Demand-Side Factors and the Employment of Young People: A Case Study of the Recruitment and Selection Strategies of Selected Firms in Johannesburg

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ABSTRACT

Unemployment is a long-standing and pressing socio-economic phenomenon that affects, markedly, both developed and developing countries. Although, in one way or another, many people are affected by unemployment, the reviewed literature concurs that youth unemployment is a critical component of the overall unemployment challenge. Indeed, the burden of unemployment is borne, tremendously, by young people, especially those who are Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEETs). The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has declared youth unemployment a global crisis, with approximately 67,6 million unemployed young people worldwide in 2018. In South Africa, the youth unemployment rate escalated to 56.4 per cent in the second quarter of 2019. This disturbing level of unemployment among young people poses a serious threat—for as long as young people stay unemployed. Indeed, the cost of unemployment is too high, not only does it engender discontent among young people who are floundering in poverty and frustration, but it can also trigger or perpetuate all sorts of social, political, and economic effects. These effects only exacerbate the already intricate and onerous global agenda of tackling unemployment—because they give rise to other socio-economic ills (e.g., crime, among others) that also need to be addressed.

Owing to this grave and perpetual challenge of unemployment, exploring and understanding the dynamics of youth unemployment continues to be of paramount importance worldwide. This thesis, in particular, seeks to investigate the factors that impede on the employment of the NEETs category, as it may be extremely difficult for them to enter the labour market—and they may lose hope of entering the labour market later in life, if they are unsuccessful while still young. Unlike graduates or other youth categories (i.e., matriculants) who have better chances in the labour market, some young people (by virtue of being 'dropouts', teenage moms/dads, having failed matric, among other reasons), remain the most vulnerable to unemployment. For this reason, the primary aim of this thesis is to examine the ways in which employers' recruitment strategies advantage or disadvantage young people (NEETs). The secondary aims include: (a) examining how employers' perceptions and attitudes, regarding the NEETs youths, influence their recruitment decisions when it comes to employing young people; and (b) understanding the ways in which government strategies (devised to combat youth unemployment) influence employers' decisions to recruit the

youths' or not. In essence, this study seeks to explore the demand-side factors in the labour market that can help us understand how employers' recruitment decisions (or recruitment behaviour) affect the employment prospects of young people in the labour market.

The focus on demand-side factors is motivated by Labour Market Segmentation (LMS) theories, which serve as the theoretical framework of this thesis. LMS theories' significance lies in their opposition to neoclassical economics, that posit the existence of a unified labour market (which operates like all other markets), consisting of buyers and sellers in 'free' competition. According to neoclassical theory, the difference between workers' employment and wages is determined by 'individual preferences' and investments in 'human capital' (skills, experience, formal education, etc.). By contrast, LMS theorists argue that labour markets are fragmented, and that differences on the demand side imply differences in compensations that are not totally determined by individual workers' human capital. Inspired by the claims of LMS theories, this study elected to explore demand-side factors by applying qualitative research methods and techniques to gather and analyse the data gathered, and to ultimately address the research objectives. In particular, non-probability sampling was used to sample 20 firms from four sectors (manufacturing, retail/hospitality, finance, transportation) in the Johannesburg (CBD) region. The respondents were all asked a series of semi-structured questions in order to yield qualitative results that would help determine the employers' dispositions towards young people; and about the government's strategies that address youth unemployment. The aim is to provide an in-depth, nuanced understanding of how the respondents' dispositions influence the inclusion or exclusion of young people in the employers' recruitment considerations.

The aggregate results of the study generally indicate that—although there are innumerable factors that affect young peoples' employment prospects—young people (without skills and tertiary education or matric) are actually being employed, and are still being considered for employment by the majority of the sampled employers (predominantly from retail/hospitality firms). Only a minority of employers stated, categorically, that they do not employ young people, and do not intend to do so. Conversely, the results also reveal that the the majority of employers often recruit young people for general and entry-level jobs that are often offered on a non-standard employment basis. At face value, the employment of young people (without skills) in the majority of the sampled firms may seem to make a difference—and it probably does, for as long as young people are exposed to the world of work. However, in the

grand scheme of things, the kind of employment offered in these firms is also problematic, because it is, basically, transient and unsustainable.

As such, the young people that occupy these jobs are most likely to find themselves back in the unemployment queues whenever the 'part-time' or 'temporary' employment contracts are terminated. These jobs are especially problematic because policies such as the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030—in line with Sustainable Development Goals—aim to reduce poverty by creating sustainable employment. Contrarily, these kinds of jobs make it hard to achieve poverty reduction, because they are inherently unsustainable and barely lift people (especially young people) from unemployment and poverty. Based on these results, it can be asserted that the proliferation of non-standard employment compromises the agenda for decent work, and it delays the already sluggish Sustainable Development goal of creating sustainable employment (among other goals). This, then, reveals that there is still a stark and long-standing need for more radical strategies that will ensure the creation of sustainable jobs—without which the unemployment crisis will be far from over.

Moreover, the results further indicate that the reasons why the minority of the sampled employers do not employ young people boil down to the fact that young people usually do not have what employers look for in their potential recruits; or that young people do not have what employers believe will contribute to the growth and productivity of their firms. In essence, employers will never employ any young person (or any jobseeker in general) that will be a liability than an asset in their firms. Over and above, this thesis corroborates many of the explanations—encapsulated in the growing literature—for rising unemployment, as well as the claims that unemployment is highly pronounced among young people. However, the contribution of this thesis is that it further offers a nuanced view to understanding the demand-side factors (as additional determinants) that hinder the employment of young people (especially those who make up the NEETs category).

Keywords: unemployment, underemployment, youth, employers, labour market, recruitment and selection practices.

My mother assured me early on, in my teens, that if I could complete my matric and get a job as a traffic cop, I would make her a proud mother. But, God had other plans: I completed my grade 12 and went ahead to be a PhD graduate, far exceeding even my very own expectations.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my late and sorely missed grandfather, Mosana Ephraim Gabobegwe. This man was more like a father to me, and he foretold my academic success before I started believing I had in me to get this far. I thank God that He gave me my grandfather, who also played a profound and colossal part in my upbringing and mentoring. All of which would later inspire my academic achievements, among other things. This thesis is for you, Rra!

Moreover, I dedicate this thesis to my late grandmother, Joyce Simangele Gabobegwe, who passed away during the final write-up stage of this thesis. Little did I know that instead of her witnessing me obtain my Ph.D. degree, I would be referring to her as someone who supported a project the results of which she never got to see. Indeed, my strong and resilient grandmama supported me in every way possible. I count myself immensely blessed to have not only known you, mama, but to have had a solid relationship with you that is like no other I have ever had. I'm forever indebted to you. You and rra, are truly one of my greatest gifts in human form. I am who I am today because you two were a great part of my support system.

Lastly, I dedicate this study to all the young people: those of you who had to drop out of school due to circumstances that are beyond your control; those of you who had to assume the role of being the breadwinner of your families, yet you struggle to make a living for your families; those of you who are on the verge of losing hope—if you have not lost it already—of ever breaking into the labour market or finding any sustainable job. This thesis simply acknowledges your struggle that is far worse than your graduate or matriculant counterparts can ever be in. Yes, many are unemployed, but you are the people group that is most vulnerable to unemployment and have little to no chances of securing decent employment. Even though you do not have the skills required by employers, you too matter and deserve interventions that will grant you opportunities to access the labour market. My hope is that there be enough effectual interventions—that you so desperately need—that will be enacted and effectively implemented to address the unique and yet hopeless situation you find yourselves in.

This thesis does not in any way claim to offer such interventions, neither does it suggest that finding such interventions is an easy feat. But with this thesis I hope to shine light on the fact that youth unemployment among the NEETs category needs interventions that will particularly address the unique factors and determinants that contribute or perpetuate unemployment among the NEETs than it does other youth groups.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AA	Affirmative Action
BCEA	Basic Conditions of Employment Act
CV	Curriculum Vitae
CR	Critical Realism
CWP	Community Work Programme
DLM	Dual Labour Market
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
EEA	Employment Equity Act
ETI	Employment Tax Incentive
EPWP	Expanded Public Work Programme
ILO	International Labour Organisation
HCT	Human Capital Theory
HRM	Human Resources Management
LMS	Labour Market Segmentation
LRA	Labour Relations Act
NEETs	neither in Employment nor in Education or Training
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
R&S	Recruitment and Selection
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
SA	South Africa
SARS	South African Revenue Services
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDA	Skills Development Act
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SMME	Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises
WESO	World Employment Social Outlook
UN	United Nations
YES	Youth Employment Service

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Unemployment is a multi-dimensional concept that incorporates economic, political, and social aspects; but [is] also an interesting academic and political issue (Acemoglu, 1995:161).

My interest in this research topic was piqued by the gravity of unemployment among young people (especially the NEETs category)—and specifically in South Africa. Unemployment is a worldwide socio-economic phenomenon faced by both developed and developing countries. Given the chronic issue that it continues to be, and the incidental, long-lasting effects of economic, social, and psychological problems, unemployment has increasingly become a high-priority problem. This perennial trend is why global organisations (e.g., the International Labour Organisation, World Bank), governments, and non-governmental organisations (among other stakeholders), continuously develop strategies to curb the long-standing and stubborn issue of unemployment. Indeed, many governments have adopted numerous multi-pronged strategies designed to mitigate unemployment, some of which are as old as the unemployment problem itself. Yet, true to its persistent and complex nature, unemployment remains a pressing social ill that calls for more and/or better strategies to better deal with the phenomenon. What is worse, is that unemployment among young people is not the only agenda that global organisations and governments seek to tackle.

Relating to the issue of youth joblessness is the crisis of youth employment. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2015:3), describes the situation of youth employment as follows: (i) lower quality of jobs and structural underemployment for those who find work; (ii) greater labour market inequalities across different groups of young people; and (iii) more insecure school-to-work transition." This report indicates that, across the globe, the challenge is not only to curtail unemployment by creating more jobs. But also, to ensure quality jobs for young people, who are either unemployed or over-represented in non-standard employment that does not offer meaningful job security. Below is an introductory discussion of the three core phenomena and concepts that have animated the research inquiry, and have inspired the thesis to focus specifically on young jobseekers. That is: (i) the gravity of unemployment,

especially amongst young people, (ii) the incidental issue of underemployment, and (iii) employers' recruitment and selection practices.

1.1 (YOUTH) UNEMPLOYMENT

In line with global trends, unemployment is one of the most egregious features of the South African labour market. Bhorat et al. (2013), point out that South Africa is a middle-income developing country that has experienced profound changes in the 1990s as it started moving away from a system of governance characterised by racial segregation and unequal opportunities prior to the advent of democracy in 1994. In the post-apartheid era, South Africa emerged with a legacy of low economic growth, a high poverty rate, extreme income inequality by international standards, and chronically high unemployment (Burger & Woolard, 2005; Burger & Fintel, 2009). Notwithstanding the much-needed developments made in the post-apartheid to reverse the apartheid era legacy, the South African economy is still struggling to dismantle the pressing unemployment and poverty problems (Knight & Kingdon, 2004; Arora & Ricci, 2005; Burger & Fintel, 2009; Bhorat et al., 2013). In fact, Burger & Fintel (2009:8), posit that South Africa currently has the highest unemployment rates internationally.

This is the culmination of a long-term, yet steady rise in unemployment that began as early as the 1970s, but which has speedily accelerated in the post-apartheid period (Arora & Ricci, 2005; Burger & Woolard, 2005; Festus et al., 2015). However, other factors such as the increase in the size of the labour force, the relatively slow post-transition growth in employment opportunities further contributed to the rise in unemployment (Patel, Hassen & Paton, 2011: 31). Burger and Fintel (2009:2), explain that the dawn of the democratic dispensation created the expectations that (among other things) the labour market prospects would improve for the majority of the population. But instead, the rates of the unemployed have been on a constant rise ever since. This increasing rate of unemployment has prompted claims that the economy has entered a period of 'jobless growth' (Burger & Fintel, 2009:3). As a matter of fact, the StatsSA report, for the second quarter of 2019, indicate that the unemployment rate has remained stagnant, and is at its highest as it has come up to a worrying 29.1%. The recent figures are should be more depressing (due to covid), with the rate at 34.9% in the 3rd quarter of 2021.

According to numerous authors, this grave unemployment issue in South Africa (as with many other countries) is structural (Bhorat & Hodge, 1999; Bhorat, 2004; Arora & Ricci,

2005; Dias & Possel, 2007; Bhorat et al., 2011). In a sense, there exists a shortage and mismatch of skills. This implies that unemployed people either have skills that employers do not necessarily demand, or they have low skills (Bhorat, 2005; Pauw, Oosthuizen, & Westhuizen, 2008; National Treasury, 2011). The demand for high skills is explained to be a result of structural shifts in the economy. According to Bhorat (2004:949), the structural shifts were heralded by—among other changes—the shift in output from the primary sectors towards the service sector and the implementation of the technologically more advanced production processes. These shifts have since fashioned a high-skills driven labour market that prefers people with high skills, thereby negatively affecting people with low or no skills at all (Bhorat & Hodge, 1999; Bhorat, 2004; Arora & Ricci, 2005; Dias & Possel, 2007; Bhorat et al., 2011). This is actually the problem that is attributed to as the main determinant of high levels of unemployment, especially among young people.

Certainly, although many people suffer unemployment, youth unemployment is said to be worse than general/overall unemployment. The focus on youth unemployment other than overall unemployment, is actually informed by the high concentration of unemployment among the youth (especially those in the NEETs category), compared to other social group. Indeed, empirical research and statistical reports continuously find that young people are the most vulnerable to unemployment. For this reason, youth unemployment has become a topical issue in many countries around the world as the unemployment figures continue to soar for young people. This is also why the South African government (as well as others across the globe) has prioritised fighting youth unemployment among some of their top-priority agendas. However, the fact that unemployment continues to rise exponentially despite the countless interventions (made by different stakeholders) to curtail unemployment, proves what a complex issue unemployment is. What makes it so complicated is the amalgamation of factors contributing to unemployment (both from a macro and micro level), some of which are probably yet to be discovered. The intricacy of youth unemployment also indicates that there can never be a one-size-fits-all solution to tackle unemployment.

In general, what can be gathered from the reviewed literature about the global state of unemployment is that: it is undeniably a prevalent incident that continues to be a pressing issue. This is still the case, despite the many studies that have been conducted to understand it better; and despite the countless multi-pronged strategies that have been enacted to alleviate the unemployment issue on a global scale as well as locally (in South Africa). The ever-rising

unemployment rate keeps the trend relevant and makes it necessary to probe even further. The various accounts gathered from the reviewed literature also demonstrate that unemployment affects social groups differently, among which the youth are the hardest hit and worse off are the women in that category. It is against this grim background that the research took an interest in the issue of unemployment and chose to focus on youth unemployment. The main objective of the research is to understand the role of demand-side factors, which LMS theories recognise as having a bearing in the resultant incident of unemployment. An inquiry into the demand-side is necessary as it will help understand the ways in which demand-side factors encourage or dissuade the employment of young people. Mainly, because the supply-side has since been a focal point in many research studies, making the demand-side the least inquired in comparison.

1.2 UNDEREMPLOYMENT

The ILO (2016:13), claims that as severe and pressing as unemployment is, it is only the tip of the iceberg. Instead, for many developing and emerging countries, the persistent poor-quality employment and working poverty pose the main challenges (WESO, 2019:5). In other words, not only is unemployment on a constant rise, but so too is underemployment. As a result of the high youth unemployment rates, young people tend to seek employment opportunities in the informal sector. Since the number of new vacancies in the formal sector is not catching up with the number of new young people looking for jobs, young people find the informal sector as the next best alternative to being unemployed (Shehu & Nilsson, 2014; Beukes, Fransman, Murozvi & Yu, 2017). This situation leaves the majority of youth in Africa with no other choice but to engage in informal sector activities such as street trading, casual labour, and illegal activities such as touting, stealing, armed robbery, dealing in prohibited substances such as drugs, and prostitution (Okojie, 2003; Garcia, 2008; Prause & Dooley, 2011; Reynolds & Myers, 2012; Cote, 2014). This indicates that, across the globe, the challenge is not only to create jobs, but also to ensure quality jobs for young people who are often underemployed and are over-represented in the informal economy or are engaged in vulnerable employment (ILO, 2015:16).

To be sure, creating enough jobs is necessary, but equally pressing is the need for decent jobs. According to the ILO, ‘decent work’ involves “opportunities for work that are productive and deliver fair income, security in the workplace … equality of opportunity and treatment for women and men.” Yet, the agenda for decent work proves to be a challenge, since in many

countries, including SA, there is a steady increase in non-standard employment (Gough, 2015: 95; Mathebula, 2013; ILO, 2015). In essence, non-standard employment entails that some workers have readily terminated jobs and are subjected to, among other things, precarious working conditions and low wages (Felstead & Jewson, 1999; Mathebula, 2013; Paola & Pons-Vignon, 2013; Golub & Hayat, 2014; Beukes et al., 2017). Indeed, most of the workers that occupy these jobs are unskilled or work in sectors with limited or no trade union organisation and collective bargaining coverage, leaving them vulnerable to job loss (Allen & Henry, 1996; Bezuidenhout et al., 2004).

Even more specifically, there is considerable evidence that suggests that certain social groups are over-represented in the different types of non-standard employment (i.e., Africans, women, youth) (Standing et al., 1999; Felstead & Jewson, 1999; Allen & Henry, 2004; Fourie, 2008; Yu, 2012; Mathebula, 2013). The ILO (2015:4), finds that low-skilled youth face a higher risk of joblessness and, if employed, often work in low-quality, low-paid and poor conditions jobs in most countries. While the study is mainly concerned with unemployment amongst the youth, the challenge of underemployment is incidental and cannot be separated from unemployment. And because the issue of underemployment is closely linked to that of unemployment, the literature on underemployment is also reviewed and thus proves to have a bearing on the thesis. Especially, in as far as it will also allow for the study to explore the kinds of jobs young people occupy, where and when they do find employment.

1.3 EMPLOYERS' RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PRACTICES

In light of the above-mentioned labour market trends (youth unemployment and underemployment), as well as the evidence that shows that young people are the hardest hit by these trends, this research seeks to explore the bearing that the role of employers has in the employment outcomes of young jobseekers. In investigating the role of employers—which can be analysed in a myriad of ways, focusing on various aspects of employers' activities—this study elected to narrow the focus to employers' recruitment and selection (R&S) practices. The focus on R&S is informed by the integral role these processes play in determining which people are considered for employment and are eventually employed. R&S practices are the fulcrum of the functioning of any firm, as they set out, using the specific methods, which jobs need to be occupied and by whom (Barber, 1998; Cober & Brown, 2006; Beardwell, 2007; Swanepoel et al., 2008; Ballentine, 2009; Zibarras & Woods, 2010). As

pivotal as these practices are, the reviewed literature indicates that not only is the role of employers under-researched regarding the employment of young people (Denvis & Hogarth, 2005; De Lannoy, et al., 2018), but so too is impact that recruitment and selection practices have on jobseekers, among other things (Keep & James 2010:24). De Lannoy et al. (2018), are among other authors who identify the significant gap in our understanding of exactly how employer behaviour shapes youth unemployment. This implies that there is limited evidence on employer behaviour regarding hiring preferences and how that affects (young) jobseekers. It is also for this reason that the research seeks to focus on these practices—amongst the many other aspects of the demand-side that could have been explored—in order to understand the ways in which employers' recruitment behaviour and considerations affects the employment of young people, or lack thereof.

Certainly, organisations and work, as socio-economic phenomena, are central to modern-day life. A vast majority of people have to engage in some form of work to earn and make a living (Myers & Dreachslin, 2007; Grobler, 2011; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Sameen, 2016; Kapur, 2018). Today, millions of people do so by working in and for organisations, but (as it will be confirmed in chapters two and three) millions of others are also in need of such work—there is a global unemployment crisis (Grobler, 2011; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). Notwithstanding the issue of unemployment, all organisations have work to be done, which is why they generally need the skills and expertise of people to do the job (Grobler, 2011). By the same token, millions of people rely on organisations to use, apply and develop their skills through work, and to thereby earn a living and enhance their standard of living and the quality of their lives (Swanepoel, 2014). Indeed, humanity's most significant need is to make a living, and the need is highly pronounced among young people (World Bank, 2009; National Treasury, 2011; ILO, 2016).

The World Bank (2009), also acknowledges that one of the best ways to address problems related to poverty (which is rampant in South Africa and on the African continent—as well as all over the world) is to create opportunities for paid work. This means (as also expressed by governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), global organisations, among others) that there is a desperate and perpetual need for jobs to be created. It is this process of job creation that necessitates the practices of recruitment and selection, thus making these practices the most significant in any organisation (Kapur, 2018). From time to time, it becomes necessary for an organisation to create jobs. This need may arise from resignations,

promotions, transfers, and other reasons (Grobler, 2011; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). Therefore, when this need arises, firms have to generate a pool of suitable applicants through advertising of the job, and then screen applicants to find the one candidate whose characteristics are most suited to the requirements of the job (Grobler, 2011; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). Jobseekers, on the other hand, have to find firms with suitable vacancies. Once they have found a firm with a suitable vacancy, jobseekers apply and convince the employer that they are the most qualified candidates compared to all other applicants (Grobler, 2011; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018).

The outcome of this matching process is eventually driven by the overlap between the firm's recruitment channels and the job seeker's search methods (Gorter et al., 1993; Lindeboom et al., 1994; Russo et al., 2000; Schöer et al., 2010). Seeing that recruitment/employment is contingent on the firms' (demand-side) need to recruit and the jobseekers' (supply-side) availability and suitability for the vacant job; this research is more interested in the proclivity of selected employers in Johannesburg, where it concerns the employment of young jobseekers. Therefore, the study seeks to explore what their perceptions, attitudes, and experiences are regarding young people; and to understand the ways in which these dispositions influence or inform their decision to accommodate (or not) the youth in their organisations. This exploration will ultimately help to understand the ways in which demand-side factors encourage and discourage the employment of young people.

1.4 MOTIVATION AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The inspiration of this study is twofold: firstly, the research interest stems from the two above-mentioned subject matters: the global crisis of youth unemployment and the issue of underemployment among young people. Secondly, the research interest derives from the claim by several scholars that the demand-side factors of unemployment are under-researched. In contrast, there is an abundant body of knowledge concerning the supply-side factors of unemployment, among other labour market trends. Indeed, there is no shortage of empirical evidence that unemployment, especially youth unemployment, is a crisis globally. Despite these innumerable studies, unemployment remains a stubborn problem in the country, and thus proves to be an intricate issue. Therefore, the persistence of unemployment and the collateral issue of underemployment—despite much policy and government intervention—still warrants more research. There can never be enough research, given the gravity and the perpetuity of unemployment. It is against this consideration that this thesis seeks to contribute

to our understanding of unemployment, especially youth unemployment, by probing into and focusing on the ways in which demand-side factors hamper the employment of young jobseekers.

This research does not only argue that unemployment among young people is severe and still needs urgent interventions, but it also stresses the fact that more research is still needed if the youth unemployment crisis has a fighting chance of being alleviated. Young people are helpless; it is exceptionally challenging for them to partake in the labour market—and this is a situation that cannot be left to the unemployed youth themselves. The government (together with the aid of other stakeholders) should tirelessly enact strategies that will progressively integrate young people into the world of work. Therefore, more research will not only point us to the minutiae details of the barriers that hamper the employment of young people, but it can—in light of these details—point to better solutions. This is not a question of whether young people are being employed in the labour market. The veritable and long-standing rates of youth unemployment demonstrate, categorically, that young people are not being employed. Therefore, the thesis is, particularly, concerned with the demand-side barriers that impact young jobseekers. Focusing on the supply-side alone (as has been the case) is not enough; all labour market actors should be explored to understand the individual roles they play in unemployment. The current study has elected to focus on the demand side.

The motivation for such an election also derives from the premise of the LMS theories that advocated for the analysis of all actors (supply-side, employers, and the state) of the labour market, not just the supply side as implied by the neoclassical theorists. Therefore, the thesis does not seek to argue that social structures are integral to the labour market operation and thus may very well shape labour market outcomes. LMS theories, as well as other socio-economic theories, have repeatedly and insightfully pointed this out. However, using the premise of LMS theories, this thesis seeks to explore some of the ways that those social structures (on the demand-side) affect labour outcomes of young people. To this end, the thesis undertakes to chiefly investigate how employers' R&S strategies hamper or encourage the employment of young people. In other words, the thesis wants to find out how the employers' recruitment strategies ensure that young people are employed or counted/left out in the employment process. In addition to this primary objective (outlined above), the proposed research secondarily explores:

- How employers' perceptions and attitudes regarding the NEETs category youths influence their recruitment decisions where it concerns young people.
- The ways in which government strategies against youth unemployment also influence employers' decisions to recruit young people, or not.

1.5 THESIS OUTLINE

The thesis is divided into ten chapters, all geared towards answering the central question of this thesis. The current chapter introduces the thesis and succintly outlines the key concepts and debates that have animated the study. Chapter two presents a broad overview of the most pertinent issues that animated this study. To this end, the chapter first presents LMS theories as the suitable theoretical framework that will inform and frame the whole thesis discussion as it privileges an inquiry into the demand-side factors. The chapter consequently presents the current state of unemployment and underemployment both on a global scale and in the African context respectively. This is followed by a discussion concerning the causes of unemployment and underemployment, as well as the effects that generally impact societies (and predominantly the unemployed). Both these contexts are discussed to give the reader a sense of the global state of unemployment and underemployment and ultimately show how these trends (in global and other African countries) compare to the South African context which is presented separately in chapter three.

Owing to these incidents and the resultant consequences that affect both the unemployed and employed; governments have put forward various efforts to try and address these labour market problematics. Therefore, chapter two also presents some of the global and typical intervention strategies that have been implemented thus far. This discussion is integral as it gives a sense of how severe the issue of unemployment is, but also of what has already been discovered by other studies that this study seeks to build on. In essence, the themes discussed in chapter two indicate that unemployment and underemployment are both global problematics that still need further research to understand the drivers behind the phenomena further. In order to, ultimately, understand better what more can still be done, since the persistence of these issues denotes that more work still needs to be done.

Chapter three provides the context of the South African labour market and the current position of young people in the labour market. Therefore, this chapter shows that the current South African labour market is still plagued with (among other things) high levels of unemployment; and that in line with global trends of unemployment, the youth are the

hardest hit by the incident of unemployment. The chapter also, narrowly, presents the issue of unemployment in Johannesburg, which is one of the biggest cities that are plagued with youth unemployment, and has, for this reason, been selected as a place of study for this thesis. The chapter first presents the state of the South African labour market (pre-and post-1994) to understand the historical context that has, among other factors, shaped the contemporary labour market. This is followed by discussing the incidence of unemployment in South Africa, which proves to be among the highest compared to other international countries. The chapter then discusses the unemployment situation among young people in Johannesburg CBD, which is the place where the current study took place.

Chapter four presents a global review of employers' recruitment practices, and thus shows how this review is relevant for this research study by drawing examples from the South African context. It first indicates that the demand-side factors—as critical as they too are in the employment of jobseekers, or lack thereof—are under-researched. This paucity of demand-side studies, where it concerns the employment of young jobseekers, calls for more research inquiries in that area. The chapter further provides a discussion of the Human Resources Management (HRM) activities that play an integral role in the recruitment of individuals. However, the chapter narrows down the focus of the thesis by discussing R&S practices as the main HRM activities that the thesis seeks to explore concerning young jobseekers. The chapter proceeds to discuss the subject of employability, which is pertinent to the employment of any jobseeker, as it speaks of ones ability to acquire and retain employment. This is followed by a review of some of the studies that have been conducted specifically to explore the demand side factors, and thus served as guidelines for the present study. The themes presented in this chapter are essential to pay attention to because they are most relevant to the inquiry of this thesis. And they are relevant to understanding the current state of the labour market from which the investigation was animated and developed. This chapter concludes the review of all the relevant literature on both the employer recruitment practices, and the state of the South African labour market concerning the youth. The essence of the chapter proves and supports a focus on the demand-side as it shows its integral role in un/employment.

After outlining the relevant literature and showing the bearing it has on this thesis, chapter five outlines and discusses the research design and the methodological approach and techniques implemented to carry out this inquiry. The chapter also justifies the selection of

the qualitative approach (specifically the case study), and reviews the qualitative features of the research design. First, this entails a presentation of the overarching paradigm and research approach upon which this study is based; and an identification of the case study as the most suitable research strategy for this study. This is followed by a presentation of the unit of analysis as well as the techniques that were employed for sampling; and how data from the selected sectors and firms from Johannesburg was collected and analysed. The chapter concludes by reflecting on the ethical considerations and the limitations of the study.

Chapter six provides the descriptive data that serves as the foundation for the data analysis chapters that follow. To this end, the chapter introduces the study's respondents and outlines the contexts of their firms, occupations, and daily duties. It also presents the key information about the firms that paint a picture of the current recruited personnel. This chapter also shows that though there are similarities amongst different firms and the different sectors/industries under which they fall. There are also considerable differences that would impact the various operations of businesses, and ultimately have a bearing on recruitment and selection, which will be discussed in chapter seven. All this information is essential not only to understanding the background information that qualifies the respondents as key informants for this study, but also of the firms which they are employed at and about which they provide information.

Chapter seven explores the perceptions, attitudes, and experiences (collectively referred to as 'dispositions') employers have towards young people. It does this by looking at how employers understand the phenomenon of unemployment and what they propose to be the solutions thereof. The chapter also looks at the perceptions and attitudes that employers have concerning the employment of young people. This chapter also explores the types of jobs that employers are most likely to offer the young people. Overall, the results of this chapter are two-fold: the majority of sampled employers have positive dispositions, and the minority of employers have negative dispositions. Accordingly, the former group is of the mind that young people are suitable for their businesses. At the same time, the other group believed that young people are risky and not ideal for their firms. Obviously, these opposite dispositions impact the young jobseekers differently. This indicates that these dispositions (perceptions, attitudes, and experiences) are not a primary or a sole factor, but there are other factors influence and shape any organisational activities (including the recruitment of potential candidates). Exploring employers' dispositions helped reveal how they influence the way in which employers design and practice their R&S strategies and how these streategies, in turn, affect young people. This impact will be discussed and analysed in chapter nine.

Chapter eight addresses one of the secondary questions of the thesis: that is, to find out the ways in which the government's youth unemployment interventions influences job creation, where it concerns young people. It does this by exploring whether the sampled employers are aware of, and whether they take part in the employment subsidies that the government has enacted as a way to fight youth unemployment. There are, by far, two most current strategies in South Africa that deal directly with youth unemployment; most of the multi-pronged strategies deal with unemployment in general. The chapter also looks at why employers take part (or not) in the employment subsidies and whether they support the conception of these strategies. Data reveals that the majority of the sampled employers are both not aware and, as a consequence, do not take part in the subsidies. While there are surely many reasons why that is the case, the underscoring reason that emerges from the data tends to fault the government. The themes discussed in this chapter helped to gauge whether the role of the government as perceived by the sampled employers—concerning youth unemployment specifically—encourages or dissuades job creation for youth people.

Chapter nine explores the recruitment practices and tendencies of employers based on their daily experience. Since the thesis is interested in young people, it was most important to examine the recruitment patterns regarding the youth and to see if the practices are inclusive or exclusive of young people. This chapter also discusses the recruitment practices in conjunction with employers' dispositions of young people and their perceptions of the government's role in addressing unemployment (discussed in chapters seven and eight, respectively). This is to explore the ways in which these dispositions influence the sampled employers' decisions to accommodate young people in their recruitment activities.

To this end, chapter nine first looks at the general practices and whether the sampled employers have any practices that specifically target young people. The chapter also looks at whether there are any differences between general practices and those designed for the youth. Additionally, in finding out whether the sampled employers accommodate young people in their recruitment strategies, the chapter also explores the skills these employers look for in general and concerning young people. Lastly, the chapter explores the factors that are likely to shape or influence, in one way or the other, the recruitment of young people. The main finding of this chapter is that although the majority of employers currently employ (and have intentions of recruiting) young people, there are several barriers relating to employer behaviour that affect young peoples' ability to find work. For instance, the R&S strategies

that employers choose to use on different recruitment occasions may be inaccessible to some young people. These barriers are at play with other non-economical factors that tend to preempt the employment of young people.

Finally, chapter ten summarises the key findings, which are a confluence of the data collected and the literature reviewed; and consequently presents the recommendations that the results of the study have inspired.

CHAPTER TWO

LABOUR MARKET SEGMENTATION THEORY, DEMAND-SIDE FACTORS, AND THE EMPLOYMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the rationale for conducting research on youth unemployment, with a focus on the demand-side factors that shape or contribute to this phenomenon. To this end, this chapter is divided into two sections: (i) the theoretical framework, which sets out the framework that serves as the lens of this entire thesis. (ii) And the conceptual framework which reviews, on a global scale, the pertinent literature concerning the two most pressing labour market trends—Youth Unemployment and Underemployment—that have animated this study. Unemployment and underemployment are universally distinguished as undesirable and perennial issues facing many societies on a global scale. It has been well established that unemployment remains prevalent amongst a host of socio-economic problematics across the globe. As this chapter will demonstrate, the bulk of the existing evidence concerning unemployment in general lies on the supply-side of the labour market. Indeed, multiple studies show that unemployment is extensively attributed to the unemployed people themselves (whether it be evidence about their lack of skills and education levels or the effects of their demographics, households and communities on their labour market prospects). However, according to Campbell (2001), Denvis and Hogarth (2005), Danson and Gilmore (2009), Ingold and Stuart (2015), Ingold and Valizade (2017), and De Lannoy et al. (2018) to mention a few studies, there is far less evidence about the demand-side drivers of youth unemployment. In other words, little is known about the employer behaviour and attitudes towards hiring young people and how that impacts young jobseekers particularly. It is against this background that the central aim of this thesis is to explore the demand-side factors (i.e., the R&S strategies) in order to understand how these strategies affect the integration of young people into the labour market.

As pointed out by Adams et al. (2000:1843), the characteristics of employers and their recruitment practices are also an essential factor in the employment of the youth or lack thereof. Therefore, the inquiry on employers' recruitment strategies (who make up the demand-side) is influenced by the claim that while there has been extensive research into the supply-side causal factors of unemployment, there is comparatively little analysis of the

demand-side. Essentially, this thesis aims to build upon existing information of the supply-side on the one hand and the meagre research on the demand-side of the labour market on the other hand. It does this by conducting an inquiry into the employers' recruitment practices and how these practices shape the employment prospects of young people. To this end, relevant literature was sourced and reviewed extensively for the construction of this chapter, and to adequately inform the study. This chapter consolidates theoretical, conceptual, and major themes that have both inspired and serve as the groundwork of the thesis. The key themes that emerged from this comprehensive review were organised and are presented in this chapter in 10 sections. The following section explicitly presents a theoretical framework that serves as the suitable framework for data collection and better informs the data analysis of this thesis. This will be followed by a conceptual framework (containing seven sub-sections) that reviews existing literature on unemployment and underemployment (as the labour market trends that have galvanised this study).

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Economists and other social scientists study and analyse the labour market and its trends (i.e., unemployment) from theoretical positions, that vary on many fronts. By far, there are two, broad theories that provide varying accounts of the labour market: namely, neoclassical theory rooted in the orthodox tradition and labour market segmentation (LMS) theories rooted in the heterodox tradition (Rubery, 1978; Harrison & Sum, 1979; Cassim, 1989; Kraak, 1995; Peck, 1996; Leonataridi, 1998; Barker, 2003; Fleetwood, 2006; White, 2010). The purpose of this section is to review the theorisation of the labour market (and unemployment) as accounted for by these two approaches. However, while both approaches provide distinct perspectives, LMS theories are better suited to explain the operation of real and yet complex labour markets and the resultant trends like unemployment and underemployment (Cassim, 1989; Kraak, 1995; Peck, 1996; Leonataridi, 1998; Barker, 2003; Fleetwood, 2006; White, 2010). It will be shown below that, unlike the orthodox or neoclassical approach, the main feature of the LMS theories—which place the demand-side of the labour market at the centre of its analysis in addition to the supply-side and the state—is fundamental to the ultimate goal of answering the main research question of this thesis. Therefore, the LMS theories' premise to incorporate the demand-side in its analysis of the labour market (and unemployment) is another reason the thesis undertakes an inquiry into the demand-side of the labour market.

This focus on the demand-side does not suggest that the supply-side factors do not have any bearing on the labour market outcomes of the jobseekers, but it is to acknowledge that employers play a more crucial role in the labour market. As such, this role of employers is as deserving of examination and analysis as the supply-side, which is already, comparatively, abundantly researched. Thus, since LMS theories serve as a critique of the neoclassical theory, which is the traditional approach to labour markets, it is necessary, first, to discuss the neoclassical theory to understand what led to the emergence of LMS theories and why the latter serves as a suitable framework for this study than the former. However, given the relatively minor relevance that neoclassical economics have on this study, the discussion of the neoclassical theory will be kept to a bare minimum. It will only be reduced to its fundamental principles to understand why they are unsuitable for this particular research.

2.2.1 Neoclassical Theory

Neoclassical theory is broadly an approach to economics focusing on the optimising of individual agents and the determination of goods, outputs, and income distributions in markets through the interaction of supply and demand (Fine, 2002; Fleetwood, 2006; Brozavo, 2015). In the context of the 'labour' market, the interaction of supply and demand refers to the specific characteristics that each worker has to offer in terms of the supply of labour and the productive services that employers on the demand-side seek (Fine, 2002; Barker, 2003; Fleetwood, 2006; Brozavo, 2015). In essence, the neoclassic theory presupposes maximising behaviour of both the supply and demand-side agents (Fine, 2002; Barker, 2003; Brozavo, 2015). That is, the profit-maximising behaviour of employers determines the demand for labour, while at the supply side, workers maximise utility by choosing to enhance their economic interest over leisure (Peck, 1996; Leonatridi, 1998; Fine, 2002; Barker, 2003; Fleetwood, 2006; Bispo, 2007). At the theoretical core of this neoclassical account lies a simple basic principle: that the wage rates and the quantities of labour demanded and supplied are functionally related (Fleetwood, 2006:60). This means that the determination of employment (and the level of employment) and the price of labour is an effect of the interplay between supply and demand. Based on this reasoning the neoclassical theorists explain labour markets as sites in which these relations (between supply and demand) operate, and are analysed in a way that suggests that 'economic' forces of wages, supply, and demand for labour override 'non-economic phenomena (i.e., mechanisms, rules, resources, conventions, habits, powers). Fleetwood (2006:61), refers to these many and varied 'non-

economic' factors as social structures, thus for ease of reference the thesis will also use the term 'social structures' to refer to non-economic factors collectively, unless one economic factor is mentioned.

Fleetwood (2006:63), further points out that mainstream economists/neoclassical theorists are, of course, aware that a range of 'non-economic' phenomena and institution impact upon labour markets. In fact, some economists spend time and effort in trying to consider phenomena like family, gender, race, trade unions, efficiency wages, insider-outsider distinctions, and so on. However, on the same breath he (Fleetwood, 2006), also emphasises that even when social structures are considered, they are generally dealt with as a 'bolt-on' to the basic principle, where the analysis [of the social structures] takes the form of deducing its subsequent effects on the wage rate, supply, or demand for labour. Yet, the possibilities that social structures might actually dominate, or even completely negate, the 'economic' forces of wages, supply, and demand are never seriously considered (Fleetwood, 2006:64). Hyclak, Johnes, and Thornton (2004: 19), also point out that even though neoclassical theorists would acknowledge that adjustment to a demand and supply equilibrium may be complicated by institutional factors, they would nevertheless expect supply and demand to be major influences on labour market outcomes. These views summarise the flawed neoclassical economists' treatment of the relation between supply and demand, which tends to overlook the social structures (or deals with social structures in a superficial manner) that influence the interaction between supply and demand. The flaws of the neoclassical theory indicate that even though the neoclassical theory offers some insights that help us understand the labour market, its analysis of the labour market is not comprehensive for as long as it fails to show how social structures (together with economic forces) also have a bearing on the structure and operation of the labour market.

Conversely, the premise of the LMS theories not only exposes the flaws of the neoclassical theory's analysis of the labour market. But they offer an alternative argument that suggests that, in fact, not only do various social structures affect the labour market outcomes, but they have significant influences on them (how this happens is dealt with in more detail in section 2.3 below). At this stage, it is sufficient to mention that as a way to criticise the neoclassical theory, some scholars (i.e., Barker, 2007, Fleetwood, 2016), assert that the neoclassical theory is characterised by several unrealistic assumptions, including perfect competition, homogeneity of workers, perfect information, and labour mobility (Barker, 2003:17). Firstly,

neoclassical theorists perceive the 'labour market' in the same way they see all markets; as places of exchange upon which prices are determined by the interaction between supply and demand (Barker, 2003; Fleetwood, 2006; White, 2010; Berlinski & Manacorda, 2011). Furthermore, neoclassical economists assume a unified and perfectly-competitive labour market. This means that individuals can freely choose among a wide range of job options in the labour market, based upon their personal preferences and skills, and receive rewards that reflect their human capital investments (Becker, 1962; Cain, 1976; Fleetwood, 2006; Kraak, 1995; Leonataridi; 1998). Therefore, it is left to the individual to increase their productivity by acquiring education and training to enhance their employability (Cassim, 1989; Biddle & Holden, 2014; Tan, 2014). It is for this reason that the neoclassical theory argues that the poor remain poor because they lack marketable skills or have failed to make the choice to invest in themselves (Becker, 1962).

This line of reasoning tends to focus on the supply-side and assumes that supply-side factors play a central role in determining employment outcomes of individuals by increasing their productivity and enhancing their employment prospects, failing which renders one unemployed (Biddle & Holden, 2014; Tan, 2014; Tittenbrun, 2017). This notion of investing in education is extensively theorised by the human capital theory. We now shift the focus to human capital theory (as a tenet of the neoclassical theory) which expands on the assumptions provided by the neoclassical approach to explain the role that the supply-side plays in shaping labour market outcomes. This discussion is integral not only because it is the tenet of the neoclassical theory (that further explains the role that the supply-side has in the labour market outcomes). But also because the human capital theory is criticised for being just as flawed as the neoclassical theory. Thus, showing why both these theories—even though they form one of two broad theorisations of the labour market—cannot be suitable frameworks for this thesis. The following section provides a condensed discussion of the main perspectives and ideas that constitute the human capital theory, and hints at the shortcomings it shares with the neoclassical theory.

2.2.2 Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory (HCT) is an extension of the neoclassical approach, which assumes, among other things, that individuals seek to maximise their economic interests (Tan, 2014:412). The HCT is concerned primarily with the supply-side of the labour market, and that is basically the extent to which human capital is accumulated (through education,

training, and work experience), and how it is used and rewarded (Cassim, 1989; Biddle & Holden, 2014; Tan, 2014; Tittenbrun, 2017). Becker (1962) is one of the founders of the HCT. He observes that the purpose of the HCT in the first instance, as far as labour markets are concerned, is to elucidate why there are differences in wages for different workers (Becker, 1962:11-12)—even in the context of a perfectly functioning market as assumed by the neoclassical theory (a view that is also shared by the HCT) (Peck, 1996; Fine, 1998; Tan, 2014). In essence, the HCT explains that if workers have different productive capabilities—however they may have been gained—then they should receive correspondingly different rewards (Becker, 1962; Peck, 1996; Fine, 1998; Tan, 2014). These capabilities, warranting wage differentials, might arise from innate abilities or upbringing, or they might have been intentionally pursued for the purposes of gaining an economic advantage (Becker, 1962; Biddle & Holden, 2014; Tan, 2014; Tittenbrun, 2017).

In this theory, education is placed at the centre and considered the source of economic development (Tan, 2014:414). Indeed, the HCT believes that education increases the productivity, employment and earnings of an individual. On one hand this line of reasoning assumes that anyone can attain skill enhancement. On the other hand this reasoning also implies that poverty and unemployment are voluntary, and are a result of people using their free choice to choose leisure than investing in their employability (obtaining education, experience among other skills). The conclusion that follows from this reasoning is that those who remain unemployed are the least valuable to employers: the least skilled or educated (Biddle & Holden, 2014; Tan, 2014; Tittenbrun, 2017). While this reasoning goes some way in explaining how education has a bearing on people being employed or not, it tends to overlook many considerable factors (both from the supply and demand-side) that deter some people from so much as acquiring education, and thus disadvantage them from entering the labour market. This tendency of the HCT to fail to observe the exogenous factors that also come into play in determining one's employability is primarily the reason why it has been (similar to the neoclassical theory tenet) sharply criticised by many scholars (Becker, 1962; Biddle & Holden, 2014).

For example, Bowles and Gintis (1975:78), Harrison and Sum (1979), Cassim (1982), Peck (1996), Fine (1998); Biddle and Holden (2014), Tan (2014), and Tittenbrun (2017) are amongst numerous scholars who acknowledge that the HCT may arguably be true on some parts (i.e., that education does enhance one's employability). Yet, they are also of the mind that just like the neoclassical account of the labour market, the HCT, similarly, tends to

circumvent social structures/barriers and inequalities that exist within the labour market, and that may negatively impact the access to education (or to the skills) that ensure good employment prospects (Bowles & Gintis, 1975; Harrison & Sum, 1979; Cassim, 1982; Peck, 1996; Fine, 2002; Bispo, 2007; Tan, 2014). For instance, it fails to notice that peoples' choice to enhance their economic interests is within economic limitations determined by factors almost entirely outside their economic choices (Bowles & Gintis, 1975:83). Such as, among other things, the inability to afford education.

Furthermore, Cassim (1982:242), observes that the functioning of the labour market involves a wide range of factors (economic and non-economic). As a consequence, higher wages, for example, can be associated with particular sectors, capital-intensity, trade unionism, and not just the level of education and skills as maintained by the HCT theory (Bowles & Gintis, 1975; Harrison & Sum, 1979; Cassim, 1989; Peck, 1996; Fine, 2002; Bispo, 2007; Tan, 2014). For this reason, among others, HCT critics contend that, at best, human capital should be seen more as a screening device in hiring decisions rather than having direct (or the main) influence in determining the occupational structure and wage level of workers. In other words, the amount of human capital mainly determines one's position in the job queue and has only little direct relationship with productivity and earnings (Bowles & Gintis, 1975; Harrison & Sum, 1979; Cassim, 1989; Peck, 1996; Fine, 2002; Bispo, 2007; Tan, 2014).

The main conclusion that can be made from the above-mentioned criticism—which is also the same reason why both the neoclassical and HCT are unsuitable to serve as the theoretical framework of this study—is that the labour market and the phenomenon of unemployment (among other trends) need to be studied from a disaggregate perspective (Cassim, 1989; Peck, 1996; Fine, 2002; Fleetwood, 2006). This entails a perspective that is cognisant of both the labour market (economic) forces and the exogenous (non-economic) factors that shape the labour market and, ultimately, impact the labour market outcomes. As it stands, the account that the neoclassical theory and HCT provide is somewhat simplified and utopian as it does not take cognisance of the exogenous social barriers that tend to impact the labour market outcomes. As such, they fail to provide a panoramic perspective of the labour market. The neoclassical theory critics further note that the theory cannot accurately explain actual economies (Cassim, 1989; Peck, 1996; Fine, 2002; Fleetwood, 2006). For instance, the view of neoclassical theory concerning unemployment is problematic because it is exclusive of a myriad of factors that impact labour market outcomes. Since the neoclassical economics do not provide a realistic and comprehensive analysis of the labour market—as they do not take

into consideration other exogenous factors—nor is it useful to explain better the problem of unemployment. The thesis has elected to consider the Labour Market Segmentation theories as a better alternative to neoclassical economics.

According to Fine (2002:89), a natural next step is to review the literature of the Labour Market Segmentation (LMS) theories. This view is also shared by Fleetwood (2006:62), who points out that the LMS theories make up the second broad account/approach that directly addresses the divisions across labour markets. Contributions to LMS theories continue to be motivated by the undeniable existence of the different divisions and segments of the workforce, which the neoclassical economists fail to subsume in their analysis of the labour market (Cassim, 1982; Kraak, 1995; Peck, 1996; Fine, 1998; Fleetwood, 2006; Leonataridi, 2008; White, 2010). LMS theories recognise that there are inequalities and barriers that lead to unemployment. They also acknowledge that social factors such as gender and race, among others, also contribute to the labour market opportunities that individuals have. Essentially, these theories—unlike neoclassical theories—contend that youth unemployment is more complex than just lacking the basic skills and education; but that one of the causes is because of mobility barriers in the labour market which are demand-side related (Cassim, 1982:243). As a result, LMS theories consider the inequalities and barriers in the labour market in terms of recruitment and employment of people. This is why in exploring the demand-side factors, this study focuses on R&S practices as demand-side factors that can help understand the ways in which these practices hamper or encourage the employment of young people. By and large, the observations that LMS theories make, in contrast to the neoclassical theory, is precisely why they serves as the better framework for this study—which is essentially concerned with the demand-side factors that impact unemployment, especially among young people. Consequently, the following section provides a review of LMS theories and also discusses their particular significance and applicability (in comparison to neoclassical models) to the current study.

2.3 LABOUR MARKET SEGMENTATION THEORIES

LMS theories are the second broad theoretical approach to the labour market, and are rooted in the heterodox perspective of the labour market. The heterodox perspective comprises an amalgamation of opposing views and critiques of neoclassical economics and HCT (Fleetwood, 2006). Harrison and Sum (1979:687), maintain that socio-economic problematics—such as structural unemployment, sustained poverty, unequal income

distribution, the persistent discrimination of certain groups, underemployment, and other related issues of the labour market—have all inspired the development of a body of LMS theories. All these theories have one thing in common and that is to challenge the orthodox views of the functioning of the labour market. According to some authors (see Harrison & Sum, 1979; Wilkinson, 1983; Cassim, 1989; Kraak, 1995; Peck, 1996; Fine, 1998; Bispo, 2007) the LMS approach infuses key insights from three theoretical generations that have proven valuable in explaining the causes, characteristics, consequences of inequalities and segmentations in the labour market. However, it is essential to note that the LMS theories literature is not unanimous on the determinants of segmentation in the labour market; three dominant explanations can be identified, namely: The first, second, and third generations (Kraak, 1995; Peck, 1996).

The first generation within the LMS literature is the Dual Labour Market theory which explains that the labour market is characterised by primary and secondary sectors. This dualism is caused by increasing demand for skills specificity deriving from technical changes (Doeringer & Piore, 1971; Peck, 1996; Fine, 1998). The second-generation consists of the works of Reich, Edwards and Gordon (1973:), Edwards (1979), Gordon et al. (1982), Bowles and Edwards (1985), who maintain that labour market segmentation is a result of labour process control strategies and is also a product of historical tendencies linked to the strategies of monopoly capitalism (Reich et al., 1973; Peck, 1996; Fine, 1998). A third and more dynamic generation focuses on labour flows and structural changes, which have re-defined the boundaries between labour market segments (Peck, 1996). In this approach, segmentation is construed as the outcome of competing strategies—which change over time given altered economic and political conditions—administered by the state (government), capital (demand-side), and labour (supply-side) to influence the conditions of employment and skill formation (Wilkinson, 1983; Peck, 1996; Kraak, 1995; Fine, 1998). These three LMS generations are explored separately in more detail below.

2.3.1 Dual Labour Market Theory

The first generation of LMS theories is the dual labour market (DLM) theory. Doeringer and Piore are usually mentioned as the pioneers of this theory (Rubery, 1985; Kraak, 1995; Peck, 1996; Fine, 2002). In essence, Doeringer and Piore (1975:67), and Piore (1975:42), believe that the labour market is divided into two distinct segments: the primary sector, that comprises of jobs with high wages, good working conditions, employment stability and job

security, and opportunities for advancement exist; and the secondary sector that is, in comparison with the primary sector, less attractive. The jobs in the secondary sector tend to involve low wages, poor working conditions, and considerable inconsistency in employment, harsh and often arbitrary discipline, and little opportunity to advance (Doeringer & Piore, 1971; Cassim, 1982; Peck, 1996; Fine, 2002; Bispo, 2007; Deakin, 2013). Fundamentally, the DLM approach is based on the notion that labour markets do not work in the standard neoclassical theory sense—for instance, workers and jobs are not 'matched' by the interaction of the 'laws' of supply and demand. Inversely, there are—in addition to the interaction between supply and demand—a series of filtering factors and social and ideological processes occurring within the labour market which also serve to shape and structure (among other things) the system of employment (Fevre, 1992; Kraak, 1995; Peck, 1996; Fleetwood, 2006). These factors, in turn, are responsible for delegating different employers into the two distinct sectors.

It is for this reason that the DLM theory emphasises the relatively minor importance of human capital characteristics of workers as having explanatory power in the employment and wage-setting process, especially concerning secondary-sector workers (Doeringer & Piore, 1971; Craig, Garnsey & Rubery, 1985; Peck. 1996; Fine, 2002; Bispo, 2007; Deakin, 2013). Instead, the DLM theory holds that job positions of workers—in particular, the type of jobs to which disadvantaged workers are restricted—are very much affected by the employers' demand for labour. In other words, the allocation of jobs is primarily demand-determined, and not only based on the supply-side factors (Doeringer & Piore, 1971, Peck. 1996; Fine, 2002; Bispo, 2007; Deakin, 2013). This line of reasoning put forward by the DLM theory is directly significant for this research study as it not only acknowledges the supply-side factors but also notices that there are demand-side factors that have a bearing on employment outcomes and thus should be explored. In fact, the dualist model treats the mechanisms of job creation as largely independent of the quality of the workforce as measured in terms of education and skills (Doeringer & Piore, 1971; Craig, Garnsey & Rubery, 1985; Peck. 1996; Fine, 2002; Bispo, 2007; Deakin, 2013).

This means that, while the DLM theory recognises that the process of job creation is made possible by the existence of a well-trained and educated workforce, the need to acquire education and training are overstated by HCT, because they put it at the center of their analysis while also overlooking the impact that demand-side factors has on job creation (Doeringer & Piore, 1971; Craig, Garnsey & Rubery, 1985; Peck. 1996; Fine, 2002; Bispo,

2007; Deakin, 2013). Therefore, according to the dualist model, the job creation process may well be responsive to human capital considerations, as individuals could be assigned places in job queues according to their potential productivity. However, this theory emphasises that employment outcomes are well impacted by different sets of selection criteria for various sectors. For instance, access to the primary sector is conditioned by—amongst other things—employers' discrimination, the effects of union-imposed constraints on the labour supply (Doeringer & Piore, 1971; Craig, Garnsey & Rubery, 1985; Peck. 1996; Fine, 2002; Bispo, 2007; Deakin, 2013). Notwithstanding the assertions that the dualist models make, the theory has been criticised for its inadequate conceptualisation of the supply-side of the labour market, and to have failed to consider the role of the state (which performs a crucial regulatory role in the labour market) (Craig et al., 1985; Peck, 1996; Fine, 2002).

However, considering the thrust of the DLM theory, the dualist theorists are more successful in exploring the influence of institutional forces in the labour market. Their most crucial contribution to the body of LMS theories has been to introduce into the mainstream debates the notion of the internal labour market within which the pricing and allocation of labour is governed by a set of administrative rules and procedures (Kraak, 1996; Peck. 1996). This notion is in direct contrast to the neoclassical theory of the labour market in which pricing, allocation, and training decisions are controlled directly by economic variables. As such this notion is useful for this thesis because it shows that there is more to the process of employment than whether an individual has adequate human capital or not (Craig, Garnsey, and Rubery, 1985; Peck, 1996; Fine, 2002; Bispo, 2007; Deakin, 2013). The following section discusses the second generation of the LMS theories, which builds on the work of the DLM theory to improve and advance the body of the segmentation theory.

2.3.2 Radical Labour Market Segmentation Theory

The radical version of LMS theories is associated with the various works of Reich, Edwards, and Gordon (Kraak, 1995; Peck, 1996; Fine, 2002). Taking dualism as its inspiration, the radical segmentation theory (it will be referred as the radial theory throughout the thesis) is fundamentally concerned with the fettered paths of mobility for differing strata of workers within occupational segments, which they submit are a result of the capitalist labour process (Reich et al., 1973; Edwards, 1975; Peck, 1996). Much like the dualist theory, the radical theory was developed to contest claims made by the neoclassical theory and the HCT as discussed in previous sections (Gordon, 1972; Kraak, 1995, Peck, 1996; Fine, 2002). Here

again, the radical theory asserts that there is no systematic relationship between educational achievement and workers' rewards. The theory rather maintains that the educational system serves to prepare workers and screen them for their generally limited roles under capitalist employment. Instead, radical theorists believe that socioeconomic background proves more of a critical indicator of labour market position than education ever does (Gordon, 1972; Reich et al., 1973; Edwards, 1975; Kraak, 1995, Peck, 1996; Fine, 2002).

Where the radical theory differs from DLM theory is that the former is of the view that the labour market is based on a fundamental conflict between capital and labour. Whereas, the radical theory asserts that the conflict is not only over wages and conditions of work but also over control of the production process itself (Reich et al., 1973). For the radical theory, a divided workforce is part and parcel of a capitalist strategy to sustain profitability. Therefore, various forms of workplace control make up the management techniques for achieving this divide (Reich et al., 1937:359). For instance, the social relations of the firm, particularly the system of control, underlie the structure and operation of labour markets (Gordon, 1972; Reich et al., 1973; Edwards, 1975; Kraak, 1995, Peck, 1996; Fine, 2002). Therefore, this acknowledgment of the employers' role (demand-side factors) by LMS theories is critical for the study. Thus making this theory a suitable framework for this thesis, as it recognises that the issue of unemployment can be adequately understood by exploring demand-side factors.

Furthermore, the radical theory describes the labour market segmentation as part of the historical process whereby political-economic forces foster the division of the labour market into separate submarkets/segments—distinguished by different labour market characteristics and behavioural rules (Reich et al., 1973:360). As such the radical theory suggests that present labour market conditions can most usefully be understood as the outcome of four segmentation processes. Where dualist models only identify two segments: primary and secondary sectors (as described above), radical theorists identify four segments: (a) between *primary and secondary* markets, which is the differentiation between 'good' and 'bad' jobs in terms of working conditions and wages; (b) *within the primary sector*, which corresponds to the level organisation; (c) *by race*, which entails that some races are over-represented in specific jobs; and (d) *by sex*, which suggests that specific jobs are occupied predominantly by men and others by women (Reich et al., 1973:362). Radical theorists argue that political and economic forces within the labour market have given rise to and continue to perpetuate segmentation in the labour market. Against this background, the radicals posit that

it is incorrect to view the sources of segmented markets as exogenous to the economic system (Gordon, 1972; Reich et al., 1973; Edwards, 1975; Kraak, 1995, Peck, 1996; Fine, 2002). In other words, labour market segmentation results from numerous factors (both economical and non-economical), and does not only relate to the supply-side, as HCT suggests.

In conclusion, there is little to distinguish radical theory from the dualist theory, although the former is marked by an explicit theory of conflict concerning production. Each is based, to a greater or less extent, on a distinction between different segments. Whereby the radical theorists also place particular emphasis on segmented labour force and divisions by sex and gender (Reich et al., 1973; Edwards, 1975; Kraak, 1995, Peck, 1996; Fine, 2002). What binds the two theories is that they both break with the neoclassical view of the labour market, and make a case for the exploration of social structures that are often overlooked by orthodox theories (neoclassical theory and HCT). The case made by both these theories is what has garnered much criticism. Most of the critics of both the dual labour market and radical theories is that the functioning of the labour market structure is viewed from only one perspective: through the motivations and actions of capitalists (Wilkinson, 1981; Kraak, 1995, Peck, 1996). Workers, in these theories, play little part in the formation of structured labour markets (Rubery, 1978; Wilkinson, 1981; Dickens, Lang; Peck, 1996; Leonataridi, 1998; Fine, 2002). This short-fall is what leads us to the third generation of LMS theories, which will be presented in the following section as both an advancement of the two abovementioned generations, and a critique to the neoclassical theory.

2.3.3 Cambridge Labour Market Theory

In contrast to the monocausal explanations of Doeringer and Piore (where dualism is seen essentially as a product of the skill and stability requirements of different production processes) and of radical theorists (where dualism arises principally from managerial control strategies), third-generation theorists have increasingly sought multicausal explanations to explain the labour market (Wilkinson, 1981; Craig et al., 1985; Kraak, 1995; Peck, 1996; Fine, 2002). Although tendencies for segmentation continue to be traced to labour market uncertainty, product market conditions, technological requirements, and labour process-control strategies (as in the first and second-generation approaches), the third-generation theorists argue that the determinants of segmentations do not just end there, but also have been identified in processes of social reproduction, actions of the state, and collective struggles of labour unions. Essentially, third segmentation approaches (otherwise known as

the Cambridge school) are the contemporary segmentation theories that represent a significant advancement over the early dualist models (Wilkinson, 1981; Craig et al., 1985; Kraak, 1995; Peck, 1996; Fine, 2002).

The work of the Cambridge school of LMS theory is in some respects the most sophisticated in range and depth (Kraak, 1995:682; Wilkinson, 1981). However, it is more easily characterised as a supply and demand model of labour markets, although one that is much more complex; and which also, like the first two generations, breaks with the neoclassical orthodoxy (Kraak, 1995; Peck, 1996; Fine, 2002). Cambridge scholars are some of the critics that criticise earlier work (by Doeringer & Piore, 1971 & Gordon et al., 1982) within the LMS approach for neglecting the supply-side while focusing predominantly on the demand-side. Craig et al. (1985:267) put it like this:

> Important though these demand-side explanations have been, our previous research and analysis found them to be inadequate … they assumed that labour supply factors played no direct role in shaping the pattern of employment organisation and inequality. Labour supply was assumed to adapt to predetermined divisions in the labour market created by the demand for labour.

It follows from this idea that the interaction between supply and demand, rather than reliance on demand alone, is one factor that marks the advance of the Cambridge school over the two abovementioned generations. Nevertheless, some scholars are of the mind that the critical claims made by third-generation theorists against the first two generations are somewhat slightly overstated, as supply-side factors are not totally absent from the analyses provided by the earlier generations (Wilkinson, 1981; Kraak, 1995; Peck, 1996; Fine, 2002). In essence, the Cambridge LMS theory differs from earlier LMS theories by emphasising the role that labour itself plays in creating labour market segments and the conditions within them (Wilkinson, 1981; Craig et al., 1985; Kraak, 1995 Peck, 1996; Fine, 1998). Notwithstanding these differences between the first two generations and the third generation, it is crucial to note the essential features of the latter theories that are compatible with the former. Firstly, and similar to the two abovementioned theories, the Cambridge theory challenges the neoclassical labour market theory (Craig et al., 1985; Kraak, 1995; Peck, 1996; Fine, 2002). Equally, there is a rejection of HCT, which maintains that workers are rewarded according to well-defined skills that they bring to the marketplace, whether inherited or acquired (*Ibid*.).

Secondly, while the Cambridge theory explains the functioning of the labour market looking at both supply and demand sides, it differs considerably from the neoclassical theory in its supply and demand analysis by extending the scope of what constitutes factors forming supply and demand, and by rejecting the principle of equilibrium as upheld by neoclassical economics (Wilkinson, 1981; Craig et al., 1985; Kraak, 1995 Peck, 1996; Fine, 1998). The conception of the labour market developed by the Cambridge school stands in sharp contrast to the orthodox model in which labour demand and supply interact with one another in response to wage signals (Kraak, 1995; Peck, 1996; Fine, 1998). Conversely, according to the Cambridge theory, the supply of labour is not governed simply by market forces but also by demographic factors, social norms concerning the participation of different groups in wage labour (mediated through the institution of the family). In addition, the Cambridge theory believes that state's functions in areas such as employment contracts, welfare provision, and training also factors in the functioning of the labour market (Wilkinson, 1981; Craig et al., 1985; Kraak, 1995 Peck, 1996; Fine, 2002). In other words, while the third generation acknowledges that labour supply factors influence the operation of the labor market, they also underscore that labour demand is driven principally by quite a different set of forces; such as struggles over labour processes, technical changes, patterns of competition in product markets, and state policies in areas such as taxation, monetary strategy, and public expenditure (Wilkinson, 1981:88).

What sets the Cambridge school apart from the earlier LMS theories is that it takes cognisance of the state’s role in the labour market, where the first two generations overlooked it (Wilkinson, 1981; Craig et al, 1985; Peck, 1996). The Cambridge theorists submit that the ongoing regulatory activity of the state fosters some of the strategies by which the inevitable struggle between labour supply and demand is curtailed and adjusted (Wilkinson, 1981; Craig et al., 1985; Kraak, 1995 Peck, 1996; Fine, 1998). This idea (advanced by the Cambridge theory) the state’s regulatory role in the labour market breaks in with the notion upheld by the neoclassical theory. While the neoclassical theory also acknowledges the role of the state in labour market affairs, they contrarily see the role as an undue interference to what they deem as the organic interaction between supply and demand, which will inevitably result to an equilibrium without the state’s interference. By contrast LMS theories (especially the third generation) advocate for the state’s regulation as it is believed to have the ability to neutralise the unstable relationship between supply and demand. Of course, this idea of the needful regulatory role of the government stems from the evidence that there are power struggles

between supply and demand, which the employers take advantage of as they are the ones who have the upper hand over employees.

Therefore, unlike what the neoclassical theory's assumptions, the Cambridge scholars hold that labour market structures and dynamics do not derive from a smooth interaction between supply and demand which does not need regulatory interference from the state (government), as the orthodox model would suggest. Instead, the labour market is a complex, composite structure wrought by the imprints of a wide range of (economic and non-economic) influences (Wilkinson, 1981; Craig et al., 1985). Some of these influences have been grouped in the spheres of labour supply, labour demand, and the state. Each sphere has its own characteristic structure and dynamic, and each brings with it different tendencies toward segmentation (Wilkinson, 1981; Craig et al., 1985; Kraak, 1995 Peck, 1996; Fine, 1998). Therefore, similar to the first two generations, these explanations of the third generation are significant for this thesis and the study it carries out. For instance, the acknowledgment of the demand-side as one part of the labour market that has a bearing on the labour market segmentation allows for a focus on the demand-side drives. In order as to understand the ways in which they shape the employment prospects of young job seekers. The acknowledgement and explanation of the state's role in the labour market are also crucial for the current study. Given that one of the study's goals is to explore the ways in which the state's intervention concerning youth unemployment has a bearing on employers' employment of young people. In other words, the study also wants to examine whether state interventions encourage or discourage the employment of young people.

2.3.4 Significance of LMS Theories to this Study

While the discussion above shows that there are notable differences in the three generations of LMS theories, there are, however, also considerable similarities between the three generations. This thesis attempts to consolidate the strengths of all three LMS theories, as they all have key and insightful features that are useful for this thesis. The common theme is that all the LMS theories are an antithesis of neoclassical economics and the HCT. As pointed out by Fleetwood (2006:63), the literature of LMS theories unites around a common theme: namely, that labour markets are embedded in institutions or social structures, instead of being independent of them. Kraak (1995), Peck (1996), and Fine (2002), also explain that in a radical break from the economic orthodoxy (which still prevails today), segmentation theories reject the assumption that labour market divisions could be attributed mainly to inadequate

levels of human capital or differences in productivity. As an alternative, LMS theories place the demand-side (while not denying the role of the supply-side) of the labour market at the centre stage in their analysis of divisions, inequalities, and segments in capitalist employment structures (Cassim, 1982:244). It is against this background that LMS theories claim that labour markets are social constructs, incorporating within them various rules and forms of organisation, as well as other economical and non-economical factors. All of which both shape their mode of operation and structure, to some extent, the actors themselves as it determines their behaviour (Rubery, 1978; Wilkinson, 1981; Dickens & Lang, 1985; Craig et al., 1985; Fevre, 1992; Kraak, 1995 Peck, 1996; Leonataridi, 1998; Bauder, 2001; Fine, 2002).

In addition, and of direct relevance for this thesis, is that LMS theories' long-standing significance lies in their opposition to neoclassical economics—which assumes that employers automatically adjust to supply-side shifts in education and skill so that they utilise all potential productivity in the labour market (Rubery, 1978; Wilkinson, 1983; Dickens & Lang, 1985; Craig et al., 1985; Kraak, 1995 Peck, 1996; Leonataridi, 1998; Bauder, 2001; Fine, 2002). Contrarily—drawing on empirical case studies of employer practices (some of which will be discussed in detail in chapter four) and workers' experiences—LMS theorists argue that employers and the wider economic conditions play a crucial role in shaping inequalities and selective access to employment in the labour market (Edwards et al., 1975; Rubery, 1978; Wilkinson, 1983; Dickens & Lang, 1985; Craig et al., 1985; Kraak, 1995 Peck, 1996; Leonataridi, 1998; Bauder, 2001; Fine, 2002). The underscoring argument is that employers' recruitment practices, among a host of other economic factors, contribute to a continuous regeneration of inequalities through the construction of 'non-competing groups,' based on personal attributes such as social class, race, gender, migrant status, age, and disability, among others (Cairnes, 1874; Edwards et al., 1975; Rubery, 1978; Dickens & Lang, 1985; Craig et al., 1985; Leonataridi, 1998; Bauder, 2001; Fine, 2002).

In other words, inequalities in the labour market are not fostered only on the supply-side but also, and perhaps predominantly, through formal and informal institutionalised policies and practices in labour markets and workplaces. Rubery (2007:955), echoes the same sentiments by showing the contrast between LMS theories and the neoclassical theory:

> The attraction of segmentation theory is that it focuses on employing organisations, the architects of the employment system, in the shaping of labour market

> inequalities…. The obscuring of the active role of employers in shaping employment outcomes is perhaps one of the main legacies of mainstream economics.

The comment above not only shows the paramount role that employers play (equal to the supply-side if not uppermost crucial), but it also points out the shortcoming of the neoclassical theory for overlooking or downplaying the role of employers. Therefore, according to the premise of the LMS theories, and contrary to the premise of orthodox economics, social structures do not only influence any operation of the labour market, but are integral to the operation of labour markets and cannot be treated simply as market imperfections. This line of reasoning or theorisation (advanced by the LMS theories but is overlooked by the neoclassical theories) of the social structures and the role they play in the operation of the labour market (and particularly in the employment and wage outcomes of job seekers) has inspired the research to inquire about the demand-side drivers that may well impede or encourage the employment of young people. As also acknowledged by Schmid (1994: 30), "Institution's steer and regulate labour markets in various ways." As such, how can they not have a significant influence on, not only the operation of labour markets, but of the labour market outcomes as well? Therefore, since the LMS theories provide compelling insights that show that social structures are integral to the labour market operation, and thus may very well shape labour market outcomes; this thesis seeks to build on the LMS theories' insights to primarilybexplore some of the ways that social structures (from the demand-side) affect labour market outcomes of young people.

Nonetheless, as pointed out by Haughton et al. (1993:9), "all this is not to deny the explanatory value of some of the variables most closely associated with the neo-classical theory." There seem to be a debate about just how valuable or relevant are the neoclassical theory's explanations of the labour market. Haughton et al. (1993), further maintain that if the 'variables' to which they refer include supply, demand, and wage rates, can we take this as an acceptance of the need to theorise supply, demand, and wage rates in ways suggested in the neoclassical/mainstream account, as long as we do not ignore the effects of social structures? Consequently, and as also pointed out by Fleetwood (2006:66), it can be concluded from this rationale that the above-mentioned quotes suggest that 'economic' forces dominate, but do not entirely negate, the effect of social structures. Yet some comments imply the opposite—namely, that social structures dominate but do not wholly negate 'economic' forces. Still, other comments suggest a position in between these two extremes. As also maintained by Martin (2002:463), "at one extreme, the labour market is assumed to function as a set of

impersonal supply and demand interactions; at the other, as a power saturated, institutionally constructed social process." Such arguments tend to downplay the influence that social structures have on the labour market and the relationship between supply and demand as argued and evidenced by the LMS theories.

In essence, LMS theories helps us understand—and as explicated by Haughton et al. (1993:9)— that the labour market is deeply embedded in a range of societal structures…which brings with it a whole range of 'distorting' influences…these distortions are, in fact, so intrinsic to the workings of society and the economy that they cannot be deemed simply as market imperfections: as they actually structure the labour market in fundamental ways. According to Fleetwood (2006:68), [Many socioeconomists] would argue that markets cannot be regarded as working in opposition to institutions; instead, markets are themselves institutions. For this reason it is, for socioeconomists, impossible to consider the labour market and the price of labour as determined by some abstract universal forces of supply and demand. But they should be understood also in terms of the economic and non-economic that also have influences on the labour in general. In sum, then, the three generations of the LMS theories should be treated as an advance of neoclassical economics because they take the fact that labour markets are embedded within social structures seriously, and insist on including the latter in any labour market analysis. Though Fleetwood (2006:66), posits that these individual perspectives of the LMS theories do not add up to the kind of systematic alternative to the mainstream model of labour markets that are needed. He also acknowledges, like other authors (see Cassim, 1982; Kraak, 1996; Leonatridi, 2008; Peck 1996, to mention a few), that the insights offered by LMS theories are still valuable as they provide theoretical and empirical insights that help understand labour markets better.

It stands to reason, from the literature reviewed and discussed above, that the account of the labour market provided by the segmentation theories indicates that the neoclassical theory nor the HCT can never be the most suitable in explaining the many labour markets across the globe. This is because both theories fail to take cognisance of the same factors that have shaped the operation of labour markets over the years. Conversely, these factors that affect the labour market are acknowledged and analysed by LMS theories. It follows from this reasoning that the theorisation of segmentation theories provides a more holistic framework to apply in analysing the labour market. As well as the role of gender and societal institutions in shaping employment outcomes for different groups of workers, without exonerating employers from their responsibility for employment outcomes (Cairnes, 1874; Edwards et al.,

1975; Rubery, 1978; Wilkinson, 1983; Dickens & Lang, 1985; Craig et al., 1985; Kraak, 1995; Peck, 1996; Leonataridi, 1998; Bauder, 2001; Fine, 2002; Barker, 2003; Fleetwood, 2006).

Furthermore, the LMS approaches enable new understandings about how labour market inequalities are created and recreated, significantly when labour market changes increases opportunities for employers to take advantage of low-cost labour, and how this affects the un/employment of jobseekers (Fleetwood, 2006). It is for all the reasons mentioned above that the thesis adopts LMS theories to answer the research questions raised by thesis. Which, essentially, seek to explore the ways in which employers' recruitment practices affect the employment of young people. LMS theories recognise this role of employers as predominant where it concerns jobseekers' employment outcomes. Among the numerous employers' organisational practices and strategies, the thesis sought to focus on the recruitment practices as one of the strategies recognised by LMS theories to have a bearing on the employment outcomes of jobseekers and also the segments they will occupy in the labour market. Indeed, the LMS theories and their three generations postulate a more realistic view of the labour market. It has proven not to replace neoclassical ideas, but to provide a better framework. In this sense, the first idea of this thesis is that while the neoclassical theory only explains and helps us understand the supply-side of labour markets, the LMS theories provide a holistic explanation to help understand the demand-side as well. Having outlined the suitable theoretical framework for this thesis, the following part of this chapter explores the major conceptual themes that have both inspired and informed this thesis.

2.4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This section of the chapter outlines the conceptual framework of this thesis which will be discussed in general—whereas chapter three presents the South African context—to give the reader a bird's eye view of the wide-ranging issues that have inspired this research. The main themes explored in this section of the chapter can be summarised as follows: (i) the state of youth unemployment and underemployment on a global scale and in Africa; (ii) causes and effects of unemployment, (iii) and the strategies that have been implemented to curb unemployment or to foster youth employment. The presentation of these themes is integral as it not only gives a sense of how severe the problematics of unemployment and underemployment are on a global scale, but it also paints a picture of what has already been discovered by other studies that this current study seeks to build on. This presentation further

reveals the work done, thus far, by governments (and other stakeholders) to tackle and curb youth unemployment. The themes are outlined and discussed in six sections, consisting of sub-sections. As will be shown below, these issues/themes have been explored predominantly from the supply-side, but literature concerning the demand-side is not as considerable as the body of literature focusing on the supply-side. This disproportion further necessitates a demand-side oriented study to help understand unemployment more comprehensively. As a point of departure for the discussion of the conceptual framework, the following section first explores the definitions of the key concepts of this thesis.

2.4.1 Definitions

Since this thesis is primarily concerned with unemployment, especially among the youth, it is necessary to provide the definitions of 'unemployment' and 'youth' that inform this research. There are different definitions applied in different contexts and for various purposes. In line with international practice, two definitions of unemployment are typically used in South Africa: the official or strict definition and the expanded or broad definition (ILO; StatsSA; OECD; Du Toit, 2003; Pigou, 2013). Both definitions include people aged 15 or older who are not employed but are available for work (ILO; StatsSA; Kingdon & Knight, 2000; Du Toit, 2003; Burger & Woolard, 2005). The strict/official definition requires that an individual has taken steps to find employment for four weeks before a given date. The expanded definition includes discouraged or non-searching individuals who have given up taking active steps to find work during a specific period (Kingdon & Knight, 2000; Du Toit, 2003; Burger & Woolard, 2005; Rogan, 2018; Stats, 2019). It is argued that the expanded definition provides a more accurate indicator of the extent of unemployment, because unlike the narrow definition, it includes both jobseekers and discouraged jobseekers (Du Toit, 2003:7; Rogan, 2018). In light of these definitions, the strict/official definition will be used when referring to the unemployed and the labour force throughout this thesis, as it is the operational definition in many instances.

Barker (2007), notes that economists are largely interested in involuntary unemployment because it helps gauge the overall job market. This may explain why economists prefer to use the narrow definition—as it refers to people who are actively seeking employment—rather than the broad definition. Involuntary unemployment is divided into four categories, namely: (i) frictional unemployment, (ii) cyclical unemployment, (iii) structural unemployment, and

(iv) seasonal unemployment. Barker (2007:163-167), among others (i.e., Altman, 2007), describes the four types of unemployment as follows:

- Structural unemployment is described as the overall inability of the economy, owing to structural imbalances, to create employment even at the peak of the business cycle. Structural unemployment may be related to, among other things, a mismatch in skills or geographical location. This type of unemployment is prevalent in South Africa, as explored in chapter three.
- Frictional unemployment is usually of brief duration and arises as a result of normal labour turnover, where people are moving between jobs. In other words, frictional unemployment results from the time lags involved in the re-employment of labour as well as the time it takes for those looking for work to secure and fill vacancies.
- Cyclical unemployment, occurs during recessionary periods when demand for labour is usually low. During these periods few or no jobs are created for new entrants to the labour market, and even existing workers may lose their jobs due to retrenchment.
- Seasonal unemployment occurs when the demand for certain labour is low due to changes in economic activity in a single year. Therefore, people are either not employed or lose their existing jobs because there is no demand for labour during certain seasons. Seasonal unemployment is similar to cyclical unemployment in that they happen during a short period of time.

Having defined 'unemployment' and the types of unemployment that this thesis is informed by, we now turn to the 'youth' definition. Numerous scholars point out that there is no universally agreed definition of 'youth' (Kingdon & Knight, 2000; Du Toit, 2003; Burger & Woolard, 2005; Rogan, 2018). It is submitted that, generally, the term youth is a social construct (Altman, 2007:8). It describes a period during which a person transitions from childhood into adulthood (Du Toit, 2003; Altman, 2007; Elder, 2009; Schoer & Rankin, 2013; Van Aardt, 2012; Rogan, 2018; UN, 2018; Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2019). This transition entails different aspects such as becoming physically or emotionally mature, being able to make one's own decisions, or being financially independent (Du Toit, 2003; Altman, 2007; Elder, 2009; Schoer & Rankin, 2013; Van Aardt, 2012; Rogan, 2018; Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2019). Therefore, 'youth' is also referred to as a stage in life which can vary across time, between or within societies, and is marked by different cultures, traditions, or socio-economic conditions (Du Toit, 2003; Altman, 2007; Elder, 2009; Schoer & Rankin, 2013; Van Aardt, 2012; UN, 2018).

It is also important to note that 'youth' is not a homogeneous group, nor does it have a defined age bracket. Given the fluid concept of youth, there is little consistency among countries and organisations about their age-based definitions of youth (Du Toit, 2003; Altman, 2007; Elder, 2009; Schoer & Rankin, 2013; Van Aardt, 2012; Rogan, 2018). For example, the United Nations (UN) and the ILO define youth as persons between the age of 15 and 24 (UN, 2018:4). However, when it comes to its School-to-Work Transition Surveys (SWTS), the ILO applies the broader measurement of 15 to 29 years to explore comprehensively the realities of such transitions (ILO, 2017:7). The African Union (AU) considers youth to including everyone between the ages of 15 and 35 (AU, 2006). The differences between youth age groups shows that the operational definition of youth differs widely from country to country. Most definitions owe their origin to cultural, institutional, and socio-political issues (Du Toit, 2003).

In South Africa— the locus of interest for this thesis—the National Youth Commission Act 19 of 1996 and National Youth Policy describe youth as persons in the age group 14 to 34 years. However, 15 years is the age at which young people are permitted formally to enter the labour market in South Africa. Furthermore, Statistics South Africa (referred to as StatsSA) also distinguishes between the 15-24 age group and the 25-35 age group when reporting on unemployment statistics. This thesis is primarily concerned with the 15-24 cohort as also used by StatsSA and the UN, firstly because this age group is also in line with the international definition of 'youth' (Du Toit, 2003; Altman, 2007; Schoer & Rankin, 2013; Van Aardt, 2012; Rogan, 2018). Secondly, because it is reported that South Africans aged 25-35 have unemployment rates close to the national average, whereas (in comparison) the 15-24 age group has much higher unemployment rates (Du Toit, 2003; Altman, 2007; StatsSA, 2019). This means the 15-24 category is more vulnerable than the 25-35 category. Hence, this thesis is more interested in the former category than the latter.

Studies (see Maguire, 2015; Graham & De Lannoy, 2016; BRICS, 2018; Rogan, 2018; StatsSA, 2019; WESO, 2019) have found that the 15-24 cohort comprises of different groups which are collectively referred to as NEETs (neither in employment nor in education or training). Therefore, the youth category that this current study is concerned with is that which excludes graduates who fall under the 15-24 demarcation. Although unemployment also affects graduates, it is not as prevalent among them as it is for individuals who fall under the NEETs category (Van der Berg & Van Broekhuizen, 2012; StatsSA, 2019; WESO, 2018). It is for this reason that the research set out to narrowly focus on the NEETs cohort. Indeed, this

group is arguably the most vulnerable to chronic unemployment and poverty, and social exclusion more than any other categories (ILO, 2015; Maguire, 2015; Graham & De Lannoy, 2016; Rogan, 2018; StatsSA, 2019; WESO, 2019). Furthermore, it is reported that the NEETs youth are more likely to come from an immigrant background, lack a diploma, and/or live in disadvantaged, rural, or remote neighbourhoods (StatsSA, 2019; WESO, 2019). They face severe problems in making the transition from education to the workplace and risk drifting into and being trapped in long-term unemployment and inactivity (OECD, 2013; Rogan, 2018; WESO, 2019). It is these dire circumstances that face young people more than any other age group that has inspired the study to focus on the 15-24 cohort, particularly those under the NEETs group.

2.5 UNEMPLOYMENT: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

The discussion of the crisis of unemployment in this chapter is broken down into two sections: (i) the global, (ii) and the African outlook of unemployment, each with a sub-section that presents the state of 'youth unemployment' in each context. The South African context—which is the domain of the study of this thesis—is explored separately in chapter three. The thesis first discusses the state of unemployment on a global and continental level mainly because unemployment is a challenge in most labour markets internationally. This global crisis indicates that there are similar processes at work in many labour market that produce similar trends. This, in turn, means that we can learn as much about unemployment from other international countries as they can learn from us. Before these sections are presented below, it is essential to note that the discussion of the incident of unemployment comprises an illustration of the statistics or the figures to provide perspective for each context. Therefore, the sections on unemployment heavily rely on global reports that provide unemployment (amongst other trends) statistics on an annual and sometimes a quarterly basis. The scope of the review of these reports is condensed to evidence from the last five years to date (with a particular focus on the year 2017-18 as the years that marked the conception of this research study), partly to keep the review manageable and the report concise. But also as a response to the sense that the current economic and unemployment context may be somewhat different from that of the past. Nonetheless, where necessary, reference is made to evidence from an earlier period where it is especially significant to compare the historical to the contemporary contexts.

2.5.1 Current State of Global Unemployment

Unemployment has, for the longest time, been one of the most pressing socio-economic issues globally (Standing et al., 1996; Kingdon & Knight, 2004; Layard, 2005; Barker, 2007; Davidson, & Matusz, 2009; Fournier, 2009; Helpman, Itskhoki, & Redding, 2010; Lindvall, 2010; Altbeker, 2011; Clasen, 2011; ILO, 2018; WESO, 2019). Many societies are gravely impacted by the long-standing and persistent incident of unemployment. Although there is a common thread of labour market and social challenges across countries, the world continues to experience unemployment as one of the most perennial trends of all (Lindvall, 2010; Altbeker, 2011; Clasen; 2011; ILO, 2018). WESO (2018) points out that there is a distinction between the state of unemployment in developed and developing countries, indicating that different countries experience unemployment differently. For instance, while unemployment rates have fallen considerably in high-income countries in the past few years, many other countries continue to report high rates of unemployment and labour under-utilisation, with more jobseekers becoming more discouraged, and a growing incidence of involuntary part-time employment (WESO, 2018:14). WESO reports that even though developed countries are expected to enter their sixth consecutive year of decreasing unemployment rates (falling to 5.5 per cent in 2018) making it the lowest rate since 2007 (WESO, 2018). Conversely, developing countries have faced a considerable increase in unemployment rates between 2014 and 2017. Even more concerning is that the WESO (2019), report found that unemployment in developing countries is expected to increase by half a million per year in both 2018 and 2019, with the unemployment rate remaining at around 5.3 per cent.

The above-mentioned reports indicate that the global state of unemployment is twofold: on the one hand, the world's unemployment rate has dropped to five per cent, the lowest level since the global economic crisis in 2008 (WESO, 2019:1). This means that an estimated 172 million people worldwide were unemployed in 2018, that is about two million less than the previous year. The ILO (2018), reports forecasted that the global unemployment rate could remain at roughly the same level during 2019 and 2020. The decline of the unemployment rate is ascribed to more flexible working practices, lower wages, and is also due to sharp falls in unemployment in industrialised countries (WESO, in fact, unemployment is projected to decrease even further if there can be stability in economic conditions. Yet, on the other hand, macroeconomic risks have increased and are already having a negative impact on the labour market in several countries. Unemployment is said to be the by product of such macroeconomic conditions in countries that continue to experience increases in the

unemployment rate. On balance, it is estimated that the global unemployment rate should remain at roughly the same level during 2019 and 2020 (this estimation was made before the Covid-19 outbreak, which may have affected the rate more adversely during the outbreak, which persists today).

To put the global unemployment situation in perspective, in 2018 (around the time of the conception of the current research inquiry), the global working-age population, comprising women and men aged 15 years or older, was 5.7 billion. Out of these, 3.3 billion people, (or 58.4 per cent), were employed, and 172 million were unemployed (WESO, 2019:6). Both these groups taken together make up the global labour force, which stood at 3.5 billion in 2018, with a labour force participation rate of 61.4 per cent. The remaining 2.2 billion people (38.6 per cent) of working-aged people were not part of the labour force, including those engaged in education and unpaid care work and those in retirement. Within this group, 140 million were in the potential labour force (i.e., people looking for a job but are not yet available to take up employment or who are available but are not looking for a job) (WESO, 2019:12). The annual reports by the ILO show that disparities across demographic groups underlie these aggregate labour market and social trends (WESO, 2018, 2019). Among other determinants, gender disparities are of particular concern across the globe (UN, 2018; OECD; 2018; WESO, 2019). On average, women are less likely to participate in the labour market, and they are less likely to find a job when they do participate. In 2018 only 48 per cent of women are working, compared to 75 per cent of men (WESO, 2019:18). The significantly lower labour force participation rate of women, means that around three in five of the 3.5 billion people in the global labour force in 2018 were men (WESO, 2018, 2019). Although gender inequality in the labour market is also a global phenomenon, it is worth noting that according to ILO reports gender gaps are widest in the Arab States, Northern Africa, and Southern Asia sub-regions, when compared to other countries (WESO, 2018, 2019).

Research shows, throughout history, that women are twice as likely to be unemployed as men (Mayoux, 1995; Dollar & Gatti, 1999; Kenworthy & Malami, 1999; Lorber, 2001; Robeyns, 2003; Fuwa, 2004; Klasen & Lamann, 2009; Lindvall, 2010; Altbeker, 2011; Clasen; 2011; Ridgeway, 2011; ILO, 2015; WESO, 2018). This same discrimination is manifest in employment: women face segregation in terms of the sector, occupation, and type of employment relationship, resulting in restricted access to quality employment (Mayoux, 1995; Dollar & Gatti, 1999; Kenworthy & Malami, 1999; Lorber, 2001; Robeyns, 2003; Fuwa, 2004; Klasen & Lamann, 2009; Lindvall, 2010; Altbeker, 2011; Clasen; 2011; Ridgeway,

2011). For instance, 82 per cent of women in developing countries were in vulnerable forms of employment in 2017, compared to 72 per cent of men during the same time (WESO, 2019:19). According to multiple authors (see Layard, 2005; Barker, 2007; Davidson & Matusz, 2009; Fournier, 2009; Helpman, Itskhoki, & Redding, 2010; ILO, 2015, 2017; WESO, 2019) gender gaps in the labour market are reported to be a result of a wide-range of inter-related factors, including social norms, gender roles, and socio-economic constraints that are often deeply embedded in societies. Consequently, it takes a long time to tackle them, even when the political will is there (as has been implied in the policies of many countries). Yet, the situation is even more worse for young women (especially those aged 15–24), and woman with disabilities as they continue to be much less likely to be in employment than their male counterparts (Layard, 2005; Davidson & Matusz, 2009; Fournier, 2009; Helpman, Itskhoki, & Redding, 2010; ILO, 2015, 2017; WESO, 2019). This is the long and short of the current state of general/overall unemployment on a global standing as reported by research conducted by global organisations (i.e., ILO, World Bank). In essence, the global reports help us understand that although unemployment plagues different countries in vayring degrees, it is still a global phenomenon which severely affects women more than it does men.

Notwithstanding overall unemployment, the lack of employment opportunities for the youth (i.e., those 15-25 years of age) presents another major global challenge (O' Higgins, 2001; World Bank, 2004; Freeman & Holzer, 2008; Elder, 2009; Golub & Hayat, 2015; Maguire, 2015; ILO, 2017; Rogan, 2018; WESO, 2018, 2019). Young people are extensively less likely to be employed than adults, with the global youth unemployment rate standing at 13 per cent, or three times higher than the adult rate of 4.3 per cent (WESO, 2019:20). According to WESO (2019), the challenge is particularly acute in Northern Africa, where almost 30 per cent of young people in the labour market are without a job (WESO, 2018, 2019). Even more worrisome is the fact that more than one in five young people are not in employment, education, or training (NEET). Since these individuals are not gaining skills valued in the labour market, this further reduces their future chances of employment (World Bank, 2004; Maguire, 2015; ILO, 2017; UN, 2019; Rogan, 2018; WESO, 2018). Arguably, this indicates that this cohort needs greater attention than other youth age groups which are better off in comparison to enter and fare in the labour market (Maguire, 2015; ILO, 2017; Rogan, 2018; UN, 2018; WESO, 2018, 2019). The following section looks into the crisis of youth unemployment on a glabal scale

2.5.2 Youth Unemployment: A Global Crisis

Almost all the literature dealing with unemployment proffers that 'youth' unemployment is the most devastating issue than 'overall' employment (Rees, 1986; Orszag & Snower, 1999; O'Higgins, 2001; Freeman & Holzer, 2008; ILO, 2012, 2015, 2017; Van Aardt, 2012; Gunderson, 2014; Fitzenberger, 2015; O' Higgins, 2015, 2017; Rogan, 2019; UN, 2018; WESO, 2018, 2019). The youth unemployment rate is much higher than unemployment among adults in most countries (WESO, 2019). Consequently, youth unemployment has increasingly become a topical issue in many countries across the world as the figures continue to soar (O, Higgins, 2001; ILO, 2012, 2015, 2017; Van Aardt, 2012; Gunderson, 2014; Fitzenberger, 2015; O' Higgins, 2015, 2017; Rogan, 2019; UN, 2018; WESO, 2018, 2019). Even though work done by some authors (i.e., Rees, 1986) shows that youth unemployment has been a challenge for many decades now, the reports by ILO (2018) indicate that unemployment among young people aged 15 to 24 years has been on the rise since the onset of the global economic crisis between 2007 and 2009. The ILO has also stated that the youth unemployment rate increased to a greater degree than the adult unemployment rate and has now, due to its severity, become a global crisis. This supports the ongoing claim that the youth are more vulnerable to unemployment (Rees, 1986; O, Higgins, 2001; ILO, 2012, 2015, 2017; Van Aardt, 2012; Gunderson, 2014; Fitzenberger, 2015; Rogan, 2019; UN, 2018; WESO, 2018, 2019). Indeed more studies (historical and current) continue to show that young people (ages 15–24) are significantly more likely than adults to be unemployed, and in most regions, young women continue to be the hardest hit by unemployment and discrimination at work (O, Higgins, 2001; ILO, 2015, 2017; Maguire, 2015; UN, 2018; Rogan, 2018; WESO, 2018, 2019).

To paint a picture of youth unemployment on a global scale, the WESO (2019), reports that in 2018, the youth labour force participation rate was the highest, at 57 per cent, in low-income countries—36 per cent was observed in even lower-middle-income countries. In upper-middle-income countries, the youth participation rate declined by more than 20 per cent since 1993, and came to 44 per cent in 2018, bringing it to almost the same level that is recorded in high-income countries (45 per cent) (WESO, 2019). Although these figures vary by each country, they are not substantially different from one another and they all point to the fact that youth employment crisis has become a stark reality in most countries and regions (WESO, 2019). Yet, a major global challenge is the phenomenon of young people who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET), especially among young women.

Worldwide, 30 per cent of young women and 13 per cent of young men were categorised as NEET in 2018 (World Bank, 2004; UN, 2018; WESO, 2018, 2019). This imbalance of employment opportunities between young women and men mirrors the ineqaility between adult women and men as described in the previous section. The question of employment opportunities is increasingly becoming concerning as more young people are about to enter the labour market than ever before in the history of humanity (Rees, 1986; O, Higgins, 2001; World Bank, 2004; Elder, 2009; Altbeker, 2012; ILO, 2012, 2015, 2017; Thompson, 2012; Van Aardt, 2012; Crowley et al., 2013; Gunderson, 2014; Fitzenberger, 2015; O Higgins, 2015; 2017 Rogan, 2019; UN, 2018; WESO, 2018, 2019).

As it stands, today's labour market is a challenging area, especially for young people. Youth remain highly susceptible to changing patterns in the world of work and experience slow and difficult transitions to stable jobs. Globally, over 73 million youth are currently unemployed, and many more are affected by precarious employment and working poverty (WESO, 2019). One of the common and most pressing questions (posed by policymakers and practitioners today) that has come out of this devastating situation of youth unemployment is: what works to support the youth in the labour market? Indeed, addressing the youth unemployment crisis is of vital importance from an economic and societal perspective (Worl Bank, 2004; ILO, 2015; UN, 2018; WESO; 2019). Some people may feel that the youth unemployment crisis cannot be separated from the overall employment incident and the need for job-rich inclusive growth strategies that deliver the goal of complete, productive, freely chosen, and decent employment for all. But the gravity of unemployment among the young people, compared to their adult counterparts, warrants a priority focus on the youths (ILO, 2015; UN, 2018; WESO; 2019). However, the focus on the youth should not be seen as a way to downplay the seriousness of overall/general unemployment in and of itself, but rather as a way to make a case for different unemployment strategies to focus and administer to different groups, given that they are affected differently by unemployment. Therefore, owing to the astounding joblessness among young people, this thesis prioritises a focus on the youth by exploring the ways in which employers create or preempt employment opportunities for them in the labour market.

2.6 UNEMPLOYMENT IN AFRICA

As with many parts of the world, Africa has been confronted with a multidimensional crisis with several symptoms, including drought and famine, floods, wars, HIV/AIDS and various

endemic diseases, and widespread poverty (Agénor, Jensen, Nabli, & Yousef, 2004). Among all these is the phenomenon of unemployment, which to some observers is at the core of the problems of the African sub-region (Franck, 1968; Gutkind, 1969; Hoddinott; 1997; Todaro, 1997; Sarr, 2000; Okotjie, 2003; Hunter, 2007; Magruder, 2010; Golub & Hayat, 2015; ILO, 2012; 2015; WESO, 2018, 2019). According to WESO (2019), close to 1.3 billion people live in Africa, making up around 17 per cent of the world's population. Of these, 764 million people (or 59 per cent) are aged 15 years or older (making up the working-age population). Over 63 per cent of the total working-age population actually participates in the labour market. However, it should be noted that the labour market participation rate varies by the two African demarcations, with 46 per cent in Northern Africa and 68 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa (WESO, 2019). Although unemployment is one of the most significant labour market challenges that are common to many African countries, there are considerable differences between Northern Africa and sub-Saharan Africa (WESO, 2019). An account of each sub-region will be described below.

Globally, Northern Africa is reported as the sub-region with the highest unemployment rate (WESO, 2019). This is mainly due to the increasingly high unemployment rates among young people (ages 15–24) and women in the area (ILO, 2012; WESO, 2019). Indeed, the youth unemployment rate is expected to exceed 30 per cent by 2019, which means that young people will continue to be 3.5 times more likely to be unemployed than adults (WESO, 2019). Whereas, in 2018, the unemployment rate at (20.7 per cent) for women is more than twice that of men (9.0 per cent). Although women are more likely to be unemployed, it is worth noting that only a small fraction of women actually participate in the labour market (WESO, 2019). Indeed, close to 62 million (or 77 per cent) of the 80 million working-age women in the Northern sub-region remain outside the labour force. However, the WESO (2019) report finds that the labour market standing for young women in Northern Africa is not significantly different from that of older women. This further proves that women are more vulnerable to unemployment than men. In 2018, only 16 per cent of young women participated in the labour market, whereas 40 per cent of these women were unemployed. What is worse is that the unemployment rate among young women has not only increased since 2016, but it is expected to continue rising over the next couple of years (ILO, 2015; 2018; WESO, 2019).

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the economy is projected to grow from the average annual growth rate of 2.2 per cent over 2016–18 to 3.7 per cent in 2019 and by 3.9 per cent in 2020 (WESO, 2019). However, growth in major resource-intensive countries, such as Nigeria and South

Africa, is expected to remain below its potential. This is expected to reduce the longer-term economic prospects of the whole sub-region (WESO, 2019). Overall, employment growth (in sub-saharan countries) is predicated to stay strong, around 3.1 per cent per year, compared to other sub-regions and regions (WESO, 2019). But, this will not be enough to keep up with the rapid expansion of the labour force. As a result, the number of unemployed people is expected to grow by nearly 1.9 million by 2020 (WESO, 2019). Although the unemployment rate is relatively low compared with that of Northern Africa, the aggregate value for the sub-region masks a high degree of heterogeneity across countries (WESO, 2019). For instance, the national unemployment rates projected for 2019 range from 1.8 per cent in Ethiopia, 6.0 per cent in Nigeria and 18.2 per cent in Botswana to 27.3 per cent in South Africa. Although these figures paint a picture of the problem in sub-Saharan countires, it should be understood that (similar to the global context and the Northern Africa sub-region, youth unemployment rates) in Sub-Saharan Africa are double those of adult unemployment for both men and women (ILO, 2013). In sub-Saharan Africa, the ratio of youth to adult unemployment has multiplied above historical trends, and young people represent a large share of those in informal jobs, low pay, and working poverty (WESO, 2019). This evidence further proves that young people have been disproportionately affected by the crisis. The following section looks closely into the problem of youth unemployment in Africa.

2.6.1 Youth Unemployment in Africa

Youth unemployment in Africa reflects the global situation but with the additional challenge of a youth population much higher than most other regions worldwide, weak national labour markets and persistently high levels of poverty (Orszag & Snower, 1999; O, Higgins, 2001; Freeman & Holzer, 2008; ILO, 2012, 2017; Anyanwu, 2013; UN, 2017, 2018; WESO, 2018, 2019). In Africa, it is estimated that young people make up more than 50 per cent of the population of most countries (UN, 2018; Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2019; WESO, 2019). In 2019, more than a third of the population was aged between 15-34 years. With almost 60 per cent of Africa's population under the age of 25, making Africa the world's youngest continent (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2019). Despite the high levels of economic growth, in the last few years, the economy has not been able to create enough employment for Africa's equally fast-growing young population (African Development Bank, 2012; ILO, 2015; Pasali, 2015; UN, 2018; WESO, 2019). In fact, about 16 million young Africans (around 13.4 per cent of the total labour force of 15 to 24-year-olds) are facing unemployment (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2019). Furthermore, Africa is the world region where the youth population is

expected to continue growing the most—between 2019 and 2100, Africa's youth population is expected to increase from 447.1 million to 1.3 billion people (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2019; WESO, 2019). This exponential growth means more strategies are need to accommodate the upcoming young people that are going to need to enter the labour market.

Another factor about youth unemployment acknowledged by the WESO (2019) report, shows that different demographic groups of youth are affected disproportionately by unemployment. In 2019, 15.7 million young people in Africa (around 13.4 percent of the total labour force of 15 to 24-year-olds) are unemployed (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2019). This rate is more than twice the unemployment rate of those aged 25+ (6.1 per cent), thus, underlining that unemployment on the continent is affecting the younger generation disproportionately. The situation is even more critical for young women who suffer higher joblessness than young men in the majority of economies (Rees, 1986; Orszag & Snower, 1999; O'Higgins, 2001; Freeman & Holzer, 2008; ILO, 2012, 2017; Anyanwu, 2013; UN, 2017, 2018; WESO, 2018, 2019). Indeed, young women are more severely affected, with an unemployment rate of 14.7 per cent compared to 12.3 per cent for young men. All in all, young people in Africa are about three times as likely as adults to be unemployed (ILO, 2017; UN, 2018; WESO, 2018). However, the average continental rate does not capture the more severe situations in some countries (African Development Bank, 2012; Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2019). For instance, in 2019, Swaziland had the highest youth unemployment rate at (56.0 per cent). Despite that South Africa has an economy with the second highest GDP on the continent, statistics show that 54.5 per cent of young people are jobless, amounting to 1.4 million South Africans between 15-24 years. Along the same lines is Libya, Mozambique, and Namibia, with unemployment rates that are above 40 per cent. The lowest youth unemployment rates are found in Niger (0.6 per cent), Rwanda (2.3 per cent), Togo, and Burundi (both 2.8 per cent) (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2019)

These statistics prove that, on the demand side, African countries face the challenge of large youth populations compared to all other age cohorts and weak capacity and economic growth to create the jobs needed to absorb these youths (O'Higgins, 2001; Freeman & Holzer, 2008; Elder, 2009; Anyanwu, 2013; Crowley et al., 2013; Pasali, 2015). On the supply side, African youth are not adequately prepared to compete for the limited quantity of jobs available due to under-funded educational, technical and professional systems that fail to respond to labour market needs (O'Higgins, 2001; Freeman & Holzer, 2008; Elder, 2009; Anyanwu, 2013). As a consequence, many young people are discouraged and grow increasingly helpless to secure

employment. Socially marginalised groups, who already face disadvantages on the grounds of, race and their socio-economic background, face even more disadvantages in the job market (Anyanwu, 2013; Golub & Hayat, 2015). Anyanwu (2013), explains that within the realities of Africa, unemployment statistics represent an undercurrent of systematic marginalisation and neglect of young people at many levels of governance and development policies. Therefore, among other things, the high rates of unemployment among young people point to the broader lack of equitable distribution of resources and marginalisation within the context of complex horizontal and vertical inequalities in African countries (Elder, 2009; World Bank Institute, 2011; Anyanwu, 2013; Crowley et al., 2013; ILO, 2017; WESO, 2019).

It can be concluded then that the common themes that emerge from the two accounts of the global and African state of unemployment is that it is undeniably a prevalent incident which continues to be a pressing issue. This is the case despite the many studies that have been conducted to understand it better and despite the countless, multipronged strategies that have been enacted to alleviate the unemployment issue on a global scale. The ever-rising unemployment rate keeps the trend relevant and necessary to probe further. The different accounts of the two contexts (Global and African) also show that the incident of unemployment affects different groups differently, whereby the youth are the hardest hit, and worse off are the women in that category. It is against this background that the research took an interest in the issue of unemployment. And thus chose to focus on youth unemployment mainly to understand the demand-side factors that the LMS theories recognise as having a bearing (among other factors) in the resultant incident of unemployment. Now that the thesis has provided an account of the current state of unemployment on a global and African scale, it is only necessary to review underemployment—as the closely linked challenge of the labour market. This is discussed in the next section.

2.7 UNDEREMPLOYMENT: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Concurrent to the global youth unemployment crisis is the worldwide challenge of youth employment. By far, the thesis has painted the grim picture of the global incident of unemployment that has sparked interest for this study. In this section, the thesis discusses underemployment as the second and related issue that animated this study. While the study is mainly concerned with unemployment amongst young people, the challenge of underemployment is incidental and cannot be separated from the overall issue of

unemployment. Given that the issue of underemployment is closely linked to that of unemployment, the literature on underemployment was also reviewed and proved to have a bearing on the thesis. Indeed, both unemployment and underemployment are global development challenges that have gripped the attention of policymakers across the globe. Therefore, it is only necessary to review literature on underemployment as it is closely connected to employment. To this end, the section will first provide the operational definition of underemployment for the purposes of this thesis and proceed to discuss the current state of general/overall underemployment, and particularly underemployment among young people. The thesis will also provide a concise discussion about why employers prefer flexible staffing arrangements, which often lead to the non-standard (referred also as underemployment) employment of many people.

2.7.1 Defining Underemployment

The reviewed literature indicates that interest in the topic of underemployment is growing as it proves to becoming more prevalent in the future (Burris, 1983; Borgen, Amundson & Harder, 1988; Feldman, 1996; Greenwood, 1999; Berger & Coomes, 2003; Jensen & Slack, 2003; Dooley & Prause, 2004; Maynard, Joseph & Maynard; 2006; Sugiyarto, 2008; Tam, 2010; McKee-Ryan & Harvey, 2011; ILO, 2015; Baidoo, 2018; WESO, 2019). It is claimed that research concerning the underemployment topic is relatively scant, coming from various fields (e.g., sociology, labour economics, industrial and organisational psychology), thus varying widely in how underemployment is understood and operationalised (Standing, 1981; Feldman, 1996; Jensen & Slack, 2003; Cam, 2014; Golub & Hayat, 2015). Nonetheless, the nub of underemployment is that it is a highly relevant and increasingly important topic as the number of underemployed workers continues to rise (Glyde, 1977; Feldman, 1996; Greenwood, 1999; Jensen & Slack, 2003; Dooley & Prause, 2004; Maynard, Joseph & Maynard; 2006; Wilkins, 2007; Sugiyarto, 2008; Tam, 2010; McKee-Ryan & Harvey, 2011; ILO, 2015; WESO, 2019). This relevance and steady increase of underemployment has led researchers (from various disciplines) to explore the phenomenon of low-quality, substandard jobs, using varying terminology to refer to the phenomenon.

In essence, underemployed workers are made up of people who are inadequately employed, underutilised, underpaid, overeducated, over-skilled, and overqualified or as having low skill utilisation or re-employment quality (Glyde, 1977; Burris, 1983; Borgen, Amundson & Harder, 1988; Ruiz-Quintanilla & Claes, 1994; Feldman, 1996; Jensen & Slack, 2003;

Dooley & Prause, 2004; Maynard, Joseph & Maynard; 2006; Sugiyarto, 2008; Tam, 2010; McKee-Ryan & Harvey, 2011; Cam, 2014; Nunley, Pugh, Romero & Seals, 2014; Golub & Hayat, 2015; ILO, 2015; WESO, 2019). Feldman (1996), argues that underemployment can be broken down into five dimensions: (a) having more education than required by the job, (b) having more skills or experience than required by the job, (c) involuntary employment in a field outside of the area of education, (d) involuntary employment in part-time, temporary, or intermittent work, and (e) low pay, relative to either a previous job or to others with similar educational backgrounds. In a report presented at the G20 Labour and Employment Ministerial Meeting (cited in OECD 2014:7), underemployment defined as referring to workers in informal, low-paid, part-time low-productivity agricultural employment. The report also found that informal employment in many low-income sub-Saharan African countries accounted for 80 per cent of total employment. This is because the formal sector was regarded as not being able to create sufficient standard jobs to absorb the labour force, thereby, resulting in growing underemployment (OECD, 2014).

A common feature of all these types of employment (underemployment) is that they break with the pattern regarded as standard employment (Feldman, 1996, 2002; Felstead & Nick, 1999; Greenwood, 1999; Dooley & Prause, 2004; Maynard, Joseph & Maynard; 2006; McKee-Ryan & Harvey, 2011; Mathebula, 2013; Paola & Pons-Vignon, 2013; Golub & Hayat, 2014; Beukes et al., 2017). Standard employment is characterised by a formal contract of employment, that imposes a range of legally binding terms and conditions and offers, among others, good working conditions (Felstead & Nick, 1999; Dooley & Prause, 2004; Maynard, Joseph & Maynard; 2006; McKee-Ryan & Harvey, 2011; Mathebula, 2013; Paola & Pons-Vignon, 2013; Golub & Hayat, 2015; Beukes et al., 2017). Conversely, non-standard employment means that some workers have jobs that can be readily terminated and are susceptible to precarious working conditions and low wages (Mckee-Ryan & Harvey, 2011). Underemployment and unemployment alike have potentially detrimental effects for individual workers, organisations, and the larger society (Greenwood, 1999; Jensen & Slack, 2003; Dooley & Prause, 2004; Maynard, Joseph & Maynard; 2006; Nunley, Pugh, Romero & Seals, 2014; UN, 2018; WESO, 2019). These effects will be discussed in section 2.9 below.

It is important to note in this section that there has been a number of studies that have explored different aspects of underemployment, and thus have used different definitions. For instance, Wilkins and Wooden (2011:14, 26), examined involuntary part-time employment in the OECD countries, and the underemployment rate ranged from 0.4 per cent in Hungary to

4.3 per cent in Italy. Bell and Blanchflower (2013:22), adopted the exact definition, asking British workers whether they felt constrained by their working hours. A composite index (which took unemployment rate and willingness of workers to supply extra work hours into consideration) was derived. It was found that underemployment has risen sharply since the recession in 2008. Tam (2010:17), also found that underemployment rates in the United Kingdom rose during a recession as labour demand declined. Walling and Clancy (2010), as well as Cam (2014), found that the likelihood of underemployment in the United Kingdom was commonly higher for women than men, but tends to vary across demographics and work-related factors. Those involved in part-time jobs, sales and customer services were associated with a greater likelihood of underemployment (Cam, 2014:15).

Furthermore, Sengenberger (2011), revealed that, although results varied across countries, time-based underemployment rose over the period 1990–2005. The results indicate that time-related underemployment was higher for women than men. Wilkens (2006), similarly found underemployment to be more prevalent among females. A study by Ansah (2012), reveals that the agriculture sector and the informal economy was where most of Ghana's work activities took place in, and the time-based underemployment rate was higher in urban areas at 7.6 per cent than in rural areas at 3.5 per cent (Ansah, 2012:109). Looking at a different aspect of underemployment, a study by Fleming and Kler (2008), shows that 34.36 per cent of the employed in Australia were over-educated, the majority of them were young adults who had formal qualifications, yet they had limited work experience. Mosca and Wright (2011), considered graduate underemployment in the United Kingdom. In this study, a graduate was deemed underemployed if they were employed in an occupation with a skills requirement lower than a bachelor's degree. The quality of the institution, subject of study, and award classification were considered to be statistically significant in the econometric analysis to explain the underemployment likelihood. The study found that a quarter of the sampled graduates employed were involved in non-graduate jobs 3.5 years after graduation.

In contrast, an interdisciplinary view of underemployment in Canada during 1997–2011 was explored by Reynolds (2012). He examined the involuntary part-time, over-qualification, involuntary temporary work, low-wage employment and unemployment. Therefore, the study revealed that young people (15 to 24 years) were most likely to be underemployed through temporary work and minimum wages (Reynolds, 2012:11). Moreover, some authors have conducted studies that explore the consequences of underemployment: For example, Kazan (2012), found that during recession employers tend to make use of more part-time staff,

leading to the under-utilisation of the existing workforce. For this reason, Kazan (2012), pointed out some concerns and suggested that organisations should address various risks associated with the under-utilisation of labour, such as low morale, workplace stress, and low productivity. Again, Fleming and Kler (2008), found that across their six measures of satisfaction, their sample that comprised of over-qualified workers were inevitably less satisfied. By and large, although the above-mentioned studies explore different aspects of underemployment—which are also pointed out by Feldman (1996)—the overarching theme from these studies is that non-standard employment has become widespread and manifests itself on different fronts, as depicted in the exemplified studies briefly discussed above. This has led to the rise of academic research exploring, among other things, the implications of this type of employment among other things. The following section looks at some of the reasons why the use of flexible staffing arrangements—which leads to different kinds of non-standard employement—have become widespread, and why employers are prone to using these arrangements.

2.7.2 Employers' Use of Flexible Staffing Arrangements

As pointed out in the previous section, employers' use of temporary, on-call, part-time, and contract employment is widespread. Indeed, evidence suggests employment in certain flexible staffing arrangements is growing (Abraham, 1988; Houseman & Polivka 1998; Dooley & Prause, 2004; Maynard, Joseph & Maynard; 2006; McKee-Ryan & Harvey, 2011; Mathebula, 2013; Paola & Pons-Vignon, 2013; Golub & Hayat, 2014; Beukes et al., 2017). The global statistics issued by global organisations also prove that flexible staffing arrangements—which is essentially non-standard employment—is not only rampant but is expected to increase, rather than decrease, in the near future (ILO, 2018; WESO, 2017; World Bank, 2017). Surely there are a host of reasons why employers have subscribed to this kind of staffing arrangements. According to the literature reviewed, the most commonly cited reasons for using all types of flexible staffing arrangements is that firms seek to minimise costs (Gramm & Schnell, 2001; Houseman, 2001; Whitchurch & Gordon, 2013). Traditionally, firms have used flexible staffing arrangements with the purposes of reducing the quantity of labour hired. Therefore, by using flexible staffing arrangements, firms can adjust staffing levels to cater to the fluctuations in their workload over the day, week, month, or year. And thereby neutralise the peak workload staffing caused by abrupt staff absences or sick, maternity leave (Houseman, 2001; Kalleberg, Reynolds & Marsden: 2003).

Moreover, such flexible staffing allows organisations to hire workers from temporary help agencies (or from in-house on-call pools) when employees are sick or on vacation, rather than overstaff or pay regular workers overtime in the event of such absenteeism (Houseman, 1999; Kalleberg, Reynolds & Marsden: 2003). Freedman (1996), suggests that, in response to competitive pressures to lower labour costs, organisations use more flexible staffing arrangements to make their organisations leaner. Another reason firms may use flexible staffing arrangements is to screen potential workers for regular full-time positions. According to some authors (see Gramm, 2001; Kalleberg, Reynolds & Marsden: 2003; Houseman, 2011) using this kind of screening (enabled by flexible staffing recruitment) allows employers to increase labour productivity while also reducing labour costs. Furthermore, it is claimed that using flexible staffing recruitment allows firms to circumvent lawsuits brought by terminated employees. For instance, a worker hired on a fixed-term contract or through a temporary help agency may be terminated with minimal risk of legal action—to the benefit of the employer (Gramm, 2001; Houseman, 2011). These are among some of the reasons why employers are inclined to using such arrangements in their firms.

Notwithstanding these reasons that seem to benefit employers and their organisations, many regard these arrangements as troubling. Some scholars assert that while firms use these arrangements to increase work force flexibility; this unfortunately translates into less job security for workers (Greenwood, 1999; Friedland & Price, 2003; Dooley & Praise, 2004; Wilkins, 2007; Garcia, 2008; Cam, 2014; Golub & Hayat, 2015; ILO, 2018). This indicates that though employers have an advantage by using these flexible arrangements, these arrangements have negative implications on the people hired to fill such employment (which are mostly young people, blacks, and women), because of the lack of job security that they have to endure, amongst other things (Houseman, 2001; Friedland & Price, 2003; Dooley & Praise, 2004; Wilkins, 2007; Cam, 2014; Golub & Hayat, 2015). This is why, though many employers widely use non-standard employment, others regard such strategies to be problematic. In fact, it is due to the increase of these flexible staffing arrangements that many people are subjected to non-standard employment (Houseman, 2011; WESO, 2018, 2019). This is a result of the high unemployment rate that leaves many of these people with no other alternative but to settle for the non-standard employment, just so they can make what little living that non-standard employment can afford them. Unfortunately, this rise to sub-standard employment has led to a global employment crisis which exists alongside the unemployment

crisis. To put the underemployment situation into perspective, the following section explores the state of underemployment on a global scale and on the Aftican continent.

2.7.3 Underemployment on a Global and African Scale

The ILO (2016), notes that as prevalent and pressing as unemployment is, it is only the tip of the iceberg. Instead, for many developing and emerging countries, persistent poor-quality employment, and working poverty pose the main challenges (WESO, 2019). Not only is unemployment on a constant rise, but so too is underemployment. Even though the reports, as mentioned above, submit that global unemployment has stabilised, it also highlights that the lack of decent work is rampant (Glyde, 1977; Greenwood, 1999; Jensen & Slack, 2003; Dooley & Prause, 2004; Feldman, 1996; Felstead & Nick, 1999; Acemoglu, 2001; Dooley & Prause, 2004; Maynard, Joseph & Maynard; 2006; Mathebula, 2013; Paola & Pons-Vignon, 2013; Golub & Hayat, 2015; Beukes et al., 2017). This is also evidenced by the ILO's (2018), flagship report that reveals that despite the stability that takes place regarding the global unemployment; unemployment and decent work deficits will stay at persistently high levels in many parts of the world. Similarly, the WESO (2018), acknowledges that global unemployment has been roughly stable for the last nine years, but also points out that the decline in the global economic growth means that, as the worldwide labour force increases, with less than enough jobs being created to absorb new entrants to the labour market. This corroborates the fact that underemployment is as much of an economic problem as is unemployment. Especially because, among other things, the constant growth of underemployment renders the agenda for decent work a great challenge since more and more organisations adopt the flexible way of recruiting labour, which includes a host of non-standard jobs (i.e., part-time, temporary, subcontracting, fixed-term contracts) (Standing et al., 1996; Barker, 2003; Wilkins, 2007; McKee-Ryan & Harvey, 2011; ILO, 2015).

According to the ILO (2017), 'decent work' involves opportunities for work that are productive and deliver fair income, security in the workplace…equality of opportunity and treatment for women and men." The ILO's WESO of 2019, finds that a majority of the 3.3 billion people employed throughout the world are working under poor conditions that do not guarantee them a decent living. Instead, they experience a lack of material well-being, economic security, equal opportunities, or scope for human development. This evidence proves that employment does not always guarantee a decent living (WESO, 2019). As a result, it should be understood that for millions of people who occupy non-standard jobs, having a

job does not make that much of a difference if they do not have job security among other thing. Indeed—and as already pointed out in the previous sections—owing to the high rates of unemployment, many people find themselves with no other better alternative than to take up non-standard employment; which often offers unattractive jobs that tend to be informal and are characterised by low pay and little or no access to social protection and rights at work (ILO, 2012; WESO, 2019). ILO Deputy Director-General for Policy, Deborah Greenfield, affirmed that many people have jobs that do not offer them economic security, lack material well-being, and decent work opportunities. This reality points to another problem that cannot be separated from the issue of unemployment, because the fight for unemployment is also a fight for underemployment. The following section considers the state of underemployment among young people on a global scale.

2.7.4 Underemployment among Young People

Much like unemployment, underemployment is more prevalent amongst the youths than the adult cohort (Allan, 1989; Wooden, 1996; Ruiz-Quintanilla & Claes, 1996; Loughlin & Barling, 1999; Dooley & Prause, 2004, Garcia, 2008; Prause & Dooley, 2011; Reynolds & Myers, 2012; Gough & Langevang, 2013; Cote, 2014; Shehu & Nilsson, 2014; ILO, 2017; UN, 2018; WESO, 2019). The youth cohort (of 15-29) years is more likely to be unemployed and underemployed compared to adults (ILO, 2012). Globally, youth aged 15 to 24 are three times more likely than adults to be out of a job. But for those who do have a job, they are typically underemployed, in part-time or temporary work, in the informal sector, and in poor working conditions (Reynolds & Myers, 2012; Gough & Langevang, 2013; Cote, 2014; Cam, 2014; Shehu & Nilsson, 2014). In line with these global trends, African youths are more likely to be underemployed and among the working poor than the general population (ILO, 2012). High poverty levels, thus, exist among young Africans despite that most need to provide for their families and work for survival. Consequently, the percentage of working poor in sub-Saharan Africa is higher among young people. Again, this indicates that even though an appreciable number of employment opportunities exist, the creation of standard jobs are often outpaced by the growth of the youth (WESO, 2019).

For this reason, underemployment and poor working conditions are key features of youth employment in Africa due to insufficient quantity and quality of jobs available. In their desperate attempt to make a living, many young people resort to taking on precarious, underpaid, and seasonal work mainly in the informal economy (Allan, 1989; Greenwood,

1999; Wooden, 1996; Ruiz-Quintanilla & Claes, 1996; Loughlin & Barling, 1999; Dooley & Prause, 2004, Hussmanns, 2007; Garcia, 2008; Prause & Dooley, 2011; Wilkins, & Wooden, 2011; Reynolds & Myers, 2012; Gough & Langevang, 2013; Cote, 2014; Shehu & Nilsson, 2014). Even educated youths turn to settle for underpaid work out of failure of securing employment that matches their education level (Reynolds & Myers, 2012; Gough & Langevang, 2013; Cote, 2014; Shehu & Nilsson, 2014; Beukes, Fransman, Murozvi & Yu, 2017). If educated people tend to work non-standard jobs even though they have tertiary education, how much more likely is it for uneducated young people to be relegated to non-standard employment? The situation is even worse for young woman who are often overlooked by employers who often prefer men.

This rampant underemployment among young people in Africa is imputed to the lack of productive jobs to meet the supply of young job seekers (Garcia, 2008; Golub & Hayat, 2015). According to the reviewed literature (see Okojie, 2003; Garcia, 2008; OECD, 2010; Prause & Dooley, 2011; Reynolds & Myers, 2012; Gough & Langevang, 2013; Cote, 2014; Shehu & Nilsson, 2014; Beukes, Fransman, Murozvi & Yu, 2017), this situation leaves the majority of young people in Africa with no other choice but to engage in informal sector activities as shop assistants, farmhands, clerical assistants, typists, stewards, and cooks in hotels and restaurants, in street trading, casual labour, and illegal activities such as touting, stealing armed robbery, dealing in prohibited substances such as drugs, and prostitution. Only a small proportion of young people are able to secure jobs in the formal sector. However, in general, young workers are much more likely to hold temporary jobs, and are relegated in cyclically-sensitive industries where jobs are the first to go in contraction times, such as construction and hospitality (Okojie, 2003; Denu, Tekeste & Van der Deijl, 2005). But if they fail to even secure such employment (which happens to most of them) they deal with extreme difficulty entering the labour market. This is because young people are increasingly expected to have work experience, even for entry-level positions, which they they often do not have (Okojie, 2003; Denu, Tekeste & Van Der Deijl, 2005; OECD, 2013).

In essence, the youth employment problem in Africa is characterised by the following dimensions: there too few jobs available for young people; the jobs that are available are usually unproductive jobs with poor remuneration and conditions; and there are too many young people without the necessary skills and qualifications for decent, productive jobs (Okojie, 2003; Denu, Tekeste & Van der Deijl, 2005; OECD, 2013; WESO, 2019). Taking into consideration the state of unemployment (encapsulated in section 2.6) and the problem of

underemployment (explored in the previous sections), it stands to reason that creating enough jobs is a desperate need, but equally preessing is the need for decent jobs. Yet, the most vulnerable to unemployment are also the most likely to be underemployed. Addressing the youth employment challenge never ceases to rank high in both international and local development priorities. In fact, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development placed the importance and urgency of achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all squarely at the centre of the new development vision; with young people explicitly identified as a key target group. This proves just how vulnerable young people are to both unemployment and underemployment. Now that we have a picture of the two perennial trends of the labour market that have animated this study, the following section explores some of the common causes of the unemployment crisis. The discussion below helps us to further grasp the enormity of the issue of unemployment. This dicussion also reveals (in a bird's eye view) some of the common determinants of unemployment (especially among young people) that some researchers have discovered.

2.8 CAUSES OF (YOUTH) UNEMPLOYMENT

This section provides a condensed presentation of the generic and most cited causes of unemployment. The discussion of the causes of unemployment, as revealed by other studies, will be synthesised with the analysis of the demand-side factors that this current research study has revealed. Certainly, the reviewed literature shows that there is no unique determinant of the unemployment challenge on the global scale or in Africa. Instead, a combination of factors contribute differently to what has now become an accumulative crisis for many governments across the globe (Furnman, 1985; Arora, & Ricci, 2005; Du Toit, 2005; Altman, 2007, 2009; Banerjee et al., 2008; Mlatsheni & Leibbrandt, 2011; van Aardt, 2012; Zimmermann & Biavaschi, 2013; Yu, 2013; Worku, 2014; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; Baah-Boateng, 2016; ILO, 2017; UN, 2018; WESO, 2019). A wide-range of determinants, at both the macro and micro-level, contribute to the extent and nature of unemployment. At the macro level, which is a broader focus on the economy as a whole, a number of inter-connected economic and social factors have shaped unemployment (Du Toit, 2001; Osinubi, 2005; Nunley et al., 2014; Golub & Hayat, 2015). These factors comprise the nature of a country's economic growth (both in terms of extent and direction), and the related implications for education, skills, and training. Whereas, the micro-level, which refers to a small scale of the economy, focuses on the actions of individual agents within the economy like households, workers, and businesses (De Lannoy et al., 2018:32).

This thesis provides examples of both macro and micro causes of unemployment as they are not mutually exclusive but are interrelated. And both give insights on the incident of unemployment. Since the study is primarily concerned with youth unemployment, the thesis will only discuss the causes of unemployment that are closely related to youth unemployment. However, reference to general/adult causes may be referred to, as they tend to be parallel to one another. It is also important to mention that the causes of unemployment that are going to be outlined below are not an exhaustive list as there is a myriad of causes that have been discovered and there are those that have yet to be discovered. Nonetheless, owing to the limited scope of the thesis, only the most common and most cited causes in the reviewed literature will be presented. A study by O'Higgins (2001), reports and confirms the fundamental theme that emerges from the previous sections: that although youth unemployment varies from one country to the next, some features are common to most nations. First, O' Higgins (2001), finds that youth unemployment was (around the time of his study) higher than adult unemployment in almost every country for which data was available (see also ILO, 2015; WESO, 2018). In most countries, youth unemployment was double the adult unemployment and, in some instances, even three times the adult rate. In many African countries, studies have revealed that limited labour market prospects for the youth were linked to differences in a number of demographics including (but not limited to) gender, age, ethnicity, educational level, family background, health status, disability (Arora, & Ricci, 2005; Du Toit, 2005; Altman, 2007, 2009; Banerjee et al., 2008; van Aardt, 2012; Zimmermann & Biavaschi, 2013; Yu, 2013; Worku, 2014; Baah-Boateng, 2016 ILO, 2017; UN, 2018; WESO, 2019).

Rees (1986:616), provides several reasons why youth unemployment is greater than the corresponding rate for adults: "Firstly, young people are more likely to exhibit seasonal employment patterns as they enter and exit the labour market between periods in which they would be otherwise engaged in education. Secondly, they are more likely to quit, or get dismissed from employment because they are less emotionally mature. Thirdly, they are less well equipped to compete with older workers. Fourthly, they are less risk-averse and may be less dependent on wage income since they are less likely to have families to support, and maybe receive financial assistance from their own families." These characteristics tend to diminish the employment prospects of these young people. Rees (1986), believes this happens particularly in situations when there is a general excess supply of labour; or when low aggregate demand in an economy leads to firm downsizing and reduction in the number

of new vacancies. This situation is particularly common in the South African context, as will be demonstrated in chapter three (see Mlatsheni and Rospabé, 2002; Du Toit, 2003; Rankin & Roberts, 2011; Aardt, 2012; Zimmermann & Biavaschi, 2013; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; Baah-Boateng, 2016; Graham & De Lannoy, 2016). The National Treasury (2011:5), reporting on the situation of youth unemployment in South Africa, advanced the following reasons for youth unemployment:

- Employers are looking for skills and experience; they regard unskilled, inexperienced jobseekers as a risky investment.
- Education is not a substitute for skills. Schooling is not a reliable indicator of capabilities, and low school quality feeds into poor workplace learning capacity.
- Given the uncertainty about the potential of school leavers, employers consider entry-level wages to be too high relative to the risk of hiring these inexperienced workers. All three of the above explanations are examples of structural unemployment.

As can be observed, there is a parallel between the historic, though condensed, account provided by Rees (1989), and the relatively recent account of the state of youth unemployment (in South Africa) provided by the National Treasury. Both these accounts indicate that, firstly there are common determinants of youth unemployment globally, and secondly that they are still prevalent today. Moreover, more research shows that the factors contributing to youth unemployment are skills levels, location, population group, economic environment, and age (Aardt, 2012; Graham & De Lannoy, 2016). Factors contributing to unemployment in general also often include labour market rigidities, minimum wages, opportunity costs of employment, structural imbalances in the supply of and demand for skills, militant unions, and low economic growth-employment elasticity (Mlatsheni and Rospabé, 2002; Rankin & Roberts, 2011; Aardt, 2012; Graham & De Lannoy, 2016). Some research found that the challenge of youth unemployment is shaped by factors in both the labour market and the education system, alongside the community, household, and individual-level issues. This intricate and multi-layered combination of both the macro and micro determinants may be the reason why the unemployment problem persists today, and also why it seems to be insurmountable (Graham & De Lannoy, 2016; De Lannoy et al., 2018). The following sub-sections discuss some of the recurring factors (from the reviewed literature) that contribute to the mass unemployment trend that persists today. The examples will be drawn from different African countries, including and especially from South Africa.

2.8.1 Gender Inequality

Gender, ethnic origin, age, and both skill and education levels are often identified to have an effect on ones probability of obtaining employment (O'Higgins, 2005; Rankins & Roberts, 2011; Diaz-Bazan, 2015; StatsSA, 2019; WESO, 2019). Gender inequality is a global phenomenon, and the previous sections have demonstrated that it is very evident in the composition of the unemployed. As indicated above, available statistics (historic and current) show that labour force participation rates are lower for women than for men in almost every country (Anker, 1998; Bazen, 2003; Vosko, McDonald & Campbell, 2009; Seguino, 2010; StatsSA, 2019; WESO, 2019). Throughout history the picture for young women has been starker than that for young men, even though the gab has been closed to some degree. It is generally found that employment prospects for young women are more limited than those for young men; consequently this, invariably, leads to higher unemployment rates for young women (Alonso-Villar & Del Río, 2008; Barnejee et al., 2008; Vosko, MacDonald & Campbell, 2009; Baah-Boateng, 2016; Baldry, 2016; Stats, 2019; WESO, 2019). Indeed, many studies show that youth unemployment is unevenly distributed across the youth cohort, as is the case with the adult cohort (see Niemi, 1974; Fodor, 1997; Sen, 1997; Mlatsheni & Rospabe, 2002; Bazen, 2003; Azmat, Guell & Manning, 2006; Alonso-Villar & Del Rio, 2008; Barnejee et al., 2008; Vosko, MacDonald & Campbell, 2009; Seguino, 2010; Rankins & Roberts, 2011; Anand, 2016; 2016; d'Agostino & Scarlato, 2016; Taljaard & van der Walt, 2018).

There is probably a plethora of factors that contribute to the gender gap in the labour market. However, in Africa, cultural practices is identified as one of many factors that contribute to gender bias against women when it comes to accessing education, training and securing employment in the labour market (Hunter, 2007; Kolev & Sirven, 2010; Anyanwu, 2013). For instance, young women face even greater discrimination than adult women in the labour market. As it is believed that they will soon get married and leave their employment or become less productive (Mlatsheni & Rospabe, 2002; Bazen, 2003; Azmat, Guell & Manning, 2006; Alonso-Villar& Del Rio, 2008; Barnejee et al., 2008; Vosko, MacDonald & Campbell, 2009; Seguino, 2010; Rankins & Roberts, 2011; Anyanwu, 2013; d'Agostino & Scarlato, 2016; Taljaard & van der Walt, 2018). This point is exemplified by a situation in Nigeria where young female graduates who are offered employment are made to sign agreements that they will not get married for, or that they will not go on maternity leave for, a specified time frame after employment. Failing which their jobs are terminated or promotions denied if they

do not comply (Okojie, 2003:16). This evidence demontrates that one's gender can have a bearing on their employment outcomes, and thus can be regarded as one of the causes of unemployment. It is a well known fact that women (young and old) are more vulnerable to unemployment in comparison to their male counterparts.

2.8.2 Education and Training

Lack of education (or access to poor quality education) is often described as one of the long-standing causes of unemployment, especially among young people (Brandson & Leibrandt, 2013; Bhorat, 2016: De Lannoy et al., 2018). This view is compatible with HCT, which is concerned with the jobseekers' attainment of or investment in education, and thus explains unemployment as an outcome or result of the (jobless) person's choice of leisure instead of investing in being employed (by acquiring education or skills). This view—that the jobless are jobless because they have made a choice not to obtain education—has since been challenged by LMS theories that believe that numerous factors can impact one's choice to invest in education or even to attain quality education. Therefore, only attributing unemployment to lack of or poor education overlooks the fact that other determinants are beyond the jobseeker's control to acquire education, even though they so desire. This rebut by the LMS theories is what makes it integral to understand both the supply and demand factors, and other economic and non-economic factors that can lead to unemployment. As opposed to only focusing on the fact that job seekers lack skills or education, because that cannot only be the explanation why some people are unemployed.

While numerous studies find (consistent with the HCT's assertions) that poor education and early school dropouts are some of the causes of youth unemployment (Callaway, 1963; Emerson, 1983; Main & Raffe, 1983; Tiggermann & Winefield, 1989; Bradley & Taylor, 1992; Schaufeli, 1992; Prause & Doodey, 1997; Winefield, 2005; Furlong, 2006; Brzinsky-Fay, 2007; Byrne, McCoy & Watson, 2008; Gustafson, 2011; Cockx & Picchio, 2013; Van Broekhuizen, 2015). Some of these studies also find (in line with LMS theories' assertions) that there are reasons behind this lack of education or the inability to acquire quality education. Indeed, some young jobseekers are not well educated, and some drop out of school early. However, this is due to reasons like poverty and inability to cope with studies, amongst other reasons. While these are supply-side reasons that can explicate the lack of education (and consequent black of employment), the demand-side determinants include the fact that due to technological advancements (among other things) that have led the economy to

demand highly-skilled labour, an incomplete secondary education becomes insufficient to guarantee employment (Al-Samarrai, P Bennell, 2007; Lam, Leibbrandt & Mlatsheni, 2008; Gustafson, 2011; Burns, Edwards & Pauw, 2010; Yu, 2013; Van Broekhuizen, 2015; Bhorat, 2016).

In other words, the high demand for skilled labour means that those with a post-secondary qualification are far more likely to secure employment than those with only a matric certificate (Burton, 2006; Al-Samarrai & Bennell, 2007; Lam, Leibbrandt and Mlatsheni, 2008; Burns, Edwards and Pauw, 2010; Yu, 2013; Van Broekhuizen, 2015). However, it should also be understood that although employment prospects for young people with only a secondary education have generally decreased, a matric certificate does still place one at an advantage over those who may not have such a qualification (Burton, 2006; Al-Samarrai & Bennell, 2007; Lam, Leibbrandt & Mlatsheni, 2008; Burns, Edwards and Pauw, 2010; Hofmeyer, Branson & Leibrandt, 2013; Yu, 2013; Van Broekhuizen, 2015). It is, therefore, extremely problematic that secondary school completion rates in the country remain low. This is because while graduate jobseekers still outweigh them with post-matric, people with a matric certificate are still far better than having no matric at all (Hofmeyer, Brandson & Leibrandt, 2013; Van Broekhuizen, 2015).

According to Graham & De Lannoy (2016), and as also held by the HCT, formal education is critical in determining the quality of labour market entrants. Therefore, to a certain degree, shortcomings of the education system form fundamental a constraint (although, not the only constrain) on the quality of young workers looking for jobs, and thereby disadvantages them from being recruited by employers (Mlatsheni & Rospabe, 2002; Fiske & Ladd, 2004; Fleisch, 2008; Spaull, 2015: 36; Graham & De Lannoy, 2016; DHET, 2019). The jobseekers that have a better chance of being employed are those who have some tertiary education level, even though this does not always mean they can secure employment (National Treasury, 2011; Van Broekhuizen, 2015; DHET, 2019; Stats, 2019). Furthermore, youth unemployment in Africa is also concentrated among those who, even though they have some education, still lack the industrial and other skills required in the labour market. This makes them unattractive to employers of labour who prefer skilled and experienced workers than jobseekers who only have education (Okojie, 2003; Alonso-Villar& Del Rio, 2008; Barnejee et al., 2008; Vosko, MacDonald & Campbell, 2009; Seguino, 2010; Rankins & Roberts, 2011; Anyanwu, 2013). Therefore, lack of education and job-related skills is another reason provided to explain high levels of youth unemployment (Du Toit, 2003; DHET, 2019).

Consequently, not only do these young people stand to face longer spells of unemployment, but this may ultimately also result in discouragement and longer-term 'scarring effect' (Lam et al. 2007; Mlatsheni & Leibbrandt 2011; Spaull, 2015; DHET, 2019). According to the literature reviewed, the main reasons for lack of education include financial constraints; being forced to look for work, grade repetition; and often, for female learners, pregnancy (Gustafsson 2011; Branson et al. 2014). Isdale et al. (2016: 7), explain that these problems are particularly severe in the lower quintile schools, especially among Coloured, followed by African learners. Furthermore, school drop-out is more pronounced in poorer, rural provinces such as the Eastern Cape, where only 20 per cent of the Grade 2 pupils from the 2001 cohort passed matric in 2011 (Spaull 2013:15). Despite these problematics, De Lannoy et al. (2018:49), point out that little is known about interventions that aim to keep young people in the schooling system (whether that be primary education or through a connection to the TVET stream). Another issue is that there is also limited research on what basic skills are required by which type of employers, and how the schooling system can ensure that these skills are provided (Spaull, 2013; De Lannoy et al., 2018). This whole situation calls for further research, especially given that lack of education is one of the critical determinants of unemployment and poverty.

2.8.3 Skills Mismatch

Another obstacle to the integration of the youth (or any jobseeker for that matter) into the labour market that is related to the lack of education, is that some jobseekers possess skills that are not demanded by employers (Bhorat & Hodge, 1999; Bhorat, 2004; Dias & Posel, 2007; Kingdon & Knight, 2007; Pauw & Oosthuizen, 2008; Bhorat, Kanbur & Stanwix, 2011; National Treasury, 2011; Rankin & Roberts, 2011; Van Aardt, 2012; Yu, 2013; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; ILO, 2016). Skill-biased technical change is often cited as one of the explanation for some skills being preferred over others. This is because the technical change that has occurred across the world increased the skill requirements for employment, leaving the unskilled, predominantly the young unskilled, at a significant disadvantage in the labour market (see, e.g., Bhorat, 2004; Bhorat, Kanbur & Stanwix, 2011). There is evidence that, at a minimum (and as a result of this technical change), employers require basic numeracy and literacy skills among young employees (Altman 2010; Horn 2006; Raftopolous, Coetzee & Visser 2009, De Lannoy et al., 2018). Employers basically also look to employ young people who are trainable (able to acquire subsequently and without difficulty the technical skills required for their work), flexible and open to new ideas, able to think logically and solve

problems, among other things (Bhorat & Hodge, 1999; Bhorat, 2004; Dias & Posel, 2007; Kingdon & Knight, 2007; Pauw & Oosthuizen, 2008; Bhorat, Kanbur & Stanwix, 2011; Rankin & Roberts, 2011; National Treasury, 2011; Van Aardt, 2012; Yu, 2013; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015). For instance, as non-agricultural employment expands across the global economy, science, technology, mathematics, and foreign language and communication skills have increasingly become what employers demand from their potential recruits (Lewin 1996).

These are the skills and qualifications that young people often do not have for various reasons (such as dropping out of school), thus making them unattractive to employers (Pauw & Oosthuizen, 2008; Bhorat, Kanbur & Stanwix, 2011; National Treasury, 2011; Rankin & Roberts, 2011; Van Aardt, 2012; Yu, 2013). Therefore, some young people tend to lag behind their more privileged peers (those with skills, qualifications) (Godfrey, 2003:2). Indeed, in most instances, the youth unemployment challenge may be explained mainly by the evolving nature of the labour market and mismatches within the education system. For instance, it is generally accepted that the primary cause for South Africa's widespread unemployment today is a structural mismatch between the skills the modern South African economy demands and the skills it supplies (Hausmann, 2008; National Planning Commission, 2011:15). Research findings indicate that a fundamental challenge facing young jobseekers, in particular, is the fact that South Africa's labour market favours skilled employees (e.g., Banerjee et al., 2007; De Lannoy et al., 2018: 51-52).

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the economy in South Africa shifted to a high productivity, technology-led growth path that was intended to stimulate investment in skills development and higher wages sectors (Dias & Posel, 2007; Kingdon & Knight, 2007; Pauw & Oosthuizen, 2008; Bhorat, Kanbur & Stanwix, 2011; Rankin & Roberts, 2011; National Treasury, 2011; Van Aardt, 2012; Yu, 2013; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015). The shift away from labour-intensive agriculture transpired around the same time as a significant increase in the number of people looking for work. The result has been a higher absorption of skilled workers into the labour market on one hand, and longer job queues for those with low or no skills and little or no qualifications on the other hand (Pauw & Oosthuizen, 2008; Van Aardt, 2012; Yu, 2013; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015). Despite the shift and changes that occurred over the democratic years, the South African labour market is still largely a low-skill, low-wage economy (DHET, 2019:14). The bulk of young people fall into that category, except for those who hold qualifications and skills that are marketable in the labour market (Parsons, 2009; Van der Berg et al., 2011; Graham & De Lannoy, 2016). In essence, the causes of South African

youth unemployment (in line with global trends) are a combination of deficient demand for labour; due to the increasingly skills-intensive orientation of the South African economy and sub-standard supply caused by the emergence of risky low-skilled youth (National Treasury, 2011; Van Aardt, 2012; Yu, 2013; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015). It is for this reason that skills mismatch is said to contribute to the incident of unemployment, especially among the youth. To address this issue, policymakers are constantly coming up with ways to promote skills development through various strategies/programmes. Some of these strategies are discussed in section 2.10 below.

2.8.4 Graduate Unemployment

Different youth groups (i.e., graduates, matriculants, NEETs) experience unemployment differently. Even though studies find that graduates are in a better position of receiving employment than the NEETs category (see Mlatsheni & Rospabe, 2002; Du Toit, 2003; Pauw, Oosthuizen & van der Westhuizen, 2006; Lam, Leibbrandt & Mlatsheni, 2009; Fourie, 2011; Mlatsheni & Leibbrandt, 2011; Van der Berg, 2012; Van de Rheede, 2012; Zimmermann & Biavaschi, 2013; Oluwajodu, 2015; Van Broekhuizen, 2015; Ardington et al., 2016; Rogan, 2018). It has been emphatically acknowledged that graduates, despite their qualifications, also face challenges getting employment for various reasons. In Africa, higher-level education does not appear to guarantee better job prospects. Yu (2013), observes that across the continent (except for four countries: Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, and Swaziland) unemployment rates, even among 15 to 24-year-olds with advanced level education, is higher than those with basic education. Anyanwu (2013), reports that in Mali, more than half (55.6 per cent) of the 15 to 24-year-olds with advanced education are without a job, compared to 3.3 per cent of those with basic education. However, in some countries, research finds just the opposite. For instance, in South Africa graduates are said to have better employment outcomes than people with no tertiary level education (Du Toit, 2003; Moleke, 2003; Pauw, Oosthuizen & van der Westhuizen, 2006). Graduate unemployment in 2019 was 31.0 per cent compared to 56 per cent overall youth unemployment, including those who do not have tertiary education (StatsSA, 2019: Q2).

Notwithstanding the observation that graduates are at a better position than other youth groups (matriculants, NEETs), there are studies that reveal that there is a considerable number of graduates who remain jobless (Pauw et al., 2008; Van der Berg, 2012; Bhorat et al., 2013). On this account, Arora & Ricci (2005), Dias & Posel (2007), Pauw et al. (2008;23),

and Patel, Hassen & Paton (2011), caution that the phenomenon of rising graduate unemployment has to be viewed within the context of skills shortages and skills mismatch, or even an oversupply of graduates. This suggests that graduate unemployment relates to an oversupply of graduates in general or perhaps more likely so, and oversupply of inappropriate qualified or poor-quality graduates. In addition, it is maintained that some of the matriculants completed their post-Matric qualifications at institutions that are not accredited or recognised by employers (Mlatsheni and Rospabé, 2002; Moleke, 2005; Pauw, Oosthuizen & van der Westhuizen, 2006; Altman, 2007; Van de Rheede, 2012; Van der Berg, 2012; Oluwajodu, 2015; van Broekhuizen, 2015). Therefore, the lack of marketable qualifications or the abundance of even the marketable qualifications can all contribute to graduate unemployment as some employers will not employ anyone who holds an unrecognised qualification or one for which they have no use.

Furthermore, lack of experience is one of the other reasons why some graduates are not employed. For instance, Pauw et al. (2008), National Treasury (2011), and Mlatsheni and Ranchhod (2017), submit that employers look for skills and experience as one of the main human capital. Thus, they regard unskilled, inexperienced jobseekers as a risky investment (National Treasury, 2011). Contrarily, quite a number of firms feel that experienced workers (who many not necessarily have a qualification) are more attractive than recent graduates from a recruitment point of view (Pauw et al., 2008). Considering this, graduates would need substantial investment in training before becoming assets to the companies that value experience more (Moleke, 2005; Pauw et al., 2008; Van de Rheede, 2012; Oluwajodu, 2015; Mlatsheni and Ranchhod, 2017). As mentioned by other authors, Pauw et al. (2008), and National Treasury (2011), find that employers are of the opinion that many graduates lack soft skills and are hardly ready for the workplace when they transition from school to work. These are among the other causes of graduate unemployment that emerged from the literature reviewed. This, however, begs the question that if employers have somewhat negative dispositions about the employability of graduate, how much more negative are their dispositions are about young people who do not have any qualifications or skills to speak of? This is one of the questions that this thesis sets out to answer.

2.8.5 Lack of Experience

Another recurring determinant imputed to as the cause of unemployment, especially amongst the youth, is that they often do not have work experience (Bhorat & Hodge, 1999; Nattrass,

2000; Dias & Posel, 2007; Kingdon & Knight, 2007; Pauw & Oosthuizen, 2008; Bhorat, Kanbur & Stanwix, 2011), which employers see as an essential human capital for productivity (Rankin & Roberts, 2011; National Treasury, 2011; Van Aardt, 2012; Yu, 2013; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; Baah-Boateng, 2016; Chigunta, 2017). A number of circumstances can explain why youths' are less likely to be experienced. For instance, unlike their adult counterparts who can gain experience over the years, young people simply need to transition from school to work to be exposed to the workplace, where they can gain work experience. Yet, the lack of experience is one of the major reasons why they are never employed. The paradox of this situation is that they cannot gain the practical experience they need, unless they can find someone willing to hire them and expose them to the work that will give them the experience. While young jobseeker looks for employment to gain experience, in order to make a living; without the opportunity to get into the labour market through some form of employment (standard or non-standard), there is no other viable way they could gain work experience.

This results in a large number of South African youths being unemployed, or spending long periods without jobs after leaving school or after completing higher education qualifications (Bhorat & Hodge, 1999; Nattrass, 2000; Dias & Posel, 2007; Kingdon & Knight, 2007; Pauw & Oosthuizen, 2008; Bhorat, Kanbur & Stanwix, 2011; Rankin & Roberts, 2011; National Treasury, 2011; Van Aardt, 2012; Yu, 2013; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015). Therefore, the youth unemployment incident (in South Africa) is closely related to the inability of young people to obtain employment owing to their lack of experience; which is all too often compounded by a lack of skills, among other things (Du Toit, 2003:11). Employers would rather employ experienced adults than take chances with young people whose productivity is not fully known (Bhorat & Hodge, 1999; Nattrass, 2000; Dias & Posel, 2007; Kingdon & Knight, 2007; Pauw & Oosthuizen, 2008; Bhorat, Kanbur & Stanwix, 2011; Rankin & Roberts, 2011; National Treasury, 2011; Van Aardt, 2012; Yu, 2013; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015). The result, therefore, is a growing cohort of young people with severely limited access to formal sector employment and limited means to do anything about this (Van Aardt, 2012:57).

2.8.6 Labour Market Regulation: Minimum Wages

Rodrik (2006), Kingdon and Knight (2007), and Festus, Kasango, Moses & Yu (2016), are among those who argue that unemployment is caused, largely, by labour market regulation

that tends to reduce the demand for labour (see also Wellington, 1991; Fields, 1994; Freeman, 1995;97; Cahuc & Zylberberg, 1999; Arora & Ricci, 2006; Rankin & Roberts, 2011; Dinkelman & Ranchhod, 2012; Bhorat, Kanbur & Mayet, 2013; Castel-Branco, 2015; Bhorat, Kanbur, & Stanwix, 2015; Isaacs, 2016; Jadoo & Williams, 2017). A common assumption about unemployment is that, in addition to employers being typically risk averse, strong labour market regulations (which make it difficult to fire staff among other things) make them not want to employ more people without the flexibility of recruiting and terminating employment contracts (Bernstein 2014; Pauw et al. 2006). Certain types of labour laws and practices, particularly those affecting wages and layoffs, may cause employers to stall recruiting jobseekers. The brunt of this possibility is mostly felt by young jobseekers as they are even more risk averse to employ (Broecke, Forti & Vandeweyer, and 2017:368).

To give an example, minimum wages are a form of such labour market regulation that have been attributed to unemployment (Mincer, 1976; Brown, Gilroy & Kohen, 1981, 1982; Fields, 1994; Cahuc & Michel, 1996; Neumark & Wascher, 1996; Cahuc & Zylberberg, 1999; Maloney & Nunez, 2000; Arora & Ricci, 2006; Mayet, 2010; Rankin & Roberts, 2011; Castel-Branco, 2015; Bhorat, Kanbur, & Stanwix, 2015; Isaacs, 2016; Jadoo & Williams, 2017). The potential effects of minimum wages on youth employment and unemployment rates have been examined in a number of international studies (Boockmann, 2010; Forti & Vandeweyer, 2017). The balance of this international empirical evidence suggests that high minimum wages can have a negative impact on youth employment. This is because the implementation of minimum wages tends to drive a wedge between youth labour costs and their expected productivity, thereby raising unemployment and undermining the chances of some young people from entering the labour market (OECD, 2010:24). Furthermore, whereas many countries differentiate minimum wages by age through the inclusion of sub-minima for youths, this is not the case for South Africa. The minimum wage in South Africa, does not account for the lower productivity of younger workers (Arora & Ricci, 2006; Mayet, 2010; Rankin & Roberts, 2011).

This exacerbates the implicit gap between entry-level wages and productivity, and hinders the hiring of younger workers (Nattrass, 2000; Mayet, 2010; Bhorat, Kanbur & Stanwix, 2011; Rankin & Roberts, 2011; National Treasury, 2011; Dinkelman & Ranchhod, 2012; Bhorat, Kanbur & Mayet, 2013; Yu, 2013; Castel-Branco, 2015; Bhorat, Kanbur, & Stanwix, 2015; Baah-Boateng, 2016; Isaacs, 2016; Jadoo & Williams, 2017). This is also because the minimum wage agreed on during collective bargaining is more easily afforded by the larger

firms, but not necessarily by the smaller firms. The latter firms, which are more labour-intensive and potentially the main source of employment creation, would then either close down or retrench workers, and youths are more likely to be retrenched first (Nattrass, 2000; Mayet, 2010; Bhorat, Kanbur & Stanwix, 2011; Rankin & Roberts, 2011; National Treasury, 2011; Issac, 2016; Forti & Vandeweyer, 2017). Let alone recruit any young jobseekers. Notwithstanding, it should also be noted, as asserted by De Lannoy et al. (2018:74), that there is little evidence to support this assumption. They further submit that there is little about how small and medium-enterprise employers differ from larger employers. This is another area that calls for more research.

2.8.7 Lack of Information

Beyond the mainstream economics analysis of causal factors (some of which are outlined above), is a range of less tangible factors that influence youth unemployment (Graham & De Lannoy, 2016). These include lack of labour market information, inexperience with the processes of applying for jobs, lack of access to the main information networks in the labour market, and social deprivation (i.e., factors such as joblessness of other household members and residence in low-income areas) (Du Toit, 2003; Bassanini & Duval, 2006; World Bank, 2009; Mlatsheni & Leibrandt, 2011; Bhorat, 2014; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; Golub & Hayat. 2015; Mlatsheni & Ranchhod, 2017; De Lannoy et al., 2018). These instances are also referred to as labour market failure, which may well impede the absorption of new entrants (Du Toit, 2003). Young job applicants are likely to be disproportionately affected by labour market failure. This is because they have less access than older people to accurate information, and are less like to be in the labour market and have limited (if any) resources to acquire accurate information (Matsheni & Rospabe, 2002; Godfrey, 2003; Mlatsheni & Leibrandt, 2011; Schoer & Rankins, 2011; Bhorat, 2014; Graham & De Lannoy, 2016; Mlatsheni & Ranchhod, 2017). Other labour market failures that tend to lower the employment chances of young people include the fact that job search and matching is very poor in South Africa, and that young people find job search costs to be too high (Matsheni & Rospabe, 2002; Godfrey, 2003; Altman, 2009; Schoer & Rankins, 2011; Graham & De Lannoy, 2016).

Furthermore, limited or lack of career guidance has been identified as a labour market failure that impedes on the employment of young people (especial graduates who obtain degree that are marketable) (Du Toit, 2003; Bassanini & Duval, 2006; Golub & Hayat. 2015; Mlatsheni

& Ranchhod, 2017; De Lannoy et al., 2018). According to Branson et al. (2015), career guidance has to form part of the high school curriculum to provide adequate information about the different careers and how they can be achieved (among other things). However, several qualitative studies indicate that young people—especially those from a lower socio-economic background—are not thoroughly informed of the need to choose subjects that match their skills and interests, or are simply not given the opportunity to select the subjects they would like or need (see Matsheni & Rospabe, 2002; Altman, 2009; Bhorat, 2014; Branson et al. 2015; Mlatsheni & Ranchhod, 2017). Instead, the ILO (2012:38), finds that young people attribute the skills mismatch currently faced in the labour market to poor (or total lack of) information regarding the skills demanded by potential employers. Indeed, the absence of adequate and comprehensive career guidance has a scarring effect on the learning and career trajectories of high school learners; who have the preasure to make choices about their matriculation subjects already in the second half of Grade 9 (De Lannoy et al., 2018).

As it stands, there is a shortage of school-to-work career counseling guidance and role-modeling services with accurate labour market information given to youth to facilitate the school-to-work transition (Matsheni & Rospabe, 2002; Altman, 2009; Burger & Von Fintel, 2009; Bhorat, 2014; Branson et al. 2015; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015). A considerable number of young people do not receive the preparation they need concerning how to market themselves and most are unaware of potential job openings. This unawareness increases the likelihood of these youths being unemployed for more extended periods, and, ultimately, resorting to less secure employment or being discouraged jobseekers (Brandson et al., 2015). As young people exit the schooling system, many do not have adequate information about how to apply for jobs, how to compile their curriculum vitae (CVs), or how to access further education opportunities. While there is some evidence to indicate that community-based NGOs can fulfill a 'bridging role' (Kraak 2015; Dieltiens 2015); qualitative studies also shows that even when young people actively seek out support from such NGOs, they may not be given adequate guidance (Newman & De Lannoy 2014; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; De Lannoy et al., 2018)

In essence, and as also held by the World Bank (2009:16), the lack of both labor market information and job search skills is one barrier to matching the supply of young labour to demand by employers. The World Bank (2009), further submits that regardless of a country's stage of development, factors such as labour market information, job search techniques, and

career guidance play a critical role in helping young people in their career choices. And thus, can bring about better labour market outcomes, should jobs become available. This is because labour market information improves the quantity and quality of job matches between employers and jobseekers, it also reduces unemployment spells, and increases labour market efficiency, among other things (Bassanini & Duval, 2006; World Bank, 2009; Golub & Hayat. 2015; Mlatsheni & Ranchhod, 2017; De Lannoy et al., 2018). Therefore, the collection, analysis, and dissemination of labour market information have a pivotal role in informing young jobseekers about employment opportunities and providing indications about which skills are demanded. Furthermore, the availability of reliable and up-to-date labour market information is essential for designing and monitoring youth employment interventions (World Bank, 2009:22). Youth should also be given access to vocational and labour market guidance to understand labour markets and to be able to select the suitable occupation for which to work. This will go a long way in helping people make better choices about what to study, and which careers to go for, while also improving the matching between the labour available to the demand that exists, at any given time, in the labour market.

2.8.8 Other Causes of Unemployment

Although the attempts by both microeconomic and macro-economic scholars to explain youth unemployment appear inconclusive, Mlatsheni and Rospabé (2002), among others, provide and adopt several possible explanations for the South African context. According to Mlatsheni and Rospabé (2002), unemployment is compounded by job-seeking strategies and individual preferences, as explained in job-search theory (see also Zaretskyalso & Coughlin 1995). The job-search theory explains that an individual's decision—whether to participate in the labour market or change jobs—is determined by wages, working hours, benefits, and working conditions of any vacant job (Mlatsheni & Rospabé, 2002:11-12). In addition to that, inequalities (on grounds of gender, race among other things) that occur on the community and individual levels also determine ones access to the labour market. Some research reveal that geographic location can also pose as as a barrier to the youth's employment, with those living outside the major metropolitan having financial challenges to access these areas for work (Matsheni & Rospabe, 2002; Altman, 2009; Bhorat, 2014; Graham et al. 2016). Furthermore, the research finds (in other African countries) that, among young women, causes of high levels of unemployment and underemployment include early marriage (Okojie, 2003; Anyanwu, 2013). This often leads to their inability to participate in the labour market,

or diminishes their chances of accessing better-paying jobs due to employer discrimination. In fact, according to a research by Okojie (2003), many young women drop out of school because of teenage pregnancy and marriage or financial difficulties where parents prefer to educate male children. Girls spend more time doing domestic work than boys, leaving them with less time for study (Okojie, 2003:16). Girls, therefore, end up with less education and fewer skills than boys. This explains why the statistics described in the previous sections show that females are more vulnerable to unemployment than their male counterparts.

Overall, and in conclusion, an orthodox, shorthand analysis of the challenge of youth unemployment would go something like this: unemployment, is a product of the low skills and aspirations of the young unemployed. And it would suggest that the problems of young people becoming NEET or trapped in poor-quality jobs can be solved by giving them more skills or education. However, the discussion above indicates that there is more to people being unemployed than their lack of skills or education. Therefore, there is good reason to doubt the analysis that is provided by the orthodox scholars, and this doubt forces us to consider the other side of 'the employability equation' (McQuaid and Lindsay, 2005:208). This means exploring the demand-side opportunities for work rather than the supposed deficits of the supply side (i.e. the young unemployed). This is because MacDonalds (2011), emphasises that it should be recognised that even if the supply of better-skilled workers increases this does not mean that there will be an equivalent demand from employers for those skills. Confirmatory, the reviewed literature shows that there is more to what contributes to the youth unemployment than the crude explanations given by the Orthodox economics. These findings echo the sentiments of the LMS theory, which observes that unemployment is impacted by exogenous factors just as well as labour market-related factors. Notwithstanding these varied explanations about the causes of unemployment, this discussion proves that there is no one cause of unemployment. It also shows that these causes overlap with one another. They are all interrelated and contribute to the ever-growing incident of unemployment. These multiple and intertwined causes may explain why it is rather challenging to address youth unemployment or unemployment in general. The persistence of unemployment proves that no one strategy can abate or mitigate the incident of unemployment.

Furthermore, the recurring theme from all these outlined causes is that generally, young jobseekers are regarded as being risky to employ, and thus discouraging employers from recruiting them. Unfortunately, another common theme about these outlined causes is that

most findings on labour market outcomes in South Africa are established using only supply-side (worker) data, while determinants of the demand side (firms) are generally unknown. This is mainly driven by the availability of regularly collected supply-side data and the paucity of demand-side data in South Africa (Matsheni & Rospabe, 2002; Godfrey, 2003; Schoer & Rankins, 2011; Graham & De Lannoy, 2016; Fynn, Mader & Oosterom, 2017). Nonetheless, exploring the demand-side factors is necessary as it may well impact jobseekers' employment outcomes in various ways. It is crucial, therefore, to understand the different ways that jobseekers are affected by the demand-side factors; and it is for this reason that this study sought to undertake this demand-side inquiry. In the next section, the thesis explores the effects of youth unemployment, both at the personal and societal levels. These effects or consequences of unemployment paint the grim picture of unemployment; and thus further necessitate research on demand-side factors, in order to understand the impact they have on jobseekers and the resultant effects they get to suffer.

2.9 EFFECTS OF UNEMPLOYMENT ON THE YOUTH

The literature review, up to this point, has shown that unemployment is a significant and pressing life event that has a devastating impact on peoples' lives. Indeed, hinged to the incident of unemployment are the collateral consequences that have adverse economic, social and personal effects (Stafford, Jackson & Banks, 1980; Warr, Jackson & Banks, 1982; O' Brien, 1986; Liem & Liem, 1988; Moller, 1992; Wanberg, 1995; Winkelman & Winkelman, 1998; Dooley, Prause, & Ham-Rowbottom, 2000; Sadava, O'Connor & McCreary, 2000; Winefield, 2002; Dooley, 2003; Paul & Moser, 2009; Meyer, 2014; Mzizi, 2017). This section presents and discusses some of the consequences of unemployment that affect both the unemployed (and the employed) and exacerbates the already existing strain on the efforts to abate unemployment. Indeed, there is a wealth of literature showing that unemployment is a stressful life event that leads to both economic and social-welfare problems such as high levels of poverty and inequality (Rees, 1986; The Presidency, 2011; Meyer, 2014; ILO, 2015). This applies not just to the unemployed but may also affect the employed (e.g., Paul & Moser (2009) explain that they may also suffer increased anxiety over job security).

In essence, unemployment increases the risk of depression, loss of self-esteem and also increases susceptibility to malnutrition, illness among other physical and mental ailments (Dooley, 2003; Paul & Moser, 2009; Meyer, 2014; Mzizi, 2017). Yu (2012:13), submits that there are a plethora of reasons as to why unemployment is a negative phenomenon, from

simple welfare effects to output effects and other social consequences . There are several consequences of unemployment, and they range from those that affect the individual and their family to those that have an impact on the economy as a whole. From the reviewed literature, the consequences can be summarised as follows below (and will be discussed regarding the youth). However, this does not mean they do not overlap with general unemployment. The emphasis of young people is due to the fact that they are the main focus of this research study.

2.9.1 Personal/Individual Consequences

First and foremost, the impact of unemployment takes its toll on the unemployed individual (Fagin, 1979; Muller, Hicks, & Winocur, 1993; Dooley & Prause, 1995; Roux, 2008; Bell & Blanchflower, 2009; Conroy, 2010; Zamfir, 2012; Kluve et al., 2017; Mzizi, 2017). Roux (2008: 51), explains that unemployment implies hunger, misery, and loss of self-esteem for the unemployed people. Roux (2008), continues to describe unemployment as leading to anger and resentment towards a system that has fails to help people to find employment. Literature confirms the sentiments made by Roux (2008), as it maintains that unemployment depreciates human capital, and has a significant negative influence on health, happiness, crime levels, and socio-political stability (see Fryer & Payne, 1986; Feather, 1990; Clark & Oswald, 1994; Whelan, 1994; Clark, 2003; Bell & Blanchflower, 2009; Conroy, 2010; Cramer, 2010; Kluve et al., 2017). Furthermore, persistent and high unemployment and underemployment have significant adverse, longer-term, and scarring consequences for young people that can prolong throughout their adult life. These include a higher risk of future joblessness or being subject to poor-quality jobs, a prolonged period of employment instability, and potentially depressed income growth (Fryer & Payne, 1986; Bolton & Oatley, 1990; Feather, 1990; Donovan & Oddy 1992; Clark & Oswald, 1994; Whelan, 1994; Beland, Birch & Stoddart, 2002; Clark, 2003; Roux, 2008; Bell & Blanchflower, 2009; Conroy, 2010; Meyer, 2014; Kluve et al., 2017).

Moreover, since unemployment is deemed to be far worse among young people, the effects thereof are similarly believed to be more severe for young people with low educational levels; and as a result are in a relatively disadvantaged position compared with their better educated peers (Bell & Blanchflower, 2009; de Witte, 2012; Kluve et al., 2017). For most young people, the transition to adulthood is parallel with the transition into the world of work (Du Toit, 2003; Bell & Blanchflower, 2009; De Witte, Rothmann & Jackson, 2012; Kluve et al., 2017; Mzizi, 2017). Therefore, experiencing unemployment during this transitory stage

makes young people more susceptible to the effects of unemployment from a young age. This lack of employment may turn into long-term effects with little to no hope of breaking out or breaking free from. As stated by the ILO (2015), the costs of unemployment or poor-quality jobs for individuals and societies include reduced self-esteem, discouragement, and diminished levels of health and well-being; which may persist for many years in adulthood (ILO, 2015). Left unaddressed, these effects may lead to social unrest. However, the ILO (2015), believes that there are significant economic and societal pay-offs (i.e., reduction of porverty) if the unemployment situation (and resultant effect) is ameliorated.

2.9.2 Economic Consequences

Apart from their detrimental effects on future wages, employability, and job security, youth unemployment and underemployment also constitute essential costs for the economy and the society (Schlemmer & Worthington, 1996; Du Toit, 2003, 2018; Osinubi, 2005; Kingdon & Knight, 2007; Banerjee et al., 2008; Burger & von Fintel, 2009; Ahmed, 2011; Chanshuai & Zi-juan, 2012; Meyer, 2014; ILO, 2015; Banda H. 2016; Makaringe, 2018). The youth unemployment crisis imposes a high cost, both in terms of the depletion of human and social capital (that remains unsuded in the unemployed people); and it also leads to the loss of opportunities for economic growth for present and future generations that depend on the economy to expand and grow so that it can accommodate them too (Schlemmer & Worthington, 1996; Du Toit, 2003, 2018; Osinubi, 2005; Kingdon & Knight, 2007; Banerjee et al., 2008; Burger & von Fintel, 2009; Ahmed, 2011; Chanshuai & Zi-juan, 2012; Meyer, 2014; ILO, 2015; Banda, 2016; Ahmed, 2011). Instead, the high youth unemployment rate thwarts any country's economic development and poses a critical burden on the government to provide social assistance to the many people that end up needing such welfare (Du Toit, 2003, 2018; National Treasury, 2011: 5; Meyer, 2014; ILO, 2015; Mthembu & Govender, 2015).

Furthermore, prolonged unemployment can lead to an erosion of skills, basically robbing the economy of, otherwise, useful human capital and labour (National Treasury, 2011; ILO, 2015). On a similar note, the absence of income created by unemployment can force families to deny educational opportunities to their children and deprive the economy of those future skills (Turner, 1995: 216). Apart from the social unrest and disgruntlement that unemployment can produce; high unemployment can have a self-perpetuating negative impact on businesses and the country's overall economic health (Ahmed, 2011; ILO, 2015;

Ahmed, 2011). At the same time, the experience of unemployment can take away the security of those who now believe they have to work extra hard to not lose their jobs. This preasure can have a toll on their mental and physical health. Additionally, prolonged unemployment can lead to greater skepticism and pessimism about the value of education and training and this may discourage workers' willingness to invest in the long years of training if it does not pay-off (Banda, 2016; ILO, 2015). This indicates that unemployment not only affects the unemployed but the people with jobs can be affected as well.

2.9.3 Social Consequences

More studies show that persistent unemployment often leads to social problematics such as high crime rates (Igbinovia, 1988; Smith, Devine & Sheley, 1992; Hagan, 1993; Bennell, 2000; Chigunta, 2002; Delius & Glaser, 2002; Okojie, 2003; Ajaegbu, 2012; Urdal, 2012; Azeng & Yogo, 2013; Uddin, 2013; ILO, 2015). Azenge and yogo (2013), are of the mind that where unemployment is high, crime is bound to occur because, without a wage-paying job, people may turn to other ways (often criminal) to meet their economic needs, and also as a way to reduce their boredom. If young people are left with no alternative but to endure unemployment and poverty, they are more likely to create other ways by which they can generate an income (Urdal, 2012: 2; Azeng & Yogo, 2013; ILO, 2015). According to this point of view, the recurrence of service delivery strikes, community unrest, and public violence are a clear manifestations of the frustration of jobless people living in poverty with no sense of hope (Mthembu & Govender, 2015:). In fact, as one of the resultant social consequences, youth unemployment in Africa has also promoted 'gangsterism.' Many jobless young people partake in activities that include armed robbery, car snatching, illegal fuel sales, and illegal importation of arms, many of which have reached crisis levels in several African cities (Igbinovia, 1988; Smith, Devine & Sheley, 1992; Hagan, 1993; Bennell, 2000; Chigunta, 2002; Delius & Glaser, 2002; Okojie, 2003; Ajaegbu, 2012; Urdal, 2012; Azeng & Yogo, 2013; Uddin, 2013; ILO, 2015).

Bennell (2000:5), argued that urban society in Africa is becoming increasingly criminalised, especially with the proliferation of youth gangs. The rise of youth gangsterism poses a threat to urban communities all over Africa (Igbinovia, 1988; Bennell, 2000; Glaser, 2000; Chigunta, 2002; Okojie, 2003). Several studies reveal that delinquency, crime, and drug abuse keep mounting among youth in Africa (Igbinovia, 1988; Okojie, 2003). In South Africa, gangsterism has led to high levels of crime. Indeed, crime in South Africa is a function of the

development and continuation, over the past 30 years, of a "culture of violence, "a normalisation of crime and violence" amongst an "underclass" of negatively socialised and socially excluded youth who constitute a significant proportion of South Africa's population (Glaser, 2000; Peller, 2008; Seggie, 2012). Overall, studies show that majority of prison inmates in some African countries tend to be young people aged 30 years and below, than adults. This high crime rate committed by young people has been attributed to poverty, inequality, and unemployment.

Furthermore, among young women, lack of employment opportunities has contributed to the increasing feminisation of poverty all over Africa. This has also encouraged prostitution as a means of survival in several African towns and cities (Aghatise, 2002; Delius & Glaser, 2002; Taylor, 2002). Even worse, it has encouraged 'trafficking in women and girls' across international borders to engage in prostitution. The sex industry is a particular target for traffickers as it offers great profits at the expense of trafficked migrant women (Aghatise, 2002; Taylor, 2002). Therefore, victims of trafficking are mainly females between the ages of 17-20 years with some as young as 14 years (Aghatise, 2002). For instance, a profile of Ghanaian prostitutes in Netherlands reveals that victims of trafficking are mainly young women, less educated, often semi-literate or illiterate women who are impressionable because they financial security (Aghatise, 2002; Taylor, 2002). In fact, Okojie (2003), finds that poverty, unemployment, and lack of economic prospects, poor education are among the main factors that foster massive migration of educated as well as educationally and socially disadvantaged groups in Africa, including young women. In a nutshell, these above-mentioned instances (which are a reality to many young people) illustrate the adverse social effects that youth unemployment has on young people. In general, unemployment is associated with increases in burglaries, thefts, and drug offenses committed by people who have resorted to their own way of making a living because of little or no hope of finding employment. Therefore, unemployment can be understood as being part of the cycle where involvement in crime reduces subsequent employment prospects and consequently increases the probability of participating in crime (Okojie, 2003:35).

2.9.4 Long-Term Effects of Unemployment

Worse still, some of the worst effects of unemployment are both subtle and very long-lasting (Bell & Padayachee, 1984; Blanchard & Summers, 1986; Budd, Levine & Smith, 1988; Jackman & Layard, 1991; Kokko & Pulkkinen, 2000; Cottle, 2003; Kieselbach, 2003;

Kingdon & Knight, 2004; Katz, 2010; Mlatsheni & Leibbrandt, 2011). As with short-term unemployment, long-term unemployment does not have one specific cause, but is rather the result of multiple social, economic, and individual factors. Whether it is due to layoffs or personal circumstances (i.e., lack of skills), the reasons people become unemployed vary (Jackman & Layard, 1991; Kokko & Pulkkinen, 2000; Cottle, 2003; Kieselbach, 2003; Kingdon & Knight, 2004; Katz, 2010; Mlatsheni & Leibbrandt, 2011; OECD, 2013). However, while the specific causes of long-term unemployment are still a matter of debate amongst experts, recent evidence demonstrates how a combination of employer discrimination and the emotional toll that unemployment has on an individual contributes significantly to the struggles that the long-term unemployed encounter when seeking jobs (Cottle, 2003; Kieselbach, 2003; Kingdon & Knight, 2004; Katz, 2010; Mlatsheni & Leibbrandt, 2011; OECD, 2013).

Long periods of unemployment for young people have been shown to have potential "scarring" effects, which have a harmful impact in later life, particularly for NEETs youth. Being unemployed for a long time can lower future income levels, skills validity, future employability, job satisfaction, happiness, and health levels (OECD, 2013; ILO, 2015). Worryingly, unemployment while young, especially of long duration, appears to be associated with permanent scars rather than the temporary blemishes that result for older workers (Ellwood, 1984). Many older workers can get out of unemployment reasonably quickly because of the experience that they possess, while young people, by virtue of lacking experience, do not have the same chances as they struggle to enter the labour market. The scarring effect of youth unemployment has two components: first, for the young, a spell of unemployment does not end with that spell; it raises the probability of being unemployed in later years. Second, early spells of unemployment also carry a wage penalty (Jackman & Layard, 1991; Kokko & Pulkkinen, 2000; Cottle, 2003; Kieselbach, 2003; Kingdon & Knight, 2004; Katz, 2010; Mlatsheni & Leibbrandt, 2011; OECD, 2013). These effects are much severe for the young people than for older people who suffer unemployment. In turn, this long-term unemployment may lead to what other researchers refer to as 'idleness' whereby youths congregate at bars and eating places to drink or smoke marijuana, for most parts of the day (Stafford, Jackson & Banks, 1980; Warr, Jackson & Banks, 1982; O' Brien, 1986; Liem & Liem, 1988; Moller, 1992; Wanberg, 1995; Winkelman & Winkelman, 1998; Dooley, Prause,& Ham-Rowbottom, 2000; Sadava, O'Connor & McCreary, 2000; Winefield, 2002; Dooley, 2003; Paul & Moser, 2009; Meyer, 2014; Mzizi, 2017).

Such places (bars, clubs, street corners) induce the establishment of street gangs and criminal activities. In general, large-scale unemployment among youth feeds the development of 'street youth' in Africa. The street youth in African towns and cities, denied legitimate means of livelihood, grow up in a culture that triggers criminal behaviour (Okojie, 2003). As a result of these effects, youth unemployment poses grave economic and social problems for the African continent in line with global trends. The overall situation of young people in Africa requires urgent and serious attention. Youth should be made a priority group for employment and development programmes if their socio-economic situation is to improve (Okojie, 2003; Bell & Blanchflower, 2010). It is against this background—that paints the grim picture of youth unemployment and its effects on the youth—that this research study took an interest in exploring the demand-side factors that impact young people. Many governments across the globe have since adopted various multi-pronged intervention strategies to address youth unemployment and the incidental consequences. The following and last section of this chapter explores some of the common strategies enacted to abate unemployment, and negate its many consequences.

2.10 CURRENT UNEMPLOYMENT INTERVENTION STRATEGIES: A GLOBAL VIEW

The UN report of 2019 estimated that at the end of 2018, about 7.6 billion people were living on planet earth. The report also points out that developing and sustaining the livelihood of all these people, especially those who were previously disadvantaged, should be the top priority of any policy agenda. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), that are integrated and indivisible, serve as a global framework for achieving the Sustainable Development agenda. These goals all work towards enhancing the well-being of people across the world (World Bank, 2009; ILO, 2016; UN, 2019). According to the UN and the ILO, labour markets are central to achieving the SDGs and promoting human-centered development. This is because paid work is the main source of income for the vast majority of households across the world. Also because the organisation of work can help to reinforce the core principles of equality, democracy, sustainability, and social cohesion (WESO, 2019:33). All these core principles characterise the SDGs. In particular, the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 calls upon the international community to "[p]romote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all" (ILO, 2016; UN, 2018; WESO, 2019). This goal alone emphasises the importance of labour markets as an environment that gives people the opportunity to make a living. Therefore, the 2030 Agenda

for Sustainable Development has placed the need and urgency of attaining full and productive employment and decent work for all squarely at the centre of the new development vision (with youth explicitly identified as a key target group) (Daly, 1990, 1996; Puerto & Either, 2007; Robalino & Either, 2013; Šileika & Bekerytė, 2013; ILO, 2016; Kluve et al., 2017).

Indeed, while governments and policymakers have undertook to curtail the crisis of unemployment in general, addressing the youth employment challenge continues to rank high in both international and local development priorities. One of the strategies against underemployment and unemployment has been the creation of jobs—and the added challenge of creating 'decent jobs' (National Development Plan 2030, 2013; Uddin, 2013; Meyer, 2014; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; Kluve et al., 2017; Paver, 2019). This strategy has proved to be difficult to achieve (due to the complexity of the various abovementioned macro and micro factors of unemployment) over the years as the labour market absorption rate remains relatively low compared to the fast growing rate of jobseekers. The SDG goal 8, which aims to create jobs and decent work, has a particular bearing on this thesis, due to it being a demand-side strategy that counts on the involvement of employers in order for it to be implemented.

Therefore, the thesis is inspired to investigate the demand-side factors so as to understand how these factors either trump or persuade the employment of young jobseekers. This is because the strategy to promote job creation involves employers (among other stakeholders), thus showing the crucial role of employers in the labour market, as well as in creating employment. Consequently, in exploring whether employers do create jobs for job seekers, this study sought out to investigate the ways in which employers recruitment practices—as well as their dispositions of young people and the government dispositions—impede the employment of young jobseekers (as the most vulnerable group in the labour market). Governments across the world have embarked on various programmes and projects to promote the (lean) employment of young people (Okojie, 2003; Development Bank of Southern Africa, 2011; García, 2011; Görlich, Stepanok & Al-Hussami, 2013; Meyer, 2014; Brixiová, Ncube & Bicaba, 2015; Resnick & Thurlow, 2015; Kluve et al., 2017). African governments have recognised the need to address youth employment in national efforts to reduce poverty and promote socio-economic growth (Meyer, 2014; Mthembu & Govender, 2015; Kluve et al., 2017; Paver et al., 2019; WESO; 2019). According to the ILO (2012:17), governments respond to the crisis of unemployment in various ways either by having national youth specific policies, and/or youth employment action plans and related programmes,

and/or have integrated the issue into national development agendas and/or in particular sector policies.

Indeed, youth joblessness has been a problem in many countries for decades. As a result, it has been the subject of a wide range of policy interventions (World Bank, 2004). According to Bell and Blanchflower (2010:9), hundreds of different policies dealing with youth unemployment have been designed and implemented. In response to the substantial increases in youth unemployment during the 1980s and early 1990s, there was a significant increase in policy initiatives targeted at the youth labour market (Bell & Blanchflower, 2010). The OECD Jobs Study (1994:27), finds that policies to improve the working of the labour market are critical for ameliorating high levels of youth unemployment. Thus, the study suggested that:

> A progressive shift of resources is needed from passive income support to active measures. Active labour market policies improve access to the labour market and jobs, develop job-related skills, and promote more efficient labour markets (OECD Jobs Study 1994).

With OECD encouragement, many member countries introduced active labour market policies (Dar & Tzannatos, 1999; Betcherman, Dar & Olivia's, 2004; Bell & Blanchflower, 2010; Kluve & Weber, 2010: Caliendo, Künn & Schmidl, 2011). Active labour market policies (ALMPs) are government programmes that intervenene in the labour market to help the unemployed find employment (Bell & Blanchflower, 2010). Many of these programmes grew out of earlier public works projects—particularly those implemented under the New Deal—designed to combat widespread unemployment in the developed world during the interwar period (Bell & Blanchflower, 2010; Kluve & Weber, 2010: Caliendo, Künn & Schmidl, 2011. According to Kluve et al. (2017:86), active labour market policies require active participation in programmes that enhance labour market integration. This is a requirement that distinguishes ALMPs from other labour market—and social protection—policies, such as unemployment insurance schemes and non-conditional transfers. In the case of active labour market policies, the economic rationale relies on market-clearing (i.e., achieving a match between labour demand and supply) and market efficiency (for instance, through job-search assistance, provision of labour market information, and pre-screening of programme applicants (Kluve et al., 2017). Active labour market policies can also promote labour supply by offering training, stimulating labour demand through labour-intensive

public employment programmes, entrepreneurship, and self-employment measures, or adjusting the structure of demand by offering employment subsidies (Auer et al., 2008; Bell & Blanchflower, 2010; Kluve & Weber, 2010: Caliendo, Künn & Schmidl, 2011; ILO. 2016).

Betcherman, Dar and Olivas (2004), add that even though the active labour market policies tends to focus on economic relevance, they also can have significant social and political dimensions. For example, active labour market policies can encourage the social inclusion of disadvantaged groups. However, the downside of the active labour market policies, which also led to the thesis focusing on the demand-side factors, is that a myriad of active labour market policies have focused on the supply side of the labour market (Martin, 1998; Robinson, 2000; Devin & Hogarth, 2004; De Lannoy et al., 2018). The key aim of these policies is to improve the 'employability' of the long-term unemployed by increasing their skills, neutralising obstacles due to personal and family circumstances, improving job search and enhancing the willingness to take up work (Meager, 1998:5). But the 'demand-side,' and particularly the role that business may play in the perpetuation of unemployment, is often overlooked by policymakers (Devin & Hogarth, 2004). There is little consideration of the extent to which these employers provide employment opportunities for job seekers (North et al., 2003:). Again, it is for this reason that the thesis focuses on the demand-side factors and not the already abundant supply-side factors—to explore how demand-side shapes the employment, or lack thereof, of young people.

The literature reviewed shows that government interventions are as old as the issue of unemployment itself. Longstanding government interventions have taken multiple forms. Similarly, in South Africa, since 1990, a wide range of policy efforts and a range of interventions have been created to deal with youth unemployment (De Lannoy et al., 2018:89). This section reviews the labour market interventions that fall into the category of active labour market policies. Kluve et al. (2017:22), define these policies as policies that "provide labour market integration measures to those looking for jobs, usually the unemployed; but also the underemployed and even the employed who are looking for better jobs. Strategies that have a direct bearing on employers' role and activity/involvement include training and skills development, subsidised employment, and labour-intensive public employment programmes. These are also strategies that have also been designed to curb youth unemployment, but have little or no bearing on the employers' role include employment services and entrepreneurship programmes (Kluve et al., 2017; De Lannoy et al.,

2018;UN, 2018; ILO, 2019). All these strategies will be briefly discussed to give a sense of the overall strategies that have been designed to mitigate unemployment globally.

These strategies show, on the one hand, that though unemployment is a big problem, many different efforts have been made to try and curtail the issue. However, on the other hand, it also begs another question as to whether these strategies are achieving the goal for which they were created. This question will be addressed in section 2.10.6 below. Nonetheless, the proposed strategies enacted to address unemployment can be summed up as follows: education, vocational training, and entrepreneurship. In fact, Kluve et al. (2017), cluster these interventions into four categories: (i) *Training and Skills development*, (ii) *Entrepreneurship promotion*, (iii) *Employment services*, and (iv) *Subsidized* employment (Kluve et al., 2017:27-29). This categorisation represents a lot of interventions that have been adopted across the globe and, therefore, will be discussed below to paint the picture of the current and typical intervention strategies used around the world. The thesis will first discuss the demand-side oriented strategies (those that need the agency/participation of employers), followed by those that do not necessarily involve employers. Particular reference will be made to the South African context since it is the domestic place where the research was conducted.

2.10.1 Training and Skills Development

Education and skills are collectively considered the core factor in determining labour market prospects of any jobseekers (Schmidt, 2002; National Treasury, 2011; Biavaschi et al., 2012; Robalino, 2012; ILO, 2014). This is a view largely shared by the HCT as it maintains that one's skills are the factor that determines their employment and wage outcomes in the labour market; thereby, attributing unemployment to lack of education and skills. For this reason, skills training programmes are consequently the most widely used labour market intervention to address unemployment among young people across the globe (Betcherman, Godfrey, Puerto, Rother & Stavreska, 2007). In fact, these programmes are increasingly delivered as a complement to other labour market measures (Fares & Puerto, 2009; Robalino, 2012; Wilson, 2013). Biavarschi et al. (2012), explains that training and skills development usually consists of programmes that fall outside the formal education system, but that offer skills training to young people as a way to improve their employability and their chances of accessing the labour market. In other words, the main purpose of skills training programmes is to develop the employment-relevant skills of jobseekers and to make them employable. Broadly speaking, and as described by the ILO (2012), these skills refer to a set of job-specific

technical skills, but also include non-technical soft skills, such as self-management, teamwork, and communication. This point—about the kinds of skills demanded by employers—is revisited and dealt with in chapter four.

This section, however, briefly discusses some of the general strategies that have been enacted to facilitate skills development among young people who often (for various reasons) do not have skills. Kraak (2013), and De Lannoy et al. (2018), are among a couple of authors that claim that in South Africa, the most widespread interventions amongst those assessed are programmes that offer skills training to young people as a strategy for addressing youth unemployment. Underscoring all these programmes is an assumption (compatible with the HCT premise) that a lack of skills amongst young jobseekers is what fundamentally drives the incident of youth unemployment. Therefore, the programmes that have been created in that regard include (i) apprenticeships, which are focused on learning a trade (such as boiler-making or plumbing); (ii) learnerships, which are usually focused on non-trade jobs where the incumbent is someone with a matric as their highest level of education; (iii) and internships, which are typically for individuals with some form of post-secondary qualification (National Planning Commission, 2011; National Treasury, 2011; Graham, 2014; Kluve et al., 2017). Even though there are other interventions that serve to develop skills, apprenticeships, learnerships, and internships are adduced as crucial vocational training mechanisms in the National Skills Development Strategy (Kraak, 2013).

In essence, the purpose of these programmes is to promote the placement of young people into entry-level posts and ensuring the development of scarce skills in certain sectors. It is also worth noting that most of these programmes are sector-specific, working in partnership with private sector parties that have identified skills gaps (such as business process outsourcing or the automotive industry) (De Lannoy et al., 2018). However, the bulk of programmes are provided by national, provincial, and local government or the SETAs. The private sector often acts as a partner (National Commission Plan, 2011; Kraak, 2013; Kluve. 2014). Given the objective of these programmes which is to ultimately promote job creation, it is only natural that there are studies that have already been conducted to assess the effectiveness of these programmes. For instance, a study by Kruss and Colleagues (2012), who conducted a rigorous investigation of both learnerships and apprenticeships, found that learnerships seem to have more substantial and positive impacts than apprenticeships when compared together. However, they also clarify that contrary to popular belief, both these

programmes have strong positive effects on job placements in their own respect, with high retention of the participants of up to five years after completion of their work-integrated learning. In addition, regarding the learnership programmes, in particular, most participants reported an increase in soft skills, but not technical, numeracy, or literacy skills. The perception of the participants was that it did not enhance their employability beyond the employers they were already with, thus suggesting that the training is job-specific, rather than relevant to the sector. This is in contrast to the apprenticeship participants who reported that their technical and soft skills have increased, and that they were employable even to other employers (Kruss & Colleagues, 2012).

Another study by Lenvinsohn, Rankin, Roberts, and Schoer (2014), also assessed learnerships that involved a comparison over time and between groups. Their comparison included an assessment of young people who went through learnerships, and those who did not. Their findings paint a slightly different picture from those of Kruss and colleagues (2012). Although Lenvinsohn et al. (2014), report a positive employment effect, this effect is not statistically significant. They also consider other outcomes pertaining to the quality of work. Overall, their findings show that learnership participants were more likely to earn slightly higher wages than non-participants, and that they were happy in their jobs in the short term. However, they also point out that this latter gain was not sustained over time. Which, they infer, may be explained by the fact that there was no effect discernible on promotion outcomes. Nonetheless, Levinsohn et al. (2014), conclude that learnerships provide some positive effects, but that these wane over time, particularly in relation to the quality of work. The positive effects may be explained by the fact that through learnerships, 'individuals learn practical skills, and are better able to prove their actual productivity to firms since they are working in an actual firm environment. In addition, since the learnership participants also get a certificate upon completion, this also proves their abilities to other firms' (Levinsohn et al. 2014: 16). Both these studies present evidence that suggests positive effects of work-integrated learning on the employment of young people. Yet, the question that arises is concerning the longevity of the impact of the learnership, as also raised by De Lannoy et al. (2018:106). However, as far as the results show positive effects, this suggests that these programmes may go some way in addressing unemployment; even though it also begs another question regarding how many people these programmes can reach. Further research is needed to address these questions.

2.10.2 Subsidised Employment

One main constraint faced by young job market entrants—particularly in developing economies—is that labour demand is not enough to keep up with the increasingly high supply of labour. It is for this reason that employment wage subsidies have been used in both developed and developing countries to stimulate employment levels (specially amongst young people) through subsidised employment (Altman, 2009; Holden, 2013; Independent Evaluation Group, 2013; Kluve et al., 2017; De Lannoy et al., 2018; World Bank, 2018; ILO, 2019). Subsidised employment interventions comprise two main areas: wage subsidies and labour-intensive public employment programmes. Both of which are designed to increase the job and training opportunities for the unemployed youth (Kluve et al., 2017; De Lannoy et al., 2018). The main aim of both these strategies is to foster other ways for unemployed young people (who cannot secure a permanent job in the labour market) to gain access and remain integrated and connected to economic and social life (National Treasury, 2011; Kluve et al., 2017; De Lannoy et al., 2018). However, in general, these programmes offer short-term interventions but can have longer-term labour market effects (Kluve et al., 2017). According to the World Bank (2009), employee-based subsidies linked to other active labor market programs such as training and job counseling can be considered to boost the employability of unskilled workers who participate in these programmes. In addition to that, employer-based subsidies tend to cost less.

In essence, a wage subsidy (explored in this section) is one type of intervention that aims to mitigate youth unemployment by offering a subsidy to firms that will reduce the cost for them to be able to employ young people (World Bank, 2009; National Treasury, 2011; Levinsohn, 2014; De Lannoy et al., 2018). Wage subsidies come in various forms and can be offered through various mechanisms, ranging from direct transfers to firms or workers, to reductions in social security contributions or payroll taxes or tax credits (World Bank, 2009). There are two types of subsidies: the employer-side and employer-side subsidy. Kluve et al. (2017), posits that employer-side subsidies serve to lessen the costs or risks that come with the unknown productivity of the person to be employed. The on-the-job training that is provided by these subsidies allows disadvantaged young people to gain access in the labour market (Kluve et al., 2017). In contrast, employee-side subsidies encourage labour supply by increasing the returns from employment, and thereby increasing incentives to seek and secure employment. While it is believed that employer-side subsidies may well promote more active

job-search, providing employee-side earning supplements may allow for certain socio-demographic groups to be targeted (De Lannoy et al., 2018).

Furthermore, whereas employer-side subsidies deal with a lack of labour demand, employee-side subsidies are used in instances were there is low labour susupply (i.e., due to reservation wages) (Kluve et al., 2017). Nonetheless, De Lannoy et al. (2018), point out that evidence on the impact of youth-targeted wage subsidies in developing countries is limited, and where it is available, the results often have mixed outcomes. For example, evaluations looking into wage subsidies in Jordan (see Groh, Krishnan, McKenzie & Vishwanath, 2012) and South Africa (see Levinsohn, Rankin, Roberts & Schoer, 2014) show positive effects, though rather short-lived, and narrow participation from firms (De Lannoy et al., 2018). In line with global efforts against youth unemployment, South Africa has also adopted ‘wage subsidies' as the most recent response to youth unemployment. This was introduced by the National Treasury and was initially called the Youth Wage Subsidy—also known as the ETI (National Treasury, 2011; De Lannoy et al., 2018). The negotiations leading up to the implementation of the ETI were sparked by a conversation about whether the price of labour, and particularly the labour of new entrants where productivity is unknown, is a key determinant of unemployment. And whether the existing labour market system is inclusive of new entrants (COSATU, 2012). The administration of wage subsidies may vary with each country, but in South Africa the national government, particularly the National Treasury, is the primary driver of the ETI. It is thus effected through the South African Revenue Service (SARS), with the private sector and NGO employers benefitting from a state subsidy on the Pay As You Earn (PAYE) tax that the company is liable to pay. It thereby reduces the cost of hiring young workers without reducing their salaries. Therefore, when claiming the ETI, employers are encouraged to provide on-the-job training for young employees. Employers may claim the incentive for new employees aged 18–29 years or retain 18–24-year-olds who are employed in existing jobs. Some studies using tax data have assessed whether the ETI has propelled job creation for young people over the two to three years of its implementation.

Two studies, using different approaches, but comparing ETI and non-ETI claiming firms (before and after the introduction of the ETI), reveal that on aggregate, there is no significant impact of the subsidy on youth employment (Ebrahim, Leibbrandt & Ranchhod 2017; Makgetla 2017). However, the studies acknowledge that there is moderate increase in employment of youth in small firms (less than 200 employees and less than 50 employees respectively). They also show that there is a high number of subsidies claimed for jobs that

either existed or would have been created in the absence of the ETI relative to jobs created because of the ETI. In contrast to these findings, Rankin and Chaterjee (2016), when looking within ETI claiming firms, find a positive effect of the ETI on overall job creation for young people, and this happens particularly in small firms (De Lannoy et al., 2018). Therefore, as pointed out by Kluve et al. (2017), the evidence on the overall effectiveness of the ETI is mixed. Nonetheless, there seems to be some agreement that there are positive effects amongst small firms. Amongst employed youth, small firms are the main employers, thus suggesting that more focus on these companies might be warranted (Meyer, 2016; De Lannoy et al., 2018).

A similar strategy that aims to achieve the same effect was one created in March 2018. In collaboration with organised business and labour, the government launched the Youth Employment Service (YES) aimed at providing one million young South Africans with paid one-year internships to acquire a first workplace experience and with tools and resources to become entrepreneurs. YES was announced to give impetus to much-anticipated job creation and youth employment in SA (Gerber, 2018; Investec, 2018; Yes4Youth, 2018). It is available for employing black youths between the ages of 18-35 for at least 12 months on a fixed-term or temporary contract (Gerber, 2018; SABPP, 2018). Though YES has just commenced, it has also been met with mixed reactions, with some critics arguing that the initiative is a mere substitution of the existing accredited training and leadership programmes; and thus would not correct the structural deficiencies in the South African economy (Gerber, 2018). Other initiatives outlined in President Ramaphosa's State of the Nation address include efforts towards re-industrialisation to spur job and export growth, local procurement efforts (BRICS, 2018). Therefore, the strategy of employment subsidies is particularly relevant for this study as it speaks to the role of employers in creating jobs. It is because of this strategy that the study sought to investigate whether employers consider recruiting the youth, especially in light of this strategy as it encourages employers to create jobs for the youth.

2.10.3 Labour-Intensive Public Employment Programmes

These programmes (also known as public works) are typically espoused to boots aggregate demand for labour in contexts where markets are unable to create jobs on scale that is needed (Moeti, 2014; Kluve et al., 2017; De Lanny et al., 2018). In addition to their ability to create jobs, public employment programmes also generate income, while also delivering public

assets and services. In fact, Lieuw-Kie-Song, Philip, Tsukamoto and Van Imschoot (2010), explain that despite that these programmes are mainly for infrastructure and construction works, they are also used for projects in the social sector, environmental services, and multi-sectoral, community-driven programmes. In essence, these programmes recruit unemployed young people for public jobs, who are then offered a stipend to allow them to make what little living they can make (De Lannoy et al., 2018). As also observed by Kluve et al. (2017), these programmes usually target unskilled, disadvantaged, or long-term unemployed workers mainly to give them exposure to the labour market, and also preclude the loss of human capital which occurs during periods of unemployment. While public employment programmes have often been occasionally used in times of crises (such as seasonal shocks or economic recession), they are increasingly used as a strategy of wider employment policies (Lieuw-Kie-Song et al., 2010). They have, particularly, become an intervention for addressing youth unemployment (De Lannoy et al., 2018), serving both as a means to integrate unemployed young people into the labour market, and as tool to expose them to work experience that they often lack. Certainly, with these programmes young people are given the opportunity to "play an active role in the community and national development while learning new skills, increasing their employability, and contributing to their overall personal development" (Cunningham, McGinnis, Verdú, Tesliuc & Verner, 2008:48).

Similarly, in South Africa, another key policy approach to addressing youth unemployment has been the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) and Community Works Programme (CWP), both of which have significant youth targets. According to De Lannoy et al. (2018), there has been noticeable success in terms of meeting and exceeding these targets. In 2004 the programme was re-launched with massive expansion targets as the EPWP. Recognising the low skills levels of the unemployed, the EPWP was initiated to address this skills deficit by providing temporary employment for low-skilled unemployed people. Therefore. The EPWP provides an income to promote economic inclusion; support SMMEs; and train EPWP participants (De Lannoy et al., 2018). Despite the focus on decent work in the mandate of the EPWP, the Code of Good Conduct of Public Works programmes permits public works employees to be paid below the minimum wage, given that it is short term temporary nature of employment. According to Samson (2007), the average duration of an EPWP job is four months, with the expectation that those who have participated should exit from the programme to seek employment with the skills they have obtained. However, some times many people are re-employed into EPWP programmes.

2.10.4 Entrepreneurship Programmes

Another key intervention deemed as a strategy to address youth unemployment has to do with developing and supporting youth entrepreneurship (UN, 2018). Fundamentally, entrepreneurship programmes promote skills in young people with the purpose of creating and managing sustainable and efficient businesses that will be able to create more jobs (Kojo & Oseifuah, 2010; Naong, 2011; Smith & Beasley, 2011;; ILO, 2012; Smit & Watkins, 2012; Salam, 2013). These programmes often include the provision of micro-credit and start-up loans to support new firm creation (Shokunbim, Raimi & Ajewole, 2013; Souaré, 2014; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; Ogbimi, 2015; Yunus, 2017). While initial programmes are mainly implemented by the government, international research reveals that these programmes often also tend to attract private sector and non-government financing and implementation (ILO, 2012; Smit & Watkins, 2012; Souaré, 2014; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; Kluve et al., 2017). According to the National Treasury (2011), entrepreneurship promotion programmes aim to diminish the barriers and costs that impede young unemployed and underemployed people from starting-up sustaining a business. Since there is a narrow scope of formal wage employment in developing countries, working on increasing (formal) self-employment among the labour force is considered an important mechanism to create more employment (Gindling & Newhouse, 2012). Therefore, a multitude of measures have been enacted to mitigate the mumerous internal and external challenges that self-employed and small-scale entrepreneurs often face (Kluve et al., 2017).

All things being equal, entrepreneurship programmes tend to increase employment (UN, 2018). According to Kluve at al. (2017), the assumption is that benefactors are usually in good stead to set up a new business after receiving funds and/or training. Therefore, an alternative to reducing unemployment is encouraging entrepreneurship, which can foster job creation, and opportunities to make a living not only for the budding entrepreneurs, but also for the people for whom their business will create jobs. In fact, Kluve et al (2017), maintains that an enterprise and entrepreneurial culture are of primary importance, and societies that appreciate entrepreneurship and promote its values and norms can create a dynamic and vibrant class of young entrepreneurs. Similarly, De Lannoy et al. (2018), explains that empirical evidence illustrates that educating young people about starting their own businesses, and how to deal with the risks thereof, increases the tendency towards adopting entrepreneurship as a career option.

Although few entrepreneurial programmes have been systematically evaluated, as held by Graham and Mlatsheni (2015), Kluve et al. (2017) and De Lannoy et al. (2018), the World Bank argues that these measures tend to yield considerably positive—though short-term effects—on the employment probabilities of young participants (UN, 2018). Nonetheless, these programmes are often subject to high drop-out rates, and a high failure rate of the businesses created if participants are not well selected (World Bank, 2007; Davies, 2008; National Treasury, 2011; Karanda & Toledano; 2012; Graham & Mlatsheni; 2015; UN, 2018). In South Africa, the NYDA (among other organisations) runs several entrepreneurship programmes for the country's youth (National Treasury, 2011). These include education on entrepreneurship to young people both in and out of school; business development support in the form of business planning, marketing, and branding; linkages to procurement opportunities for young entrepreneurs to act as distributing agents for medium and large enterprises; as well as the provision of micro, small and medium finance for business start-ups (National Treasury, 2011:44). Therefore, consolidating and strengthening small business financial and advisory support (from both public and private sector capacity) should contribute to the the needed growth of employment opportunities that can see many people being employed—young and old (Davies, 2008; National Treasury, 2011; Steenkamp & Van der Merwe, 2011; Graham & Mlatsheni; 2015; De Lannoy et al., 2018).

2.10.5 Employment Service

Employment services programmes are other strategies espoused as a response to youth unemployment (Kluve et al., 2017). These programmes can be implemented in two ways: Job placement programmes and job-search assistance services. Job placement programmes take into considering the existence of information asymmetries, and, mainly, incompleteness and inaccuracies of information in the labour market. Therefore, they aim to improve the job-matching process by disseminating information and giving support to both sides (demand and supply) of the labour market. On the one hand, these programmes work to inform young jobseekers about suitable job opportunities (a service which is of particular relevance to youth who have only recently entered the labour market, and are experiencing difficulties in marketing themselves or lack the knowledge, information, and networks to find job openings) (Kluve et al., 2017). On the other hand, they provide information to potential employers about unemployed youth who can be employed. According to Kluve et al. (2017), the underscoring idea behind these programmes is to facilitate the matching of employment

opportunities with jobseekers while decreasing the costs and risks to employers connected with recruiting young people (Kluve et al., 2017).

The second type of intervention is the job-search assistance services, which refers to job-search training, educational or career guidance, counselling and monitoring programmes. Such programmes primarily target disadvantaged or demotivated young people who are disconnected from the labour market (Kluve et al., 2017). In essence, the main objective of these programmes is to improve the intensity, motivation, and effectiveness of the job search for the recepients of these services. Included in these services are mentoring programmes which are offered to young people without jobs, those who are still in school—whereby mentors would encourage mentees to stay in education or on-the-job training. Mentorships are also offered to those who have just entered the labour market who may need post-placement support (Kluve et al., 2017). However, in some countries, employment agencies adopt a case-management approach by which they identify barriers to employment and design individual action plans through which they refer jobseekers to appropriate interventions, and follow through on these interventions by monitoring job-search activity. According to Walther and Pohl (2005), this approach has been considered to be the most effective method providing these services. Whereas in some countries, public employment agencies are the primary providers of employment services. While other countries have moved into subcontracting, which Kluve et al. (2017), believe plays a critical role for private employment agencies to address mismatches and information failures in the labour market (Kluve et al., 2017). This point may be challenged by many authors who are of the view that subsontractig as a form of non-standard employment, only serves employers more than it does the employees (see section 2.7.2)

2.10.6 Critique of Current Unemployment Interventions

Notwithstanding the employment strategies/programmes/interventions and the considerable work they have achieved, unemployment and underemployment are still on a perpetual rise. As a response to this perpetuity there are several critics that have both acknowledged the negative and positive outcomes of these interventions, but all conclude that more work still needs to be done to address unemployment. In fact, there has been a number of reasons that have been attributed to the miniscule efficiency (and sometimes inefficiency) of some of the strategies in tackling unemployment. For instance, the OECD (2013:44), submits that rigid policy delivery frameworks, insufficient capacities, and a lack of strategic approach at the

local level are often the factors that undermine or discourage the support that unemployed young people need. These reasons provided by the OECD (2013), summarise some of the recurring reasons that the reviewed literature outlines as to why the implementation of the strategies to fight unemployment has not been as successful as is desired. It follows from this consideration that successfully addressing the youth employment challenge requires a coherent and integrated response that recognises the particularities of different contexts. Conversely, many countries' interventions have focused on programmes that are narrow in scope, limited in time, and are often biased toward urban areas (Kluve et al., 2017).

Indeed, what is apparent at this point, is that the rising number of underemployment and unemployment rates prove that the target of achieving "full and productive employment and decent work for all … and equal pay for work of equal value" remains out of reach (ILO, 2018). This is because barriers preventing young people from a successful transition into employment are often multifaceted in nature, and are quite complex. Therefore, any strategy that is designed to curb unemployment need to come from a wide array of policy areas that can address the different, checkered factors that contribute to unemployment (Bhorat, 2008; Marock, 2008; Pollin, Epstein, Heintz & Ndikuman, 2009; Chibba & Luiz, 2011; Fourie, 2013; Mago, 2014). Many scholars have suggested that, it is at the local level that government policies can be integrated and combined with place-based initiatives to provide multi-dimensional responses to complex problems that come with youth unemployment (Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; Graham & De Lannoy, 2016; WESO, 2018). Yet, in practice, too often, programmes are delivered in isolation from each other, with uneven degrees of coverage and limited capacity to reach out to the most in need (De Lannoy et al., 2018).

Contrarily, there is a broadly held view that productive employment and decent work for young people cannot be achieved through fragmented and isolated interventions (Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; Graham & De Lannoy, 2016; WESO, 2018). Instead, there must be sustained, determined, and concerted action from a wide range of actors. The consensus from these suggestions is that youth employment is a cross-cutting and high-priority issue that needs to be addressed within the framework of an interdisciplinary, multi-sectoral, and multi-stakeholder approach (ILO, 2012:52). This is especially apropos given that Kulve et al. (2017), asserts that overall, youth employment interventions increase the employment and allows young people who participate in them to make a living. But the effect is small with a lot of variation between programmes. For instance, in South Africa: although there have been numerous employability interventions for young people, few programmes have been

implemented on a large scale or proven to be sustainable in the long run. Further, few have been rigorously assessed for their impact (Moleke, 2003; De Lannoy et al., 2018).

Considering these short-comings of current strategies, it remains, then, that an integrated and coherent approach that combines macro-economic and micro-economic interventions is needed to address both labour demand and supply drivers of unemployment. The (ILO, 2015), and BRICS (2018), also suggest that the quantity and quality of employment, which augments innovative interventions, is critical to addressing the specific vulnerabilities and needs of young people during the transition to the world of work. Indeed, equipping South African youths (as is needed in most countries) with relevant skills and formal qualifications is a mammoth challenge (Bhorat, 2008; Marock, 2008; Pollin, Epstein, Heintz & Ndikuman, 2009; Chibba & Luiz, 2011; Fourie, 2013), and strengthening these efforts will also be instrumental in realising the potential benefits of integration and the associated structural transformation (Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; Graham & De Lannoy, 2016; BRICS, 2018; WESO, 2018). Therefore, evidence suggests that, while major structural challenges are underlying the high levels of unemployment among the youth, there are also some promising options that can lessen the challenge of unemployment. For instance, Graham & De Lannoy (2016), propose that South Africa could begin by adjusting the way in which employers recruit their employees, particularly for entry-level jobs. They believe that if society at large recognised the youths' willingness to work, and key role-players engaged with them in ways that made job searches easier and less expensive, there would be an opportunity to better connect young people with the jobs they may be able to fill.

It should be understood, as illustrated above, that youth unemployment is not an isolated issue; it reflects economic, geographic, demographic, and other conditions; and the particularities of each country. Youth specific policies will be more effective when they are aligned with other policies and priorities and when they consider the economic and social contexts. According to the World Bank (2009), any policies/ strategies created to fight against unemployment need to be integrated with broader development frameworks and be made up of two key elements: an integrated strategy for growth and job creation in both rural and urban areas. As well as targeted interventions to help young people overcome the specific barriers they face in accessing and remaining in the labour market (World Bank, 2009). The main challenge for governments, however, is to determine how to bridge the short to long-term perspective and to identify the appropriate policies to absorb the youth in the economy (World Bank, 2009). Simply put the solution to the youth unemployment problem is: more

jobs for young people. While a comprehensive approach to sustaining aggregate demand and boosting overall employment is a necessary condition for improving youth employment prospects; focussed and specific attention on opportunities for young people is equally important (ILO, 2015; BRICS, 2018).

The South African government, as well as many governments across the globe, echo this sentiment. Currently President Ramaphosa has reverberated this sentiment, stating that tackling youth uneployment is the top agenda of the government (Ramaphosa. 2018). There is also heightened recognition of the need to work in partnership. Clearly the primary responsibility for promoting youth employment lies with governments. Therefore, coherence, coordination and cooperation are needed across different government institutions and agencies, at central and local levels (De Lannoy et al., 2018). The challenge at stake, however, is daunting, and the responsibility goes beyond the national level. This calls for renewed efforts to work together in a concerted and effective way means governments, the social partners, civil society, the international community, and young people themselves, all have an essential contribution to make to this process (World Bank, 2009; De Lannoy et al., 2018). Considering section 2.10.5 and this current section, it can be concluded that the strategies that have been adopted on a global scale and locally seem to strike a balance between the supply and demand-side. We see that some strategies target job-seekers themselves, and some promote employment by incentivising employers to employ young people. While not underplaying the impact of the supply-side strategies or interventions, the research seeks to focus on the demand-side strategies. This is fundamentally a focus on employers: whether and how they take heed of these strategies, and what their experiences and perceptions are concerning these strategies. It is important to realise that there is no single policy/strategy that can offer the solution for the long standing issue of unemployment. Rather, what is needed is a sustainable period of accelerated and inclusive economic growth, and a comprehensive set of short and long-term police reforms and initiatives (World Bank, 2009; Graham & De Lannoy, 2016).

2.11 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented a broad overview of the most pertinent issues that animated this study and, therefore, necessitate a focus on the demand-side factors. To this end, the chapter first considered LMS theories as the suitable theoretical framework that informs and frames the whole thesis discussion. The chapter consequently presented the current state (especially

during 2018-2019) of unemployment and underemployment both on a global scale and in the African context separately. This was followed by a condensed discussion concerning the causes of unemployment and the effects that generally impact societies, but predominantly the unemployed—owing to these incidents and the resultant consequences that affect both the unemployed and employed. Governments have put forward concerted efforts to try and address these labour market problematics. Therefore, the thesis also presented some of the global and common intervention strategies that have been implemented by far, as well as some of the critics that have been levelled against the current strategies.

In essence, the themes discussed in this chapter indicate that unemployment and underemployment are both global crises that still need more research to further understand the drivers behind the phenomena. And, ultimately, to better understand what more can still be done, since the persistence of these issues denote that more work still needs to be done. Therefore, in light of the abovementioned pressing labour market trends, this thesis sought to shed light on the demand-side drivers that form as barriers to the employment of the NEETs youths. It does this by investigating the ways in which employers' recruitment activities encourage or impede the employment of young jobseekers. This focus on recruitment and selection is informed by the integral role these processes play in determining which people are considered for employment and are eventually employed. These processes also serve as a tool that situates employees to specific jobs in the organisation. Thus, exploring recruitment and selection will help understand what about these recruitment activities encourages or discourages the employment of young people; as well as reveal the types of jobs the youth tend to occupy when employed. Now that a broad overview of the relevant issues/trends have been presented, the next chapter looks closely at these trends (unemployment and underemployment) in the South African context, which particularly inspired the thesis and is the domain in which the study was conducted.

CHAPTER THREE

YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN LABOUR MARKET

The high level of unemployment for the youth group presents a major social and skills challenge for the country [South Africa] since the country's population largely comprises the youth, hence the need to boost employment opportunities for the youth.
(Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), 2019:24)

3.1 INTRODUCTION

A review of literature concerning the South African labour market in general—and of the position of unemployed young people in particular—shows that, in comparison with older jobseekers, 18 to 24-year-olds are seen as more disadvantaged by a relative lack of work experience and work-related skills. Despite positive economic, demographic, and educational trends, youth unemployment remains devastatingly high. It is also asserted that demand for young people has contracted at a faster rate than has their supply, partly due to occupational and sectoral shifts, which have reduced the demand for unqualified and inexperienced workers (StatsSA, 2018). This has applied, perhaps most strongly, to the 16 to 18-year-old school leavers, who have, additionally, faced increased competition from slightly older and better qualified 19 to 24-year-olds, and from growing numbers of adult women working on a part-time basis (StatsSA, 2018). Furthermore, the long spells of joblessness is seen as discouraging by employers, both for what it implies about the youth's motivation, and the implied deterioration of human capital by extended idleness (De Lannoy et al., 2018). These are the woes that a vast majority of young people face, indicating that today's labour market is a challenging arena for young people. Youth remain highly susceptible to changing patterns in the world of work and, as a result, they experience slow and difficult transitions to stable jobs. The previous chapter presented a general review of the literature concerning the two most pressing socio-economic trends that plague many countries across the globe and have accordingly become the subject matter (amongst others) for policymakers.

This chapter provides a contextual framework by taking a closer look on the issue of youth unemployment and underemployment in the South African context—and even more

particularly in the Johannesburg context where the case study was conducted. To this end, the chapter first presents an outline of the state of the South African labour market. This discussion will be divided into two sections: a brief historical context of pre-1994 and the post-1994 (as the current context that has been shaped considerably by the former context). As the study is chiefly concerned with youth unemployment in South Africa, much of the discussion will be focused on the youth (not the general/overall) unemployment and underemployment, both in South Africa and in Johannesburg. It is necessary to review youth unemployment and underemployment in both these contexts to understand the background and current trends in these contexts. In all these themes/sections, the discussion therein will be limited to young people, as they are the main focus of the study. However, reference to other groups will be made where a comparison is necessary. It is also important to note, at this point, that there are some sources that provide annual statistics of the unemployment incidence—these include the ILO, UN, and StatsSA. The thesis relies heavily on these sources and uses the data to develop a picture of youth unemployment, and to provide recent figures that paint the gravity of unemployment among young people.

3.2 STATE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN LABOUR MARKET

In 2017, South Africa was estimated to have a population of 56.5 million, and about 51 per cent (28.9 million) of the population were females (Tabengwa, 2017). In terms of race, the population comprised 80.8 per cent Black/Africans, 8.6 per cent Coloureds, 8 per cent Whites. The country is regarded as a youthful nation, with two-thirds of the population under the age of 35 years, and about one-third (29.6 per cent) aged younger than 15 years (DHET, 2019:11). Tabengwa (2017), explains that young people make up almost 67 per cent of the population, and they make up a third of the working-age population. Many of these people, especially young people, that live in South Africa live in poverty and unemployment. According to the World Bank (2018:27), high unemployment remains the main challenge for South Africa, and the country struggles to create sufficient jobs. The labour market is characterised by a shortage of job opportunities due to slow economic growth, while racial and gender inequality remain prevalent. In fact, the population group (race) is among the factors that have a bearing on one's chances of finding a job, and the wages earned (DHET, 2019:13). In line with global trends illustrated in chapter two, in South Africa females are recorded to be the most vulnerable to unemployment than their make counterparts (Stats SA, 2018; 2019)

The section on the causes of unemployment (in chapter two) shows that there are various determinants that contribute to unemployment. Apart from the population being one of the determinants, another major contributory factor to the unemployment challenge in South Africa, according to Tabengwa (2017), is the current state of the country's labour market institutions and regulatory environment. Tabengwa (2017:23)—as well as other authors—believes that a rigid labour market, the ongoing crisis in collective bargaining, the widespread prevalence of the controversial practice of labour broking, problems with the determination and implementation of minimum wages, and policies that actually hamper—rather than aid—efforts to achieve higher rates of job creation are all to blame (Arora & Ricci, 2005; Burger & von Fintel, 2009; Bhorat & Tian, 2014). Another factor that undermines the efficiency of the South African labour market is the economy's low capacity to absorb labour—the current employment to population ratio is 41.9 per cent. This modest labour absorption rate is also ascribed to the issue of skill-mismatch between the skills jobseekers have and the skills that are actually demanded by employers (Standing et al., 1996; Fedderte & Mariotti, 2002: Burger & Woolard; 2005; Barker, 2007).

Indeed, research shows that a large share of the country's jobseekers do not possess the skills required for the jobs that need highly skilled workers across South Africa (Kingdon & Knight, 2007; Banarjee et al., 2008; Burger & von Fintel, 2009; Bhorat & Tian, 2014). The issue of skills-mismatch has been imputed to changes in the sectoral composition of employment in the country, where adjustments towards a more capital and skill-intensive economy has created a need for high skills, thus decreasing the need and use for low skills (Moleke, 2004; Burger & Woolard, 2005; Banarjee et al., 2008; Bhorat & Tian, 2014; Newman & De Lannoy, 2014; Festus, Kasongo, Moses & Yu, 2015;). The inadequate vocational skills training and a poor-quality education system have only worsened the skills deficit, rendering many people unemployable. It is clear that a range of factors impede job creation efforts in South Africa. In fact, South Africa's socio-economic situation is described mainly as characterised by the "triple challenge of inequality, poverty, and unemployment" (DHET, 2019:18). These challenges are all interlinked and they all constitute a socio-economic phenomena that affect millions of South Africans, and thus remain a cause for concern for policymakers, government, and NGOs among other stakeholders (National Treasury, 2011; DHET, 2019).

The apartheid labour market is key to understanding the current state of the labour market as it is one of the predominant factors that has shaped the labour market there is today. The rationale to look into the historical background of any economic context, so as to understand

the current affairs, is advanced by the LMS theories which serves as the framework of this thesis. The LMS theorists maintain that the present divisions of the labour market are best understood from a historical analysis of their origins (Reich et al., 1973:359). This view is shared by a number of authors who are of the opinion that the current South African labour market and its trends (i.e., unemployment, underemployment, inequalities) are a reflection of the labour market of the apartheid era (see Moleke, 2004; Arora & Ricci, 2005; Bhorat & Oosthuizen, 2005; Festus, Kasongo, Moses & Yu, 2015). According to Altman (2011), the legacy of apartheid is a contributing factor to the unemployment experienced by the young people. Therefore, the following section looks at the South African labour market during the apartheid era, which is the immediate historical context that has had a significant impact on the current state of the post-1994 labour market.

3.2.1 South African Labour Market under Apartheid

Mariotti's (2009:4), details that during the apartheid era (from 1950-1994) the apartheid government promulgated a series of social and economic laws that divided South Africa's four racial groups. Whereby, labour market laws were enacted to the benefit of white workers predominantly, while they negatively affected other racial groups, especially the African population, which in 1969 constituted 80.7 per cent of the population (Moleke, 2003; Marioti, 2009). As a result of this discrimination, the African population was, for the most part, poorly educated. The much smaller coloured and Indian groups, which made up 12.4 per cent of the population, were only remotely better educated (Marioti, 2009). During apartheid, racial discrimination was driven by systemic legislation and rules, and this, in turn, fashioned the structure of the labour market (Moleke, 2004; Patel, Hassen & Paton, 2011). Considering that race was the main factor that determined different races' participation in the labour market, Patel, Hassen & Paton (2011), assert that an analysis of the South African labour market should take into consideration the racial and gender dimensions inherited from the apartheid era—so as to understand the effect these dimensions had on the apartheid labour market. Despite the division of four races, the apartheid labour market is said to have been characterised by racial dualism, whereby there was a 'white' sector and 'black' sector (Cassim, 1982; Patel et al., 2011; Festus et al., 2015). Therefore, race was the determining factor of the distribution of individual jobs and income (Cassim, 1982; Moleke, 2003). As a result, the labour market showed major differences between whites and black workers.

This dual labour market was reinforced by the education policy imposed by the apartheid government. The education system of that time was designed to promote white education while subjecting Africans to sub-par education (Fiske & Ladd, 2004; Moleke, 2005; Bunting, 2006; van der Berg, 2007; Brandson & Leibrandt, 2013). This led to the creation and perpetuation of two education systems, one for whites and one for blacks (which was dubbed the Bantu education and was poor in quality). This racial differentiation of education reflected the racial organisation prevailing in the South African society as a whole; especially in the labour market (McCord & Bhorat, 2003). According to Fiske and Ladd (2004:43-46), and Moleke (2005), the education offered to Africans was poor in quality and designated to keep them out of the modern sector of the economy. This division led to the South African labour market to have two distinct labour markets, one for white labour and one for black labour. Each labour market was regulated by different laws, institutions, and mechanisms for the recruitment, training, and allocation of workers to jobs (Cassim, 1989; McCord & Bhorat, 2003).

This dualism bred the inequalities that plague the contemporary labour market. According to Moleke (2003:206), the inequalities in the labour market were compounded by the shortcomings of the education system. Indeed, lack of access to quality education meant that a large section of the population was functionally illiterate. This ensured a steady supply of cheap labour, particularly for the agricultural mining and domestic service sectors (Moleke, 2005). Indeed, mostly black women were relegated to the secondary sector, which is characterised by low-paid jobs and poor working conditions (Cassim, 1982). On the other hand, whites were concentrated in manufacturing, commerce and finance, and the professional service sectors—and these were the well-paying sectors with benefits and promotional opportunities (Cassim, 1982:244). It is against this background that a number of authors (i.e., Bhorat & Oosthuizen, 2005; Moleke, 2005; Dias & Posel, 2007:7; Festus, Kasongo, Moses & Yu, 2015), assert that the inequality in educational opportunities between the races played a significant role in the segmentation of the South African labour market during apartheid (Bhorat & Oosthuizen, 2005; Moleke, 2005; Dias & Posel, 2007:7; Festus, Kasongo, Moses & Yu, 2015). The LMS theorists would then postulate that whites during apartheid were mostly employed in the primary labour market, while blacks were mostly employed in the secondary labour market (Bhorat & Oosthuizen, 2005; Moleke, 2005; Dias & Posel, 2007; Festus, Kasongo, Moses & Yu, 2015). It is for this reason that the South African labour market should be understood to be a complex and segmented labour market—

which cannot be explained by the orthodox labour market theories (Cassim, 1982; Leonataridi, 1998; Fleetwood, 2006).

Moreover, some authors agree that the apartheid labour market during the apartheid era was also segmented by gender (Moleke, 2003-2004; Dias & Yu, 2007; Festus et al., 2015). For instance, women, especially Africans, were relegated to certain occupations within the labour market (Bhorat & Oosthuizen, 2005). Even though the apartheid labour market subjected all women to discrimination, women from the black population endured worse discrimination than their white counterparts (Moleke, 2003-2004). This is also a result of the unequal access to education which, while favouring the white population, it confined black women to mostly domestic labour, and other unskilled jobs and clerks (McCord &Bhorat, 2003). Therefore, it is argued that these inequalities which were manifest on the ground of race and gender, among others, are reflected in the post-apartheid labour market (Bhorat & Oosthuizen, 2005; Moleke, 2005; Dias & Posel, 2007; Festus, Kasongo, Moses & Yu, 2015).

The crux of the apartheid labour market is that the laws that were imposed during that period led to a segregated population, affecting four races in varying degrees, relegating them to different education systems and thus creating a segregated and unequal labour market. Indeed the country suffered from decades of systemic and social bias, characterised by racial segregation and a system of selective developmental and economic exclusion formally described as apartheid (Thompson, 2001:2122). This adverse political and social state meant that the country's majority population was denied access to both education and, subsequently, decent employment. Instead, the African population predominantly served as cheap labour in favour of an economy exclusively benefiting the white population. While this state of affairs (i.e., inequality) permeated all sectors and industries (including the transport sector) of the South African apartheid economy, its negative consequences are still reverberating and burdensome to the post-apartheid labour market (Bhorat, 2004; Festus et al, 2015). As argued by Tsotsotsi et al. (2017), even though liberation and transfer of political power to the black population is a significant feature of post-1994 South Africa, social development and meaningful economic inclusion are slowed down by low education and, therefore, low skills levels. These problematics, in turn, contribute to the static absorption of the larger segment of the (previously disadvantaged) population into decent employment, among other things (Reddy et al., 2016 cited in Tsotsotso et al., 2017:413).

3.2.2 Labour Market in Post-Apartheid South Africa

Following the end of apartheid in 1994, the South African government made numerous major adjustments in the economy that helped promote economic growth, among other adjustments (Standing et al., 1996; Bhorat & Oosthuizen, 2005; Moleke, 2005; Dias & Posel, 2007; Burger & von Fintel, 2009; Festus et al., 2015). The labour market has, since 1994, been extensively reformed through the enactment of a wide-range of laws, primarily aimed at redressing the grim legacy left behind by the apartheid regime (Burger & Woolard, 2005). Today the South African labour market has undergone many changes since the demise of apartheid—these changes were preceded by various policies aimed at doing away with the injustices of the past, and the need to adjust to the global economy requirements (Bhorat, 2004; Moleke, 2003-2004; Bhorat & Oosthuizen, 2005; Festus et al., 2015). Notwithstanding these drastic changes, acute labour market challenges remain (Moleke, 2004; Burger & Woolard, 2005; Banarjee et al., 2008; Bhorat & Tian, 2014; Newman & De Lannoy, 2014; Festus et al., 2015). The labour market is still characterised by significantly high levels of unemployment, inequality in the labour market and skills deficit; and despite policy interventions to remedy the inequalities in the South African labour market, it remains segmented. Factors such as race and gender continue to determine people's entry and type of employment in the contemporary labour market (as was the case in the apartheid era) (Moleke, 2004; Bhorat, 2005; Burger & von Fintel, 2009).

According to Moleke (2004), Arora & Ricci (2005), and Burger & von Fintel (2009), one of the major piece of legislation that was enacted since 1994 to address issues of equity and skills shortage in South African labour market is the Employment Equity Act (EEA). With respect to the racial and gender inequalities affecting labour market opportunities (Bhorat, 2004; Moleke, 2004; Arora & Ricci, 2005), the EEA was enacted to eliminate discrimination and establish measures to foster equal opportunities for previously disadvantaged groups (i.e. women, blacks and people with disabilities). The measure that is adopted to achieve this is the Affirmative Action, which ensures that suitably qualified people from designated groups have equal employment opportunities, and are equitably represented in all occupational categories (Bhorat, 2004; Moleke, 2003; Arora & Ricci, 2005; Dias & Posel, 2007; Burger & von Fintel, 2009). In essence, the EEA offsets discrimination—that originates from the apartheid system—by a designated employer on the grounds of race, gender, age, amongst other things. However, authors such as Moleke (2004), Burger and Woolard (2005), and Arora and Ricci (2005) argue that though there have been some changes in the South African

labour market effected by the EEA and the other pieces of labour market legislation; the impact of these has been limited because the labour market is still characterised by stark differences on the grounds of gender, race, and access to occupational categories, amongst others.

For instance, there are still occupations in the labour that are under-represented by Africans and women in general and are over-represented by men, predominantly white men (Moleke, 2004; Stats SA, 2016 & 2017). Indeed, despite the above-mentioned changes, the South African labour market remains segmented based on skills (qualification), race, and gender (Bhorat & Oosthuizen, 2004; Moleke, 2009). According to Van der berge (2007: 85), the legacy of the apartheid education, with racially segregated schools and the under-resourcing of schools for blacks, is still evident in large educational differentials between whites and blacks. Race remains the main correlate of both education quality and quantity (Moleke, 2005; Van der Berge, 2007). In addition, Moleke (2004), maintains that the labour market access to jobs is limited and unequally distributed across different racial groups and genders. For example, whites still dominate high-level occupations; white males predominate in management. In contrast, African and women are still relegated into secondary sectors and occupations with the characteristics of secondary sectors (Bhorat, 2004; Moleke, 2004; Dias & Posel, 2007; Burger & von Fintel, 2009). Furthermore, notwithstanding the improved economic adjustments and growth performance in South Africa since the end of apartheid, unemployment remains high and poses a significant social and economic policy challenge.

Arora & Ricci (2005), argue that unemployment is particularly concentrated among the historically underprivileged groups, and is even higher among the rural, female, uneducated, and young segments of the population. This view is supported by the observation made by the StatsSA (2017: 13) report, which highlights that the most vulnerable groups to unemployment are females than males, the uneducated, and the youth. In particular, the report acknowledges that people with a higher level of education participate more in the labour market compared to those with lower levels of education. However, the labour participation rate for males is higher than that of their female counterparts for all educational levels. Bhorat and Oosthuizen (2005:37), have also reported that Africans have by far the highest unemployment rates and this is still confirmed in the Stats SA report of 2016. The Stats SA report of 2016 highlights that Africans and coloured graduates have lower prospects for unemployment when compared with their white and Indian counterparts. This proves that the contemporary South African labour market is still characterised by differences on the

grounds of gender, race and level of education. This evidence indicates that while the educated get jobs, what determines their entry into the labour market has to do with their gender, race, and level of education, amongst other things.

Furthermore, McCord (2003:128), explains that the segmentation of the labour market in South Africa is also reflected in wage distribution patterns. For instance, coloured and African workers experience greater wage homogeneity than Indians and whites due to their concentration in a restricted number of occupations (McCord & Bhorat, 2003; Bhorat & Goga, 2012; Naidoo et al., 2014). Whereas wage inequality favours men than women among all races, being most extreme amongst white and Indian men and lowest amongst African and coloured women (McCord & Bhorat, 2003; Bhorat & Goga, 2012; Naidoo et al., 2014). Where inequality is considered in relation to education, the highest wage inequality is found amongst the employed with matric or tertiary education. According to McCord and Bhorat (2003), wage differentials are driven by race, gender, education, and public/private sector employment, with race being significantly stronger than other determinants (McCord & Bhorat, 2003; Bhorat & Goga, 2012; Naidoo et al., 2014). Occupation wage analysis exposes a stark difference between Africans and whites supposedly in the same skilled/semi-skilled occupations. Which according to McCord and Bhorat (2003:133), "may be explained in terms of differential accumulation of capital, as well as actually perceived quality differentials in education and possibly unofficial racial discrimination."

This state of the post-1994 labour market not only highlights the inequalities that exist between race and gender, but it exposes the weakness of the HCT for being unable to realise these inequalities. Especially given that even in circumstances where different races and genders acquire the same levels of education, there are still subject to wage and occupational differences. These are some of the key trends of the contemporary labour market of South Africa, which—as it has been reported in the Labour force survey and as maintained by the above-referenced authors—are a reflection of both the apartheid legacies and the structural and technological changes in the South African economy (McCord & Bhorat, 2003:29). It is this current state of the labour market, which is characterised by high levels of unemployment, that has sparked interest for this thesis. The following section looks closely at (youth) unemployment as one of the major trends of the South African labour market. However, the discussion on youth unemployment will be preceded by a discussion on general unemployment in South Africa.

3.3 UNEMPLOYMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

Since the advent of democracy in South Africa, the policy adjustments that foster equality and inclusivity have been occurring in spheres such as, to mention a few, education, health care, and within the labour market. Notwithstanding the fact that the government has enforced numerous measures for the purposes of, amongst others, reducing unemployment, poverty, inequality, and dismantling labour market discrimination—persistently high unemployment levels remain one of the major socio-economic issues the country is still grappling with to date (Beukes, Fransman, Murozvi & Yu, 2017:35). This is because, in the post-apartheid era, South Africa is still faced with the apartheid-era legacy of low economic growth, a high poverty rate, abject income inequality by international standards, and devastatingly high unemployment (Altman, 2007; Burger & Woolard, 2005; Burger & Fintel, 2009). Bhorat et al. (2013:16), as well as Tabengwa (2013), posit that South Africa is a middle-income developing country that has experienced sea changes in the 1990s, as it transformed from a system of governance characterised by racial segregation and unequal opportunities hitherto 1994 to a democratic governance system from 1994. Yet, despite the critical milestones made in the post-apartheid, the South African economy has mostly been incapable to deal with its pressing unemployment and poverty problems (Moleke, 2003-2004; Arora & Ricci, 2005; Altman, 2007; Burger & Fintel, 2009; Bhorat et al., 2013).

It is worth mentioning that as worrisome as the unemployment situation is, it is argued that the levels were lesser during the apartheid era than they are post-apartheid. At the time of democratic transition in 1994, unemployment was substantially lower than it is today (Kingdon & Knight, 2004, 2007; Burger & Woolard, 2005; Barnajee et al., 2008; Yu, 2013). A nationally-representative survey conducted just before the democratic transition revealed that unemployment was at 13 per at the time. However, by the end of the decade, unemployment had jumped to almost 30 per cent (Burger & Woolard, 2005; Barnajee et al., 2008). This considerable jump is usually imputed to the fact that labour force participation also substantially increased since the end of apartheid, which has proved to outpace the absorption rate even today (Barnajee et al., 2008). Or, put in another way, job creation has not matched the growing labour supply. Therefore, the unemployment rate continues to rise (Altman, 2003; Burger & Woolard, 2005). The low absorption rate is one of the reasons why unemployment is one of the predominant challenges in South Africa. Indeed, Patel, Hassen & Paton (2011: 31), assert that unemployment is the primary concern in the labour market to both the policymakers and the labour market participants. In fact, Burger and Fintel (2009:7),

posit that South Africa currently has one of the highest unemployment rates internationally. They also point out that these high unemployment rates are a culmination of a long-term yet steady rise in unemployment that started as early as the 1970s, but which has rapidly accelerated in the post-apartheid period (Arora & Ricci, 2005; Burger & Woolard, 2005; Kingdon & Knight, 2007; Festus et al., 2015).

Numerous factors have contributed to the increase of unemployment, such as relatively slow post-transition growth in employment opportunities (Burger & Fintel, 2009). Burger and Fintel (2009:23), further explain that educational levels and the reversal of discriminatory policies all created the expectations that labour market prospects would improve over this period for the majority of the population. Instead, as they purport, the rates of the unemployed have grown, which has given rise to claim that the economy has entered a period of jobless growth (Bhorat, 2009; Burger & Fintel, 2009; Yu, 2013). As a matter of fact, the StatsSA (2019:11), circulated the unemployment figures for the second quarter of 2019, which showed that the unemployment rate remained stagnant, and is at its highest as it has come up to a worrying 29.1 per cent. According to Oosthuizen and Bhorat (2005), and Bhorat, Goga, and Stanwix (2013), one conceptual view of what has shaped South Africa's unemployment challenge is the fact that the economy has increasingly demanded higher-skilled workers; while the labour force consists of a large contingent of less-educated over skilled workers. Burger and Fintel (2009:9), concur as they explain that the situation of unemployment has been attributed to changes in the structure of production and skills-biased technological change. Therefore, demand for unskilled or semi-skilled workers (who are in abundant supply) decreased, while demand for highly skilled workers increased—there is still a shortage of such a workforce (Bhorat & Hodge 1999; Banerjee et al., 2017). A result of this un-met demand for skilled workers, it is generally accepted that the primary cause for South Africa's widespread unemployment today is a structural mismatch between the skills the modern South African economy demands the skills it supplies (Pauw, Oosthuizen & Westhuizen, 2008; Burger & Fintel, 2009; National Planning Commission, 2011:15; Bhorat et al., 2013; Yu, 2013; Mlatsheni & Ranchhod, 2017).

Another major contributor to high unemployment in South Africa is the current state of labour market institutions and the regulatory environment (Arora & Ricci, 2005; Burger & Woolard, 2005; Altman, 2007; Dias & Posel, 2007; Bhorat, 2009; Patel, Hassen & Paton, 2011; Burger, Van der Berg & Von Fintel, 2013; Festus et al., 2015). These authors are of the view that South African labour laws impose rigidities in the labour market that contribute to

unemployment. The general idea is that labour laws lead to higher wages than would otherwise prevail; thus, discouraging employers from absorbing more labour market entrants (IMF, 2009: 14, cited in Burger & Fintel, 2009). This reluctance from the side of employers renders some people unemployed. Worse still, according to Patel, Hassen & Paton (2011: 31), when viewed from a gender perspective, unemployment in South Africa is most acute amongst black Africans and those with less than a matric, the youth, and women. As can be observed, these causes (outlined in this section) are compatible with global causes, which are discussed in section 2.8 in the previous chapter, but discussed briefly in this chapter to put the unemployment situation into perspective for the South African context. This indicates that despite the improved economic growth performance in South Africa since the end of apartheid—which was fostered by democratic laws; unemployment remains high and poses a significant social and economic policy challenge today.

It could be argued that the labour laws enacted could be doing more harm than good. Especially considering that some of the unemployment causes are imputed to the labour laws rigidities, which are aimed at creating equal opportunities for all South Africans. It is clear that, unemployment in South Africa, irrespective of the post-1994 measures adopted, is extraordinarily high and has increased substantially since the African National Congress came to power (Whiteford, Van Zyl, Simkins & Hall, 1999; Du Toit, 2003; Kingdon & Knight, 2004; Burger & Woolard, 2005; Altman, 2007; Barnajee et al., 2008, 2013; Fedderke, 2012; Anand, 2016; Taljaard & Van der Walt, 2018). Using the official definition, the unemployment rate has increased to 29 per cent in 2019 from 27.6 per cent in 2018. The expanded unemployment rate increased by 0.5 per cent from 38 per cent in the first quarter of 2019 to 38.5 per cent in the second quarter of 2019 (StatsSA). The number of unemployed persons increased by 455 000 to 6.7 million in the second quarter of 2019 compared to the first quarter of 2019, resulting in an increase of 476 000 in the labour force (StatsSA, 2019: Q2).

These concerning figures prove that although the political transition to democratic rule in South Africa was somewhat smooth and rapid, the economic transition has proved to be slow and extremely challenging (Du Toit, 2003; Kingdon & Knight, 2004; Altman, 2007; Banerjee, 2008; Worku, 2014; Ebrahim & Lilenstein, 2018). No where is this slowness more apparent than in the labour market. It is worth emphasising that the problem of unemployment is particularly concentrated among the historically disadvantaged groups and is higher among women, the poorly educated, young segments of the population and especially those in rural

areas (Kingdon & Knight, 2004; Banerjee, 2008; Yu, 2013; Worku, 2014; Bhorat, 2016; Taljaard & Van der Walt, 2018). In line with global trends, the incidence of unemployment also varies by gender and race (Kingdon & Knight, 2004; StatsSA, 2019). Women experience substantially higher unemployment than men; this is the same for Blacks in comparison to Whites (Barker, 2003; Arora & Ricci, 2005; Barnerjee, Galiana, Levinsohn, McLaren & Woolard, 2008; Bhorat, 2009; Burger & von Fintel, 2009; Fourie, 2011; National Treasury, 2011; Yu, 2013; StatsSA, 2019). For isnatnce, in 2018 quarter 3, unemployment among women was 29.4 per cent relative to 25.9 per cent unemployment rate among males. The Black/African population group experiences the highest incidence of unemployment compared to other population groups (StatsSA, 2018 Q3: 1).

Furthermore, in 2018 quarter 3, unemployment rate was highest among the Black/African population group at 31.1 per cent, followed by 21.8 per cent among Coloured, 10.1 per cent among Indian/Asian and 7.1 per cent among Whites. Between 2010 and 2017, the share of employed males ranged between 56.0 per cent in 2017 and 56.8 per cent in 2010, while the share of employed females ranged between 43.2 per cent in 2010 and 44 per cent in 2013 and 2017. The proportion of the employed Black/African population group increased by 4.4 percentage points from 70.1 per cent in 2010 to 74.5 per cent in 2017 (StatsSA, 2018 Q3: 1). The per cent of the employed among White declined by 3.1 percentage points from 15.0 per cent in 2010 to 11.9 per cent in 2017, and the share of the employed among Coloured declined by 1 percentage point from 11.2 per cent in 2010 to 10.2 per cent in 2017 (StatsSA, 2018 Q3: 1). The share of the employed Indian/Asian decreased by 0.4 of a percentage point from 3.7 per cent in 2010 to 3.3 per cent in 2017. Trends in unemployment by gender over the period from 2010 to 2017 were characterised by the lowest share of unemployed females at 51.3 per cent, while the highest proportion stood at 52.8 per cent in 2011 (StatsSA, 2018 Q3: 1). These figures paint the picture of the state of (overall) unemployment in South Africa, yet the situation is far worse for young people. The following section explores the unemployment situation among young people in South Africa.

3.3.1 Youth unemployment in South Africa

Unemployment among the youth is amongst the perennial socio-economic plights affecting the South African economy (Du Toit, 2003; Altman, 2009; National Treasury, 2011; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; Kraak, 2015; Makgetla, 2015; Tabengwa, 2017; DHET, 2019). South African youth is continuously finding it extremely challenging to enter the world of work and

there is also concern about the quality of work or jobs young people occupy when they are employed. Youth unemployment is a grave issue in South Africa because the country—as with many African countries—is experiencing a youth bulge (National Planning Commission, 2012:98). In fact, on a global scale, the South African case of youth unemployment is deemed to be much higher in comparison with other countries (Banerjee et al., 2008; Schoer & Rankin, 2013). This pressing problem presents opportunities for growth if interventions are established to promote employment for young people (McKinsey Global Institute, 2010:3), but unfortunately is a potential for serious social instability and disruption if they are not (National Planning Commission, 2012:106).

To put things into perspective, in South Africa the youth aged 15–24 years are the most vulnerable in the labour market compared to the 25-35 cohort. The earliest estimates of youth unemployment that were recorded (in the 1996 Census) during the democratic, report that 53.2 per cent of young people were unemployed around that time (Central Statistics Service 1996: 17). By the latter half of the 1990s and the early part of the 2000s, the unemployment problem grew worse, with young people continuing to be the hardest hit (Bhorat 2005: 962). Indeed, the unemployment rate has been steadily increasing ever since as it has come up to (for the youth among the 15-24 age group) 56.4 per cent in the second quarter of 2019. Of the 10.3 million persons aged 15-24 years, 32.3 per cent were not employed, education or training. This means that approximately 3.3 million (32.3 per cent) out of 10.3 million young people aged 15-24 years were not in employment, education or training (NEET) compared to the 35,6 per cent among the 25-34 age group (StatsSA, 2019:Q2). Among graduates in this age group, the unemployment rate was 33.7 per cent during this period (StatsSA, 2019:Q2; DHET, 2019). These alarming figures denote that the burden of unemployment is highly pronounced amongst the youth under the NEETs category, even though other youth categories also experience unemployment (O'Higgins, 2001; Mlatsheni & Rosapabe, 2002; Du Toit, 2003; Altman, 2007; Lam, Leibbrandt & Mlatsheni, 2009; Mlatsheni & Leibbrandt, 2011; Van Aardt, 2012; Woolard 2012; Ardington et al., 2015; Worku, 2014; Cloete, 2015; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; Graham & De Lannoy, 2016; Tabengwa, 2017).

The literature that has been reviewed upto this point shows that the incidence of unemployment falls most heavily on young South Africans, as they are generally low-skilled and have little to no formal employment experience (National Treasury, 2011:12). According to research, many of the young jobseekers are not well educated due to poor quality education, or they have dropped out of school (Mlatsheni & Rospabe, 2002; Du Toit, 2003; Lam,

Leibbrandt & Mlatsheni, 2009; Fourie, 2011; Mlatsheni & Leibbrandt, 2011; Zimmermann & Biavaschi, 2013; Ardington et al., 2016; Rogan, 2018). This is also because, as the economy increasingly demands skilled labour, an incomplete secondary education is just not sufficient to guarantee employment (Altman, 2007, 2009; van Aardt, 2012; Yu, 2013; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; Graham & De Lannoy, 2016). Unfortunately, this results in a growing cohort of young people with significant limited access to employment and marginal means to do anything about the situation. The more these young people remain jobless, the more difficult it is for them to escape unemployment (Du Toit, 2003; Van Aardt, 2012). In fact, it is expected that a considerable number of today's unemployed youth may never achieve formal sector employment, if they are unable to access the labour market now (National Planning Commission, 2012:106; BRICS, 2018)

Much like overall unemployment (globally and locally), one particular feature of youth unemployment is that it is unequally distributed between segments of the labour market and population (Du Toit, 2003; Kingdon & Knight, 2004; Banerjee, 2008; Lam, Leibbrandt & Mlatsheni, 2009; Mlatsheni & Leibbrandt, 2011; Van Aardt, 2012; Worku, 2014; Cloete, 2015; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015). The unemployment rates for different groups reveal significant disparities by race, gender, and education level (Mlatsheni & Rospabe, 2002; Du Toit, 2003; Mlatsheni & Leibbrandt, 2011; Van Aardt, 2012; Yu, 2013; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; Ismail & Kollamparabil, 2015; Graham & De Lannoy, 2016). For instance, young African people suffer much higher unemployment levels than their white counterparts. Joblessness is also more acute for women than men (see ILO, 2015; StatsSA, 2018, 2019). However, StatsSA (2019:Q2), finds that irrespective of sex, the black African and coloured population groups remain vulnerable in the labour market. In the second quarter of 2019, StatsSA found that Blacks were on 32.7 per cent, Coloured on 22.5 per cent, Indian/Asian on 11.2 per cent, and whites being the lowest on 7.4 per cent (StatsSA, 2019:Q2).

However, African women are the most vulnerable, with an unemployment rate of 35.0 per cent, compared to 30.8 per cent among their male counterparts. Female Coloureds have an unemployment rate of 23.0 per cent compared to 22.1 per cent among their male counterparts. Male Indians/Asians have an unemployment rate of 8.5 per cent compared to 16.2 per cent among their female counterparts (StatsSA, 2019:Q2). White females' unemployment rate increased to 9.2 per cent compared to 6.1 per cent among their male counterparts. These figures show the discrepancies among racial groups with regard to unemployment, with black females unsurprisingly being the most vulnerable group (StatsSA, 2019:Q2). There are

various scholars who comment on the causes of youth unemployment in the country, most of which have been encapsulated in chapter two. Some attribute the phenomenon to the education crisis where the public schooling system is seen as incompetent and inefficient (Arora & Ricci, 2005; Barnerjee et al., 2008; Bhorat, 2009). Some see the problem as being caused by the high cost of labour, where employers find themselves trapped in rigid government regulation of the labour relations (Burger & von Fintel, 2009; Fourie, 2011; National Treasury, 2011; Yu, 2013). Others view the economy as being part of a global structural capitalist economy, which makes unemployment inevitable (Du Toit, 2003; Knight & Kingdon 2007; Festus et, 2016; Tabengwa, 2017).

Considering the severity of unemployment—and the various, multiple and intricate causes attributed to unemployment—there is broad consensus that youth unemployment in South Africa is critical, with the latest figures confirming that one half of young people 15–34 years are unemployed by the broad definition (Statistics South Africa 2018). The situation is widely viewed as a national emergency, as the high level of youth unemployment is predicticted to lead to an increasing sense of exclusion and to heightened 'levels of frustration and impatience' among young people (National Planning Commission 2012; Yu, 2013; Bhorat, 2014; Ranchhod & Finn, 2014; Kraak, 2015; De Lannoy et al., 2018). Therefore, given the triple challenge of high levels of unemployment, poverty, and inequality that befalls South Africa, the central objectives of the South African government's development policies and programmes since 1994 have been the creation of jobs, elimination of poverty, and reduction of inequality (National Planning Commission 2012). The National Development Plan (NDP) Vision 2030, notes that accelerated inclusive economic growth remains the key lever for job creation (DHET, 2018:38). Some of the strategies that have been adopted are similar to those discussed in chapter two, wherein reference to SA unemployment interventions was made. The following section looks at the underemployment situation in South Africa.

3.4 UNDEREMPLOYMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

Chapter two has pointed out that underemployment is as much a problem as youth unemployment on a global scale. By and large literature shows that there are numerous reasons why underemployed people end up in that situation. One of the reasons that applies to young people is that long-term unemployment (or any length of unemployment) leaves the unemployed desperate enough, and with no other option but to end up taking up any form of jobs; in order to escape unemployment and be able to eke out some sort of living. For this

reason, the LMS theories would view underemployment as a byproduct of employers' requirements and organisational procedures that ensure there are different sectors (Primary and Secondary), and that different people are relegated to these sectors (Leonartaridi, 2008; White, 2010). Therefore, according to LMS theories, underemployment is a strategy that works for the employers as it serves them by having employees that fill the underemployment category. Research, discussed in chapter two, shows that many people, especially young people, increasingly ocupy non-standard jobs that are offered by most employers, if not all. Despite that the situation of underemployment is widespread, Beukes et al. (2017:35), submit that currently, the majority of existing studies, in South Africa, focus on the characteristics of the unemployed, the causes of unemployment, and policy options to alleviate unemployment (Kingdon & Knight, 2004; Banerjee et al., 2008; Bhorat, 2009, 2012; Mathebula, 2013).

Therefore, according to Beukes et al. (2017), there is still a need to explore and analyse the state of underemployment in South Africa because there are currently only a few local studies on this subject. According to Beukes et al. (2017), most of these studies that do exist did not examine underemployment in great depth. Infact, Beukes (2017:39), points out that there are only six local studies, in South Africa, the time of writing. However numerous international studies investigated the extent and nature, predictors, and consequences of underemployment. Golub and Hayat (2014:12), find that the one of the reasons behind underemployment in Africa is a dualistic labour market that is deficient of labour demand. Also, the prevalence of informal-sector jobs and agricultural activities, results in increased underemployment rather than unemployment. This view, for as long it acknowledges the existence of the informal sector, is compatible with LMS theories as they also acknowledge the existence of two segments designed to attract and retain different groups of the society: those who fall under the primary and secondary sectors, respectively.

For instance, Altman (2003), while primarily exploring whether jobless or job-creating growth took place during 1994-2001, also briefly examined underemployment by defining them as those working in the informal sector, domestic services (private households) and subsistence agriculture. Altman (2003), found that the underemployed people accounted for 14 per cent of all the employed sampled in 1994 before rising to 21 per cent in 2001. Altman (2003:9-10), also mentioned that though the underemployed sampled were employed, they still preferred to secure standard employment, and enjoy higher pay and better benefits. Another subsequent study by Altman (2009), briefly explored the time-based underemployed in 2008 and found that underemployed sampled were more likely to be female blacks aged 15

to 24 years, residing in KwaZulu-Natal and Free State. These results corroborate the literature that maintains that non-standard jobs are predominantly occupied by females than males. Similar to these results, Beukes (2017), points out that Yu (2009) found, in investigated underemployment, that majority of the underemployed sampled were blacks and females that occupied unskilled occupations.

Furthermore, Mathebula (2013), undertook an econometric analysis to investigate the determinants of time-related underemployment and his study revealed that people who are likely to be underemployed are females and people who do not have post-Matric qualifications, those who live in urban areas. Moreover, looking at underemployment among graduates, Moleke (2005), explored, by way of survey, the labour market prospects of 2600 university graduates who obtained their post-Matric qualifications in 1990–1998. This study revealed firstly that 16 per cent of the graduates were underemployed, as they worked jobs that do not necessarily require a degree (i.e., administrators, operators or trainees). The graduates that were likely to be underemployed hold degrees in Economic and Management Sciences, followed by Humanities and Arts. However, Moleke (2005), reports that the extent of underemployment declined over time, as a huge 93 per cent of the respondents reported that only entry-level or lower-level ability was required in their first job. These results suggest that upward labour mobility occured because some graduates who were initially underemployed later found work that matched their education/skills better. Also, the graduates initially had low reservation wages and preferred to be underemployed rather than unemployed. Still, over time, some of them searched for a better job and became fully employed (Moleke, 2005:23).

Taking into consideration the above-mentioned studies and the section on underemployment in chapter 2, it appears that the majority of the local and empirical studies focus on the profile of the underemployed (e.g., females, youth, residing in rural areas and working in services industries). But, as asserted by Beukes et al. (2017), there is a dearth of any in-depth studies that examine whether the characteristics of various groups of underemployed differed significantly, and whether there was any relationship between underemployment, unemployment, and economic growth. This thesis also does not provide such an in-depth study on underemployment since its primary focus is on whether young people get employed at all, and seeks to explore factors that may discourage the employment of young people. That is to explore the demand-side factors that influence the decision from the employers to employ young people.

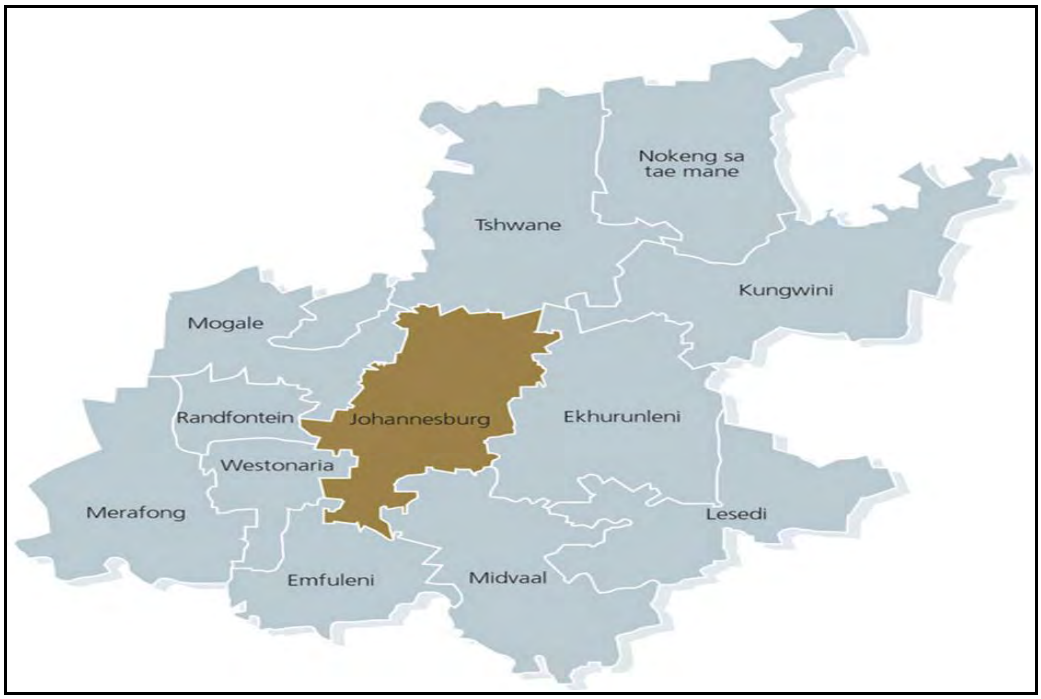
However, the literature on underemployment is referred to (in chapter two and this section) as it has a bearing on the study, since the study seeks to not only to explore whether young people are being considered for employment, but also seeks to investigate the kinds of jobs young people are offered when employed. Accordingly, the purpose of including underemployment as a theme was merely because it is related to unemployment, and it is as much a socio-economic issue as is unemployment. However, the scope of the thesis did not allow for an in-depth inquiry on both the issues of unemployment and underemployment as they are both broad issues that, due to their severity, should constitute respective research topics. The current research topic this thesis addresses already looks at the dispositions of employers and how these affect the recruitment/employment and selection of the youth. Investigating both the dispositions and R&S practices of employers—to understand how they affect the employment of young people—constitutes an in-depth research study on its own. It would have made it rather unmanageable for a PhD thesis to investigate the issue of underemployment to the same depth as the main research questions. Although underemployment is not the main focus of the study as unemployment and R&S practices are, it is not entirely excluded from the discussion of both the literature and data analysis. After all, it does have a bearing on the entirety of the main research question.

3.5 YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN JOHANNESBURG

Although the research is inspired by youth unemployment (and underemployment) in South Africa, the scope of this research study is confined to the city of Johannesburg in the Gauteng province, South Africa. This narrowed focus allows for the study to be a case study that can produce an in-depth analysis of the dispositions and recruitment practices of employers, thus exploring and understanding the demand-side factors that impede or encourage the employment of the youth. This city is selected due to the over-representation of both young jobseekers and of the firms (that can provide information that is indispensable for this study) in the city. Since Johannesburg is home to predominantly young people and a plethora of businesses, the thesis sought to investigate whether the selected employers from Johannesburg's Central Business District (CBD) employ young people. For this reason, it is important to provide background information about the City of Johannesburg so as to have a sense of why it was selected as the research site. Therefore, this section provides background information about the city of Johannesburg. Below are the geographical maps that give the reader an idea of the geographical area of the city of Johannesburg and where it is situated in South Africa.

Figure 3.1: Map of Johannesburg in South Africa

Figure 3.2: Map of Johannesburg in the Gauteng province



In 2014, CDE (2014:8), reported that Johannesburg—situated in the Gauteng province—is one of the major metropolitan cities, among others (i.e., Cape Town, EThekwini (Durban), Tshwane (Pretoria), Ekurhuleni (East Rand), and Nelson Mandela Bay (Port Elizabeth). Johannesburg, also affectionately known as *Jozi*, *Joburg*, or *Egoli* is the largest city in South Africa and the provincial capital of Gauteng and South Africa as a whole (Barker, 2010; City of Johannesburg, 2018; Property24, 2019). The City of Johannesburg's local municipality is situated in the Gauteng province and covers an area of 1 645km2 (City of Johannesburg, 2018). The city was built on the gold mining reef of the Witwatersrand and has since grown into a residential powerhouse with a rich gold mining heritage (City of Johannesburg, 2018). It is said that 40 per cent of the world's gold comes from Johannesburg, which has inspired the city being dubbed "Egoli" meaning "Place of Gold" (City of Johannesburg, 2018; Property24, 2019). While Johannesburg is the smallest town in Gauteng in terms of area, as illustrated in figure 3.1, it is the provincial capital of Gauteng and South Africa's financial capital, making Gauteng the richest province of South Africa (City of Johannesburg, 2018; Property24, 2019).

To provide the economic background of Johannesburg, the city's economic structure is like that of any other large global city: dominated by service sectors. This city receives more international flights than any African city on the continent, and the Johannesburg Stock Exchange is the 12th richest in the world. Due to its contribution of more than 35 per cent of the National GDP, 10 per cent of the GDP for the whole of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and houses more than 74 per cent of private-sector headquarters including major banks, the city of Johannesburg commands so much power in southern Africa (COJ-IDP, 2014). However, the city competes with Cape Town and Durban in South Africa as an economic and political powerhouse. CBD is dominated by big banks and insurance companies (Tomlinson, Beauregard, Bremner and Mangcu, 2003: xiii), it also boasts accounting firms, media houses, entertainment industries, and information technology companies (City of Johannesburg, 2018; Propery24, 2019). The city is "peopled not just by workers, the poor, criminals, and illegal immigrants, but also by artists, playwrights, craftspeople, investigative journalists, poets, writers, musicians, and civil-minded public intellectuals of all races as well as highly skilled migrants and jet setters" (Mbembe and Nuttall, 2008: 24). Even though other metropolitan cities also have these things, the dominance of the Johannesburg region is unquestionable.

With a propertied, privileged, and powerful middle class, the city seems to emulate others on the continent with its high-walled gated communities, exclusive shopping malls adjacent to poverty, and slums occupied by the poor (Grant & Thompson, 2015). Johannesburg has hosted one of the biggest successful events in the world–the FIFA Soccer World Cup 2010 (FIFA Financial report, 2011). The event recorded all-time high profits in the city and catapulted the city beyond the African continent. The FIFA World Cup was hailed for generating up to USD 631 million, which increased FIFA's reserve to USD 1,280 million (FIFA Financial Report, 2011). With world-class shopping malls, the city offers endless opportunities for many ambitious Africans. From being predominantly a mining town in the 19th and 20th centuries, Johannesburg now has the most diversified economy in South Africa (City Of Johannesburg, 2014). It is for this reason that Johannesburg is reckoned as an economic powerhouse of Africa. As a result, the fast-growing suburbs are now reaching the inner-city skyscrapers and busy highways (Corporate Planning Unit, 2004).

In view of the above, the city of Johannesburg is the primary research area for the following reasons. Firstly, this is the most developed municipality and the country's economic hub. Secondly, it is a place where many people, predominantly the youth migrate to, to seek settlement and employment opportunities. Thirdly, Johannesburg has always had a high concentration of the headquarters of companies and service workforce (Rogerson, 1984; Tomlinson et al., 1995; Brenner, 2000; (Grant & Thompson, 2015). Therefore, in a place that has so much economic activity taking place, it is befitting to explore what employers think of the employment of young, and whether young people are in fact being employed or, at the least, considered for employment. Since the research in question is concerned with the 'youths' and their vulnerability to unemployment and underemployment in South Africa, it was essential to consider a place where these phenomena are most prevalent in South Africa. Johannesburg seems not only to be a place with most young people who live in it, but despite that there are so many businesses in Johannesburg, most of the young people that live there are the hardest hit by the unemployment incident.

City of Johannesburg municipality reported in 2016 (their latest report) that there are about 3.8 million people, made up primarily of a young population between the ages of 19 and 39 living in 'Joburg,' some are young professionals seeking successful careers offered in the city, and some (usually referred to as the NEETs) are simply unemployed and faced with the challenge of entering the labour market. Of course, migration significantly influences the size of Johannesburg's population. Johannesburg continues to be an essential switchboard for both

domestic and international migrants (Joburg 2040, 2011). The population pyramid further reflects a large youth population (persons aged 14-35 years) which constitutes over 40 per cent, as young people migrate to Johannesburg for better opportunities (City of Johannesburg, 2018). As a result, the City of Johannesburg continues to fight high unemployment, which is one of the major problems facing South Africa as a whole. While contributing significantly to South Africa's GDP, Johannesburg's economy has featured evidence of 'high and sticky levels of unemployment (Du Toit, 2011).

According to CDE (2017:13), youth unemployment afflicts metros like Johannesburg and Cape Town, where it is often concentrated in townships. Youth unemployment is of particular concern in Johannesburg and was estimated to be above 35 per cent (official definition) in 2014. Unemployment and, in particular, youth unemployment is not only one of the City's most pressing social and economic, but is a significant obstacle to transformation, growth, and development (Bernstein, 2011; City of Johannesburg, 2014). Therefore, in light of this evidence, the CDE (2017), suggests that one of the ways to abate youth unemployment should focus on integrating the city, so that young people in townships can link with economic opportunities and develop their own. Indeed, the challenge of the youth is employment opportunities. Also, metros should also make it easier for poor people to resettle in places where economic activities are concentrated (CDE, 2017). When almost half of a City's youth is unemployed, prospects for the future look rather gloomy. As adduced in chapter two, unemployment also affects economic welfare, production, the erosion of human capital, social exclusion, crime, and social instability (Bernstein, 2011; City of Johannesburg, 2014). It is also in light of these findings that the study in question has selected Johannesburg as the unit of analysis.

Lastly, one would find it quite ironic that the city of Johannesburg is deemed the economic hub of South Africa—which offers an abundance of business opportunities and as such, many South Africans relocate here from all parts of South Africa to seek out employment opportunities (Property24, 2019). Yet, records show that the city has more unemployed people than any other South African metropolitan area (CDE, 2014, 2017). As also pointed out by DuToit (2011), contributing significantly to South Africa's GDP, Johannesburg's economy has featured evidence of 'high and sticky levels of unemployment.' This contrast begs the question as to whether these many businesses that operate in Johannesburg consider employing young people, and if not, what are the underlying factors for that outcome? In other words, what are the demand-side factors that contribute to or perpetuate the

unemployment of young people? It is against this background that this study undertakes to investigate the attitudes and experiences that employers'—who have firms in the city of Johannesburg—have concerning the employment of young people. This investigation is necessary because the Joburg 2040 (2011:45), reports that the City's challenge is to drive job intensive competitiveness: creating more productive, decent jobs; supporting the industry more effectively; defining new emerging sectors for growth. Therefore, it would be interesting to find out how the sampled firms, from the city of Johannesburg, think of the employment of young people, and how they ensure that young people are included or excluded from their employment consideration.

3.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter explores the South African labour market and the current position of young people in the labour market. Therefore, this chapter shows that the current South African labour market is still plagued with (among other things) high levels of unemployment. In line with global trends of unemployment, the youth are the hardest hit by the incident of unemployment in South Africa. The chapter has also narrowly painted the issue of unemployment in Johannesburg, which is one of the biggest cities that are plagued with youth unemployment—thus is consequently selected as a place of study for this thesis. Up to this point, the thesis has painted the grim picture of the two main labour market issues (unemployment and underemployment) in South Africa, which has piqued the interest of this thesis. Subsequently, the following chapter proceeds to review the literature concerning the role of employers in the labour market, which is another aspect/theme that the thesis is interested in and seeks to explore. It does this by examining employers recruitment behaviour and strategies, particularly the recruitment and selection practices of employers to date.

CHAPTER FOUR

EMPLOYERS' RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PRACTICES

Employers are the architects of the employment system (Rubery, 2007:955)

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter four is another crucial chapter that deals with an aspect of the eccletic and integral role of employers in the labour market (and concerning the employment of jobseekers). Therefore, the thesis uses this chapter to make a case for an inquiry of the demand-side, rather than the already abundant supply-side. Reviewed literature shows that, when it comes to youth unemployment, there is an ever-growing body of macro and micro-level studies that predominantly focus on the supply-side factors of un/employment (De Lannoy et al., 2018). The macro-level research has, for instance, concentrated on sectoral changes in employment opportunities for the youth, among other things (Du Toit, 2003:9). While a looming body of micro-level work, drawing mainly on household and individual-level data gathered by quantitative surveys, investigates the role played by the characteristics of young people and their households (see Kingdon & Knight 2004; 396). Literature also illustrates how different disciplines or fields of research focus on varying aspects of the unemployment issue. For example, most findings within the field of economics draw mainly on survey data to analyse large-scale trends. Whereas smaller-scale, in-depth studies in the qualitative social science fields investigate the nuances of the lived experiences of disadvantaged youth that may contribute to unemployment (De Lannoy et al., 2018). Some of these causes have been discussed in chapter two.

By now, there is a clear understanding that one set of standard explanations for persistent unemployment has particularly focused on the supply side (as also asserted by CEC, 1994; OECD, 1994; 1996; Keeps & James, 2010; Schoer & Rankins, 2011; Ingold & Valizade). Much of the theoretical and policy debates on labour markets have focused upon improving the educational, training, and other `supply-side' characteristics of jobseekers (Fynn, Mader & Oosterom, 2017). However, complementary employer `demand-side' factors, in particular, the characteristics of employers, job openings, and recruitment practices, are also crucial in labour markets, but have been relatively neglected in the literature compared to supply-side

factors (Magd, 2003; Devin & Hogarth, 2005; Keep & James, 2010; Schoer & Rankins, 2011; Ingold & Valizade, 2015; Raikes & Davies, 2015; De Lannoy et al., 2018). While there may be standard labour-market research and policies that have pointed out deficiencies in the skills and other supply-side characteristics of jobseekers, it is also posited that the significance of employer and vacancy characteristics and their impact on employment in labour markets has been given less consideration (Adams, Greig & McQuaid, 2002; Devins & Hogarth, 2005; Fynn, Mader & Oosterom, 2017).

According to Adams, Greig, and McQuaid (2002:1411), "these [demand-side factors] need to be more fully considered to provide additional understanding of their causes in order to, among other things, increase the speed of flow of jobseekers into new employment, and reduce the costs of unfilled vacancies." As has been already pointed out by LMS theories, the demand-side (much like the supply side) plays a crucial role in the affairs of the labour market. Therefore, to fully understand the labour market and the affairs of the labour market (i.e., unemployment) both the supply and demand-side have to be analysed together, as well as the role of the state (Cassim,1982; Kraak,1995, Peck, 1996)—not one side over the other. However, it is purported that as important as the role of employers is (in the labour market outcomes of jobseekers), it has been under-researched and under-theorised (Devin & Hogarth, 2005; Sparrow, 2007; Schoer & Rankins, 2011; Keep & James, 2010; Ingold & Valizade, 2015; Raikes & Davies, 2015). It is for this reason that this study seeks to explore this so-claimed under-researched (demand-side) role, where it concerns the employment of young jobseekers. It does this by, particularly, investigating the ways in which employers' recruitment strategies and practices—which reflect, *inter alia*, their preferences and requirements—affect the employment of young people. The thesis concurrently seeks to explore the ways in which employers' dispositions (of young people and of government's interventions to curb youth unemployment) encourage or discourage the employment of young people. This focus on the demand side factors, which is essentially a focus on the role of employers in the labour market or specifically job creation, is endorsed by LMS theories. Therefore, the review in this chapter aims to collate and understand employers' recruitment practices (as one of the demand-side activities) in general and specific to the young people. The chapter on the demand-side activities is vital because it demonstrates the chief role of employers in job creation, and it also shows how employers exercise their agency in creating jobs. This role then justifies why it is necessary to explore and examine how the demand-side activities have a bearing on employment where it concerns the youth.

To give a sense of the role of the demand-side in the labour market—and the need to focus the research inquiry on the recruitment and selection practices—this chapter starts with a theme that addresses the claim that demand-side factors of unemployment are under-researched. This will be followed by a concise background of the Human Resource Management (HRM) practices as a discipline (or field of study) from which the recruitment practices stem. However, given that there are numerous HRM practices, the main focus will be diverted to the recruitment and selection practices. The discussion of HRM is necessary as it will help the reader understand the recruitment practices as part of the HRM practices. The chapter will proceed to examine the actual R&S practices, and does this by drawing on the South African experience as the main study area for the research. In particular, this section examines the main features of the recruitment and selection practices as identified in the literature, and the factors that affect these practices. Further, the chapter also looks at the concept of employability as a term that is closely related to the study of employers. This section will also review some of the debates regarding the skills employers look for (or seek) from potential jobseekers. Moreover, owing to the study's interest in the employers' role in the labour market, it was also necessary to explore some of the existing studies that also serve as a guiding tool for the research, in terms of the ways in which employers' role has been explored, and what may need further research. These studies also provide the framework for the data analysis contained in chapters seven, eight and nine.

With all these themes, the chapter maintains that a focus on employers'role is indispensable because as explained by Adams, Greig, and McQuaid (2000:1843), different labour markets are characterised by different flows of employed and unemployed people in and out of the labour market and jobs—which are partly a result of the underlying economic and industrial conditions and characteristics of the local economy (Martin & Sunley, 1999 cited in Adams, Greig & McQuaid, 2000: 1848). These conditions and characteristics include both labour supply and employer demand factors, as well as more general low aggregate demand; and are particularly important in labour markets with persistently high levels of unemployment. Hence skills shortages, and indeed many supply-side factors can be considered to be a subset of more general recruitment difficulties; than the problem being one of the skills shortages per se or purely of skill-mismatch. Therefore, there is also a need to explore non-supply-side factors in order to fully explain the extent of labour-market inefficiency (Adams, Greig & McQuaid, 2002:1412). This research undertakes to cast focus on employers—who make up

the demand-side—by exploring how they design and practice their recruitment and selection strategies, so as to understand whether they accommodate the youth in that process, or not.

4.2 EMPLOYERS' RECRUITMENT BEHAVIOUR

Chapters two and three have adduced, in simple terms, the purported paucity of demand-side studies (even though both chapters chiefly focus on the literature on unemployment and underemployment). This section considers the claim (of the under-researched demand-side factors) in much more detail, thus also making a case for such an inquiry. A considerable number of scholars have strongly claimed that very little is known about the experiences of employers when it comes to recruiting jobseekers (Magd, 2003; Devin & Hogarth, 2005; Keep, 2009; Hasluck, 2011; Schoer & Rankins, 2011; Ingold & Valizade, 2015; Raikes & Davies, 2015; De Lannoy et al., 2018). Unlike the trends of unemployment that are increasingly documented on a host of media outlets such as mainstream news, newspapers, and international and local organisations (such as STATS SA, ILO, UN, and the likes). Employers' experiences, dispositions, and practices in the labour market are rarely documented, compared to the supply-side determinants. This proves true the concerns raised by some scholars that the role of employers in job creation/employment is under-researched—especially when compared to the abundant supply-side studies.

In fact, Hasluck (2011:24), points out that even standard labour economics textbooks generally provide only an outline of the determinants of employers' demand for labour without exploring the dynamics and specificities of employer behaviour. However, he also highlights that there are exceptions that have provided a complete account of the dynamics of employer behaviour in terms of workforce adjustment, recruitment, and turnover. According to Hasluck (2011), most accounts of the dynamics of employer behaviour are alluded to in more specialist analyses of unemployment, such as Joll et al. (1983), Layard, Nickell, and Jackman (1991), or Boeri and van Ours (2008). These accounts of unemployment are built on the microeconomic foundation of a dynamic analysis of employment behaviour that focuses on a range of things—such as the ways that employers cope with continuous change in the labour market (i.e., turnover in their workforce) and respond to 'shocks' (such as a temporary fluctuation in sales or a major economic recession) (Hasluck, 2011: 76). However, speaking specifically to the subject of recruitment and selection (R&S)—which are the demand-side dynamics this current study sets out to explore—a paper by Keep and James (2010:4), notes that, within generic discussions about skills, education, training, and their relationship with

the labour market, R&S are often either wholly absent as a topic or regarded as being of relatively marginal importance. They argue that the supply of skills has generally been seen as central, with the process of its absorption into employment (i.e., the process of recruitment and selection) within organisations viewed as a smooth matching mechanism with minor issue. Keep and James (2010:7), further assert that the world of research mirrors the silence of policy debates on the topic of R&S. Instead, they maintain that within the research literature, R&S activities are largely considered in two fields:

- a generally prescriptive human resource management (HRM) or personnel management viewpoint (see, for example, Taylor and Collins, 2000); and
- a very technical psychology literature that focuses on the validity (absolute and relative) of different forms of recruitment techniques, such as competency modeling, interviews, and various types of psychometric testing (see, for example, Hunter and Hunter, 1984; Barrick and Mount, 1991; Rynes et al., 2000; Shippmann et al., 2000; and Lievens et al., 2002).

To an even lesser extent, R&S are also addressed in the fields of economics (in terms of the labour market) and education and training (usually in terms of the impact of qualifications within the R&S process). In many instances, it is generally treated as a relatively simple, mechanistic 'matching' process and the problems associated with it as being mainly technical in nature (Keep & James, 2010:9). It is also worth pointing out that much of the research that is drawn upon in discussing R&S does not have recruitment as its prime focus but simply deals with some limited aspect/s of the topic (Keep & James, 2010). For example, and as posited by Keep and James (2010), there is a considerable body of work in the UK that over time has probed employers' happiness and/or satisfaction with the outputs of the education and training system (see, for example, Reed, 1981; Industry in Education, 1996; Sims, 1989; Johnson & Burden, 2003 cited in Keep & James, 2010). On the other hand, a parallel strand has tried to understand employers' perceptions of and responses to different types of qualifications (for some early examples, see Reed, 1980; Williams, 1981; Sims, 1989; and for a more recent example, see Roe et al., 2006). In the main, however, the focus of this R&S topic has generally been relatively narrow. Keep and James, explain that focus on R&S often failed to explain the use of qualifications as part of the R&S process within any broader framework that might link this aspect of R&S with wider issues concerning why and how employers have specified their skill acquisition needs in the way they have. And how these

choices then impact on and inter-relate with the deployment of R&S techniques and sources of labour (Keep & James, 2010:36).

It is in view of this purported gap that the study seeks to focus on R&S practices in order to explore how they impact/shape employment outcomes of job seekers. Keep and James (2010), assert that as labour market conditions change considerably with time, forcing employers' recruitment activities (and their consequences for the unemployed) to mirror such changes, not only in volume but in procedure (Atkinson et al., 1996 cited in Keep & James, 2010). It becomes critical to explore the current state of these practices, and see how much of their composition is affected by employers' characteristics, as it would by the supply-side characteristics (and other economic and non-economic factors). Yet, most studies focus on the supply-side at the almost total neglect of the demand side. Where demand-side research studies exist they are often based on survey data that offers a description of a particular pattern of employer behaviour, but does not necessarily provide nuanced explanation for why it occurs as it does (Keep & James, 2010). Again, it is these assertions, advanced by Keep and James (2010)—considered together with other abovementioned scholars who argue that more demand-side studies are needed—that have inspired the study to focus on the R&S using the qualitative approach instead (which is explored in detail in Chapter five). In order to yield different results that make for an in-depth understanding of the demand-side factors from the employers' perspective other than the statistical analysis.

Furthermore, Carless (2007), advises that R&S can be examined from varying perspectives, for example, applicant, recruiter, and employer. In recent years, there has been a rising body of literature on the applicant and recruiter perspective (for reviews, see Breaugh & Starke, 2000; Highhouse & Hoffman, 2001; Ryan & Ployhart, 2000). With regards to the employer or organisational perspective, there has been considerable interest shown in selection practices (e.g., Cochrane, Tett, & Vandecreek, 2003; Di Milia, Smith, & Brown, 1994; O'Leary, Lindholm, Whitford, & Freeman, 2002; Ryan, McFarland, Baron, & Page, 1999; Taylor, Keelty, & McDonnell, 2002). There has, however, been scant research looking at the process of recruitment from the employer perspective (Mathews & Redman, 1998; Murphy & Bartram, 2002; Carless, 2007). Very little research has focused explicitly on employers' perceptions of unemployed people, or more precisely, has explored the extent to which employers' approaches to recruitment may be influenced by their attitudes and beliefs towards the unemployed (see Magd, 2003; Devin Hogart, 2005; Keep, 2009; Schoer & Rankins, 2011; Ingold & Valizade, 2015; Raikes & Davies, 2015).

This—how recruitment may be influenced by their attitudes and beliefs towards the unemployed—is particularly an inquiry the thesis is interested in—being inspired both by the gravity of the unemployment and underemployment crises as well as the purported gap on this particular subject. As also stated by Keep and James (2010), the recruitment of jobless people needs to be seen within the broader context of the recruitment process. By definition, unemployed people are outside of the workplace, and can only enter employment by being recruited by an employer from the external job market. Therefore, by considering when employers recruit, how they recruit, and what they want from the people they recruit, some light can be shed on the position of unemployed people in the job market. Also, it can help identify aspects of the process that may disadvantage unemployed jobseekers, as much as it can advantage others. Now that we understand that there is a relative gap in research of the demand-side factors, compared to the supply-side. The thesis now reviews the existing literature on employers' employment practices (which are the demand-side factors related to the employment of job-seekers) by first considering the HRM practices briefly, and then looking closely at R&S as one of the dynamics of employer' employment behaviour, and as the main subject of the thesis.

4.3 HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Although Human Resource Management (HRM) is a broad topic that consists of a number of practices, this chapter essentially explores the literature concerning employers' recruitment practices as the main focus of the thesis. Employee recruitment, examination, and selection are among the most essential HRM practices (Casey, Metcalf & Lakey, 1993; McCourt & Eldridge, 2003; Newell, 2005; Llorens & Kellough, 2007; Grobler et al., 2011; Lussier & Henson, 2013; Warnich, Carrel, Elbert & Hatfield, 2015; Swanepoel et al., 2017). For any organisation, making the right decisions about its employees is crucial to its success. These are the processes through which jobseekers, who make the suitable candidates, are selected and brought into the job market. Therefore, the quality of the workforce and the effectiveness of organisations depend—to a great extent—on the manner in which these core processes are conducted (Llorens & Kellough, 2007; Grobler et al., 2011; Warnich, Carrel, Elbert & Hatfield, 2015; Swanepoel et al., 2017). According to Warnich et al. (2015), numerous issues come into play in this area. One of them is the issue of recruiting and selecting the best candidate among an average pool of candidates (McCourt & Eldridge, 2003; Lussier & Henson, 2013). It is important to note that there is only a limited number of exceptional candidates available in the labour market (Warnich et al., 2015). Therefore, the ability to

identify, attract and integrate suitable recruits into an organisation is, thus, a significant challenge, which necessitates the designing and operation of the recruitment and selection practices (Newell, 2005; Llorens & Kellough, 2007; Grobler et al., 2011; Warnich, Carrel, Elbert & Hatfield, 2015; Swanepoel et al., 2017).

HRM centres on all aspects pertaining to the recruitment and management of the work of, in, and for organisations (Walton, 1999; Grobler et al., 2011; Warnich et al., 2015; Swanepoel et al., 2017). HRM is understood to be rooted in work as a socio-economic human activity, and as conducted primarily in the context of organisations (Walton, 1999; Swanepoel, 2017). Once a need is identified for a person (potential recruit) to carryout the work of the organisation, some form of HRM is required to find and bring such a person into the organisation (Swanepoel et al., 2014). The concept of HRM has been defined in various ways, and has developed over the years. Terms and concepts used to describe this field traditionally include labour management, personnel management, manpower management, employment management, industrial relations, labour relations, etc. (McCourt & Eldridge, 2003; Llorens & Kellough, 2007; Grobler et al., 2011; Warnich et al., 2015; Swanepoel et al., 2017). Expectedly, modern HRM is drastically different from personnel management understood decades ago (Llorens & Kellough, 2007; Grobler et al., 2011; Lussier & Henson 2013; Warnich, Carrel, Elbert & Hatfield, 2015; Swanepoel et al., 2017).

The emerging trend in HRM is clearly toward espousing the HR approach, through which organisations benefit in two significant ways: an increase in organisational effectiveness and satisfaction of each employee's needs (Grobler et al., 2011; Lussier & Henson, 2013). Crudely put, HRM is the practice of recruiting, hiring, deploying, and managing an organisation's employees. Recruitment and selection are some of the most important functions of HRM (McCourt & Eldridge, 2003; Llorens & Kellough, 2007; Grobler et al., 2011; Lussier & Henson, 2013; Warnich et al., 2015; Swanepoel et al., 2017). Recruitment and selection practices and processes are conducted to get the right persons for the right jobs vacant in any organisation. The recruitment and selection process shape the decisions, in terms of which candidates will get employment offers (Altkinson & Williams, 2003; Keep & James, 2010; Mohammed & Absar, 2012; Kapur, 2018). In any kind of organisation, R&S processes are considered useful because they help find the most suitable candidates for the jobs (Kapur, 2018). Hence, these processes are integral in HRM, and are designed to make the best use of employee strength to meet the strategic goals and objectives of the employers,

and of the organisation as a whole (Newell, 2005; Grobler, 2011; Mohammed & Absar, 2012; Kapur, 2018). It is for this reason that the thesis elected to investigate the selected/sampled employers' recruitment behaviour by, particularly, focusing on the R&S practices (among the many other practices that can reveal recruitment behaviour). Therefore, the following section begins the narrowed focus on R&S practices as an HRM practice that is more relevant for the study.

4.4 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PRACTICES

Although some scholars maintain that there is no one hard and fast universalistic recruitment model per se, much of the HRM literature referring to R&S tends to put forward an orderly sequential approach. As such, R&S have generally been espoused as the paramount means by which an organisation sets out to search for, attract, and select the appropriate number of high-quality candidates to meet its organisational (production or serves) needs (Windolf & Wood, 1988; Storey & White, 1994; Taylor & Collins, 2000; McCourt & Eldridge, 2003; Grobler et al., 2011; Lussier & Henson, 2013; Warnich et al., 2015; Swanepoel et al., 2017). Therefore, the primary way usually suggested to achieve this, is by standardising the process and making it objective, equitable, rational, efficient, systematic, and arguably more scientific (e.g., Thomason, 1978; Blackburn & Mann, 1979; Hedges, 1982; Jenkins, 1986; Attwood, 1989; Torrington & Hall, 1991; Watson, 1994; Iles & Salaman, 1995; Atkinson et al., 1996; Grobler et al., 2011; Lussier & Henson, 2013; Warnich el at., 2015; Swanepoel et al., 2017). The need to formalise recruitment and selection and develop defensible procedures has, arguably, deepened over the years (Newell, 2005:118). The recent impetus for formalising has been shaped by a variety of sources of labour laws that vary from country to country.

In fact, this need has mainly been in response to: an increase in social awareness; the looming concern for achieving equality of employment opportunities; and a concomitant need to do away with discriminatory practices that work against certain groups in the labour market (such as the disabled, ethnic minority groups and the unemployed, especially the long term unemployed) (McCourt & Eldridge, 2003; Newell. 2005). In light of these issues, organisations have generally been encouraged to introduce more overt, standardised, scrutinised, and professional personnel practices (Swanepoel et al., 2017). Which do away with inequitable, subjective judgments, altitudinal prejudice, and discrimination; but also allows for recruitment and selection decisions to be equitable, valid and more reliable as well as effective (Grobler et al., 2011; Lussier & Henson, 2013; Warnich et al., 2015; Swanepoel

et al., 2017). Typically, the recruitment process takes place once the vacant work has been designed, structured and workforce planning has been conducted, as it may, from time to time, become necessary to recruit new employees (Glueck 1978; Byars and Rue, 1997; Carrell, 1998; Walton, 1999; Dessler 2007; Llorens & Kellough, 2007; Grobler, 2011; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015). To this end, specific strategies must be performed to attract the necessary job applicants from which selection will take place (Llorens & Kellough, 2007; Keep & James, 2010; Grobler, 2011; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015). Therefore, by means of the recruitment process, the organisation aims to attract and retain suitable applicants that will join and work for the organisation (Glueck 1978; Carrell, 1998; Walton, 1999; Llorens & Kellough, 2007; Keep & James, 2010).

Holistically, recruitment refers to those HRM activities undertaken to entice people who have the necessary talent, capabilities (knowledge, skills, experience, motivations, and other attitudes and aptitudes) and potential to apply to fill vacant positions, to become employees, and work for the organisation to help achieve its objectives (Glueck 1978; Carrell, 1998; Walton, 1999; Grobler, 2011; Mohammed & Absar, 2012; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). The global definition of recruitment refers to a process whereby a candidate is attracted, screened, and selected for a job by a recruiter or employer (Carrell, 1998; Walton, 1999; McCourt & Eldridge, 2003; Grobler, 2011; Mohammed & Absar, 2012; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). By and large, recruitment can be defined as the set of activities an organisation uses to attract job seekers who have the capabilities and attitudes needed to assist the organisation in accomplishing its goals (Llorens & Kellough, 2007; Grobler, 2011; Mohammed & Absar, 2012; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). It is the process of encouraging people to apply for actual or anticipated vacancies of the organisation.

Selection is part of the recruitment practices but serves a different and particular purpose. Byars and Rue (1997:172), defined selection as “the process of choosing from among available applicants, which are the individuals who are most likely to perform a job successfully.” It is the process of gathering all necessary information about applicants and using that information to decide which applicants to employ (Carrell, 1998; Walton, 1999; Llorens & Kellough, 2007; Grobler, 2011; Mohammed & Absar, 2012; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). Once an adequate number of qualified applicants are identified through proper recruitment (described above), the selection process begins. Selection is one of the most important functions of HRM, because the wrong selection of

employees can negatively impact organisational performance enormously (Llorens & Kellough, 2007; Grobler, 2011; Mohammed & Absar, 2012; Kapur, 2018). While recruitment encourages and calls for individuals to apply for employment, the purpose of the selection process is to identify and employ the best-qualified individuals for specific positions. Essentially, selection is a process of choosing, from a pool of jobseekers, the individual best suited for a particular job (Carrell, 1998; Walton, 1999; Llorens & Kellough, 2007; Grobler, 2011; Mohammed & Absar, 2012; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018).

The significance of recruitment is recognised by the fact that it, not only, functions to enhance productivity and profitability, but it also serves to encourage good relationships among the employers and the employees (Grobler, 2011; Mohammed & Absar, 2012; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). Furthermore, it helps in increasing the possibility of selecting the suitable candidates who will be able to, effectively and efficiently, carryout the goals of the organisation, thus contributing to the organisations growth and development (Newell, 2005; Llorens & Kellough, 2007; Grobler, 2011; Mohammed & Absar, 2012; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). On the other hand, the significance of selection is recognised by the fact that it helps in choosing the most suitable and qualified candidates who can meet the requirements of the jobs within an organisation (Carrell, 1998; Walton, 1999; Llorens & Kellough, 2007; Grobler, 2011; Mohammed & Absar, 2012; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). In a nutshell, recruitment and selection processes are the steps that any firm takes to attract, qualify and ultimately hire new employees. However, for every firm and role being recruited, this process will look different.

4.4.1 Common Methods of Recruitment and Selection

Every organisation has its own organisational culture based on its vision and mission, and long-term strategic plans are defined accordingly (McCourt & Eldridge, 2003; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). Human capital is the biggest asset for any organisation to run the business successfully. Based on the firm size, requirement, nature of work, etc., they can decide what type of recruitment plan will be suitable for them: formal or informal recruitment methods (Myers & Dreachslin, 2007; Grobler, 2011; Mohammed & Absar, 2012; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Sameen, 2016). Hasluck (2011), argues that there are many different methods by which employers' can find potential recruits. These include

formal methods such as the use of Jobcentres, private employment agencies, advertising in professional journals and newspapers. As well as informal methods which entails seeking personal recommendations from existing employees, direct approaches to potential recruits, word-of-mouth, and so forth. Each recruitment channel, in turn, has its own associated costs and benefits in terms of its reach of potential recruits and its effectiveness in identifying and selecting suitable recruits; each of which will translate into direct costs of recruitment and indirect cost in terms of delays and errors in recruitment (Fever, 1989; Byars and Rue, 1997; Spilsbury & Lane, 2000; Dessler 2007; Llorens & Kellough, 2007; Mohammed & Absar, 2012; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Kapur, 2018). An example of a study examining employers' recruitment methods preferences was conducted by Fulgence (2015). In this study interviews were conducted with human resource managers in different sectors to determine how corporate recruiters recruit graduates.

The findings of this study reveal that graduate recruiters prefer to use formal recruitment channels than informal channels when searching for new graduates. The study reveals that there is a growing trend towards using assessment tests, than academic qualifications during the screening process. The study established communication skills, attitude, curriculum vitae presentation, and behavioural qualities as essential aspects that influence recruitment decisions of graduates by corporate recruiters. In general, the literature reviewed shows that both formal and informal methods are used to select potential applicants. According to Mohammed and Absar (2012), differences in the use of recruitment channels can be attributed to differences in the potential benefits to search (the consequences of making a wrong appointment; the extent of the variation in the distribution of worker productivity). As well as differences in the costs of different methods, and the scale on which recruitment is required (Byars & Rue, 1997; Taylor Collins, 2000; Altkinson & Williams, 2003; Dessler 2007; Myers & Dreachslin, 2007; Mohammed & Absar, 2012). Each method has its own advantages and disadvantages. Research on the recruitment methods shows that small firms can settle for cost-effective informal methods, while larger firms tend to go for a requirement agency to recruit and select new employees. But this likelihood varies from country to country and type of the industry as well (Keep & James, 2010; Hasluck, 2011; Sameen, 2016). It is, however, just important to know that there are two different ways employers recruit potential candidates: through formal and informal strategies.

4.4.2 Why is a focus on recruitment and selection practice necessary?

Organisations and work are central to modern-day life. Indeed, a vast majority of people have to engage in some form of work to be able to earn and make a living (Myers & Dreachslin, 2007; Grobler, 2011; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Sameen, 2016; Kapur, 2018). Today millions of people do so by working in and for organisations. But, as has been shown in chapters two and three, there are millions of others who are also in need of such work—there is a global unemployment crisis (Grobler, 2011; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). Notwithstanding the issue of unemployment, all organisations have work to be done, which is why they generally need the human capital of motivated people to do the work (Grobler, 2011). By the same token, millions of people rely on organisations to use, apply and develop their skills through work, and to thereby make a living and enhance their standard of living and the quality of their lives (Swanepoel, 2014). As a result, everywhere on the face of the planet, one of humanity's fundamental need is a good job, and the need is highly pronounced among the young people (World Bank, 2009; National Treasury, 2011; ILO, 2016), as emphasised in previous chapters. This is why one of the best ways to address problems related to poverty and unemployment (which is rampant in South Africa and on the African continent—as well as all over the world) is to create opportunities for paid work where millions of people can all benefit (World Bank, 2009; ILO, 2019).

This means—as been expressed by governments, NGOs, global organisation, among others—jobs should be created, people should be employed. Therefore, it is the process of job creation that necessitates the practice/s of recruitment and selection, and thus renders these practices the most significant in any organisation (that needs to recruit employees) (Kapur, 2018). From time to time, it becomes necessary for an organisation to create jobs. This need to recruit may arise for various reasons such as resignations, promotions, transfers, and other reasons (Grobler, 2011; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). When this need arises, the firm has to attract a pool of suitable applicants by advertising the vacant job; and then screening applicants to find the candidate/s whose characteristics closely match the requirements of the vacant job (Grobler, 2011; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). Job seekers, on the other hand, have to find firms with suitable vacancies. Once they have found a firm with a suitable vacancy, jobseekers have to apply, and to

convince the employer that they are the most qualified candidates, compared to all other applicants (Grobler, 2011; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018).

The results of this matching process is eventually driven by the overlap between the firm's recruitment channels, and the job seeker's search methods (Schöer et al., 2010). Although the response of potential employees is important, which depends on their attitude towards both the work to be performed and the organisation trying to recruit them—because without their response, the vacancy may not be filled. This research is more interested in the openness or proclivity of selected employers in Johannesburg to employ (or consider to employ) young jobseekers. This is to explore what their attitudes are pertaining to young people, and to understand the way in which these attitudes influence or inform their decision to accommodate (or not) the youth in their organisations. This exploration will help explicate the ways in which demand-side factors (which include employers' discretion, disposition and employment considerations/practices) either encourage or discourage the employment of young people. It is clear by now that every organisation, regardless of its size, product, or service, must recruit and select applicants to fill positions (Grobler, 2011; Warnich et al., 2015). Katou and Budhwar (2007), also found that R&S practices are positively associated with organisational performance variables such as effectiveness, efficiency, innovation, and quality. It stands to reason that, to a great degree, the effectiveness of an organisation depends on the effectiveness of its employees.

Indeed, without a high-quality labour force (which is usually composed through the R&S process), any organisation is destined to have mediocre performance. For this reason, the recruitment of human resource is a crucial HRM function (Grobler et al., 2011). This explicit and implicit significance of the R&S practices is precisely why the study was motivated to focus on them, as one of the ways to investigate the demand-side factors that influence employers' decisions concerning the recruitment of the youth, or lack thereof. Looking at R&S practices is one of the ways that can help know who gets recruited and who does not, which may also reveal the positions for which people are recruited. It will also show the ways in which the design and practice of these strategies encourage or hinder the employment of young people. For this study, all these questions are explored in relation to the NEETs youth. Therefore, having justified the focus on R&S practices, the thesis explores the factors that affect such practices, which have a potential also to influence and shape the recruitment of (young) job-seekers.

4.5 FACTORS THAT AFFECT RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

The recruitment process, like other processes carried out in any organisations, is not conducted in a vacuum but is influenced (both positively and negatively) by a multitude of factors whose sources can be found both from the internal and external environments (Anderson, 2002; Grobler, 2011; Hasluck, 2011; Mashaba, 2013; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). Indeed, the reviewed literature finds that factors affecting R&S are organised into the internal and the external categories (Mashaba, 2013; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Kapur, 2018). The internal factors have been stated to involve: the size of the organisation, organisation policy, recruitment policies and procedures, the availability of various sources and methods of recruitment and their relative effectiveness and efficiencies, the image of organisation and image of job, the strategies and general managerial dynamics of the organisations of the dynamics (in particular, how HRM is practiced) (Grobler, 2011; Mashaba, 2013; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). External factors include demographic factors, labour market conditions, unemployment rate, government policy and legislation, trade unions (Anderson, 2002; Grobler, 2011; Mashaba, 2013; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). While not providing an exhaustive list of the various factors that influence the design and execution of the recruitment process; below are some of the most cited factors that have been outlined in the reviewed literature. These will be divided into internal and external factors, and will be discussed briefly with examples drawn from the South African context where necessary.

4.5.1 Internal factors influencing recruitment

The internal factors (also known as endogenous factors) are factors that affect recruiting personnel in the organisation, and are factors that can be controlled by the organisation. Below are some examples of such factors.

(i) Recruitment policy of an organisation

A recruitment policy is a framework that unequivocally outlines the firm's recruitment practices (Grobler, 2011). The purpose of a recruitment policy is to provide guidelines and to foster consistency, transparency, compliance, and adherence to labour laws and legislations (Grobler, 2011; Mashaba, 2013; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). Therefore, for an organisation to achieve effective and successful recruitment in the organisation, it must have a concise recruitment and selection policy that will guide the

application of such practices. For this reason, the recruitment policy is one of the most integral functions in any organisation, no matter the size or type of business. The only difference between small and large firms is the scope and complexity of the recruitment policies they need to implement (Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). Essentially, recruitment policy, not only, ensures that the recruitment process is equitably and effectively carried out, but it also determines who gets employed and how. This, in turn, affects different job seekers differently as some may not be accommodated by the recruitment preferences set out in the recruitment policy. For instance, if (for whatever reasons) a firm prefers (or has set out) to recruit internally as opposed to externally for certain positions. This means that external job seekers may not be considered even though they may have the skills the firm requires.

(ii) Size of the organisation

This is one of the most important factors affecting the recruitment process. To develop and expand business, recruitment planning is of the essence for hiring more labour (Grobler, 2011; Mashaba, 2013; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). In other worss, if the organisation is planning to increase its operations and expand its business, it will also need, among other things, to recruit more personnel that can handle the expanded or added operations that the growing business will now have. However, the lack of such growth also tends, at best, to simultaneously discourage the need to recruit more—and at worst, it may lead to the current employees being laid off if the growth of the business is stagnant or declining (Mashaba, 2013). Therefore, when it comes to recruitment, the size of an organisation is critical as organisations will employ or consider employing more personnel if it is growing and expanding its production or services.

(iii) The cost of recruitment

This is another factor that shapes recruitment decisions. Employers usually consider the cost of the entire recruitment process; that is why organisations try to employ/outsource their potential candidates in a way that is cost-effective as opposed to a way that will require the organisation to over-spend on recruitment (Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). Basically, when a need to employ more personnel arises, employers are mindful of the costs of recruitment and thus set out to conduct every recruitment within a specific budget. Therefore, as also pointed out in section 4.4.1 above, employers tend to adopt strategies that will bear a lower cost of recruitment, while also ensuring that the suitable candidate is recruited.

4.5.2 External Factors Influencing Recruitment

Beyond institutional boundaries, there exist numerous factors that may affect the recruitment process, either positively or negatively. Unlike the internal factors that can be controlled by the organisation to a great extent, organisations have limited or no control over external factors. These factors include, but are not limited to, labour market conditions, government policy and legislation and labour organisations, and their influence on recruitment processes.

(i) The state of the country's economy

This refers both to the economy being able to grow and expand, allowing for more economic activity (selling and buying); or the inevitable periods were the economy declines or shrinks, slowing down the interaction between supply and demand. For example, if the supply of people that have specific skills and abilities is less than the demand, then the hiring will require more effort as this will mean more people are unemployed (Grobler, 2011; Mashaba, 2013; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). On the other hand, if the demand is less than the supply, then hiring will be relatively more manageable. In a strong growing economy, there is usually a concomitant growth and ample demand for suitably qualified job candidates. This may, however, vary from one industry or sector to another (Grobler, 2011; Mashaba, 2013; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). Each organisation has its own labour market peculiarities. If there is an abundance of qualified candidates who meet the job specification requirements, a small recruitment effort may generate many applications. If the job market is tight, more creative, and expensive efforts might be needed (Swanepoel et al., 2014).

(ii) Supply and Demand

The availability of labour both within and outside the organisation is an important determinant in the recruitment process. For example, if the firm has a demand for more professionals and there is limited supply in the market for such professionals, then the firm will either be discouraged from making such recruitments; or will have to depend upon internal personnel by providing them special training and development prgrammes. This also suggests that the shortage of skills makes the recruitment process expensive as such skills' demand is more than the supply. This will sometimes force employers to offer larger compensation packages to attract suitable candidates. At the same time, an abundance of skills lowers recruitment costs as more candidates compete for a few vacancies (Erasmus et

al., 2005:209). If the supply for employment, seekers in a particular labour market, is higher in relation to available vacancies, then the price of labour will generally be cheaper. Similarly, the cost of labour will be higher when the supply of employment seekers is lower compared to available jobs (Mashaba, 2013). Furthermore, when the firm is not creating new jobs, for whatever reason, this leads to, among other things, an oversupply of labour which in turn may lead to unemployment.

(ii) Demographic factors

These factors are related to the characteristics of potential employees, such as their age, religion, educational qualifications, gender, occupation, economic status, and geographical area (Grobler, 2011; Mashaba, 2013; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). The South African statistical shows (as indicated under the sub-section of youth unemployment in chapter three) how demographics influence the employment of various groups, reporting that young people are less likely to be employed in comparison to adults, and more females are less likely than males. This indicates that employers take into consideration the demographics—depending on which ones they prefer—of their potential candidates when they make employment decisions. This preference, in turn, positively affects the people that are employed based on their demographics, but negatively affects those that are not.

(iii) Trade unions

While trade unions can be deemed to not be an external factor, as there are unions representing employees (internally) within the organisation, the trade union movement, by virtue of being independent of any employer, is an external factor—and, as such, has implications for recruitment (Mashaba, 2013). In some countries, trade unions may be inactive, whereas in other countries trade unions are, not only, active but are revolutionary in how they protect and advance the interests of their members in the workplace (Grobler, 2011; Mashaba, 2013; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). For instance, in South Africa, the role of trade unions can be categorised as external factors that influence recruitment, because they also play a critical role in regulating employment relations in an organisation (Grobler, 2011; Mashaba, 2013; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). Among other things unions may seek to take part in recruitment processes to make sure there is no irregularity or unfair discrimination (Barney and Hesterly, 2006:125; Nel, Werner, Haasbroek, Poisat, Sono & Schuiltz, 2009; Mashaba, 2013; Swanepoel et al.,

2014). The experience in most public institutions is that the participation of labour unions in these prcosses helps thwart favouritism and nepotism, and helps in achieving inclusiveness in decision-making processes (Barney and Hesterly, 2006:125; Nel, Werner et al., 2009:224; Mashaba, 2013; Swanepoel et al., 2014).

(iv) Labour laws

Labour laws—which reflect the social and political environment of the market and are created by the central and the state governments—are also outlined as external factors that affect recruitment (Grobler, 2011; Mashaba, 2013; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). Among other things, these laws stipulate the compensation, working environment, safety and health regulations, and the job duties of the workforce, for different types of employments (Grobler, 2011; Mashaba, 2013; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). For this reason, it should be understood that the government policies play an, increasingly, important role in the recruitment policies and practices of organisations (Mashaba, 2013). To provide a contextual example, South Africa has a comprehensive legislative framework governing HRM-related matters, (i.e., affirmative action, unfair discrimination and employment services). As such, all recruitment efforts must be performed within the boundaries of the legal framework and laws such as the Employment Equity Act (EEA), the Labour Relations Act (LRA), and Employment Services Act. The Employment Services Bill Act of 2012 have an important influence (Grobler, 2011; Mashaba, 2013; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). The purposes of these Acts has to do with the promotion of the employment of South African citizens, improving access to the labour market for work-seekers, provide opportunities for new entrants to the labour market to gain work experience, and improving employment prospects for people with disabilities (Swanepoel et al., 2014).

In addition, these Acts collectively seek to improve employment prospects of job-seekers and employees facing retrenchments. They all aim to facilitate access by job-seekers to training and to promote employment growth and workplace productivity (Swanepoel et al., 2014). These legal considerations, promulgated by government, have a positive or negative impact on the recruitment policies of the organisations. When recruitment and selection of the employees take place, then it is vital to take into consideration, equal employment opportunities for the individuals (Grobler, 2011; Mashaba, 2013; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). In other terms, there should not be any discrimination

against anybody on the basis of factors, such as race, religion, ethnicity, gender and socio-economic background. Therefore, fairness and equity are of principal significance in the R&S processes (Kapur, 2018; Klug, 2017). Given the major impact of labour legislation on R&S practices, the following section expands on this factor by considering the labour laws in South Africa, and some of the impact they have on the R&S practices therein.

4.6 LABOUR LEGISLATION AND RECRUITMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

As pointed out in chapter three, after the advent of democratic South Africa, the new ANC-led government moved swiftly to overhaul the country's inequitable labour dispensation—among other issues that emerged from the apartheid regime's reign (Thompson, 1990; Leger, 1993; Standing et al., 1996; Legg, 2004; Barker, 2007; Swanepoel et al., 2014). As a result of this, numerous labour laws were promulgated from 1995 onwards. According to Thompson (1990), the new labour laws brought about a renewed perspective of what the people-centered philosophy, advanced by the new government means for South African organisations. Therefore, labour relations, particularly the legal and compliance aspects of HRM became increasingly paramount (Standing et al., 1996; Legg, 2004; Barker, 2007; Swanepoel et al., 2014). One of the first pieces of labour legislation that went this route was the Labour Relations Act (LRA), which officially came into effect in November 1996. Other new labour related laws that followed (some of which are cited in the previous section) included the South African Qualifications Authority (No. 58 of 1995), the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (No. 75 of 1997), the Employment Equity Act (No. 55 of 1998), the Skills Development Act (No. 97 of 1998) and the Skills Development Levies Act (No. 9 of 1999). Needless to say, this period posed organisations with serious challenges of adapting to the new pieces of legislation (Thompson, 1990; Standing et al., 1996; Legg, 2004; Barker, 2007; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Festus et al., 2016).

As mentioned above, labour legislations are some of the major factors affecting the recruitment practices, as they seek to neutralise and regulate the labour market affairs and ensure equal opportunities and fairness, especially where employment outcomes are concerned (Grobler, 2011; Mashaba, 2013; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). In essence, the South African labour legislation provides protection of the rights of persons seeking employment and those already in employment. For instance, the LRA expressly prohibits an employer from advantaging, or attempting to, advantage an individual looking for employment in exchange for individuals who choose to exercise any

right conferred by the LRA (Grobler, 2011; Mashaba, 2013; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). These rights include: joining a trade union, participating in protected strike action, participating in workplace forums, or other procedures provided for in the LRA (LRA, 1996).

Furthermore, the BCEA mainly, *inter alia*, for the improvement of labour market standards through the setting of minimum wages by the Minister of Labour (and bargaining councils), and extending the scope of labour standards to workers in sectors that were previously not under such protection (Mashaba, 2013). The EEA, essentially charges employers to do away with 'disproportionate' wage differentials between workers, through the implementation of firm-level employment equity plans that must be drawn up and reported on by all employers (excluding small firms) (Burger & Woolard, 2005). With the promulgation of the EEA particularly, the selection process itself has become of critical importance to companies in South Africa. This, because the realisation of the EEA basically means that all forms of discrimination, whether direct or indirect, are prohibited (Grobler, 2011; Mashaba, 2013; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). Direct discrimination refers to when a person, on racial grounds, is treated less favourably than others. Indirect discrimination occurs when a requirement or condition, although applied equally to persons of all racial groups, it however negatively affects some people than others (Grobler, 2011). Therefore, in regulating such likely discrimination, groups identified by the government in the EEA as blacks, Asians, coloureds, women and persons with disabilities will play a major role in filling the new jobs (Grobler, 2011; Mashaba, 2013; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018).

Overall, these abovementioned legislations, amongst others, serve to place specific and necessary prohibitions on unfair discrimination in any employment policy or practice. This prohibition has given rise to important issues relating to the recruitment process. For instance, employers are now given the responsibility to scrutinise their recruitment policies and procedures carefully, and they have to compile recruitment and selection procedures to be applied consistently and fairly to all job applicants. A failure to do so could have major implications for the non-compliant employers (Grobler, 2011; Mashaba, 2013; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). Therefore, organisations have to guard against enabling or perpetuating unfair discrimination through their recruitment policies, and they have to ensure that they foster affirmative action (Grobler, 2011; Mashaba, 2013; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). Therefore, affirmative actions should be

tailored to the specific circumstances of each organisation, considering its current human resource base and future needs in terms of the long-term direction of the organisation, and its overall resource and competitive position (Grobler, 2011; Mashaba, 2013; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018).

This indicates that affirmative action, as part of the broader empowerment agenda, forms an integral part and key focus of HR in South Africa. In fact, one authors asserts that the AA should be treated as a strategic business and HRM priority and applied accordingly (Grobler, 2011; Mashaba, 2013; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). This deliberate intervention of this legislation is necessary, as it essentially aims to redress the divided society that was shaped largely by the apartheid system, and which still plays out in the post-apartheid labour market (Burger & Woolard, 2005; Coetzee, 2005; Burger & von Fintel, 2009; Grobler, 2011; Clarke, 2013; Mashaba, 2013; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Festus et al., 2016; Kapur, 2018). As discussed in Chapter three, section 3.1, when the ANC was elected in 1994, high levels of inequality and unemployment are some of the perennial trends that characterised the labour market (Burger & Woolard, 2005; Coetzee, 2005; Clarke, 2013; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Festus et al., 2015). Historical structures of gender and racial discrimination shaped the way in which women and black workers were incorporated into the labour market (Burger & Woolard, 2005; Coetzee, 2005; Clarke, 2013; Festus et al., 2015). Black workers were mostly employed in the mines, farms, or as unskilled or semi-skilled labourers in other sectors. Women dominated employment in the retail and clothing manufacturing sectors, while black women mostly found work in the agricultural industry or as domestic workers (Moleke, 2003; Burger & von Fintel, 2009; Festus et al., 2015). Section 3.1, also shows that since 1994, the labour market has been fundamentally reformed through the introduction of a range of laws (including and especially the abovementioned) primarily aimed at protecting workers at the middle and lower end of the skill spectrum, and at fostering the employment of individuals from historically disadvantaged groups (blacks, women, and the disabled) in the workplace (Burger & Woolard, 2005; Festus et al., 2015).

In response to this situation, it was widely recognised that specific legislation was needed to address ongoing discrimination in the labour market, as well as to correct gender and racial imbalances in the workforce resulting from apartheid policies and practices (Coetzee, 2005; Clarke, 2013). In addition to the labour legislations, the Constitution, as the supreme law of the country, also provides the legal framework for recruitment and selection by affording

employees and jobseekers equal protection against discrimination from employers or potential employers (Mashaba, 2013). In fact, the labour legislation introduced post-1994 had to conform to the framework set out by the Constitution. While labour legislation affords workers' rights within the scope of the Constitution, they also serve to constrain the ability of employers to adjust their demand for labour (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996; Mashaba, 2013). Prior to the promulgation of the LRA, job applicants had no (or little) recourse in cases where they have reason to believe that they were unable to obtain employment due to unfair discrimination (Coetzee, 2005). However, the LRA as well as other labour legislations provide this recourse by guaranteeing workers (and job applicants) the rights that employers are obligated by the law to uphold (Burger & Woolard, 2005; Coetzee, 2005; Burger & von Fintel, 2009; Clarke, 2013; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Festus et al., 2015). As a consequence, how institutions undertake recruitment as part of the employment process has been significantly affected.

Notwithstanding these robust changes in the world of work, rising unemployment and changing work patterns are undermining the short and long-term success of the EEA and equity provisions in other pieces of legislation. A range of factors contribute to the continuation of racial and gender segregation in the labour market (Moleke, 2003; Bhorat, 2004; Bhorat & Oosthuizen, 2005; Dias & Posel, 2007; Burger & von Fintel, 2009; Clarke, 2013; Festus et al., 2015). Indeed, despite employment equity legislation, skill and education levels continue to reinforce apartheid-era employment patterns. As a result of this perpetuity, there is still a high concentration of women and black workers in job categories and sectors with low-end jobs and high levels of casualisation. The retail industry provides a good example of this stratification Research reveals that South African organisations are facing the challenge of developing and implementing AA programmes that will achieve the joint goals of employment equity and wealth creation (Bhorat, 2004; Bhorat & Oosthuizen, 2005; Dias & Posel, 2007; Burger & von Fintel, 2009; Clarke, 2013; Festus et al., 2016). A common theme in the experiences of numerous countries is that the successful long-term redistribution of resources is contingent upon economic growth, which, in turn, is reliant upon AA in order to develop and utilise a country's human resources and ensure political stability. It should thus be clear that the systematic and strategic management of AA is of crucial importance for the wealth of the individual, the organisation, and the country (Coetzee, 2005).

Indeed, Coetzee (2005), asserts that if organisations are to reap the fruits of such longer-term spin-offs, AA will have to become an integral part of everyday human resource management practices in organisations. This will require for all human resource management practice areas to incorporate the AA strategy (Coetzee, 2005). In other words, not only should employers eliminate all forms of unfair discrimination, but also implement AA measures to achieve employment equity targets. Human resource practitioners should therefore review all HR policies, procedures, and practices to ensure that they do not enable any form of unfair discrimination or unjustifiable differentiation (Coetzee, 2005). The responsibility that the labour legislations place on employers to ensure that there are no grounds for unfair discrimination, proves to be one of the factors that are likely to affect the ways in which employers design and practice their recruitment strategies. This, in turn, will likely impact the employment outcomes of different groups of society. The research is interested in finding out how legislation affects recruitment strategies and how that, in turn, impacts young people.

4.7 EMPLOYABILITY

Up to this point, the chapter has shown that demand-side factors are the least researched, in terms of the bearing they have on labour market outcomes of job seekers. The chapter has also explored the R&S practices as a part of the HRM activities that make up the demand-side. Now (in this section) the chapter reviews the concept of employability, as it is closely tied to the subject of un/employment of jobseekers. For people to be employed, they have to be employable, failing which they might not be attractive/marketable to employers. The review of the literature regarding the concept of employability is paramount for this study given that the major cause of unemployment is attributed to skills mismatch (which simply means that most jobseekers do not have the required/demanded skills, or that there is an abundance of skills). This issue of skills-mismatch points to the fact that people may not know what are the demanded or marketable skills. Therefore, since the study is interested in whether employers recruit or consider recruiting young people, it is important to explore what employers think about the employability of the youth.

There are varying views as to what is meant by the term employability, with most definitions recognising that employability refers to a set of skills and attributes that will make employment possible (Peck & Theodore, 2000; Harvey, 2001; Johnson & Burden, 2003; McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005; Yorke, 2006 Wharton & Horrocks, 2015). Rothwell and Arnold (2005:23), also submit that employability concerns the extent to which people possess the

skills and other attributes to find and stay in employment of the kind they prefer. Devin and Hogarth (2004:249), define employability as an economic concept that is concerned with entry to, maintenance in, and progression through the world of work. According to Mcquid, Green, and Danson (2004), employability remains a contested concept in terms of its use in both theory and policy. As a result of this, the term has been given a number of definitions. Benston (2008:1), refers to employability simply as "one's chances of getting employment." He asserts that most (if not all) people at some point have to consider their possibilities of finding a new job—whether it is when they first enter the labour market, or later in life when they move between jobs in search for better pay or positions (Bernston, 2012; Moreau & Leathwood, 2007).

Therefore, employability relates to both unemployed people seeking work and those in employment seeking better jobs with their current or different employer (Lindsay & McQuaid, 2005; Yorke, 2006; Wye & Lim, 2009; Saunders & Zuzel, 2010). The broad view of employability focusses on an individuals' employability in terms of their ability to secure new employment within the labour market (Harvey, 2001; Lindsay & McQuaid, 2005; Wye & Lim, 2009; Saunders & Zuzel, 2010). As a result, the broad approach takes into consideration factors (such as job search and labour demand conditions), which affect one's chances to actually find or change employment (Lindsay & McQuaid, 2005; Moreau & Leathwood, 2007; Bernston, 2008; Wye & Lim, 2009; Saunders & Zuzel, 2010). Notwithstanding the lack of agreement on the meaning and contributing factors of employability, Nilsson (2010:545), submits that a central aspect of employability relates to an individual becoming employed. In this view, it can be surmised that to feel employable is to believe that one's chances of finding employment are good. According to Symington (2012:18), the most widely used definition of employability is that of York and Knight (2006), who define employability as a "set of achievements, understandings and personal attributes that make individuals more likely to gain employment, and be successful in their chosen occupations."

Despite the above-mentioned definitions, Brown, Hesketh, and Wiliams (2003:110), bet to differ, as they argue that the manner in which employability is defined is problematic. According to Brown, Hesketh & Williams (2003:109), emphasis on employability rests on the assumption that the economic welfare of individuals and the competitive advantage of nations have come to depend on the knowledge, skills, and enterprise of the workforce. This means that people with degree-level qualifications are seen to play a particularly important

role in managing the knowledge-driven economy of the future. However, they also argue that the way employability is defined in official statements is seriously flawed because, among other things, it ignores the fact that employability is primarily determined by the labour market than the capabilities of individuals. This view is compatible with the LMS theories, as these theories also consider (and make a case for) factors that exogenously influence one's employment. This view is also corroborated by an example made by Brown, Hesketh & Williams (2003: 115), with which they explain that "if 30 suitably trained brain surgeons applied for ten vacancies it is inevitable that 20 surgeons would not get the job." With this example, they submit that the idea that employability is about one's capability to gain employment, which is advanced by the HCT, would suggest that their failure to acquire employment is that they are not employable—even though they have the skills that other employed surgeons have.

However, the tendency to focus on the supply-side as done by the HCT theoey, according to Brown, Hesketh & Williams (2003:119), reflects the example of victim-blaming (those who cannot find a job). They explain that this is why this HCT influenced definition is flawed. In essence, given that employability varies according to economic conditions, it cannot be reduced only to the jobseekers ability to secure employment. For instance, when the supply for labour is marginal, even long-term employed become employable as employers may be open to employing them. However, when job creation is not occuring in the same scope as the labour supply, many jobseekers (even the skilled ones) become unemployable because of the abundant supply, with very little absorption rate. It is for this reason that Brown, Hesketh & Williams (2003), argue that employability cannot be defined solely in terms of individual characteristics, because one's employability is also subject to the labour market conditions. Furthermore, they argue that one's employability is not only contingent on fulfilling the requirements of a specific job, but also on how one stands relative to others within a hierarchy (and competition) of jobseekers. Considering all this then, employability should be defined as the "relative chances of acquiring and maintaining different kinds of employment" (Brown, Hesketh & Williams., 2003). This definition of employability reasonably recognises that it is possible to be employable, but not be in employment. In addition, this type of definition is intended to highlight that it is not enough to just be employable, especially given that economic factors may still cause one to not be employed even though they are employable.

4.7.1 Employability and the Labour Market

The 21st century world of work (labour market) can be described as an unpredictable and ever-changing environment that places great pressure levels on those partaking within this context (Symington, 2012:3). It is generally accepted that employability poses challenges (to both employers and employees) that were not always present, or has reinforced what little pressures have already been experienced (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008). As a result of this continuous change, employers (or organisations) are now interested in individuals that are adaptable, creative, innovative, flexible, and keen problem solvers, to mention but a few attributes (McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005; Moreau & Leathwood 2007; Bernston, 2008, Wye & Lim, 2009). Therefore, employability brings a shift in responsibility for career start-up and development, making the employee primarily responsible for the investment and continuous development of his/her career (Symington, 2012; Bernston, 2008, O' Leary, 2016 McQuiad, Green & Danson, 2004; McQuaid & Lindsay, 2004; Moreau & Leathwood, 2007; Wye & Lim, 2009; Bezuidenhout, 2011. In essence, with the labour market having moved away from life-long employment, whereby job security is no longer a given. This means that employees (and jobseekers) must be pro-active in coming up with alternative ways to develop their careers and ensure ongoing (long-term) employment (Symington, 2012; Bernston, 2008, O' Leary, 2016).

Moreover, it is generally acknowledged that employers today no longer hire employees on the basis of education status only (Yorke, Rothwell & Arnold, 2005; Bernston, 2008; Rothwell, Jewell & Hardie, 2009; Wye & Lim, 2009; Nilsson, 2010; Bezuidenhout, 2011; Symington, 2012). Although education is a main prerequisite from any potential recruits, employer seeks much more than a degree to prove productivity and competitiveness. Again, this shift is set in motion by, among other things, today's world of work that is characterised by fast paced change, technological advancement and globalisation (Coetzee & Bergh, 2009 cited in Symington, 2012). According to Saunders and Zuzel (2010:1), "employers, expect [jobseekers] to have well-developed employability skills so that they can make an immediate contribution to the workplace when recruited." In other words, employers need well-rounded candidates (Brown, Hesketh & Williams, 2003). However, Rothwell and Arnold (2005: 25), further advise that it should be noted that employability is ot only about individual attributes, but that there are exogenous factors—which the LMS theories refer to as social structures (as described and explained in chapter two)—that are also likely to affect employability (the ability to acquire and keep employment). Again here, it becomes clear that putting the

responsibility of being employable on the job seekers themselves is problematic because it overlooks the many labour market factors that have a bearing on one being employable; even when they have, on their part, done everything to enhance their employability. This line of reasoning tends to suggest, in a compelling way, that even though job seekers have the onus to make themselves employable (i.e., gain skills, education), the decision to be actually be employed does not rest with them, but is also contingent on the employer and other economic factors (i.e., absorption rate).

Again, this line of reasoning (or consideration) justifies why that the general employability of jobseekers and the availability of job-ready seekers (especially young people) should continue to be the focus of the labour market and government and policy-makers (Brown, Hesketh & Williams, 2003). According to Symington (2012), the question that remains is: what precisely are these new defined requirements and expectations, and how can a student [or any job seeker] would ensure that they possess such qualities. Such a question (as well as many others like it) is the reason why this research is also interested in finding out what employers demand from jobseekers. In order to understand how this demand (for certain skills-set) has a bearing on young people and their inability to get employed. This is also precisely why the concept of employability is important for this study, it is because employers are the ones who decide what skills are employable based on what will best serve their firms. Therefore, the subject of employability further allows for an inquiry into the demand-side, which is really to hear from the employers' perspective what they regard as employable. The following section explores, generally, the skills that employers look for in people, which essentially determine what employers view as employable or not.

4.7.2 Skills Demanded by Employers

It follows from the previous discussion that to understand what employers view as employable is to understand the skills-set that are marketable in the labour market and, importantly, what employers demand from their potential recruits. According to Acemoglu and Pischke (1999:123), the skills of the labour force are normally regarded as a key engine for economic performance. Therefore, a focus on R&S practices cannot ignore the skills that employers demand. It is necessary for this study to explore the existing discussions on the skills that employers are looking for. As it stands, the discourse of employability shows that some of the factors that contribute to one's employability are the skills-set that they have, and whether these are demanded by employers. Therefore, it is befitting to explore the kinds of

skills that employers require, and for which they recruit suitable jobseekers. This section explores what the literature says about employers' demand for skills.

The reviewed literature reveals that skills-mismatch (lack of skills or abundance of certain skills) is a major challenge facing many countries. In fact, it is the major cause of the global crisis of unemployment. A vast majority of people, especially young people, are not employed predominantly due to lack of skills-set (which may include a range of skills) that employers are actually looking for (Mlatsheni & Rospabe, 2002; Bhorat, 2009; Yu, 2013; Ranchhod & Finn, 2014; Kraak, 2015; Makgetla, 2017; StatsSA Q2, 2018; Tabengwa, 2017). The previous chapter (on South African labour market) mainly shows that, in line with global trends, in South Africa, skills mismatch is one of the major factors that contribute to the structural unemployment that is rampant in the country (Kingdon, & Knight, 2004; CDE, 2007; Banarjee et al., 2008; Burger, Van der Berg & von Fintel, 2013; Bhorat, 2016). It stands to reason from this evidence that the acquisition of appropriate skills is a major issue (among others) that determines labour market outcomes. The DHET (2019), submits that in South Africa, the supply of appropriate skills is a necessary condition and a central catalyst for promoting long-term growth and development of the economy.

In fact, DHET (2019:34), explains that sustainable development of a skilled and capable workforce, therefore, provides one of the fundamental channels through which our country [South Africa] can deal with the triple socio-economic challenges of unemployment, poverty, and inequality; as well as correcting historical discriminatory labour practices and injustices inherited from the apartheid epoch. Some of the efforts have been made, since the dawn of democratic government in 1994, towards addressing and planning for skills needs in South Africa (Moleke, 2004; Bhorat, 2009; Rankin & Roberts, 2011; Tabengwa, 2017). Yet, despite skills development being prioritised among the big adjustments (with strategies being enacted to this effect), the DHET (2019:45), argues that (although education has a strong influence on the probability of participation in the labour market) skilled labour remains the most difficult to find in most skilled and professional sectors, largely due to the poor state of the public education system. As such, skills-mismatch is rampant and remains the major unemployment determinant (Kingdon, & Knight, 2004; CDE, 2007; Banarjee et al., 2008; Seeking, 2012; Budlender, 2013; Burger, Van der Berg & von Fintel, 2013; Bhorat, 2016). This skills dilemma is all the more reason why it is important to find out, from the employers, the kind

of skills that they demand as they are the ones who employ people based on whether they possess these desired skills.

The global problem of skills mismatch and the unmet skills demand points to the fact that skills are a very crucial capital in the labour market as they sets apart the people who are employable from those who are not. The importance of acquiring skills is so important that there are policies that solely deal with (youth) skills development. In South Africa, one such policy is called the Skills Development Act 97 of 1998, which aims to (amongs other things) expand the knowledge and competencies of the labour force, in order to improve productivity and employment skills. Several studies have also conducted inquiries exploring the kinds of skills that employers look for (see Bhorat & Lundall, 2002; Reddy et al., 2016; DHET, 2019). All these studies find that there are various skills that are demanded by different employers owing, primarily, to the different sectors that conduct different businesses in the economy. In fact, other studies find that some sectors, such as the tertiary sector, employ mainly skilled labour; while other sectors such as the primary and construction sectors tend to accommodate unskilled labour (see DHET, 2019; Magubu & Mohamed, 2008; Ali, 2017; Tsotsotso et al., 2017). This thesis does not get into all the different and specific skills demanded by different sectors and employers—owing to the limited scope of thesis and to reasons that are explained below. However, it is still worth noting that some sectors employ predominantly skilled labour while others are open to employing unskilled labour.

Moreover, and noteworthy is that the National Strategic Skills Audit for England, 2010, indicates that "skills can be difficult to define and measure at an aggregate level, since they are socially constructed, intangible and unobservable. In fact, research uses several different measures to assess the quantity, level and content of skills possessed, and deployed in the workplace" (UKCES, 2010:9 cited in DHET, 2019:37). This is because the types of skills required in an economy vary depending on the country's state of development, which can be either factor-driven, efficiency-driven or innovation-driven (DHET, 2019). An economy that is a factor-driven economy experiences growth that is imputed to the dominance in both agriculture and extraction businesses—in addition to a significant dependence on the use of unskilled labour and natural resources. Whereas, an efficiency-driven economy is characterised by a high degree of competitiveness, more efficient production processes, and improved product quality, and economic growth is largely driven by use of skilled labour. In an economy that is innovation-driven, growth is greatly ascribed to businesses that are knowledge-intensive and expansion in the service sectors (DHET, 2019:42).

Notwithstanding, the DHET (2019), notes that due to the significant number of unpredictable variables which affect demand, the process of identifying skills shortages and skills mismatches is neither aformulaic nor an algorithmic science, in a sense that it is not possible to calculate the exact numbers of people needed in the different occupations or sectors. Instead, it is only possible to provide signals on where demand outstrips the supply for specific occupations at certain points in time. Some skills are taught after completing general education, particularly technical training, while others are commonly acquired at a younger age, namely basic cognitive skills (Cunningham et al., 2016). Despite that there is no hard and fast skills definition, the literature highlights the different skills demanded and valued by different sectors and businesses. According to Tsotsotso et al. (2017: 413), most businesses within various economic sectors require specific skills which cannot be met by general-purpose education and require workplace training. This distinction (between sectors) is especially important for this study because the study also seeks to understand how employers from different sectors view the employability of young jobseekers; which will also reveal the skills that are needed by individual firms, and the ways in which this varied demand of skills by different skills affects young people.

While the review of the literature suggests that skills required by employers vary with each sector and firm, which also means that what employers view as employable will differ accordingly (Miller & Kellie, 2002; Grugulis, Warhurst & Keep, 2004; Newton et al., 2005; Taylor, 2005; Loud & Payne, 2008; DHET, 2019); some scholars have identified and classified skills into different categories: (1) Transferable skills: the skills based on ability and aptitude (i.e., analyse organise). (2) Personal traits/attitudes: refer to the personality characteristics that contribute to performing work, which can be developed throughout life (i.e., patience, result-oriented). (3) Knowledge-based skills: these are acquired through education, training, and on-the-job experience (see Reddy et al., 2016). In South Africa, the DHET has identified some of the skills that employers generally look for, and these are the same skills that the Skills Development Act 97 of 1998 aims to expand and inculcate to people to improve productivity and employment, among other things. Therefore, given the focus on employers' dispositions and how these dispositions affect recruitment decisions where young job seekers are concerned, it is also important to understand the skills they demand. And to understand the ways in which this demand impacts the young people who are deemed to be the most people group who lack these skills. The following section explores

some of the studies that have explored demand-side factors concerning the un/employment phenomenon.

4.8 RELEVANT STUDIES

There are studies (mostly international) that have been conducted (historically and contemporary) to examine the demand-side factors that have a bearing on employment outcomes of people in general (see, for example, Meager and Metcalf, 1987; Atkinson, 1996; Carrol, Marchington, Earnshaw & Taylor, 1999; Ruggiero, 2002; Atkinson & William, 2003; Devin's & Hogarth, 2005; for more recent studies, see Keep & James, 2010; Hasluck, 2011; Cominetti, Sissons, & Jones, 2013; Lindsay et al., 2014; Mthembu & Govender, 2015). A common theme in most of these studies is that they focus on the demand-side drivers—particularly the role of employers—to understand how it impacts the employment outcomes of different groups (on the grounds of, among other things, race, ethnicity, age, disability). Therefore, in trying to understand how demand-side factors affect the employment outcomes of different job seekers, these studies have explored a wide range of factors such as—to mention a few—employers' perceptions and attitudes of different age groups of job seekers as well as the inclusivity of different groups of job seekers in employers' R&S practices.

Although many studies were reviewed—to get the sense of what already been studied regarding the role of employers' in the labour market—below are some of the studies that have been featured in this thesis just to provide examples of some of the existing studies in this subject matter. I focus only on a few studies, mainly, to avoid the repetition of studies with the same focus or interest, but also to highlight the different aspects that different existing studies have covered (i.e., time, area, the focus of study: race/age/gender); and to show the relevance and continuum of such studies throughout time. The studies that have been reviewed explore the dispositions of employers towards different social groups (adults, young people, disabled, wo/men, dis/abled), and how that affects their decisions to employ different social groups. Whereas some of the studies examine employers' recruitment practices. I specifically reviewed studies that deal with these issues because that is more or less the focus of this present study. Drawing from some of these studies, the focus of this current study is to examine the dispositions of employers towards, particularly, young people and to concurrently explore how these dispositions play out in how employers design their recruitment practices to accommodate or preempt the employment of young people. It has been evidenced by literature (some of which has been cited above) that even though there is a

paucity of demand-side studies, compared to supply-side studies, there are studies that have taken an interest to investigate demand-side (employers) factors, and that these studies have been ongoing for a considerable amount of time.

In fact, Meager and Metcalf (1988:12), also claim that since 1970, many studies have examined employers' recruitment practices and how they vary (over-time, with the unemployment level and types of employers). Russo, Nijkamp, and Gorter (1995:3), also maintain that in the last two decades (from 1995, the time of their writing), the economic literature has devoted significant attention to the mechanisms behind firms' recruitment strategies as a possible way of reducing (un) employment. According to Atkinson (1996), the most detailed study of employers' recruitment practices and intentions relating to the unemployed was undertaken a couple of decades ago by Meager and Metcalf (1988), in the United Kingdom. This study involved a postal survey of 456 employers in four different labour markets, followed by case studies of 31 employers. The study mainly investigated whether employers employed Long-Term Unemployment (LTU) jobseekers in general, however, there was no targeted age group. The study reports that one-third of employers claimed to have recruited the LTU. Overall, therefore, unemployed people did at least have access to some vacancies. However, the LTU were at risk of rejection, simply because they were LTU in half the jobs studied (Meager & Metcalf, 1988: 18). Thus, the results of this study suggest that the unemployed people appeared to be disadvantaged solely based on being unemployed.

Looking at another issue of the demand-side, a study conducted by Taylor & Walker (1998), examined the relationship between attitudes towards older workers held by personnel managers and directors in large organisations (500 or more employees) across virtually the whole range of industrial sectors (excluding agriculture) and their employment practices. The research aimed to explore the operation of workplace social closure and the social construction of age in organisations, and provide practical information to better inform policy making concerning the employment of older workers. The analysis indicated that attitudes linked with the recruitment, training, and promotion practices concerning older workers were, mostly, the perceived trainability, creativity, cautiousness, physical capabilities of young people; the likelihood of young people having an accident; and the ability to work with younger workers. Whereas, attitudes which proved to not have a bearing on employment practices were employers' perceived productivity, reliability, ability to adapt to new

technology, interest in technological change and flexibility. These attitudes prove to affect the employers' decisions to employ or not employ older workers. For instance, employers employ older workers when they believe that older workers have what it takes to carry out the job. But some do not accommodate older workers because they are of the mind that they may lack the qualities that are needed to carry out the operations of the firms (Taylor & Walker, 1998). With these results, Taylor and Walker argue that these findings stress the need to target stereotypical attitudes towards older workers if age barriers in employment are to be done away with. However, they also argue that educational campaigns alone are likely to have only limited influence against a background of a long-term decline in economic activity rates among older workers. The research also indicates that future research studies need to take into account the differences between different groups of older workers. It is recommendations such as this that have inspired this thesis to want to know what employers see in youth that makes them either want to employ (or not) the youth.

Another example of a study that investigated attitudes of employers was one conducted by Magd (2003). To be exact, this study examined attitudes and perceptions that a sample of 21 hospitality manager have towards older workers in terms of employment, in order to find the perceived benefits and disadvantages of employing older workers. The underlying argument of the study was that it is essential to determine the extent to which age stereotypes have an impact on the selection criteria of staff in the context of small and medium-sized firms in Scotland (Magd, 2003). The findings, however, suggested that age stereotypes did not exist among small and medium-sized firms in Scotland, as the results indicated that hospitality managing directors perceived older workers as offering positive attributes. Magd (2003), reports that the participants perceived that there are instances (of employing older people) that gave older workers a positive image (i.e., ability to learn as much as younger workers, self-motivated, disciplined, respect for authority, happier/satisfied on the job, dependable, ability to produce quality work, good communication skills and have credibility with customers, co-operate more on the job, loyal to the organisation, willing to train, lower absentee rate, and they make better employees tended to be the strengths of older workers).

Whereas, on the other hand, high costs that come with the employment of older workers, inflexibility and reluctance to change, their inability to keep up with the speed required, and to adopt to new technology tended to be their weaknesses (Magd, 2003:393). However, despite that sampled hospitality managers identified both positive and negative dispositions

concerning the employment of older workers, the advantages tend to outweigh the disadvantages. In fact, the results indicate that the majority of the sampled employers would employ older workers in greater percentages in the near future (Magd, 2003:398). Therefore, this also suggests that small and medium-sized firms in the Scottish hospitality industry, which fail to hire older workers, may miss out on the potential advantages that come with employing older workers (Magd, 2003:399). While the study helps us understand what some employers think of older workers, it would have been interesting if the study also examined whether there would be any differences/parallels between what employers think of older workers in comparison to young workers (in order to understand which age group employers would most likely employ if they were to choose from the two groups). This juxtaposition (of both young old) will not only help us understand the different viewpoints of employers concerning the two age groups, but it will also help deconstruct the age stereotypes as suggested—in the Tayler and Walker (1998) cited above—to be one of the strategies against age stereotypes. This need to compare and contrast the employers' attitudes and recruitment tendencies towards both older and young workers/job seekers is what the present study also seeks to address—and that is whether employers have differing perceptions concerning two different age groups' ability to do the work, and how these perceptions influence the employment of either age group (young/old).

Furthermore, other studies have also took interest in investigating the employment of other social groups: young and disabled people. In fact, an illustrative case study that focusses on both these demographics was conducted by Luecking (2003). The study examined the attitudes of employers where it concerns the employment of the young people living with some form of disability. Particularly, this study explored effective workplace accomodations and supports of disabled youths (i.e., assistive technology) and relates them to employer perspectives of bringing youth with disabilities into the workplace. Luecking (2003:68-69), holds that the review of the literature and two case study illustrations indicate that employers' attitudes concerning disability are less significant when deciding to bring youth into the workplace than are other factors, such as the identification of workplace supports, accommodations, and interventions that also contribute to the improvement of companies' operational and organisational processes (Luecking, 2003). The overall results of the study denote that when looking at employers' views on disability and youth, it is clear there are still misperceptions and negative attitudes about both disability and young people (Luecking, 2003:71). However, it is also clear that it is not simply these perceptions that keep youth with

disabilities from accessing workplaces to learn and to work. This means that the job seeker's disability does not, in and of itself, trigger inherently negative employer responses. Rather it is due to a lack of knowledge of education and transition programmes' as well as about how companies operate (Luecking, 2003). Therefore, what is needed is for employers to be educated about different abilities that different people (jobseekers) have and, importantly, about how they can accommodate different people according to their different disabilities, as a way to accommodate people (young and old) with disabilities in the workplace.

Although most of the reviewed studies are international—as there have not been, in comparison, as many studies in South Africa as they are in other international countries—one of the most recent studies in South Africa was conducted by Mthembu and Governor (2015). In this study, the authors focused on both the youths' and employers' perceptions. The primary objective of their research was to explore the perceptions of unemployed South African youths and employers on the proposed youth wage subsidy incentive scheme. A triangulated research approach was applied through the administration of survey questionnaires amongst the unemployed youth and semi-structured interviews with human resource managers and specialists. A sample of unemployed youths was recruited from selected communities within the province of KwaZulu-Natal. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with human resource managers and specialists at selected organisations to determine their perceptions of the proposed scheme and any benefits or limitations they think it might have. Non-probability sampling was used to sample 100 respondents (N = 100), 90% of whom were unemployed youths and 10% of whom were employers. The overall results indicate that more than 93% of the youth surveyed and more than 90% of employers are in support of the youth wage subsidy. In terms of how the subsidy should be structured and implemented, about 80% of respondents in the employer survey wanted the tax rebate and incentive option as most of them pointed out that it would be an easier process to manage and monitor. More than 50% of employers believed that it would ease the wage burden and ensure business sustainability. On the other hand, 88% of the youth surveyed were of the opinion that it would promote employment for the youth. Findings, furthermore, reveal that 10% of employers and 28% of the youth were concerned that the subsidy has the potential to exploit older workers (i.e., those who are already in employment) and feared corruption from some employers; otherwise, they are in support of its implementation (Mthembu & Govender, 2015).

By and large, the studies discussed above have been presented in this section as examples from the studies that were reviewed that have been conducted, primarily, to explore the demand-side drivers that assuage or dissuade the employment of different groups. As expected, these studies indicate that various factors influence the employment or non-employment of any social group. What the studies also collectively point out is that employers' discretion plays a huge role in who they employ. As a consequence, this present study, while drawing inspiration from these studies and others that could not be included in this (but are more or less the same to those that have been discusses), builds and extends on these studies; in so far as they explore the demand-side factors of un/employment, and especially the role that employers play in the employment of people. However, the current study is different in that it focuses on employers' dispositions towards the youth (15 to 24-year-olds), to understand how these dispositions influence the employers' decisions to accommodate young people in their recruitment strategies. In fact, while the studies cited above are included in this section to provide a sense of: (i) the existing research in the same area, (ii) and the diverse focus on demand-side factors that affect different social groups; there are also two recent international studies that have explored the self-same questions that the present thesis also seeks to explore (i.e., what are employers' attitudes towards young people, and whether employers accommodate young people in their recruitment strategies?). These studies were conducted by Hasluck (2011) and Cominetti, Sissons, and Jones (2013) in the United Kingdom and are discussed separately below.

The aim of the study conducted by Hasluck in the year 2011 was to collate and assess recent evidence on employers' attitudes and recruitment practices concerning young people. Specifically, the review examined evidence relating to the recruitment of young people (with a focus wherever possible on 16–18-year-olds); what employers look for from young recruits, and the extent to which young people meet those requirements. The study also considered whether employers are engaged in the education and training system (i.e., through involvement in the design and provision of education and training, offers of work placement/experience or internships, entry to work training or other support to young people and young recruits), and the extent to which employers feel well served by the system (Hasluck, 2011). The evidence review drew on a range of sources including (but not limited to): (a) official statistics accessed online via NOMIS and the National Statistical Office; (b) Journal and other academic publications, (c) Official reports and evaluations (including that of the UK Commission, Department for Education, Department for Business, Innovation and

Skills, Department for Work and Pensions, Jobcentre Plus); (d) 'Grey' literature consisting of unpublished material and working papers evidence was mainly obtained via on-line sources, but also included material (such as unpublished working papers) provided by other experts in the field (Hasluck, 2011). This study reveals a string of findings and conclusions from the study. The main results—that have a particular bearing on this current study—are that employers use a variety of formal and informal channels to communicate vacancies to the job market. Each recruitment channel, in turn, has its own associated costs and benefits (in terms of its reach of potential recruits, and its effectiveness in identifying suitable recruits).

Hasluck (2011), also finds that hiring decisions are complex. This is because things like having the demanded skills, relevant qualifications or certificates, the level of work experience, personal circumstances, and personal qualities are all likely to be considered. However, it can be concluded from the results that, ultimately, employers are simply looking for 'the right person for the job. Furthermore, the study reveals that qualifications play only a limited role in employers' selection decisions regarding applicants for low-skilled occupations, but greater preference appears to be on people who have generic skills (such as attitudes, motivation, and flexibility). However, while this preference seems favourable to unemployed people (who are often unqualified), many have difficulty showing that they possess such soft skills. In addition, Hasluck (2011), finds that employers regard job applicants who have been unemployed for a long time as a serious risk, both in terms of additional cost, poor performance, and the likelihood of leaving the job at short notice. In fact, long-term unemployment is seen as a signal that the jobseeker does not have the drive or a desire to work, and is out of touch with the world of work. Hasluck (2011), further maintains that from an employer perspective, there are a number of approaches that could be applied to improve opportunities that can be available to unemployed job seekers. These approaches include increased regulation of recruitment, engagement with employers and financial incentives. Hasluck (2011), concludes the study by cautioning that helping people into employment is not the sole responsibility of employers, but is a responsibility that should be shared with individual job seekers and the State. "There are many actions that individuals can take to increase their employability by addressing the concerns of employers about recruiting unemployed people. Where individuals cannot address those issues themselves, they may need information, active guidance and, indeed, support in raising their confidence to do this" (Hasluck, 2011:38).

Another example of a study investigating employers' recruitment tendencies was conducted by Cominetti, Sissons, and Jones (2013). This study explored the business case for hiring young people and the employer's role in addressing youth unemployment. It examines the drivers and barriers to the recruitment of young people, and the ways in which employers can help support young people through the school-to-work transition (Cominetti, Sissons & Jones, 2013). In particular, the study reviewed the existing evidence on the business case and also conducted in-depth interviews with employers about their recruitment decisions and practices; their perceptions of young people; and any engagement they had with young people in schools and those making the transition to work (Cominetti, Sissons & Jones, 2013). On the whole, the authors find that the respondents are of the view that there are benefits to employing young people. In particular, employers appreciated the fact that young people enable them to mold their workforce to suit their needs. The sampled employers liked the positive effect that employing young people has proved to have on their company profile, such as that young people have digital literacy (Cominetti, Sissons & Jones, 2013). However, other elements of the business case for employing young people were not so positive. There were mixed reactions concerning the employment of young people. These positive and mixed reactions were a result of one major drawback—that young people have less experience, both of specific jobs and work in general. Overall, therefore, Cominetti, Sissons, and Jones (2013), posit that an appeal to the business case for employing young people is necessary, but it should not be seen as a silver bullet in addressing youth unemployment. This view is similar to the one made by Hasluck (2011), above, which cautions that curtailing unemployment should be tackled by multiple stakeholders, and should not only be seen as an employers' responsibility.

The predominance of international studies compared to local (South African) studies mirrors the disparity and the wide gap that exists in the literature—whereby there are comparatively more international studies than there are local studies that explore the demand-side factors. As has been mentioned above, South African authors have in recent papers/studies also submitted that there is a dearth of studies that have actually examined the demand-side factors of unemployment (especially where it concerns the young people) (see, for example, Mthembu & Govender, 2015; De Lannoy et al., 2018). While this does not imply that there are no studies that focus on youth un/employment, it should be emphasised that most studies focus on the supply-side factors than the demand-side factors. This simply means that the demand-side is under-researched compared to the supply-side research studies. It is against

this background that a study of this kind (exploring the relatively under-researched demand-side factors) is necessary to be conducted in South Africa, firstly, as a response to the recommendations made by researchers (cited in section 4.2.) for further inquiries into the demand-side factors. Secondly to contribute to the scant but growing body of literature concerning the young peoples' inclusivity in the recruitment strategies of employers. Therefore, the thesis drew inspiration from all the reviewed studies to devise a research inquiry that this thesis exists to answer: Do the sampled employers accommodate young people in their recruitment strategies, and what are the ways in which employers' perceptions, attitudes, and experiences, as well as the government strategies (enacted to promote youth employment), influence their decision to design and practice their recruitment strategies in a way that is inclusive of young people.

4.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented a global review of the employers' recruitment practices and has shown how this review is relevant for this research study by drawing examples from the South African context were necessary. It first showed that the demand-side factors—as critical as they too are in the employment of jobseekers, or lack thereof—are under-researched. As a consequence, this paucity calls for more research inquiry. The chapter further provided a discussion of the HRM activities that play a huge role in recruiting individuals. However, the chapter narrowed down the focus of the thesis by discussing R&S practices as the HRM activity that the thesis seeks to explore in relation to young jobseekers. The chapter proceeded to discuss the subject of employability which is pertinent to the employment of any job seeker. This was followed by a review of some of the studies that have been conducted to explore the demand-side factors, and thus served as guidelines for the present study. These themes are important to pay attention to because they are most relevant to the inquiry of this thesis. They are applicable to understanding the current state of the labour market, which the investigation was animated by, and from which it was developed. This chapter concludes the review of all the relevant literature on employer recruitment practices, and the state of the South African labour market concerning young people. The essence of the chapter proves and supports a focus on the demand-side as it shows its integral role in un/employment. The next chapter focuses on the research design and methodology approach espoused in the study and the relevant literature sourced and drawn from to support the election of the specific design.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH DESIGN

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapters present a holistic review of the literature concerning the subject matters and topics that ignited the present research. The chapters highlight the devastating state of unemployment and underemployment on a global scale, and specific to South Africa. The thesis has also, up to this point, discussed the key features of the recruitment dynamics, and thereby justifies a focus on the R&S as a demand-side driver of employment. All this indicates and points to the long-standing and perennial problematics of many labour markets across the globe that still, to this day, need increased attention and efforts to be abated. As already shown, literature on unemployment and underemployment, especially concerning young people, still reveals these trends as pressing issues that continue to have a stark impact on many societies. Similarly, the extensive literature on the dynamics of R&S practices indicates that numerous factors (i.e., labour law; demographics) influence, to a large extent, the decision and process of employment/job creation, or lack thereof. Also crucial to this study is that much of what the reviewed literature reveals about unemployment and underemployment has largely been explored from the supply-side, thus rendering the demand-side under-researched in comparison.

Focusing on the R&S practices allows this thesis to look beyond the supply-side and conduct a scientific inquiry into the demand side. Prompted by the phenomena described above, this study undertook to investigate employers' (who make up the demand-side) R&S strategies—as well as their dispositions regarding young jobseekers, and regarding how governments' (youth unemployment) interventions impact the employment opportunities for the youth. The LMS theories maintain that there are unobserved factors that affect people's participation in the labour market that are not accounted for by the mainstream: neoclassical theory. This cannot be simply explained by reference to the interaction between supply and demand (Kraak, 1995; Peck, 1996; Fleetwood, 2006). So, an inquiry that goes beyond exploring this interaction is necessary to reveal the underlying factors that affect the interaction between supply and demand. Employers' dispositions and recruitment activities can be reviewed as some of the unobserved (demand-side) factors that may well have an impact on peoples' labour market outcomes.

It is against this background that this study seeks to find out the ways in which employers' dispositions impede or assuage youth employment. The purpose of this chapter is to outline and discuss the research design and the methodological approach and techniques that were implemented to carry out this scientific inquiry. The chapter also provides justification for the qualitative approach (specifically the case study) by reviewing the qualitative features of the research design. First, this entails a presentation of the overarching research paradigm and research approach upon which this study is based, along with an identification of the most suitable research strategy which was elected for this study. This is followed by the presentation of the unit of analysis as well as the techniques that were employed for sampling, and how data from the selected sectors and firms from Johannesburg was collected and analysed. The chapter concludes by reflecting on the ethical considerations and the limitations that ensued throughout the study. All this process was integral to initiate this study, draw the sample of respondents, gather data, and thus analyse it to answer the chief question of this thesis.

5.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM: CRITICAL REALISM

There are a couple of research paradigms that have been proposed by various researchers, and thus advocate for various approaches to social sciences. Candy (1989:98), proposes that the paradigms can all be grouped into three main categories, namely Positivist, Interpretivist/Constructivist, Critical Realism paradigms (Collier, 1994; Archer, 1995; Wikgren, 2005; Krauss; 2005). In addition, however, other researchers such as Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003:67), proffer a fourth paradigm known as the Pragmatic paradigm that basically borrows elements from the previous three to make up its own. These systems of belief, or paradigms, can be defined by their answers to three sets of questions involving ontology, epistemology, and methodology (Guba 1990; Wikgren, 2005). The over-arching methodological approach that was selected to inform the analysis of this thesis is Critical Realism (CR). For this reason, the section will solely focus on the fundamental features of CR, as the most suitable paradigm for this study. According to Donald and Clay (2012), CR is emerging as a viable philosophical paradigm for conducting social science research, and has been proposed as an alternative to the more prevalent paradigms (positivism and interpretivist). The strengths of critical realism are often described in contrast to the paradigms of positivism (which insists that true knowledge is based on experiences of senses and can be obtained by observation and experiment), and interpretivism (which focuses on understanding the subjective meanings that participants assign to a given

phenomenon within a specific, unique context) (Bhaskar 1978, Collier, 1994; Archer, 1995; Lawson, 1997; Danermark, Ekstrom, Jakobsen, & Karlsson, 2005; Krauss, 2005; Wikgren, 2005).

To provide a brief background, CR is a movement in the philosophy of science, that started with the writings (from 1978/9) of a British philosopher Bhaskar. It has since been developed and applied in social theory by Bhaskar (1989), and many others, most notably by Archer (1995, 1996, 2000), Sayer (1992, 1999), Layder (1994), and Collier (1994, 1998). The core premise of CR—which is also what separates it from other paradigms—is that CR sees the universe as a naturally multi-layered open-system of interrelated parts or entities that interact over time (Donald & Clay, 2012). Therefore, all entities (whether natural or social) are viewed as a result of having *causal power* (to affect outcomes), and susceptibilities (to be affected by the powers of other entities in different ways) (Bhaskar's, 1978, 1979; Archer, 1995, 1996, 2000; Sayer, 1992, 1999; Danermark, Ekstrom, Jakobsen, & Karlsson, 2005; Wikgren, 2005). The powers and susceptibilities of entities cannot be reduced to their constituent parts, but are best viewed on how entities, internally and externally, relate to one another over time (Bhaskar 1978, 1979; Archer, 1995, 1996, 2000; Sayer, 1992, 1999; Danermark, et al., 2005; Wikgren, 2005). From the beginning of structured thought—known now as 'science'—philosophers have grappled with the question of how absolute knowledge is obtained. According to (Wikgren, 2005), the central question has been 'how can we gain absolute knowledge about reality?' In answering this question that has remained topical throughout history, different paradigms have devised varying theories. In particular, the CR maintains—unlike other paradigms—that there is a reality, independent of our knowledge of it; and it emphasises that this reality is not something immediately fixed and empirically accessible or observable (Bhaskar 1978, 1979; Archer, 1995, 1996, 2000; Sayer, 1992, 1999; Collier, 1994; Wikgren, 2005; Donald & Clay, 2012).

Instead, according to Bhaskar (1978:14), CR believes that reality consists of three domains, namely: the empirical; the actual; and the real. The empirical domain includes that which we can observe; which are basically things that happen and exist within the experience of the researcher. The actual domain is a broader one, and refers to that which occurs independently of the researcher or any other observer who might record it. Finally, the domain of the real includes those mechanisms that produce different events and other 'surface phenomena' (Bhaskar, 1978:15). In fact, reality, according to CR, is a domain that consists of several other domains: a stratified ontology comprised of structure mechanisms, events, and

experiences; emergent powers dependent upon but not reducible to lower-level powers; and an open systems perspective (Bhaskar 1975, 1986, 1998; Collier 1994; Danermark et al. 2002; Sayer 1992; Donald & Clay, 2005). CR argues that if we are to obtain knowledge about underlying causal mechanisms, we must focus on these above-mentioned domains, not only on the empirically observable events (Danermark et al., 2005). This view put forward by CR is significant to what this thesis wants to achieve—insofar as it recognises that to each reality, there are underlying factors that shape the reality—and that is to understand how the role of employers (particularly their attitudes, perceptions, recruitment strategies), which are not immediately observable, play out in their decision to accommodate young jobseekers in their R&S strategies.

The key argument of CR allows the research to look beyond the observable event of unemployment and underemployment among the youths, to rather focus on what the underlying factors could be that contribute to the phenomena—which in this case would be to investigate the reasons behind the employers' decision to employ or not to employ the youth. This inquiry will allow for the nuanced understanding of the employers' dispositions (attitudes, perceptions, and experiences) concerning the youth. It will also help understand the ways in which these dispositions factor into how they design and practice their R&S activities, and how they affect their employment decisions where it concerns young people. Moreover, CR acknowledges the role of subjective knowledge of social actors in a given situation, as well as the existence of independent structures that constrain and enable these actors to pursue specific actions in a particular setting (Easton, 2010). Thus, theorists and researchers applying methodological approaches advanced by the CR paradigm are enabled to provide more detailed causal explanations of a given set of phenomena or events that takes into consideration both the actors' interpretations and the structures and mechanisms that interact to produce the outcomes in question (Donald & Clay, 2012). Therefore, a primary objective of CR-based research is to provide clear, concise, and empirically supported statements about causation, precisely how and why a phenomenon occurred (Easton, 2010; Donald & Clay, 2012). The How and Why are the questions that this thesis seeks to unpack. Moreover, CR shifts the focus to explicitly describing causality by detailing the means or processes by which events are generated by structures, actions, and contextual conditions involved in a particular setting (Sayer, 1992; Collier, 1994; Archer, 1995; Bhaskar, 1998).

This premise already forms the basis that makes the CR paradigm a suitable paradigm for this study, because the underlying goal of a CR study is to explain (beyond just describing) the

mechanisms that generate or contribute to a certain event. As such, explanation in CR seeks to identify the causes of a particular phenomenon that has occurred (Easton, 2010). This differs markedly from just making precise predictions (as advocated for by positivists), which require that researchers are able to control or determine the specific conditions affecting the enactment of a given set of mechanisms, in order to correctly anticipate a given outcome. Contrarily, theories developed using CR as an underlying philosophical framework are largely confined to providing an explanation of the reasons a phenomenon occurred in a given complex social system (Bhaskar 1975).

For instance, given a set of empirical facts regarding a focal event (i.e., youth unemployment as a phenomenon of interest) and context, CR attempts to answer the following question: What must reality be like in order for this event to have occurred? Therefore, a CR researcher's goal is to identify the mechanisms/factors that emerge from the components of a social structure to produce the events of interest (Sayer 1992). Ultimately, the theories that result from this paradigm enable the researcher to not only identify the structures and mechanisms themselves, (Gregor 2006), but also how the relate to one another and how they generate the phenomena that the researcher seeks to explain (Keat & Urry 1975). This includes the identification of the conditions that encouraged (enabling conditions), triggered or reinforced (stimulus conditions), or removed impediments to (releasing conditions) the exercise of the hypothesised powers and tendencies (Bhaskar 1975; Hartwig 2007). Therefore, this rigorous exploration of mechanisms will produce an explanation that takes into account a set of existing and enacted mechanisms, along with the impact of any structural factors and relevant conditions that generated or perpetuated the outcome being studied (Donald & Clay, 2012).

Another reason for the choice of CR paradigm is due to its established suitability to the field of economics. Fleetwood (1999), submits that the CR paradigm directs attention to the structures, mechanisms, powers, and capabilities that explain the observed phenomena of economic life, and thus provide a more profound understanding of the subject matter of economics. Furthermore, within economics, CR has very much played the role of under-labourer owing to its auspicious approach to scientific explanation (Lawson, Peacock & Pratten, 1996; Mutch, 1999, 2002); in that, it has been both immensely explanatory (of the existing situation in economics), and in varying degrees developmentally constructive (in elaborating an alternative perspective) (Fleetwood, 1999). Since unemployment and underemployment are two of the most perennial economic (as well as they are social) trends

of many labour markets across the globe, applying the CR paradigm to explore the causes and effects of these trends (which is mostly studied from the supply-side: employees and/or jobseekers,), will allow for nuanced explanation of the demand-side factors. Indeed, the CR endorses a nuanced focus on how the role employers play (in how they design their recruitment and selection practices) affects the employment outcomes of young people. It also allows the thesis to explain underlying factors as opposed to predicting phenomena as positivist theories usually do; or the interpretivist view that entails describing the conditions or the context for the production of meaningful experiences (Wilgren, 2005).

Moreover, the CR is also suitable for this study because it augments the LMS theories that have been justified in chapter two as the suitable theoretical framework for this thesis. Together (the CR paradigm and LMS theories) provide insights that helped with the collection and nuanced analysis of data for this current study. Critical realism is fundamentally concerned with the deeper analysis of phenomena; that is, it seeks to go beyond the surface empirical data to expose the nature of the real. This means that it does not denounce positivism, but proposes that the limit of positivism is its dedication to closed systems which does not always reveal the underlying factors of the observable events (see Bhaskar, 1978). Relating to social phenomena such as labour markets, CR proposes that labour markets are open systems and are not confined to the orthodox economic vision of laws of supply and demand (see Fleetwood, 2006). This means that there are other factors and forces at play in the shaping of labour markets. This critique allows us to perceive the labour market from a heterodox approach, particularly the LMS theories. The LMS labour market approach considers the social, economic, and political factors (collectively referred to as social structures) that shape the labour market. As mentioned in chapter two, according to LMS approach, labour markets are far from homogenous, but are complex and fractured as a result of these factors/social structures (see Fleetwood, 2006). Therefore, according to Fleetwood (2006: 79), dealing with open systems—which involve a more robust treatment of social structures—requires a more sophisticated meta-theoretical apparatus. Therefore, critical realism is especially useful here because it has, at its core, a meta-theoretical apparatus that is especially designed for considering social structures and, of course, the human agents that interact with them (Fleetwood, 2006:79).

This means that the emphasis of investigation necessarily moves (ontologically speaking) from the domains of the empirical and actual to the domain of the deep (the real), to the social structures that govern these events. In other words, investigation goes beyond focusing

on the consequences—that is, from the outcomes or results (in the form of events and their patterns) of some particular human action, to exploring the conditions that make that action possible (Fleetwood, 2006:80). Again, Fleetwood proffers that because of the openness of socioeconomic systems, consequences cannot be induced, deduced or predicted. However, the social structures that govern this human action can be 'retroduced', and their operation illuminated and explained. For this reason, CR proves to be a more reasonable substitute for positivism and social constructionism in offering principles and ideas for science—at least for this field of study. Since CR seeks to identify those deeper mechanisms which create observable phenomena. That means that critical realism allows this thesis to view the (unobservable) dispositions of employers, and how they decide to design and practice their R&S practices as a result of those dispositions (among other things) as representations of social structures at play in the labour market.

It stands to reason, then, that CR conceptions of a layered ontology may help address and uncover some long-standing demand-side factors that affect labour market outcomes of young people. The emphasis that CR—that is not found in other paradigms—places on underlying factors' meanings of social phenomena makes it ideal for the study in focus. As the study seeks to inquire and understand the underlying factors that contribute or perpetuate the unemployment situation of the youth, as this is an undeniably, long-standing socio-economic phenomena. Moreover, it is argued that within a CR framework, both qualitative and quantitative methodologies are seen as appropriate for researching the underlying mechanisms that drive actions and events (Healy & Perry, 2000). However, methods such as case studies and unstructured or semi-structured in-depth interviews are said to be acceptable and more appropriate within the paradigm (Krauss, 2005). The subsequent section will discuss the qualitative approach as the suitable approach for investigating the varying underlying factors that the research in question seeks to understand.

5.3 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH

There are two dominant approaches to scientific approach, namely: Qualitative and Quantitative. Under certain circumstances, both these approaches or some of their respective methods/techniques/features can be integrated—and this method is referred to as the 'Mixed methods approach (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Neuman, 2002). Considering the preceding discussion of the CR paradigm—which is essentially concerned with the underlying factors of any phenomenon, and is concerned with the explanation (not prediction) of such factors—

it follows that the suitable research approach for this study is the qualitative approach, as it allows for the in-depth explanation of the data (underlying demand-side factors) emerging from the scientific inquiry. Instead of the quantitative approach that depends on numerical measurements to analyse data. The qualitative research approach is characterised by such methods and techniques that are pursuant to the goals of this study. In essence, qualitative research is an approach to scientific inquiry that undertakes to understand the nuances of various kinds of social phenomena.

Data collected within this qualitative framework is channeled towards answering questions about 'why people behave the way they do, how opinions and attitudes are formed, how people are affected by events that go on around them, and how and why cultures and practices have developed in the way they have' (Hancock et al., 2009:7). There is no shortage of the definitions of the qualitative approach; Schmid (1981), describes qualitative research as the study of the empirical world from the vantage point of the person being investigated. Schmid (1981), identifies two underlying principles: the first is that behavior is influenced by the physical, sociocultural, and psychological environment. The second, is that behaviour is much more than what is observed by the researcher. Subjective meanings and perceptions of the subject are of paramount importance in qualitative research, and it is the researcher's responsibility is to access them. Additionally, LeCompte and Preissle (1994:15), for example, maintain that qualitative research is a form of investigation that seeks to expand knowledge about the attitudes, values, beliefs, and meanings held by certain populations through interactions which take place in the most natural settings.

The key insight of these definitions is seen in how they all emphasise that the core purpose of the qualitative approach is to gain an in-depth understanding of social phenomena from lived experiences or observations. Unlike the quantitative framework that is used to generate numerical data and hard facts, by applying the statistical, logical and mathematical technique. Instead, qualitative research goes deeper as it attempts to explore a host of factors that may be influencing a situation (Creswel, 1998; Russel et al., 2005; Baxter & Jack, 2008; Silberman, 2010). This reason alone is enough to warrant the employment of qualitative research (other than the quantitative research approach), since the research in question undertakes to answer the context-laden question such as: (i) what (are the attitudes and perceptions of employers towards young people), (ii) how (do employers strategise/design their recruitment and selection strategies to accommodate the youthful jobseekers); and (iii) why (do employers make decisions to employ or not to employ the youth). These are questions that cannot be

well captured by the quantitative framework. Unlike surveys, a qualitative approach allows the sampled informants to explain in detail their attitudes, beliefs, and experiences than simply ticking a box. Accordingly, the qualitative research helped get a sense of the demand-side factors that impact the employment outcome of the youth or lack thereof; which is essentially a picture of how the role of employers factors into the perennial features of youth unemployment. Indeed, the qualitative research approach provided the indispensable framework with which the goals of this study can be achieved, as it allowed for the collection of in-depth information rather than focusing on numbers. This produced a nuanced analysis of the underlying factors that affect the employment of the youth.

Although the general characteristics of qualitative research are the same, differences exist between specific types of qualitative research. Krefting (1991:218), maintains that qualitative research is diverse, consisting of a variety of approaches. Many types have evolved from various disciplines, such as anthropology, sociology, psychology, history, biology, and education. According to Creswell (1998), these include, but are not limited to, *Phenomenological studies, Life History, Ethnographic studies*, *Grounded-theory* qualitative research, *Biographical studies,* and *Case studies* (which are different from other types in that they are intensive analyses and descriptions). These approaches have different purposes and methods (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). The research strategy that was particularly selected for this study is the *case study* strategy. Therefore, the following sub-section provides a discussion and justification for the selection of a *case study* strategy of the qualitative research, other than the rest of the strategies.

5.3.1 Qualitative Research Strategy: Case Study

Case study research continues to be a crucial form of social science inquiry (Abramson, 1992; Verschunen, 2003; Getting, 2004; Noor, 2008; Yin, 2011, 2014; Eltikon, Musa & Alkassim, 2016). Essentially, the qualitative case study is an approach to research that facilitates the exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources. Among other things, this technique ensures that the phenomenon, under investigation, is not explored through one lens, but rather a variety of lenses which allow for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood (Yin, 2003, 2009, 2011). As a result, a case study of a single, or a small sample, can yield a great deal of data which can be explicated as a case study that provides detailed insights into the nature of the phenomena (Easton, 2010). Generally, case studies are more suited to how and why questions which are explanatory in

nature. A case study "involves investigating one or a small number of social entities or situations about which data are collected using multiple sources of data" (Easton, 2010:119). Furthermore, a case study is an empirical inquiry that examines a phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the causes of a phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin, 2003:13). One of the major advantages of the case study research—and one that is not shared by, for example, survey-based methods—is it's flexibility (Donald & Clay, 2012).

Notwithstanding the widespread use of case study research, there are often misunderstandings about what a case study is as a form of qualitative research (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2011; Idowu, 2016). Some scholars describe case studies as only being useful for generating hypotheses, whereas other research methods are deemed to be more suitable for hypotheses testing and theory building (Flyvbjerg, 2006:234). According to the literature reviewed, the frequent criticisms of case study strategy is that its dependence on a single case (and lack of scientific rigour) makes it fall short of providing a generalising conclusion and the reliability of findings (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Yin, 2011; Idowu, 2016). Some also believe that the immense exposure of the researcher to the study may lead to a biased view of the findings, which may only just confirm the researcher's preconceived ideas (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Idowu, 2016). In a nutshell, Idowu (2016:185), submits that case study research is often charged with causal determinism, non-replicability, subjective conclusions, absence of generalisable conclusions, biased case selection and lack of empirical influence.

However, scholars like Flyvbjerg (2006), Dul and Hak (2008), and Yin (2014), were careful to reject the criticisms of the case study as poorly founded, and being a byproduct of methodological conflict. Creswell (2014), asserts that, despite these critiques, scholars continue to, successfully, apply case study research strategy to investigate real-life issues in order to understand them better. Yin (2014:64), strongly rebuts the criticism (regarding case study's lack of generalisation), by putting forward an explanation of the difference between analytic generalisation and statistical generalisation (Yin, 2014:67). He states that "in analytic generalisation (unlike with statistical generalisation), a previously developed theory is used as a template against which to compare the empirical results of the case study." In fact, Kuhn (1987:14), profoundly submits that a scientific discipline without a large number of thoroughly executed case studies is a discipline without systematic production of exemplars; and a discipline without exemplars is an ineffective one. To this same effect, Hancock (2006), argues that case study research represents a much broader view. Flyvbjerg (2006:241),

submits that this type of research is significant for the development of social science, in that it can help us understand the degree to which certain phenomena affects a particular group, or how phenomena vary across cases.

While the advantage of large samples is the breadth, they often lack depth which is what helps understand a phenomenon. Case studies are one of the research strategies that guarantees depth, even though they often lacks breadth. As a result of this, case study research is richly descriptive and explanatory because it is mostly concerned with deep and varied sources of data. According to Idowu (2016), case study research strategy reveals particular insights from specific circumstances, and it involves gaining an understanding of an issue through the study of detailed activity within a particular real-life context. Therefore, the key feature a case study offers is to understand a phenomenon in-depth and comprehensively. Yin (2003:368), describes some of the instances when a case study design should be considered, and that includes when: (a) the focus of the study is to answer "how" and "why" questions; (c) when one wants to cover contextual conditions because they believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under study (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Again, these instances/questions—described by Yin (2003)—are similar to that of the study in focus; hence a case study is suitable for this study.

Furthermore, and also of particular significance to this study is that the CR principles (outlined in section 5.2) endorse the case study strategy. Even though Bhaskar (the founding father of CR) did not recommend a specific research methodology to go with the paradigm (Donald & Clay, 2012); several CR researchers have dubbed the case study method as one of the best approach to explore the interaction of structure, events, actions, and context to identify and explicate causal mechanisms/underlying factors of a particular phenomenon (Miles & Huberman 1994; Mingers 2004; Ackroyd 2010; Easton 2010; Donald & Clay, 2012). According to Easton (2010:124), CR links well with case study research. In as far as the research is concerned with thoughtful in-depth data, with the goal of understanding in detail why a phenomenon is the way it is. Accordibg to Donald and Clay (2012), the realist case approach is particularly well suited to relatively clearly bounded, but complex, phenomena such as organisations, inter-organisational relationships of connected organisations. Yet, Easton (2010:126), maintains that CR is less well suited, for example, to the study of individual behaviour, although that can be done, or to situations which are largely characterised in quantitative terms such as perceptions and attitudes tracking data.

In essence, critical realism asserts endorses case studies for as long as what is investigated is in the form of: what caused the events associated with the phenomena to occur (Mingers 2004; Ackroyd 2010; Easton 2010; Donald & Clay, 2012). These descriptions affirm that case study research is an intensive research method and is, therefore, entirely consistent with a critical realist ontology (among others). Indeed, the present researh undertook to do such an investigation, which is to explore how employers' perceptions, attitudes and experiences factor into how the employers devise their recruitment strategies. And how this in turn factors into the employment of young people or lack thereof. Since the CR approach to case study research involves developing a research question that identifies a research phenomenon of interest, in terms of discernible events; and asks what causes them to happen. Accordingly, this study has identified unemployment as a long-standing labour market challenging phenomena (as discussed in chapter two and three). This study, using the qualitative case study approach (as also inspired by the critical realism premise), undertook to investigate the demand-side factors that may well contribute to the unemployment phenomenon.

The most important contribution that the qualitative data made was that it also provided emperical insight that was essential to develop the study's explanations and understandings of the how and why questions that the thesis sought to explore, so that different perceptions, attitudes, and experiences were revealed. The qualitative findings produced a case study that, while being of a small number and cannot be generalised, can help gain an understanding of (1) employers' disposition towards young jobseekers and governments role in tackling unemployment; (2) how employers design and practice their recruitment strategies, and (3) how this practice affects the employment outcomes of young jobseekers. Furthermore, the choice to focus on the in-depth details, than numbers, is because most reviewed studies have used the quantitative approach which is concerned with numbers and often answers the 'what' question; while very little is known about the 'how' and 'why' questions. Thus, qualitative case study helped understand the minutiae details from a small sample that quantitative studies cannot reveal. Through the qualitative methods, employers were able to provide some insights of their attitudes and perceptions towards young people, and of the multiple and dynamic nature of their employment strategies. The following section describes the informants that provided data for the present study, and how they were sampled.

5.4 SAMPLING

In the qualitative research framework, there are various sampling techniques that researchers can use when recruiting participants (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Neuman, 2002). It is also important to note that sampling methods are divided into two categories: probability sampling and non-probability sampling. In probability sampling, each member of the sample unit has a fixed, known opportunity to belong to the sample. It is described more clearly as "every participant has an equal probability of being selected" from the population (Neumann, 2002:124). Generally, in nonprobability sampling, randomisation is not important—as is in probability sampling—in selecting a sample from the population of interest. Instead, subjective methods are used to decide which elements are included in the sample. Hence, nonprobability sampling is a technique where the samples are gathered in a process that does not give all the participants or units in the population equal chances of being included (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016: 2). This current research deployed a nonprobability sampling technique, which refers to, *inter alia*, the fact that not all members of the sample frame have an equal (or known) chance of participating in the study (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Baxter & Jack, 2008).

In particular, the nonprobabilistic sampling method that was applied is purposeful sampling, also known as judgment/selective/subjective sampling. Purposive sampling strategies are non-random ways of ensuring that particular categories of units within a sampling population are represented in the final sample of a project. The rationale behind employing a purposive strategy is that the researcher assumes—based on their understanding of the topic being studied—that certain categories of individuals may have a unique, different or important perspective on the phenomenon under investigation (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Mason 2002). Furthermore, purposive sampling is a technique widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources (Patton 2002). This involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Cresswell & Clark, 2011; Palinkas et al., 2015). In other words, a researcher is permitted to choose only those people who they deem fit to participate in the research study.

In contrast, probabilistic or random sampling is used to ensure the generalisability of findings by minimising the potential for bias in selection and to control for the potential influence of known and unknown confounders (Palinkas et al., 2015:538). Unlike the various sampling

techniques that can be used under probability sampling (e.g., simple random sampling, stratified random sampling). The goal of purposive sampling is not to randomly select units from a population to create a sample, intending to generalise (i.e., statistical inferences) from that sample to the population of interest. Therefore, considering that the present research is not concerned with generalisability, but with the nuanced and varied attitudes and experiences of employers, the probabilistic sampling is ruled out for this present study. The main goal of purposive sampling is to focus on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest, which will best enable the researcher to answer the research questions. For this current study, the sample being studied does not need to be representative of the rest of population; owing to the fact that the study is concerned with individual dispositions and experiences, which are subject to vary with each individual. Therefore, the study is not necessarily looking for unifomity of characteristics or responses, so as to generalise the results; but it is interested in the in-depth details of the individual responses. In this case, the only key characteristic that is of particular interest for this study is that the respondents must be employers or HR personnel that can be able to provide information about the R&S practices of the respective participating organisations.

To this end, the judgment of the researcher in this present study was informed by the GDP report of 2018 (retrieved at the commencement of the research project), which reports the highest and well performing industries and sectors in South Africa's economy. Owing to the limited scope of the study, only a handful of firms could be sampled to provide information that is needed to address the main question of this study. Therefore, the choice of the firms that were considered was informed by the GDP report which provides a sense of the industries and sectors that are doing well economically on a national scale and locally (in Johannesburg). According to StatsSA (2019:2), the largest positive contributors to growth in GDP (in the second quarter) were mining, finance, trade and general government services. Additionally, as also mentioned in chapter three, Johannesburg is also reported as the largest metropolitan contributor to the national economic product. National average growth in gross domestic product (GDP) has been 1,8% over the past 10 years, with Johannesburg marginally outpacing that growth with an average growth per annum of 2%. The city's contribution to the national economy is almost 16%, while it is 40% to the Gauteng province. Per capita gross geographic product (GP) in Johannesburg is R31 000. This compares to World Bank-designated middle-income countries whose average GGP per capita is R33 000. Therefore, most of dominant industries in South Africa's are also dominant in Johannesburg.

Johannesburg's economy is dominated by four sectors, three of which are service sectors (City of Johannesburg, 2018). The four key sectors are:

- financial and business services;
- retail, hospitality and wholesale trade;
- community and social services; and
- th e manufacturing sector.

Since these sectors are reported as the dominant sectors in the City of Johannesburg and are also among the well performing sectors, nationally, as captured in the GDP report; firms from these sectors/industries were sampled using the purposive sampling technique. In other words, the employers that took part in the current study were sampled from these abovementioned sectors. Another reason for the selection of the first four well performing industries is because one would surmise that since they are the most dominant sectors, they are the most likely to create jobs—and if not, how much less will the less performing industries be likely to create jobs. Considering this reasoning, employers/their representatives from companies/firms representing these industries were considered and approached. The section below describes how the respondents were recruited for this study.

5.4.1 Respondents

After identifying the sectors (and firms) from which the sample would be drawn, I proceeded to solicite information from management (or any personnel) that could provide information about the organisation, and especially the R&S practices of the firms, respectively. As a way to protect both the names of the respondents and the firms that they represent (or work for)—and also to avoid giving pseudonyms to both the respondents and the firms they represent—only the firms were provided with pseudonyms, and the respondents will be referred to by their positions and pseudo firm names (which will be italised throughout the rest of the thesis) not their real names, nor their real firms. The way in which these employers or their representatives from the above-mentioned industries were recruited for this study was carried out in two ways: (i) through available contact details on the firms' websites, (ii) and through direct walk-ins to companies that were considered for the study. Respondents were contacted first by email (with a formal letter describing the purpose of study) which basically asked for the permission to conduct study. Some participants either denied or accepted the invite via email—over 60 firms were randomly invited; but a little over 30 firms expressed interest to participate in the study. But only 20 firms availed themselves for the data collection

interviews. In addition to the emails sent out, I also did walk-ins where I asked for permission face to face and explained my research study. Amazingly, most successful consents (or expressions to participate) were ones granted when I approached the companies in person. I assume it is because they understood my study better when I explained it to them, and because, I suppose, I was able to also developing a rapport by allowing them to ask me questions about their concerns. Below is a table introducing the 20 participants by the industry, nature of business carried out in different firms and the pseudonyms given to the participants to protect their identities?

Table 5.1. Respondents by industry and demographics

Sector/Industry	Participant's Position	Nature of business	Firm Names (Pseudonyms)
Retail/Hospitality sector	Supervisor	Clothing	***Ladies and Gents Clothing***
	Manager	Pharmaceutical, Health and Beauty	***Health First Store***
	Supervisor	Restaurant	***Eat & Dine restaurant***
	Manager	Restaurant	***Burger Club restaurant***
	Supervisor	Clothing	***Dynamite Clothing***
	Manager	Restaurant	***Chicken Corner restaurant***
	Manager	Supermarket	***Stop & Shop Supermarket***
	Supervisor	Supermarket	***More for less Supermarket***
	Manager	Supermarket	***Right Choice Supermarket***
	Supervisor	Clothing	***Fashion statement store***
	Manager	Theme Park	***Maboneng Theme Park***
	Supervisor	Petrol garage	***Super Fuel Garage***
Financial sector	Manager	Bank	***General Bank***
	Manager	Bank	***East Bank***
	Junior Manger	Bank	***Star Bank***
	Junior Manager	Accounting Firm	***Money Matters Accountancy***
Manufacturing sector	Manager	Alcohol Brewery	***Egoli Distillery***
	Supervisor	Motor Corporation	***Exceptional Motors Corp***
	Manager	Beverages manufacturer	***Multi-Drinks Factory***
Transportation	Manager	freight	***AfriTrans***

As pointed out above, the firms that have participated in this study where randomly selected from the four of the high performing industries/sectors nationwide (GDP, 2018), and specific to the Gauteng province (the Johannesburg area) upon the time they were sampled. A total of

20 firms were sampled, and as can be observed from the table the firms disproportionately represent the selected industries. In particular, the retail sector is the most represented industry with a total of 12 firms which is slightly over half of all the firms sampled. The second most represented sector is the Finance sector with a total of three firms, followed by the manufacturing sector with a total of two firms, and the Transportation sector with only one firm. The sampling and collection of data were gravely affected by the outbreak of the corona-virus, and the consequent national lockdown, which forced an abrupt halt of data collection after only a total of 20 firms were sampled and interviewed. Thus, inhibiting the continuation of data collection from more firms and respondents. Even though the abrupt halt meant that I could not continue data collection, I was of the mind that data from the 20 respondents (from 20 sampled firms) reached saturation. Hence I proceeded with the data analysis of the 20 interviews collected from 20 firms, instead of waiting without any certainty of when I was going to be able to collect more data. This limitation is described in more detail under the limitations section below.

Nonetheless, the firms that could be approached are those that are in the CBD, which is the central area of Johannesburg in which this thesis is interested. Some firms fall outside of the CBD area; they are in other areas of Johannesburg, not the CBD. This explains why some sectors are under-represented in the sample; it is because most of the firms (under some sectors) are all outside the CBD area. One of the reasons why the Retail/hospitality is the most represented in the sample is because it is overly represented in the CBD area. Be that as it may, the disproportionate representability of firms in other sampled industries does not pose a problem for the thesis; since it is not interested in generalisig the results, but rather concerned with the in-depth details that the small and concentrated sampled produced. What is of critical importance for the thesis is that, to be eligible to take part in the study, the respondents had to be able to provide information about the recruitment of the participating firms. Collectively and individually, these 20 participants shared a wealth of experience ranging from one year to 20 years of being in their occupations.

5.4.2 Data Collection Technique: Interviews

In total, 20 face-to-face, in-depth interviews with employers/managers/supervisors (depending on who was available to provide the information that was needed) were conducted. The entire fieldwork involved one on one interviews—using semi-structured questions—with various categories of respondents from participating organisations as shown

in table 5.1. Given that interviews are the primary data collection instrument for this research, the semi-structured interview technique was applied whereby questions (predominately how and why questions) were carefully designed to provide adequate coverage for the purpose of the research. Major questions were developed in the form of general questions, which were then coupled with follow-up questions where further probing was necessary (to seek clarity or to elaborate on some of the responses). The choice for semi-structured interviews rather than structured interviews was informed by the fact that they offer sufficient flexibility to approach different respondents differently based on their individual responses, while also covering the same data collection topics with all respondents.

Interview questions were asked in such a way that explored the informants' belief system concerning young people and, particularly, concerning the employment of them. Therefore, open-ended questions were used so that the informants could answer them in their own terms and express themselves. Each interview was approximately an hour long. All these interviews were audio-recorded using a digital recorder with permission obtained from the participants. This was done in addition to keeping my own extensive field notes of all the participants, which I also used to follow-up or get elaboration on some of the information they provided. The data collected were transcribed verbatim daily (right after the interview) to ensure an accurate account of the conversations, and avoid any loss of the data. All the data was stored on my laptop to be revisited for the data analysis.

5.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Given that the qualitative approach is the operational framework for this study, the data analysis techniques for the data that was collected fell within the qualitative ‘case study’ framework. According to Hancock (2006), case study researchers have to heed several guidelines during the process of synthesising and interpreting the data gathered. A key aspect of doing case study research is interpreting and explaining information as a basis for understanding the issue under investigation. Typically, this process involves examining and re-examining research questions and answers that emanate from the information available for analysis. Therefore, a case study researcher synthesises the many individual pieces of information acquired during the research process, in order to identify and report the key findings that come from the collective analysis.

Researchers have developed several strategies (e.g., thematic analysis, categorical analysis, narrative analysis) for accomplishing this (data analysis) task (Hancock, 2006). Although

each strategy has unique characteristics, most strategies have in common a basic process—that is, the repetitive, recurring review of the gathered information in order to identify common patterns or themes. The strategy that was used for this study is the *thematic* analysis by which data were examined in light of a particular research question in order to construct a tentative answer to the question. These tentative answers were categorised into themes. According to Hancock (2006), this process should continue until themes emerge that are well supported by all available information. Once information from all respindents is thoroughly reviewed, themes for which the large part of information supports a tentative answer are kept and reported as the main findings (Hancock, 2006; Ackroyd, 2009).

The reviewed literature on the techniques of data analysis, which specifically falls within the qualitative approach, highlight that data analysis consists of three specific activities (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998; Hancock, 2006). These are the particular activities that guided the analysis of the data generated for this research. The first entails scrutinising the data for themes, concepts and propositions. After transcribing the data collected, I repeatedly went through the data to familiarise myself with the ideas that emerged from employers' responses. At this stage, themes were identified, as reflected in similar ideas and repeated words or concepts. The second activity, according to Taylor and Bogdan (1998), involves coding the data and refining one's understanding of the subject matter. After highlighting similar ideas, and upon highlighting recurring ideas. Themes were created within which the sampled employers' responses could be discussed and disaggregated according to the different sectors and various participating firms. The final activity of data analysis involves understanding the data in the context it was collected. This was ensured by revisiting the research questions to foreground the purpose for which the data was sought.

Furthermore, the data was organised and divided into manageable units by searching for similar patterns (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). This was done by continually classifying and categorising the data according to similarities and dissimilarities found in the responses. When this was done, the next step was to compile the data to make sense of the views and experiences that the respondents shared during the interviewing process. And to interpret it in a manner that will answer the research questions, and ultimately the chief research question which is concerned with demand-side factors that impact on young jobseekers' employment outcomes. This was adopted for the purposes of reporting back on the findings of this research. As will be shown in the following chapters that are designed solely to report back

on the data. This process helped ensure the codes and themes formulated encompassed the range of ideas expressed by the participants.

5.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

There has emerged a growing body of literature focusing on ethical considerations—when conducting social research—all of which emphatically highlight the key ethical issues as follows (but not limited to): confidentiality, informed consent, privacy. According to Hammersley (2014:536), social scientists today find themselves surrounded by a plethora of statements about research ethics that outline ethical considerations that they ought to heed when planning and carrying out research; and sometimes specifically tell them what they should and should not do. Even more significant, in practical terms, are the ethics frameworks adopted by universities, funding bodies and by organisations that act as gatekeepers in order to control access to data (and to research sites, such as hospitals or social work agencies). These frameworks frequently serve as the basis for ethical regulation. In other words, to one degree or another, they are enforced through institutional procedures that determine whether proposed research projects using particular methods can go ahead in the manner intended (Hammersley, 2014).

Likewise, this thesis considered the vital importance of ethical considerations for social research and has accordingly observed some of the most generic ethical requirements in my fieldwork. According to Ritchie and Lewis (2003), ethical concerns are based on the 'proper' way to execute research, especially not to cause harm to the respondents during the research process. In view of all this, when I commenced my fieldwork, I was mindful of the great responsibility to be sensitive and respectful of the research respondents and their fundamental human rights entirely throughout the research process. The first thing was to ask for permission while also explaining the key brief detailed information about my research to allow participants to make an informed decision about participating in the study. So, I sought informed consent, which was obtained in-person, even though permission was also sought online via email. In this regard, throughout my fieldwork and study, I would first introduce myself and explain to the respondents what my research is about, and what I would do with the information they provided.

In particular, I (a) spelled out the main aim and objectives of the study as well as the procedures to be followed up-front to everybody taking part in the research (such as recording their responses); (b) I advised respondents that partaking in the study was

absolutely voluntary, and that should there be a need or a reason to withdraw from it, they have the right to do so at any given time; and (c) that every candidate of the study should give an informed consent, this is for the purposes of only having keen participants to partake in the study. Particularly the participants were also given informed consent forms to sign, which signaled that they had consented to participate in the research and to the conditions under which they granted their consent. The consent forms were signed before the interview commenced. Lastly, I respected their privacy at all times and treated all they shared with confidentiality; and respondents who did not want me to make mention of their names. The actual names of the participants were not disclosed (I used Pseudonyms to refer to different participants and their responses), so too were their respective companies at which they work. To be specific, and as also mentioned above in section 5.4.1, the respondents themselves will be referred throughout the thesis by their occupations/positions, and the firm names were replaced by pseudonyms that I creatively devised. There were no gatekeepers; all the responders exercised their own agency to consent to take part in the study.

Also noteworthy is that all post-graduates at Rhodes University (as well as other institutions) have to apply for ethical clearance to undertake their fieldwork. In fulfilling these requirements, I submitted an application, together with the research proposal, to research and ethics committee of faculty of Humanities, Rhodes University. This was done before I began my field work and only proceeded to do the field work after I received my ethical clearance. As such, this whole research inquiry was guided by ethical consideration about what to do and what not to do.

5.7 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

It is inevitable that each research project will have limitations or challenges that tend to compromise the research in one way or the other. Indeed, this research was met with a few unexpected limitations. The first limitation concerns the sample of the thesis; initially, the study sought to interview 40 respondents (which was to be made up of 10 firms from each of the four selected sectors). But due to the novel Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent national lock down, the set target (of the desired sample) could not be met as the fieldwork was abruptly halted. By that time, I was in the middle of my fieldwork and had only interviewed 20 employers (the interviews were based on who was available at the time). This meant I had to continue with the data I had collected at that point, hence as presented in Table 5.1, there are only 20 employers—with the retail sector having more respondents than from

other sectors. The reason for the over-representation of the retail sector is that: firstly, the retail sector firms are predominant in the Johannesburg CBD area than any other sector. Secondly, it was the retail sector firms that were almost readily available to participate in the study. Therefore, it was quicker and easier to get access into the retail sector firms, and that is why I managed to cover all the targeted 10 plus two more from the retail sectors, which made a total of 12 retail firms.

However, the same level of ease of access cannot be said about the firms in the other three remaining sectors, most of which declined the email invitation requesting for their consented participation. Some had very strict access rules about accessing their organisations, yet others said they will get back to me but never did. This meant at times that the scheduled meetings were canceled and some were postponed. Therefore, due to the national lockdown, I could not go back to them for follow-up. While this means that the sectors are not evenly represented, I can safely maintain that the data did reach saturation. And because of this, I could carry on with writing my thesis to answer the main research questions. Despite that the numbers are uneven; the research is not interested in numbers nor representation because the main aim is not to generalise the results (as quantitative research does); but rather to gain an in-depth understanding of the dispositions of employers and the ways they influence employers' decision to accommodate young people in their employment strategies. Hence the research took the qualitative approach that focuses on the in-depth analysis of the data.

As will be shown in the consequent chapters, data from only 20 respondents turned out to be sufficient to understand and answer both the primary and secondary research questions. Furthermore, I justify my use of the 20 firms other than waiting to collect more data to the fact that if I had gone back to the field, the results would be disproportionately different because it would consist of data collected before the pandemic and data collected during the pandemic. For instance, employers interviewed during the pandemic would not help but report on the challenges of the pandemic, and this opportunity would not have been given to the firms interviewed before the lockdown. For this reason, I thought the data from the 20 firms was sufficient because it reports on what happened before the pandemic. Continuing with data collection after the pandemic, which was still not possible even when I started my data analysis, would mean having incongruent data: some from before the pandemic and some from during the pandemic. This would be like reporting on two different phenomena, and that is not the aim of my study.

Moreover, another issue that posed as a limitation for the study is that some employers did not answer some of the questions, which in my judgment, seems to do with the fact that they represent their firms and did not want to appear as though they are expressing their perceptions on behalf of their respective firms. So, it is possible that there is information that the sampled employers held back without being sure they could share further. In fact, two of the respondents mentioned—respectively—during interviews that they were not too sure that they could divulge some of the information that was asked of them. Therefore, where I saw some discomfort from a few of them, which happened in some interviews, I ceased to probe further because my aim was to build rapport and not to discourage them from finishing the interviews. Hence, it can be concluded from that observation that employers had their own agency as managers to provide and share information with me. However, since the respondents are also subjected to the company as employees, this could have limited just how much information they could share about the practices in their firms.

5.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter has outlined the methods and techniques adopted to conduct the essential part of the research, which is to gain information that speaks to the research question. It first presented the research paradigm, which informed the choice of the qualitative research approach. This was followed by a discussion of the case study technique as one of the qualitative strategies that is the most suitable strategy for this study. This strategy allowed for a sample of and data collection from a small unit of analysis. Indeed, the qualitative analytical research was conducted to explain and understand the demand-side factors that affect labour market outcomes where young people are concerned. The chapter also presented the interview technique and thematic technique as a way in which data was collected and analysed. This was followed by a discussion of the ethical considerations which were observed to successfully undertake the study. All these methods speak to the research objectives and have, for the most part, enabled the success of the process of data collection. Notwithstanding, the methods were not without their shortcomings which, while considerable, they did not negatively impact the overall study.

The next chapters provides the actual analysis of the synthesis of both the literature review chapters and the data collected. All in all, my study collected information about the respondents/employers' recruitment practices as they stand currently: their employment history; the challenges the companies are facing concerning recruitment; factors that affect

their recruitment; their own understanding of unemployment; what they think would curb unemployment; involvement or lack thereof in government strategies against youth unemployment. All this data gathered was used to supplement the analysis of the labour market and will serve as themes in the data analysis chapters. The following chapters provide an extensive and critical analysis of the data collected as enabled by this preceding chapter. The next chapter, in particular, introduces the participants and the firms for which they work in more detail.

CHAPTER SIX

SAMPLED FIRMS AND RESPONDENTS IN JOHANNESBURG'S CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves as the preliminary data analysis section that lays a foundation for the subsequent data analysis chapters. The main purpose of this descriptive chapter is to present the background information of participants, and of the individual firms for which they are employers. This background information is integral as it helps understand the positions and duties of the respondents that qualify them as key informants of this study. It also helps us understand the key organisational information of the individual participating firms which—as also shown in chapter four, section 4.5—has a likelihood of shaping their recruitment practices amongst other organisational activities. This discussion will also help see how firms from the four selected industries/sectors differ in terms of structure, composition, and way of doing business. Since this research is primarily interested in exploring the ways in which the demand-side factors (employers dispositions and recruitment activities) affect young people, it is only indispensable to first—before considering the recruitment practices and the employers' dispositions regarding the employment of the youth—review the characteristics of the respondents', and the compositions of the firms. This preliminary consideration will not only help us understand the individual firm, and how the context of each firm shapes the organisations' practices regarding recruitment (all which will be discussed in the subsequent chapters). But it is also instrumental in answering the overall research question.

Therefore, this chapter first presents the participants' key background information by detailing their occupations, and the duties that make them the key informants of this study. The next theme shifts the focus from the respondent to the organisations that the respondents work for. Understanding the key organisational characteristics (i.e., core values, attributes, and qualifications sought by employers, opportunities, and challenges faced by the selected firms) is key to understanding how they in turn shape the organisational activities and factor into their decision-making. Furthermore, the chapter also considers the composition of the selected firms, which gives the sense of the firms' current personnel (by age, race, and type of employment contract: part-time or full tie employment) employed in each firm. All themes

provide an understanding of the respondents and the firms that, in turn, help understand why they adopt the organisational activities that are carried out in each participating firm. To this end, this chapter as well as the subsequent chapters, will present and discuss the data gathered thematically in an effort to answer the research questions.

6.2 THE RESPONDENTS' BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Table 5.1 (in the previous chapter) presented the industries and firms that the sampled respondents represent, and about which they provided data. Table 6.1 below presents the key background information of the respondents (as key informants) themselves. This table gives us a sense of who they are and what they generally do in their respective firms. This information is what makes them key participants of this study, as it is only because to their occupations and duties that they could answer the questions the thesis seeks to explore. The table indicates that the respondents' occupations range from managers, supervisors and HR personnel. As already mentioned in chapter five, all of these candidates were suitable to provide answers to the research questions, and will, for that reason, be referred to by their occupations and pseudo firms (which will be italised); or referred collectively as respondents/employers throughout the thesis.

Table 6.1: Sampled firms and the respondents' demographics

Respondents' Firms	***Respondents' Occupation***	***Sex***	***Duties/Responsibilities***
Ladies & Gents Clothing	Supervisor	Male	Monitor and oversee business operation
Heath First Store	Manager	Male	I make sure that everything is in order
Eat & Dine restaurant	Supervisor	Male	Overseeing the progress of the day
Burger Club restaurant	Manager	Male	I make sure that everything is in order
Dynamite Clothing store	Supervisor	Male	Monitoring daily functions'
Chicken Corner Restaurant	Manager	Female	Check whether everything is done as recorded
Stop & Shop Supermarket	Manager	Female	I check how the supervisors work in their different stages
More for Less Supermarket	Supervisor	Female	Mostly is to ensure that customers are happy
Right Choice Supermarket	Manager	Male	Monitoring daily functions'

Fashion Statement Store	Supervisor	Male	Overseeing the progress of the day
Maboneng Theme Park	HR personnel	Male	Ensure that everyone has safety equipment
Super Fuel Garage	Supervisor	Male	Responsible for overseeing the daily progress
General Bank	Manager	Female	checking if procedures of that day are observed
East Bank	Manager	Female	checking if procedures of that day are observed
Star Bank	Junior manager	Male	make sure everything runs smooth daily
Money MattersAccountancy	Junior	Male	Overseeing the progress of the day
EgoliDistellery	HR personnel	Male	Ensure that everything is up to date
Exceptional Motors Corp	Supervisor	Male	I instruct employeeswhat to do daily
Multi-drinks Manufacturer	HR personnel	Male	Overseeing the progress of the day
AfriTrans	Manager	Male	Monitoring daily functions'

Looking at the table one can observe that 10 out of 20 of the respondents were managers. This is followed by supervisors, who were seven in total, and HR personnel, who were three out of the 20 respondents. In addition, the table also shows that the respondents represent both genders. Most sampled respondents are male with a total of 13, while females are only seven in total. While the gender gap is an observable factor as it represents the demographics of the respondents, it is worth noting that the differences in the gender does not have any bearing on the main research question. What has a significant bearing, in answering the research question, are the occupations and the duties/responsibilities of the respondents in their respective firms. Furthermore, given that the respondents filled different positions or occupations, the table also shows that they also had different duties and responsibilities that they execute on a daily basis, even though they could all be summed up as managerial duties. It is crucial to the study for the respondents/informants to be in the managerial positions and to also execute these duties/responsibilities, because it puts them in good stead to provide information that can be used to answer the research questions. In other words, these positions that they filled and the duties that they carried out (when the interviews were conducted thereof) make them key informants for the study.

As seen on the table, these duties and responsibilities varied from—in the words of the respondents— "monitoring daily functions," "overseeing the progress of the day," "checking if procedures of that day are executed," and "making sure that everything runs smoothly." Given that these were the recurring responses that were shared by all respondents they serve as the four different categories of the respondents' duties/responsibilities, as presented in Table 6.1. However, the respondents reported that they carry out numerous duties, so albeit the duties presented in the table are their main, day-to-day duties, their overall duties are not limited to these categories. In fact, for most employers, their duties sometimes comprise of all the above-mentioned kinds of duties. Therefore, there are duties that are just secondary to their main everyday duties, while other duties are regarded as primary/main duties. This is explained by the *More for Less Supermarket Manager* (2020): "Well, as a supervisor, I make sure all the stock is packed and employees are here on time and that they are doing their job; but, I think, mostly is to ensure that customers are happy."

Corollary to the point mentioned above, it can be observed from the table that the duties/responsibilities overlap with each respondent as also pointed out by the *Health First store Manager* (2020): "I make sure that everything is in order in terms of stock, staff, you know, the usual, just what managers do: manage what's happening in the store." This response suggests that respondents have more or less the same duties, even though they may vary by sector and firm, and on what a particular day requires from the respondents—as different days may have different tasks. One of the respondents elaborated:

> I make sure that everything is in order, the stuff is on time, and finances are also properly recorded. I'm actually responsible for everything that's happening because the people that I report to, if anything bad goes down, I have to be answerable to them; and I'm the one who'll get the warnings if things don't go well (*Stop & Shop Supermarket Manager*, 2020).

Furthermore, the last column of the table: (duties/responsibilities), illustrates that respondents have a wide-ranging set of duties, and this may explain why some employers expressed frustration with their day-to-day duties, as shared in the interviews. For instance, the *Money Matters Accountancy Manager* (2020) noted: "uhm, it's a straining position, I just make sure everything runs smooth daily." Moreover, data reveal that, in addition to these daily activities, the respondents every so often need to recruit people. However, the duty to recruit does not take place every day as with other duties (highlighted in Table 6.1). In a follow-up question,

the respondents were asked if they are ever in charge of conducting recruitments, and they expressed that they are involved in the recruitment activities that happen in their firms; even though it was not a daily task like other duties that are highlighted in the last column of table 6.1. It appears that conducting recruitment is an intermittent duty that they carried out in their firms. The Dynamite Clothing Supervisor (2020) stated:

> Yes, every now and again I get involved in recruitment activities. I have to conduct interviews to recruit new entrants whenever there is a vacant position. This does not happen every day though, because we do not recruit every day.

It should be noted that managers or supervisors, who are responsible of recruiting new employees in addition to their other duties, are from firms that do not have an HR department and, consequently, have to conduct their own recruitment and selection practices. This means that most of the firms have employers (managers/supervisors) who conduct recruitment themselves, while only three out of 20 firms have specific HR personnel (and department) responsible for recruitment. The duty to conduct recruitment is the most important for the thesis as it makes the respondents key informants who could answer the interview questions, which are in turn necessary to answer the main research question.

6.3 SAMPLED ORGANISATIONS

The previous section presented the key demographics about the respondents themselves. This section presents the background information about the firms/organisations that the respondents perform all the above-mentioned duties/responsibilities for (as outlined in the previous section), and about which they provided information. It is as equally important to understand the background information of the organisations as it is to understand about the respondents themselves, in order to better understand how this information may shape their R&S practices (as they would other organisational activities). To understand this context, it is important to understand the things that constitute and characterise the firms such as the (i) core values of the firm, (ii) attributes, characteristics and qualifications sought by employers, (iii) and the challenges or opportunities faced by each firm. This information will ultimately help us understand how this context informs and impacts the recruitment and selection of the young people specifically, thus answering the main research question.

6.3.1 Core Values of the Firms

According to Barber (1998), and Cober and Brown (2006), every organisation has core values that are established, and thus guide the operation of the organisation. In fact, among other things, these values are what ensure that the vision of the firm is carried out, and also tend to fashion the culture and reflect what each firm values. As explained by Beardwell (2007), and Swanepoel et al. (2008), values are the essence of the firm's identity—the principles, beliefs or philosophy that guides the functions of any organisation. In addition, core values signal to clients and potential customers what the firm is about and paint the identity of the firm (Beardwell, 2007). For this reason, it is crucial to know and understand the key values of the participating organisations; in order to have a sense of how their core values may guide the operations of the firms and how the respondents perform their duties to uphold these values. Therefore, the values that were repeatedly mentioned by the sampled employers are '*customer satisfaction'* and '*serving customers*'. These two values are the most recurring in the data, in fact one of the respondents from a retail firm stated: "Just like in other businesses, our values are 'customer satisfaction'. To meet our [customers] basic needs and wants" (*Ladies & Gents Clothing Manager*, 2020). Another respondent from the finance sector stated: "to ensure that customers are always satisfied. Despite that there are other banks, but we want to see our company being the best" (*General Bank Manager*, 2020). A similar value was upheld by the *Exceptionl Motors Corp Supervisor* (2020), from the manufacturing company:

> The [company's] values are to ensure that customers get their goods in time and the services is up to date and that they never complain. We try to work hard to avoid customer complaints, so that we don't lose our customers.

These views were shared by a considerable number of respondents and have, inevitably, one thing in common: *customer satisfaction*. It is actually not surprising that all the respondents identified 'customer satisfaction as one of their firms' core values. Indeed, firms benefit greatly from customer satisfaction, because it means that customers can keep supporting their business. In turn, it is this (continued) support that enables businesses to make more profit. This eventual outcome—which proves to be a priority for firms—suggests that customer satisfaction is a strategy that firms use to attract more customers, and to keep them as their customers. After all, and as acknowledged both by the neoclassical and LMS theories, under capitalism the number one goal of firms is to make profit, so customer satisfaction is one of

the ways firms generate profit—by making sure customers are satisfied enough to keep supporting the businesses carried out in each firm.

6.3.2 Skills, Attributes and Characteristics Sought by Employers

It is only common sense to think that employers would only seek and recruit candidates who will be able to uphold the values of their firms. For this reason, it is important to know the attributes, characteristics and/or qualities (collectively known as human capital/skills-set) that employers seek from their employees. This will not only help us understand how the firms' values shape the attributes, characteristics and qualifications the sampled employers look for or require from potential workers. But it will also reveal the similarities and differences between firms, based on how each firm's values shapes the personnel they seek to recruit. The data provided by the respondents in this regard show that there are attributes, characteristics and/or qualities that are shared across firms. But there are also those that are unique to the individual firms that are not necessarily shared with other firms. Employers highlighted several attributes, characteristics and/or qualities distinctively, but the most recurring ones that the firms sought was the attribute or quality of being 'hardworking'.

For instance, the *East Bank Manager* (2020), from the financial sector stated: "We want dedicated, hardworking people who are also honest, and we want people who are willing to try new things." Another employer explained: "Ah, mostly in our company we are looking for hard workers, who are presentable, and we look for punctuality and competence" (*Money Matters Accountancy Manager*, 2020). Though the respondents from the retail sector provided similar responses—as they require more or less the same attributes—one of the main attributes they required was customer service qualities. Some examples of these responses are reproduced below:

> We look for employees who are confident and competent, you know. Who can communicate well because, you know, we deal with customers, so communication is key (*Ladies & Gents clothing Manager*, 2020).
>
> I look for hard-working people with great personalities and good customer service. (*Dynamite Clothing Supervisor*, 2020).
>
> …Because we work with people, we want people who are able to work with people. You know, we look for people skills. (*Stop & Shop Supermarket Manager*, 2020).

> We look for many characteristics, but it really must be hard working and communication skills; those are like the main ones (*More for Less supermarket Supervisor*, 2020).

From these responses—which also serve as examples of the responses that were given by almost all respondents from the retail sector—it can be observed that the ability to communicate is the recurring characteristics that employers in retail firm seek the most. This emphasis on communication skills by the retail firms' respondents may be explained by the fact that their nature of the business involves, for the most part, contact and interaction with customers. Therefore, in order to provide services/products to customers, the employees must have the ability to communicate with clients. This consideration indicates that the business rendered in each firm is one of the key determinants of the attributes, characteristics and/or qualities sought by firms. Indeed, other responses indicate that the nature of the business determines the qualities and characteristics sought by firms. For example, a respondent from the manufacturing sector noted: "We do a lot of hard labour here, so, in addition to being a hard worker, we need people who can do hard labour and be ready for everything that the job would require at any given time" (*Egoli Distillery Manager, 2020*). Another respondent from a manufacturing firm stated:

> We're looking for consistent people. People who will be on their feet all the time. Our job can put you in a position where customers can be rude, and they come with rough edges and bad energy. So, it's important you stay calm and work on your feet (*Exceptional Motors Corp Supervisor,* 2020).

This evidence shows that, while the demand for different attributes, characteristics and/or qualities from potential recruits, is shaped by their different values (discussed in the previous section); it is also clear that there are attributes that are shared across all the firms that were sampled despite having different values. Data reveal that being 'hard working' is an attribute/characteristic that all the firms value and look for in their recruits or prospective recruits. Considering the previous discussion that presents the core values of the firms, there seems to be a link between the values established by the firms and the attributes sought after by the selected firms. For instance, firms all value hardwork because it is one of the attributes that lead to the value of customer satisfaction being realised. Again, this proves that the ultimate goal for these firms is to make profit and these values and attributes/characteristics sought for in employees is to achieve the number one goal of making profit. It is unlikely that

any firm will establish these values and only seek the attributes they seek from their employees only because they are interested in their customers. They are only interested in their customers because the support from customers is instrumental in the profit maximisation that the neoclassical theory maintains is their ultimate, if not the only economic interest.

6.3.3 Highest and Lowest Qualifications in Each Firm

Individual attributes, characteristics and/or qualities are not the only things that employers look for when they are looking to recruit employees. There is compelling evidence that education qualifications are among the many prerequisites that employers look for when selecting new employees (Moleke, 2004; Bhorat, 2005; Altman, 2007; Tan, 2014). There is clear evidence that education is [one of] the key(s) to success, and that people with higher education enjoy better employment outcomes than those without it (Dias & Possel, 2007; Altbeker & Johnston, 2013; Branson & Leibbrandt, 2013; StatsSA, 2019). For instance, StatsSA has reported, continuously, that people with higher education have better job outcomes in the labour market than people with limited or no education. The Human Capital theory also proposes that education is a good investment in the labour market (Tan, 2014). Therefore, in trying to understand what employers look for from potential workers, it is also paramount to understand the types of qualifications that they seek to recruit, or for which they are in demand. By asking the respondents about the qualifications they currently have in their firms, their responses should reveal what qualifications they value and will, in turn, reveal how the youth are impacted by the specific demands of the sampled employers.

Inevitably, the data reveals that different firms demand and value different qualifications. In fact, the findings indicate that some firms value qualifications more than others. Expectedly, the firms that have a prerequisite of tertiary qualifications are from the financial, manufacturing and transportation sectors. A response that supports this point is provided by the *Exceptional Motors Corp* Employer (2020) from the manufacturing sector:

> Well, the work we do in this firm makes for a strict career. You need to be a graduate, and you need to be on a higher level. The higher certificate you have, the higher the position you have. We look for graduates, specifically.

The demand for and value of qualifications was shared by employers from the other two sectors mentioned above. Employers from these sectors stated that the highest qualification in their firms was a tertiary qualification (diploma and degree, and for some firms it was a post-

graduate degree). In contrast to the abovementioned sectors, the respondents from the retail sector (who make up the majority of the respondents) reported that the highest qualification sought was a matric certificate. Unlike the respondents from the financial, manufacturing and transportation sectors, the respondents from the retail sector did not seem to place the same value on tertiary qualifications when recruiting jobseekers. In fact, five of the 13 retail sector firms expressed that not only is a matric certificate enough to get people recruited in their firms, but that they also accommodated jobseekers who only had up to grade 10 education. This was, in many instances, the lowest qualification some of their current employees had at the time of the research interviews. In fact, a majority of the sampled employers (across all sectors and firms) expressed that the lowest qualifications they had was grade 10; but this was reported mostly by employers from the retail sector. Employers from the other sectors explained that employees with a grade 10 qualification were few in their firms, and that they occupied general positions such as security guards and cleaners. One employer explained that there is an employee who was recruited with the lowest qualification only because he had work experience:

> We have a new employee who has grade 10. Because of his experience, we were able to hire him. (*Money Matters Accountancy Manager*, 2020).

A similar experience was shared by the *AfriTrans Manager* (2020):

> Sometimes experience would be something that might, be a minimum requirement, but even if you have a grade 11 or matric, it depends on the experience. Or if you are lucky, we can take you without experience.

It can be concluded from the *Money Matters Accountancy Manager's* (2020), response that the reason the employee was recruited was that he had something else (work experience) the firm valued despite that he did not have a tertiary qualification. However, for the retail sector, most employees had a grade 10 qualification even though that is all they had. It stands to reason—considering these responses and data exploring the values and attributes of the firms—that the difference between firms that require a tertiary qualification and those that do not, is predicated on the nature and kinds of goods/products/services that each firm renders. Apart from the retail sector, the nature of goods or services rendered by firms (from the other three sampled sectors) required employees to have certain skills and qualifications. It would be counter-productive to hire someone who does not possess the skills/qualifications

demanded by these firms because the person would not know what to do. The opposite is true for the retail sector, the nature of the businesses rendered by firms from this sector does not necessarily require people to have qualifications to do the jobs offered in the sector. This idea was also pointed out by the *Health First store Manager* (2020) from the retail sector: "We hire people with grade 10 because we train them to do the job. Most of the jobs we have here do not necessarily need qualifications." This response is an indication that the retail sector often tends to employ people who are still studying and are willing to work part-time. For instance, the *Eat & Dine restaurant Manager* (2020) stated: "some of our workers are still studying, so they are still working on obtaining their qualifications, but we employ people with no qualifications because most of the jobs here don't require a qualification."

In fact, according to some of thee reviewed literature (see Tam, 2010; McKee-Ryan & Harvey, 2011; Beukes, 2017) anyone who has a tertiary qualification that ends up working at any retail firm is deemed to be underemployed. This would mean that the jobs offered there do not make use of the 'underemployed' worker's skills, and thus leaves the worker to idle due to the under-utilisation of the workers' skills. Therefore, it can be concluded that these results reveal that the value put on qualifications varies greatly amongst the sampled sectors. There is a divide between the retail sector and the three other sampled sectors. While these three sectors place considerable value on qualifications the retail sector seems to not only accommodate people with no tertiary qualifications, but also those with qualifications below matric. This variation between the different firms may be explained by a number of factors which include, firm size, nature of business rendered, and also the values that are established to guide the business. However, the recurrent factor that appears to have a bearing on skills demand is the nature of business rendered in each firm. For instance, the retail sector, may afford to accommodate people with only, or less than a matric certificate because the nature of their business does not require high skills unlike in other sectors where tertiary education is a prerequisite. This point is explored in greater detail in chapter nine.

6.3.4 Challenges Facing the Selected Firms

It is inevitable that every organisation (small and big alike) would be confronted with challenges. There are many common challenges every business faces, one way or the other. These include things such as challenges that come with hiring the right people, developing a customer base, building a brand, among other things. Therefore, in understanding the respective firms' R&S practices, it is important to learn about the challenges they encounter.

As these challenges would most likely have a bearing on the operation of the organisation, and thus also impact recruitment practices and the employment behaviour of each firm. The data indicates that, firstly, for some firms, the 'loss of employees' was stated as the major challenge currently facing the firms. For instance, the *Super Fuel Garage* (2020) states: "Ah, I would say losing staff is the biggest challenge." This view is matched by an employer from the *General Bank Manager* (2020): "the major challenge is to lose customers". The *East Bank Manager* (2020) states: "Losing customers, not providing the best service as we promised to."

Other challenges include what employers described as the dishonesty of and theft by employees. For instance, the *More for Less Supermarket Supervisor* (2020), stated that the key challenges at the firm are theft and dishonesty. Responding to the same question, the *Dynamite Clothing Supervisor* (2020) stated: "At the moment, we do not have any cameras in our store. So, some employees steal from us; so, we need to upgrade our security system." These challenges are likely to not only have an impact on the operation of the business as a whole, but also on R&S processes. For instance, when firms lose employees, there will be vacancies that the firms may need to fill, unless they decide otherwise. In addition, when there is dishonesty or theft by some employees, it means disciplinary action will be taken, and this may mean that employees found guilty are dismissed. The result of both these challenges is that the firm will have a shortage of staff members, and this may either necessitate the employment of replacement employees or may discourage firms from recruiting any more.

Yet, some challenges have a direct impact on the profit that is made or could be made by firms. For instance, the *Stop & Shop Supermarket Manager* (2020) stated: "In case of a product being spoiled, then of course we have to refund, and then we lose profit." Moreover, the *Eat & Dine Restaurant Supervisor* (2020), pointed out that their competitors were the firms' biggest challenge: "The challenge we are facing at this time is our competitors. I mean we have many companies we do the same business with, so one of the thing that is a challenge is our competitors." Notwithstanding the challenges that all firms have a fair share of, half of the firms (from all four sectors) also expressed that they had benefits that the organisations were enjoying despite of (or in the midst of) the challenges. According to the *General Bank Manager* (2020): "the firm is growing, and we get people that switch from other banks to use our bank, which makes us grow as a bank." Also referring to the benefits faced by the firm, the *Ladies and Gents clothing Manager* (2020) explained: "Profit, at this

point. Profit is the biggest benefit; our clientele is growing, so we are making a lot of profit these days." These responses show, matter of fact, that firms are confronted by challenges—whether big or small. The challenges may be explained by various micro, macro and global determinants which are all interlinked. The challenges and the benefits that were highlighted by the respondents consequently have a bearing on how the businesses fare in the labour market in general, as it may either compromise or enhance the operation of the business and the employment practices. Therefore, it was important to explore the challenges of the sampled firms in order to understand the impact that they may have on the recruitment of young people, or lack thereof. The following section looks at the composition of the participating firms.

6.4 COMPOSITION OF THE SELECTED FIRMS

6.4.1 Number of Employees

Table 6.2 below presents the different sizes of the firms based on the number of employees they have. The 'size' of the firm is important for the study as it not only also helps understand the number of employees that it has (which shapes the decisions of job creation in each firm); but it also can reveal the bearing that size has on the recruitment behaviour any firm. The number of employees in each firm is recorded as estimated by the respondents themselves. The firms are divided into three size categories based on the number of employees in each firm: (i) less than (-100); (ii) greater/more than 100 (<100); and greater/more than 1000 (1000+), which will also be referred to, for the purposes of this thesis, as small, medium and big respectively. These categories were derived from the data the respondents provided concerning their workforce size. Most of the respondents gave a rough estimation of the total number of their employees and these three categories emerged from the data—with a majority of the respondents reporting a workforce total of less than 100. Two out of 20 respondents reported a total that is above 100, and three respondents reported a total that is greater than 1000+. Therefore, the categories, as presented in the table below, reflect the most recurring responses, which were grouped together to provide a sense of the size of the sampled firms individually and how they are separate from one another.

Table 6.2: Breakdown of selected firms by size

Sector/Industry	Size of the Workforce	Firms	Number of Employees

Retail	Small (-100)	Ladies & Gents Clothing Store	20/21
		Health First Store	12
		Eat & Dine Restaurant	14
		Burger Club Restaurant	30
		Dynamite Clothing Store	28
		Chicken Corner Restaurant	15
		More For Less	20
		Stop & Shop Supermarket	70
		Right Choice Supermarket	25-30
		Fashion Statement Store	10
	Medium (<100)	Maboneng Theme Park	300
		Super Fuel Station	15
Finance		General Bank	30
		East Bank	45
		Star Bank	33
	Large (1000+)	Money Matters Accountancy	5000+
Manufacturing and Transportation	Medium (<100)	Egoli Distellery	200+
		Exceptional Motors Corp	13
	Large (1000+)	Multi-drinks Factory	10000+
		AfriTrans	55,946

As demonstrated in the table, there are two extremes in terms of the size of the firms: some firms fall under the small category with the lowest having a total of 13 workers (*Motor Corporation* firm), and the biggest firm having a total of 55,946 workers (*AfriTrans* firm). It can be observed from the table that the firms that had the lowest number of workers were in the retail sector. Only eight of the 12 retail firms can be referred to as small firms, in terms of the number of employees they have. Yet, two of the firms that fall under the retail sector have a high number of employees: the *Stop & Shop Supermarket* had 70 employees, while the *Theme Park* retail firm had 300 employees. This same divide with retail firms is seen in the financial sector. According to Table 6.2, three of the four financial sector firms, which are all

banks, have more than 30 (but less than 50) employees. As a result, they also fall under the small category as most of the retail sector firms. However, there is a huge gap because the auditing firm, which is the fourth firm under the financial sector, had 5000+ employees as estimated by the *Money Matters Manager*.

Overall, only three of the 20 firms can be classified as large firms, and the rest are classified as small and medium firms as categorised in the table above. Therefore, the firms from the manufacturing and transportation sectors, which are few compared to the retail sector, can be classified as large firms as they have a considerable high total of employees; excluding the Motor corporation firm which has only 13 employees. Two of the firms that fall under these sectors have a high number of staff members: the *Egoli Distillery* (2020), firm has 200+ employees while the *AfriTrans* firm has 55,946 employees, making it the largest employer out of the 20 selected firms. As it has been mentioned in chapter four (section 4.6) the size of the organisation is one of the most important factors affecting the recruitment progress (Grobler, 2011, Mashaba, 2013, Kapar, 2018). It can be expected that big firms tend to hire more people to carryout the many duties that big firms may have. This makes firm size an important factor to consider in this study, so as to understand how it may have a bearing on the R&S behaviour, and ultimately how this affects the employment outcomes of young people.

6.4.2 Demographics of Employees in the Selected Firms

Table 6.3 below sets out the demographics (gender, race, age, dis/ability) of the employees that were employed in each sampled firm when the study was conducted. This information provides an indication of the kind of personnel employed in each firm, especially where it concerns the age category (young/old)—which is the focus of this study. While most firms could not provide exact figures, they did, however, provide a rough estimation of the different demographics in their workforce. This estimation will paint a picture of the demographics in each firm. It is important to explore these demographics because, as maintained by the reviewed literature in chapter four (section 4.6), the demographic of the workforce is another factor that has a bearing on the recruitment practices. As such, demographics are likely to inform how recruitment practices are designed and carried out as a response to the increasing diversity within labour markets. Therefore, the demographics of the current workforce in each firm may reveal and help understand how they impact recruitment decisions in the following chapters.

Table 6.3: Demographics of employees in each firm

Firms	**Employee Demographics**				
	Sex	**Race**	**Disabled/Abled**	**Youth/Adults**	**Part-Time Employees**
Ladies & Gents Clothing	More females than males	Blacks only	Abled only	Mostly youth	Yes
Health First store	60% males and 40% females	All races represented	Abled only	Youth and adults	Yes
Eat & Dine restaurant	60% females	Blacks only	Abled only	Mostly youth	Yes
Right Choice Supermarket	70% males and 30% females	All races represented	Abled and disabled	Mostly youth	Yes
General Bank	Roughly 50/50	Whites and blacks	Abled and disabled	Adults only	Yes
Maboneg Theme Park	Females and males	Mixed races	Abled only	Mostly youth	Yes
East Bank	Females and males	Blacks and whites only	Abled only	Mostly adults	Yes
Money Matters Accountancy	Both females and males	All races	Abled only	Mostly adults	Yes
Burger Club Restaurant	16 males and 14 females	Blacks only	Abled only	Youth and adults	Yes
Dynamite Clothing store	Mostly females than males	Blacks only	Abled only	Mostly youth, few adults	Yes
Chicken Corner restuarant	Mostly males	Blacks only	Abled only	Mostly youth	Yes
Stop & Shop supermarket	50/50	Blacks and whites	Abled only	Mostly youth	Yes

Exceptional Motors Corp	Mostly males	Mostly Indians but other races represented	Abled only	Mostly youth (graduates)	No
Egoli Distellery	60% males and 40 males	Blacks and whites	Abled and disabled	Mostly youth	Yes
More for Less supermarket	45 males and 20 males	Blacks, Indians and coloureds only	Abled only	Youth and adults	Yes
Super Fuel Garage	70 males and 30 females	Mostly blacks, few whites	Abled and disabled	Youth and adults	Yes
Fashion Statement clothing	Mostly males	Blacks only	Abled only	Mostly youth	Yes
Star Bank	More females than males	Blacks and few whites	Abled only	Adults only	No
Multi-Drinks Factory	More males than females	Blacks and whites	Abled and disabled	Youth andadults	Yes
AfriTrans	More males than females	Blacks and whites	Abled and few disabled	Youth and adults	No

Even though the respondents could not provide precise figures of the males and female employees in their firms respectively; they only provided estimations as illustrated in the first column of the table above. It can be observed that some firms had (at the time of the interviews) more females than males, and some had more males than females. Only five respondents reported that they have more or less the same number of both genders in their firms. According to the data gathered, the difference in the distribution of genders is based, among other things, on the nature of the job and the gender the sampled employers feel can do the job better. For instance, one of the employers from a retail firm that recruits more females than males stated: "...and there is more females than males, we find females attractive for some reason, and we really need good looking employees to sell the products and represent our store" (Ladies *&* *Gents Clothing Manager*, 2020). Conversely, another

employer from a manufacturing firm (*Exceptional Motors Corp Supervisor*, 2020) stated: "It's not a lot of females that you find that prefer working with cars, under oil and everything. So, to be honest, it's only males we employ…". However, a response that shows that some firms have a balance of both genders was provided by an employer from the retail sector:

> We actually have both females and males because males are the ones who do the hard job in the stock room, and they carry boxes. The females, I need them to be the cashiers. So, I can say we always try to have a good balance of both genders (*Dynamite Clothing Supervisor*, 2020).

It stands to reason from these responses that the nature of business and services rendered in each firm are consequential when it comes to the gender that is employed. This indicates that there are stereotypes that factor into the decision of employment and, as such, these have a bearing on the unemployed. Therefore, the distribution of employees by gender reveals that recruitment and selection is informed by these stereotypes to some degree. This point is revisited and explored in greater detail in the following chapters that deal specifically with the recruitment practices and how these practices are influenced by employers' dispositions (attitudes, perceptions and experiences) towards young jobseekers.

Another difference that is apparent from the table is that there is an uneven distribution of different races. Most firms had more blacks than other races, while some firms had black employees only. The uneven distribution of race depends on the fact that Johannesburg is close to the neighbouring townships such as Soweto—among other townships—which is home to many black people who often go to the CBD area to seek employment. While this reason does not mean that white people do not work in the CBD, it does help understand why the sampled firms had more blacks than whites and less Indians and coloureds. A response that seems to support this reasoning is the one provided by the *Exceptional Motors Corp Supervisor* (2020), who explained "We only have black people. We don't get white people coming to drop off their CVs and most of them are from just outside the CBD" (*Burger Club restaurant Manager*, 2020). An employer from the *Health First store Manager* (2020) shared the same sentiment:

> We don't have white people working for us. Actually, we have never had them. I don't remember having a white person working in this store. Most of our employees come from Soweto, which is not far from the CBD.

Furthermore, the table also demonstrates the difference between firms that have either abled or disabled employees. With only four of the 20 firms that had—at the time of interviews—both disabled and abled workers. It is important to note that the firms that have disabled workers are mostly the big firms. The fact that it is the large firms that have disabled workers may be explained by the idea that large firms usually often have (or can afford) infrastructure, equipments and facilities that not only make it possible to have a large number of employees; but, that also make it possible to accommodate disabled workers. Whereas small firms are usually just starting out in the labour market and would not yet afford the same (disability friendly) facilities that large firms can afford to install in their firms. An employer from one of the four firms that had disabled employees, stated:

> We are all the same, as you can work as a disabled person, it doesn't mean you don't have skills, you don't have anything to bring in the world. So, I think as a disabled person you are more welcome to work with us (*Money Matters Accountancy Manager*, 2020).

The rest of the firms only had able workers. These employers provided various reasons as to why they do not have any disbaled workers in their firms. Some explained that employing disabled people would have a financial impact on the firm, as it would be costly or highly demanding to employ such persons. One employer expressed:

> In our company we don't find it suitable to employ disabled people because, firstly, we work with people and some of the people are not understanding, they might offend the disabled person in other ways. And secondly, we are a small firm and do not have the equipment to accommodate the people with disability (*Dynamite Clothing Supervisor*, 2020).

Some employers expressed that they would love to recruit disabled workers but do not receive any job applications from disabled workers. For instance, *Burger Club restaurant Manager* (2020) stated: "Yes, we would love to hire disabled people, but we don't get their CVs; they don't come in and ask for jobs. Maybe they are scared to be judged for their disability, I don't know why, but they never come here." A similar response was obtained from *Health First Store Manager* (2020): "we don't have any disabled employees at the moment, but we are looking to hire them." These responses suggests that, although several

employers do not have disabled workers, they have valid reasons which will be discussed and analysed further in the following chapters.

6.4.3 Distribution of Workers by Age

The gap between adults and young workers, which is the key focus of this thesis, is another notable feature of Table 6.3. The table shows that most of the selected firms prefer to have young people as employees and some prefer adults only, while other firms have, almost, an even distribution or mix of both age groups. Though most employers did not provide exact numbers, they did provide estimates that paint a picture of their employees based on the key demographics. Only 11 firms reported that most of their stuff is constituted by young people, while only five firms reported that they have both adults and young people. Only four firms disclosed that they only have adult employees; referring to employees that do not fall under the youth categories (15-24 and 25-35).

While Table 6.3 shows that no firm has only young recruits (15-24 category), two firms from the financial sector (*General Bank* and *Star Bank*) out of 20 firms only had adult employees. Interviewees from these two firms submitted that they prefer not to employ young people at all. For example, the *General Bank Manager* (2020) noted:

> We only hire adults with considerable working experience. I mean we've had situations whereby we'd hire young people who don't have experiencee and the outcomes are bad. That is really because much of our work requires certain workplace experience and skills. So, you must have many years of experience to be considered and young people usually do not have experience.

Table 6.3 shows that the minority (nine out of 20) of the firms have more young employees than adult employees. These employers reported that they believe the youth have what it takes to carry out the service rendered by the nine firms. Most firms that have more young employees than adult employees are from the retail sector. Additionally, as Table 6.3 demonstrates, there are some employers who have a, roughly, even distribution of young and adult employees, as per the estimations they provided. Therefore, knowing the current distribution of employees by age as well as other demographics paints a picture of the employment intake of the selected firms. While these distributions may be explained by a lot of economic and labour market factors. They will also help understand if and how these demographics factor into the decision to employ jobseekers, especially young jobseekers.

6.4.4 Workers in Non-Standard Employment

Reviewed studies show that many employers have shifted to 'flexible' staffing solutions as a cost-effective way of recruitment (see Gramm & Schnell, 2001; Houseman, 2001; Kalleberg, 2003; Brett, 2007; Burin, 2010). The literarure also points that young people are the most represented in non-standard employment, among other social groups (i.e., women, Africans,). Thefore, in trying to understand whether employers' R&S practices (which has to do with who gets employed and for what position) are accommodative of young people; it is also crucial to investigate if the sampled employers offer non-standard employment in their firms. More importantly whether the firms accommodate young people for these kinds of jobs. Table 6.3 shows whether each firm has non-standard workers with either Yes/No. The reasons for the employment of non-standard employees or lack thereof, will be explored in detail in chapter nine. This section only reports on the distribution of such employees.

Indeed, as illustrated in Table 6.3, almost all sampled firms have non-standard employees, which comprises of temporary, part-time, casual, contract employment among others. Only three firms do not have non-standard workers and the remaining 17 firms have such of employees. According to the data, workers who work non-standard jobs are usually cashiers, cleaners, and waiters. This sentiment was shared by a majority of the 17 firms. They expressed that the non-standard positions are offered as entry level jobs. The *Chicken Corner* Manager stated: "We have seven [employees] in the kitchen, two cashiers and the rest are just waiters and waitresses. These are all entry level jobs that do not necessarily require a qualification." The *Dynamite Clothing Supervisor* (2020), explained why they employ part-time employees: "Yes, I have part time workers. Those are the workers that come mostly on holidays and December time." However, other non-standard jobs from other firms were a result of internships programmes as explicated by *the Money Matters Accountancy Manager* (2020):

> We have many casual workers because we have different programmes that we offer, it includes internships, scholarships. So, we regard those as our part-time employees because they work part-time.

As Table 6.3 depicts, a majority of firms have non-standard employees. In fact, only three of the 20 firms did not have any non-standard workers. This evidence supports the literature that acknowledges that there is a tendency of employers to employ people for non-standard

employment (Kalleberg, 2003; Houseman, 2011; Beukes, 2017). This could be imputed to the scarcity of employment in general and full-time employment specifically, among other reasons.

6.4.5 Current Vacancies

Another question that is of particular interest to the subject of recruitment, and is thus instrumental to answering the research question, is whether there was a gap in personnel and whether firms have any vacancies available to be filled. Investigating whether there are any current vacancies that need to be filled is necessary because only when there is a vacant position or a job opening can there be a need to recruit. Only four out of 20 firms, and three of the four retail firms maintained that there were some job vacancies that needed to be filled. For instance, the *More for Less Supermarket Supervisor* (2020), noted that the firm has vacant jobs and explained why they were not yet filled:

> Well, we need more cashiers. Yes, we have vacant jobs. But they have not been filled because we have been having theft trouble in our stores–so, that's the reason they remain unfilled because it is hard to find trustworthy people.

The rest of the (16) firms, nine of which are retail firms expressed that they did not have any vacant positions and had no need to recruit—at least at the time of the study interviews. As a follow-up question, respondents were asked to provide reasons for the lack of vacancies. Only 15 of the 16 respondents that are also referred to above emphasised that the lack of vacancies was exclusively due to no demand (which also means that there is no need for more personnel in the firm) because all positions were occupied in the firms. Another question that relates to the composition of the participating firms, and has a bearing on the subject of recruitment is whether any of the participating firms have recruited in the last five to 10 years. Even though the majority of firms did not have any current vacant positions at the time of interviews, the data reveal that all 20 firms had recruited in the recent past five to 10 years. Some of the positions that they recruited for were entry-level or part-time positions. This further affirms the inclination of employers' to recruit for non-standard employment. Chapter nine explores these issues in more detail as it outlines and discusses the general recruitment practices of the sampled firms.

6.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided the descriptive data that serves as the foundation for the data analysis chapters to follow. To this end, the chapter introduced the respondents of the study and outlined the key contexts of their firms, occupations and daily duties. It also presented the key information about the firms that paint a picture of the current recruited personnel. This chapter also showed that though there are similarities amongst different firms and the different sectors/industries they fall under; there are also considerable differences that would impact the different operations of businesses, and thus have a bearing on the recruitment and selection which will be discussed in chapter nine. All this information is essential not only to understanding the background that qualifies the respondents as key informants for this study, but also of the firms in which they are employed and provide information about.

The information that has been presented in this chapter will help us understand how employers design their recruitment practices in the context described above. Therefore, the analysis of the data that was collected is divided into three chapters: (i) the next chapter explores the dispositions (perceptions, attitudes, and experiences) of employers where it concerns young people. (ii) Chapter eight explores the employers' perceived role of the government and whether they (sampled employers) know and participate in government strategies created to tackle youth unemployment. (iii) Chapter nine explores the R&S strategies and practices employed in the selected firms, and investigates how the dispositions of employers presented in chapters seven and eight influence and/or shape the design and practice of the recruitment strategies and how this implicates the young jobseekers.

CHAPTER SEVEN

EMPLOYERS' PERCEPTIONS, ATTITUDES, AND EXPERIENCES CONCERNING THE EMPLOYMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Having provided the background information on the selected firms and their participating respondents—which gives us a sense of their eligibility to provide the data needed to answer the main research question of the thesis—this chapter commences the analysis of the data collected from the respondents that have been introduced in the previous chapter. Particularly, this chapter entails the analysis of the perceptions, attitudes and experiences (which will, for ease of reference, be collectively referred to as dispositions throughout the rest of the following chapters) of the participating respondents. Chapter nine will then explore the R&S strategies and practices of the selected firms in relation to the dispositions explored in this chapter. This current chapter (chapter seven), however, is integral as it helps first to reveal the dispositions of the sampled employers (towards young people) that may well inform or influence how employers design and practice their R&S strategies where it concerns young people. Secondly, this chapter can also reveal the ways in which these dispositions influence the inclusivity or accommodation of young people in the strategies and practice of R&S activities. In essence, understanding the dispositions employers have towards young people will help understand how they play a part in influencing their decision to include young people in their R&S strategies.

The reader is reminded once again that the thesis adopts LMS theories, as the theoretical framework of this thesis, to analyse the data gleaned from the respondents. This LMS theories are an alternative to the orthodox theories (Neoclassical theory and Human Capital theory), and will only be mentioned in comparison were necessary. This election of the LMS theories is based on the argument by Fleetwood (2006; 2016) and other socio-economic theorists (i.e., Cassim, 1982; Kraak, 1996; Leonatiridi, 2008) who argue that while there are two broad theorisations of the labour market, LMS theories (as one of the heterodox approaches) provide a better explanatory account. This is because the LMS theories generate greater insight into the issues of the labour market including but not limited to unemployment, poverty and discrimination (Cassim, 1989; Kraak, 1995; Peck, 1996; Leonataridi, 1998,

Robert, 2007; White, 2010). Chapter three concisely illustrates how LMS theories apply to the South African labour market, which is another reason why LMS theories are espoused in this thesis to analyse the data concerning un/employment (as a trend of the South African labour market). Inversely, the orthodox model, though it is one of the two broad approaches, fails to provide a comprehensive account of the labour market as it focuses mostly on the supply-side and pays little to no attention to the demand-side (Cassim, 1989; Kraak, 1995; Peck, 1996; Leonataridi, 1998, Fleetwood, 2006; White, 2010). Rubery (2007: 955), echoes the sentiments that suggests orthodox models (mainstream economics) are exclusive of the demand-side factors, he argues:

> The attraction of segmentation theory [also known as the LMS theories] is that it focuses on employing organisations, the architects of the employment system, in the shaping of labour market inequalities….The obscuring of the active role of employers in shaping employment outcomes is perhaps one of the main legacies of mainstream economics.

It is for this reason that the thesis elects the LMS theories which advocates for a focus on both the supply and demand side in tandem, as factors that determine employment and wage, among other issues of the labour market. The LMS approach enables the investigation and the understanding of the demand-side (role of employers) as one of the crucial roles in the labour market—and especially regarding the issue of youth unemployment. Therefore, this chapter will analyse and discuss the collected data in relation to the literature review and the theoretical framework, which serves as the lens of the thesis. When these concepts are considered together, a more comprehensive understanding of how demand-side factors contribute to youth unemployment is furnished, which ultimately answers the main research question. Indeed, several issues ensued from the data gathered, and these will be presented into themes in this chapter. In particular, the discussion below will explore the dispositions of employers by first presenting the role of employers—this discussion also provides the basis for why it is necessary to study employers' dispositions and their recruitment practices.

The chapter also explores the perceptions of employers concerning the employment of young people. The chapter also looks at employers' perceptions about youth unemployment as it is important to understand if employers know the crisis that youth unemployment has become. This collective analysis is integral to this thesis because it integrates the reviewed literature with the data of the respondents that emerged from the interviews as well as the theoretical

framework of this study. From this, an answer to the central research question is formed and the thesis will potentially contribute to the growing literature concerning employers' role in the issue of youth unemployment, especially how their R&S practices affect young people.

7.2 THE ROLE OF EMPLOYERS IN EMPLOYING JOBSEEKERS

It is worth noting, as a point of departure, that the thesis is cognisant of the fact that there are many factors that lead both to the employment or unemployment of people in general. This is evidenced by the many studies that have since explored the determinants of the crisis of unemployment, and the employment of certain groups (i.e., graduates). However, these studies have predominantly been conducted from the supply-side, and very little has been explored concerning demand-side factors (see Devin & Hogarth, 2004; Danson & Gilmore, 2009; Ingold & Stuart, 2015; Fynn, Mader & Oosterom, 2017; Ingold & Valizade, 2017; De Lannoy, 2018). For this reason, the thesis in line of LMS theories makes a case for an inquiry into the demand-side factors, particularly the role of employers. Especially given that the demand side has been under-theorised in ccomparison to the supply-side factors. Certainly, there is considerable consensus that demand-side aspects are under-explored (Danson & Gilmore, 2009; Ingold & Stuart, 2015; Fynn, Mader & Oosterom, 2017; Ingold & Valizade, 2017; De Lannoy, 2018). For instance, Danson and Gilmore (2009:993), among other scholars, argue that "there has been a plethora of initiatives to improve the progression of those facing barriers to the labour market, but the role of employers can be considered as relatively neglected." Again, it should be emphasised that this argument is only made in contrast to the supply-side; it does not mean that there have never been any studies that have been conducted to explore demand-side side factors. Rather, it should be understood that, when compared to the supply-side studies that explore unemployment factors, the demand-side studies have been relatively meagre. It is for this reason, then, that this thesis set out to explore the role of employers, where it concerns the recruitment/employment of young people.

While it will be shown in the following chapters just how crucial the role of employers is, it is safe to maintain that data from the previous chapters not only already indicates that employers have a role in the labour market, but it also reveals—in confirmation with the literature and the LMS theories—how particularly important this role is. Indeed, employers are not only economic actors in the labour market, but they have the upper-hand in the labour market, especially in the employment system (Rubery, 2007). This chapter explores and

analyses the role of employers by unpacking some of the factors that influence their decision/s to recruit or not recruit—where it concerns the youth. The chief aim of this theme (which will permeate the following themes) is to develop further the understanding of the demand-side of the labour market, and ultimately show how this role affects the employment of jobseekers in general, and particularly the youth (Devin & Hogarth, 2004:248). As a consequence, this chapter first argues that in order to understand better the recruitment of jobseekers (or lack thereof) or job creation. There must be an inquiry in the demand-side (since the supply-side inquiries are already abundant), so as to understand the factors that both motivate or dissuade employers from recruiting (or considering recruiting) young jobseekers. In turn this investigation will reveal the demand-side factors that impact the employment outcomes of young people. This is what the thesis seeks to achieve.

Sure enough, the findings of this study all point to the fact that employers do play a very crucial role. These results are also consistent with the fact that both the broad theories of the labor market, discussed in chapter two, recognise the critical role of the demand-side in the labour market. Even though both theories provide different accounts about, and place conflicting importance on, the employers' role in the labnour market. Both theories acknowledge that what makes the role of the demand-side critical is that unlike the supply-side (made up by employees, jobseekers), employers (who make up the demand-side) own/manage the means of production, and thus create the very processes (recruitment process) that grant suitable candidates access into the labour market. The very inherent exchange between employer and worker is initiated by the employer. Without employers demanding and being willing to recruit certain labour (human capital), there cannot be an interaction between employer and worker—which then translates into either employment or unemployment. This reasoning does not downplay the critical role of employees or jobseekers, as without them employers would have no one to employ. Rather, it serves to indicate that employers have the upper hand because they are the ones who have to offer employment in order for jobseekers to be employed.

This alone warrants an inquiry into the role that employers play in the employment of people to find out and understand the factors (concerning this role) that encourage or impede on employment of certain groups. While the role of employers can be studied to understand many aspects of the labour market (i.e., wage determination, among other things), the thesis is interested in this role concerning, particularly, the employment of young people. Therefore, in exploring this role—with respect to the employment of the youth or lack thereof—the data

presented in chapter six is the first evidence that proves how significant the part of employers is in the employment system (and the labour market in general). The background information, presented in chapter six, of the employers and the firms they represent shows that the sampled firms have employees that are employed—for the sole purpose of making sure that the firms are able to offer and render the services that will not only generate profit for the firms, but also enable the employees to be paid. This evidence indicates that though the firms exist to make a profit ultimately, without these firms, there would not be any employees that are already employed in the sampled firms. Therefore, for anybody to be employed, there has to be an organisation they can work for, and they should, ultimately, be an employer who creates this kind of employment.

In addition, chapter six reveals the importance of the employers' role as it shows how the different daily duties of employers have a bearing on how the respective firms are run; and how their individual duties require for them to conduct recruitment practices whenever needed. Therefore, both the existence of the firms represented in this study and the duties that the respondents themselves execute daily is a clear sign of the big role they play in the labour market. The gravity of this role warrants a research inquiry that will investigate how employers arrive at their employment decisions and how these decisions impact young people. Fernández-Huerga (2019:39), also recognises that "most of those decisions [employment decisions] are adopted in organisational environments, particularly in firms." This line of reasoning allows the analysis of the internal configuration of the recruitment strategies—and the ways in which (employment) decisions are arrived at within the sampled firms—to take on a central role in this thesis. Indeed, another evidence that further prove the integral role of employers in the un/employment of young people is contained in chapters seven, eight, and nine; these chapters confirm that all sampled employers have recruitment strategies that they adopt for the purposes of facilitating employment. Therefore, in designing these R&S practices, employers get to exercise their discretion that can affect people differently. The recruitent strategies themselves are designed to select the cream of the crop, which inevitably leaves others unemployed. This is another reason why these practices need to be studied and understood because they—among other determinants—have a big potential of impacting jobseekers. LMS theories asserts that matters of the labour market and employment have a lot to do with the role of the demand-side, as it does the supply-side and the state (Wilkinson, 1983; Kraak, 1996). Unlike the neoclassical theory, the LMS theory acknowledges the vital role of the demand-side, which is primarily made up of employers.

Overall, employers play a huge role in the creation of jobs. Although there are other factors (both macro and micro factors) that affect job creation, this should not keep us from wanting to understand the role of employers, and how it respectively affects job creation or contributes to youth un/employment. Even when government creates legislation to regulate employment terms and practices, employers still exercise their agency; they have the final say. This alone indicates unequivocally just how important the role of the employers is, and thus deserving of being investigated for the purposes of being better understood. While it should be mentioned that jobseekers have to work on their employability to be attractive to employers, employers too have a key role to play in making job opportunities available, and in recruiting and retaining people who are looking for employment. This is the notion of the LMS theory which maintains that both the demand and supply side have roles to play, and since there is an abundance of research exploring the supply side, equally important and necessary are comprehensive studies that will elucidate the role of employers and how it impacts jobseekers.

As presented above, the importance of the role of employers goes without saying, therefore, the purpose of this section is not to question whether the role of employers concerning the recruitment of jobseekers is important or not—that is a given. Rather the essence of this section/theme is to argue that such an integral role merits an inquiry into the demand-side that this thesis set out to conduct. The underlying argument of the thesis, for such an enquiry, is that the paucity of the demand-side inquiries is a disservice to the body of literature that exists to create an awareness, and help understand the unemployment crisis with the ultimate aim of abating the crisis. It can even be further asserted that the paucity of demand-side related studies may not only be one of the reasons why there has not only been little demand-side strategies to curb unemployment as depicted in chapter two. But it may also be one of the reasons why it has been so hard to come up with overarching, sustainable solutions that address the unemployment in all its dimensions. After all, how can there be comprehensive solutions when the reasearch inquiries (concerning unemployment) have been one-sided (looking predominatly on supply side factors). In fact, some scholars maintain that most unemployment interventions have been supply-side oriented simply because most research studies have also focused on supply-side factors of unemployment (De Lannoy et al., 2018).

As such, any analysis of the labour market—especially the unemployment trend and any solution designed to address this trend—should not exclude or overlook the demand side from the equation. Such an important role of employers, as is self-evident, must be

extensively explored to reveal whatever factors that can help to, not only understand unemployment better, but help solve it better. This is why this study focuses solely on the demand-side. This demand-side inquiry is especially necessary given that this inherent role of employers to create jobs makes them key players, among other stakeholders, in addessing unemployment. The idea that employers are key players is posited by the governments across the globe (see World Bank, 2009), and also articulated well by Cominetti, Sissons and Jone (2013). The latter authors argue that employers have a fundamental contribution to make in tackling youth unemployment. This is tied to the fact that employers provide the job opportunities which enable young people to enter the labour market, and they can also engage with young people in other ways to help them prepare for work. They further argue that, the difficulty of young people to transition into the labour market raises important questions about the relationship between employers and young people (Cominetti, Sissons & Jone:27).

Seeing how integral the role of employers is, one of the questions this thesis asks is: how precisely does the role of employers play out in the employment outcomes of young jobseekers? The thesis answers this question in two ways: firstly, by exploring the employers' dispositions towards young jobseekers and towards the government's strategies designed to abate youth unemployment. Dispositions about young people are discussed in this current chapter, whereas dispositions about government strategies are discussed in the following chapter. Secondly, by investigating the ways in which these dispositions influence the employers' decisions to accommodate young jobseekers in their recruitment considerations. In exploring employers' dispositions concerning the employment of young people, the following themes (and sub-themes) will look particularly at employers' views about unemployment (perceived causes and solutions); perceptions about youth employment. This discussion will help us understand what the sampled employers think of young people in general and about their employability. Ultimately these results will reveal the ways in which these dispositions affect the employment outcomes of young people.

7.3 EMPLOYERS' PERCEPTIONS OF UNEMPLOYMENT

This section explores the respondents' perceptions about youth unemployment. Owing to the severity of the global crisis of youth unemployment (and in trying to understand the role of employers and the demand-side factors concerning youth unemployment), it is also necessary to understand employers' views about youth unemployment and what they think causes youth unemployment, as well as what they perceive to be the suitable solutions. To this end, this

section analyses the collected data and presents it in five key themes that are all integral to understanding the employers' perception of youth unemployment. Particularly, the following sub-sections explore: (i) employers' understanding of unemployment, (ii) employers' views about the causes of unemployment. (iii) Employers' views about the 'solutions' of unemployment, (iv) and lastly, the theme looks at employers' views on whether young people seek employment from the sampled firms. All these themes helped understand how employers' outlook of unemployment (and the causes of it thereof) factor into how they perceive young people. And ultimately how these views factor in their decisions to accommodate young people in their recruitment strategies.

7.3.1 Employers' Understanding of Unemployment

The persistently high youth unemployment rate has long been one of the most pressing socio-economic problems in South Africa. In line with global trends, youth unemployment is a crisis in South Africa, and it is reported to be three times more than overall unemployment (StatsSA, 2020). As has been encapsulated in chapter two, there are a plethora of studies on the subject of unemployment. Some of these studies account for the general unemployment, which includes all members of the population, as also captured in Labour Force Survey reports. Some studies focus on graduate unemployment, and all the while a growing body of research casts focus on youth unemployment. Almost all the research that focuses on unemployment concurs that youth unemployment is worse off than unemployment among the other two cohorts(general/adults and graduates); as also distinguished in the StatsSA reports. In fact, StatsSA corroborates this view by demonstrating, with figures, that young people are the most vulnerable to unemployment, and that graduate unemployment is not as bad as it is for the youths in the NEETs category.

Furthermore, some authors, such as Pauw et al. (2008), Banerjee et al. (2008), and Burger and Fintel (2009:1), maintain that the issue of unemployment is, as it should, a concern to policy makers and labour market participants and hopefuls. Comparably, data from the sampled firms also reveal that employers are also reasonably concerned about the problem of unemployment. The first thing that data points to is that all 20 respondents had some thoughts about the unemployment situation in the country—though not always explicitly expressed. It was also apparent that they are not only aware of the problem, but are also concerned about the effects of the long-standing unemployment in South Africa. Although employers did not give exhaustive lists of what they perceived as the determinants of unemployment, and they

were not expected to; it is essential to note at this point that, in congruence with the literature reviewed, each employer saw the unemployment issue as a real and substantial problem in South Africa. In fact, a considerable number of employers (17/20) gave emotive responses when asked about their views about youth unemployment. The data is suggestive that the respondents think of unemployment as an unfortunate situation that cannot be necessarily imputed to the youth themselves.

The *Maboneng Theme Park Manager* (2020), referred to the incident of unemployment in South Africa as: "a disease; it's a bad thing, it has caused all sorts of social ills." The *Eat & Dine Manager* (2020), also stated: "It's scary because it's [unemployment] affecting our economy very badly, that's why we are trying to help the youth, to empower them and give them the jobs so that they can make a living." Another response that was filled with empathy for (unemployed) young people was provided by the *East Bank Manager* (2020), from the finance sector, as she stated: "To be honest its not fair, young people need jobs too, it seems like they are being robbed of the opportunity to make a living for themselves, it's just not right." These sentiments were echoed by the *Multi-Drinks Factory* Manager (2020), from the manufacturing sector, who stressed that it was not necessarily the youths' own choice to be unemployed, while also highlighting the fact that young people are not employed because they often lack the skills. The *Manager* explained:

> It's unfortunate that not everyone can be hired by some companies, because usually, it's not their [youths'] choice. Mostly, it's bcause the country has uneducated youths, we all know that you need like a matric to get a job. I think we have many young people that have only grade 9/10, which is unfortunate because they can't get a job because they don't have the needed tools like a degree or certificate to get a decent job.

Considering the two dominant theories of the labour market and the two distinct conclusions they each come to concerning unemployment. It can be argued that these above-stated views (which were also shared among the respondents across all four participating sectors) not only indicate that the sampled employers have a general sense of the severity of unemployment—which is inevitable given that unemployment is the most talked-about socio-economic trend, so much that one only needs to listen to the news to be informed about the phenomenon. But, these very responses also refute some assertions made by the neoclassical theory which claims that unemployed people do not have jobs because they have chosen leisure over

participating in the labour market (Fleetwood, 2006; Biddle & Holden, 2014; Tan, 2014; Tittenbrun, 2017). As pointed out in chapter two, the neoclassical theory believes that unemployment is voluntary. This means that every person has a choice between investing in themselves by developing human capital, failing which it suggests that they (unemployed people) have chosen leisure over having to work (or participating in the labour market). Conversely, much like the LMS theorists, the responses described above suggest that unemployment is a problem that is beyond the control of the people who find themselves unemployed.

Unlike the neoclassical theory, that analyses the labour market (and un/employment) on the basis of the interaction between supply and demand—this also explains why they (neoclassical theorists) would explain unemployment as a result of lack of supply or demand (a phenomenon they deem to be voluntary). The LMS theories also acknowledge the law of supply and demand, but conversely, they also profoundly take into consideration the exogenous factors that are outside the interaction between supply and demand that well impede on many peoples' ability to develop their human capital and acquire employment even if they so wish. Therefore, being agreeable to LMS theories, most of the sampled employers' views show that they understand that while unemployment is widespread and on a perpetual rise; it cannot entirely be attributed to the jobseekers themselves as the neoclassical theory would suggest. Instead, other factors should be considered when explaining unemployment.

In fact, there are specific sampled employers who expressed that they understand that unemployment is alarmingly high, and is at a crisis level. For instance, the *Ladies & Gents Manager* (2020) said: "I know that it [unemployment] is very high, looking at the government, our government is operating on a depression mode caused by a mismanagement of tax payers' money and corruption, so it becomes difficult for more jobs to be created and for young people to be employed." The *Maboneng Theme Park Manager* (2020), shared the same view and submitted:

> My thought about youth unemployment is that the rate is way too high. It's incredibly high in my opinion because nobody is willing to give young people jobs. I believe young people are eager to learn, and if you have these people with so much potential sitting at home looking for jobs, and you still have a 70-year-old man doing his work

there at his own pace because of his age, I don't think that's beneficial to the company that's looking to grow.

Correspondingly, the claim that unemployment is a global crisis is extensively documented by world organisations such as, to mention a few, the ILO, UN, World Bank; and it is widely talked about on mainstream television, daily newspapers. Moreover, it is mentioned in Presidents' speeches and treated as a top priority by policymakers, and is even backed up by scientific and academic research/literature (as pointed out in chapters two and three). Certainly, it has been well established that unemployment is not only a socio-economic phenomenon, but also a world's crisis. Its longstanding nature only proves just how complicated the phenomenon of unemployment really is. The literature discussed in chapter two (which is a compilation of the sources mentioned above, amongst others), as well as the implied explanations of unemployment advanced by the two abovementioned labour market theories, also point to the fact that unemployment is not a clear-cut situation. But, it is instead a complex and perennial phenomenon that persists for the same reason that it cannot be cracked or solved overnight. Even decades-long strategies have not succeeded in so much as halving the unemployment rates. In fact, due to various factors, unemployment continues to soar, even more so among young people.

Indeed, owing to the abundant and widespread data concerning unemployment, it would be natural for the sampled employers to know of the issue of unemployment, not necessarily because they are directly affected by it, even though that may be one of the reasons. But mostly because unemployment, as a global crisis, is the most talked-about phenomenon worldwide, with updates on the ever-increasing rate of unemployment being reported every so often. How could one possibly not be informed about the significant problems that it poses in society? It is also for this reason that there can never be too many studies that are conducted to understand better the stubborn incident of unemployment. The perpetuity of unemployment warrants more studies, even though there already exists a wealth of literature on unemployment. In fact, contemporary studies do not argue whether or not unemployment is a grave problem in many societies. But, being well informed of how serious the unemployment problem is, they seek to find ways to better understand the determinants and effects of the phenomenon to better tackle it.

Furthermore, just like an overwhelming body of literature has created awareness about the effects of unemployment—maintaining that in addition to the unfortunate impact of

unemployment on jobseekers, people who suffer unemployment also suffer other socio-economic effects as a result of unemployment (see Wanberg, 1995; Winefield 2002; Mussia, 2007; Azeng & Yogo, 2013; Uddin, 2013; ILO, 2015; Makaringe, 2018). Indeed, unemployment has become a major problem that affects our life, health, economy and community (see Mroz & Savage, 2006; Paul & Moser, 2009; Mzizi, 2017; Makaringe, 2018). Similarly, and in addition to being aware of the global crisis that unemployment continues to be, some sampled employers also recognise that the problem of unemployment engenders other socio-economic problems. The *Money Matters Manager* (2020) stated: *"*youth unemployment, I would say, it brings a lot of crimes and more poverty, people are suffering because of unemployment." This view was shared by the *Health First store Manager* (2020), who stated: "It's [unemployment] too much, we have a lot of young people who are not working and they end up being in the street, using drugs as a way to deal with their inability to find employment." Similar responses are as follows:

> My thought is that young people when they are unemployed, they end up doing wrong things, some of them hang around by the corners, they smoke, they trouble their families, and communities. Things get out of hand, so we need to find them jobs and make sure they are well taken of. (*Dynamite Clothing store Supervisor*, 2020)

> It's [unemployment is] bad because, like for example, in one house, five people are unemployed. The mother is also not employed, so it affects them. It gives the impression that there's nothing for them [young people] in the streets, so I'd rather go and steal to make a living. (*Egoli Distillery Manager*, 2020)

Again, all these varied responses, indicate that there is reasonable awareness amongst employers about not only the crisis that youth unemployment is. But also the scarring economic, social, and health related effect of this incidence; even though social effects were the most cited by the respondents. This view that employers have may be explained by the fact that most of the unemployed young people resort to, just to name a few, substance abuse, idleness, or to make a living in other ways that can be criminal. In fact, crime has become a crisis in its own right and is often attributed to unemployment. A study by Tshabalala (2014), which mirrors the findings of other studies on the same subject (see for example Roux, Dissel, 1993, Glasser, 2000; and for a more recent study see Azeng & Yogo, 2013), finds that unemployment is considered to be the root cause of many problems South Africa is facing today such as crime, poverty and suicide. In particular, the results of the study conducted by

Tshabalala (2014), showed that the level of education is responsible for the high rate of unemployment and bears a direct relationship with the high rate of crime. Hence, it can be posited that the sampled employers may well be sharing their views from both their perceptions and experiences about the crisis of unemployment and the concurrent effects of it. For instance, one employer clearly expressed that:

> This situation of unemployment is sad because it leads to crime. Every day you see young people in groups around the [street] corners, and that is because they do not have jobs. Unemployment has made them resort to hanging around on street corners and robbing people or selling drugs. I know some of them do not do criminal activities, they are just street vendors. But I don't think they would be out in the streets as well if they had jobs that allowed them to make a decent living. It is deplorable. (*Maboneng Theme Park Manage*r, 2020)

Furthermore, it can be inferred that the sampled employers gave emotive responses when asked about what they think of unemployment. This evidence not only suggests that they are aware and may also be concerned by unemployment—as everyone should be due to the adverse multi-causal effects of unemployment. But the evidence here also offsets the anecdotal belief or perception that employers are indifferent about the unemployment situation, as some people may assume. Instead, the responses indicate that the sampled employers' do have reasonable concern about the issue of unemployment among the youth. Employers may not always be able to create jobs for the many jobseekers for various reasons—one such reason is that employers are profit-driven and would create jobs only if it means they can generate more profit. However, the evidence at least denotes that employers are aware and concerned. It can be argued that these concerns reflected in the employers' responses, considered together with the additional adverse effects that come as a result of unemployment, make job creation not only one of the primary solutions to unemployment, but also makes it an urgent matter. Employment will not only provide young job-seekers with an opportunity to make a decent living, but young people will also escape being victim of socio-economic ills, which they fall into as they look for alternative (and often criminal ways) to eke out a living. It is rather unfortunate that although job creation has been deemed and hailed as one of the main solutions for unemployment (World Bank 2009; ILO, 2016; NDP, 2011), it has, instead, proved to be a very difficult feat as many remain unemployed. In fact, the rate keeps on rising.

These results underscore the findings of a vast body of academic research, which highlights that youth unemployment means that young people—by being and remaining unemployed—are not receiving the skills and experience that are required to drive the economy forward. According to National Treasury (2011: 5), the high youth unemployment rate inhibits the country's economic development and significantly burdens the state to provide social assistance. In view of this, it stands to reason that when young people are not employed, both the youthd and the economy run a loss. The opposite is also true that when the youths are actually employed; the opportunity to participate in the labour market not only benefits the youth but the economy as well. It is for this reason, that there can never be enough research or studies on the issue of unemployment for as long as it keeps persisting. Every study contributes to a better understanding of the trend of unemployment and informs policymakers to better strategise the approaches that can curb the issue. The National Development Plan also warns that the country [South Africa] must 'find ways to reduce alarming levels of youth unemployment and to provide young people with broader opportunities...failure to act will threaten democratic gains' (National Commission Planning Commission 2012:16). Therefore, the perceptions that the respondents have about unemployment and it's effects further prove that the need for youth employment is a matter of urgency. While a minority of the sampled employers stated that they do not consider employing the youth at all, as will be elucidated further below, the data reveals that most employers recognise that youth employment should be treated as a pressing issue. This point is addressed further in section 7.3.4. Until then, the following section explores the respondents' awareness and understanding of the social groups that are most vulnerable to unemployment.

7.3.2 Youth: The Most Vulnerable to Unemployment

An interest to focus on young people—even though many people are affected by unemployment—was piqued by the gravity of "youth unemployment" globally and in South Africa specifically. Almost all the literature on unemployment and documents on world organisations (ILO, UN, and the World Bank, to mention a few) tend to distinguish between general, graduate, and youth unemployment (among other groups), and thus recognise that unemployment is mostly acute amongst the youth. Though the general and youth unemployment are not mutually exclusive as they share similar determinants for the most part (i.e., lack of education and experience, low absorption rate). There is considerable consensus that young people are the hardest hit by the incident of unemployment. StatsSA's reports echo and prove these sentiments to be accurate as it shows, quarterly, that young people,

especially those who fall within the NEETs cohort, are the most vulnerable to unemployment (see chapter three for the South African statistics). Additionally, President Ramaphosa often stated in his speeches, which he has delivered since he took the presidential office in 2019, that youth unemployment receives greater attention in policymaking and is prioritised as the first issue to be confronted by the government. In the 2020 SONA speech, President Ramaphosa dedicated a large portion of his speech addressing the issue of youth unemployment and promising to change the situation, with joint effort from other stakeholders (i.e., businesses). Among the many issues he mentioned he made it clear that youth unemployment is the biggest problem the country faces and stated: "We are going to give young people of our country great opportunities so that they can participate in the economy" (SONA, 2020; South African Government, 2020).

Considering the attention given to youth unemployment together with the attempt to explore the perceptions of the sampled employers concerning unemployment, it was just as important for the thesis to explore whether the sampled employers are aware that young people are the ones who are most vulnerable to unemployment. This goes without overlooking the fact that unemployment is a crisis in general, but rather to highlight that young people suffer the most. The awareness that young people are the most vulnerable to unemployment may not in itself abate youth unemployment, but it may go some way in encouraging employers to accommodate the young people in their recruitment considerations. Or may encourage them to, at least take part, in initiatives that work towards empowering young jobseekers or young people in general. Therefore, this section/theme was asked as a follow-up question to the section that has been discussed above. Over and above, the study finds that the responses of the sampled employers are consistent with most of the literature that recognises that young people are the most vulnerable to unemployment compared to adults and graduates, among other social groups.

Indeed, data for this sub-section reveal that not only are employers aware of the crisis of unemployment, but they are also aware that the youth suffer the incident of unemployment more than other population groups. In fact, there was a unanimous agreement that young people are the ones who are likely to be unemployed; even though some firms expressed in addition that people from rural areas and the disabled are also among the most affected. The *General Bank Manager* (2020) stated: "unemployment mostly affects the youth and disabled people." The *Money Matters Accountancy Manager* (2020), also identified a few other groups, in addition, saying: "mostly people who are in rural areas, informal settlement." The

AfriTrans Manager (2020), provided a view that shows that he recognises that graduates are also very much affected by the incident of unemployment. He stated: "It would probably be the youth that graduated from school but are just sitting at home because they cannot find any job." This view is also supported by literature and StatsSA reports, as they recognise that graduates are also impacted by unemployment, though they are better off in comparison to the NEETs youths (Altbeker & Storme, 2013; Van Broekhuizen, 2013; StatsSA, 2018).

While the study is solely focused on the youth, it is interesting that employers referred to the people from rural areas as well. This may indicate that the employers are quite knowledgeable about the issue of unemployment and just as aware of the people who are most affected by unemployment. This again may be explained by the fact that unemployment is the most talked-about phenomenon, and the details around it are covered in national and local news and newspaper outlets. The views (that recognise disabled people and those living in rural areas as also being hardest hit by unemployment) are compatible with most of the literature that also acknowledges disabled and people from rural areas as other groups who are severely affected given their unique circumstances (Standing et al., 1999; Yu, 2012; Mathebula, 2013; Uddin, 2013; ILO, 2017). The data analysed in the subsequent sections will show how employers' decisions concerning their recruitment strategies also affect people with disability conditions. This is also true for people in rural areas who do not have access to numerous things (i.e., transport, internet, facilities) that could otherwise afford them the same opportunities (of accessing the labour market) that people in urban areas have. For instance, the very fact that all sampled employers are in central Johannesburg, which is an urban area, means that people from the rural areas have certain barriers (i.e., distance, access to the internet) that already inhibit them from entering the labour market.

As also discovered by Mlatsheni & Rospabe (2002), and Graham & De Lannoy (2016), who maintain that geographic location sometimes poses as a barrier to youth employment, with those living outside the major metropolitan areas having to spend more time and money looking for work. These barriers also make it hard for the unemployment strategies that the government implements to reach the people in rural areas (Caramel & Furlong, 2000; Bertolini, Montanari & Peragine, 2008; Uddin, 2013). Therefore, an argument can be made that this evidence—that shows that there are external factors (e.g., geographic area) that affect people's ability to enter the labour market—refutes the assumptions of the neoclassical theory, in as far as the theory claim that there is free mobility in the labour market. In the contrary, LMS theories, as also pointed out by some respondents, acknowledge that the

location of people from the rural areas forms a barrier that can make it difficult to find employment, as they may not have immediate access to the urban areas where many firms are situated. For this reason, it should be understood that, though many other factors affect the employment of jobseekers, the geographic area alone is enough to keep people out of employment (Montanari & Peragine, 2008; Uddin, 2013; Singh, 2018).

Notwithstanding, two of the 20 employers were of the view that everyone is affected by youth unemployment. The *Ladies & Gents store Manager* (2020) stated: "everyone becomes affected because youth unemployment leads to crime. For instance, many people become victims of theft conducted by stranded, unemployed people." The *Dynamite Clothing Supervisor* (2020) stated: "The whole country [is affected], if you take a look at the economy of the country it's unstable, the whole country is affected." These respondents are correct in their own right, as far as they claim that unemployment affects everyone. Indeed, everyone (employed or not) gets affected in various ways. Therefore, it is actually a good thing that some respondents acknowledge that all people are affected by unemployment in one way or the other. However, the fact that everyone is affected exposes unemployment for a critical problem that it is, and it makes addressing unemployment a pressing issue that needs effective and ecclectic strategies. This is because the amelioration of the grave unemployment situation will not only enable many people to participate in the labour market and to make a living for themselves. But it will concomitantly address socio-economic factors that affect other people (even though they are employed) such as crime (which is mostly attributed to unemployment).

Moreover, according to De Lannoy et al. (2018), there are ongoing debates addressing whether youth unemployment should be considered simply as one part of the broader unemployment challenge or whether youth unemployment is driven by specific characteristics of the youth and, therefore, requires specific attention. It is clear from the already mentioned findings (and the findings discussed in the consequent chapters), and the findings of much of the reviewed literature that youth unemployment should be treated as a stand-alone problem in and of itself—even though this does not mean that unemployment regarding other social groups is less serious. This point is further confirmed by the ILO (informed by numerous scientific research) as it maintains that, while this crisis (youth unemployment) cannot be detached from the overall employment deficit, and the need for job-rich inclusive growth strategies that deliver the goal of full and decent employment for all (ILO, 2015; O' Higgins, 2017).

One of the reasons that justify a priority focus on the youth is that young people have been disproportionately affected by the crisis. The ratio of youth to adult unemployment has multiplied above historical trends, and young people represent a large share of those in informal jobs, low pay, and working poverty (ILO, 2015). Therefore, there seems to be a consensus from the data and literature that while there is a recognition that unemployment affects many people, the youth are the most affected—and more so those who have disabilities and live in rural areas. There is a general appreciation of the difference between general unemployment and youth unemployment. While both are pressing issues in their own respect, youth has been enjoying more attention not only from scholars, but also from the government and policymakers. Hence, abating youth unemployment has become one of the biggest global agendas. Since we now know what employers think of unemployment and about young people being the most affected group, the following section looks at what the sampled employers think of the causes of unemployment.

7.3.3 Employers' Views of the Causes of Unemployment

The reviewed literature presents a great deal of evidence concerning the causes of unemployment. Actually, it seems with more ongoing research focusing on different aspects of unemployment, new determinants of unemployed are discovered. This not only shows that the causes are not exhaustive, but it also warrants further research, which will better inform policymakers about the causes of unemployment and how to tackle them better. Indeed, reviewing the literature on the issue of unemployment has revealed that this subject matter is imputed to a myriad of causes and is regarded both as an economic and social ill. Several authors agree that unemployment in South Africa is structural (Bhorat & Hodge, 1999; Bhorat, 2004; Kingdom & Knight, 2007; Banerjee et al., 2008; Pauwet al., 2008; Bhorat et al., 2013). Banerjee et al. (2008) and Bhorat et al. (2013), among others, find that a high level of unemployment is caused by structural changes to the economy, including an increase in the size of labour force, changes in production technology, and the shift from agricultural production to less labour-intensive sectors. For this reason, Pauw et al. (2008), explain that unemployment is structural in a sense that the unemployed generally possess lower or no skills than what is required by the economy.

Furthermore, Bhorat (2004), and Bhorat et al. (2013), give a more extensive explanation of the structural changes and maintain that what has shaped South African's unemployment challenge is the notion that the economy has increasingly demanded high skilled workers

while the labour force consists of a large portion of less-educated lower-skilled workers. They refer to this as an outcome of the mismatch between the labour market and labour supply (Bhorat & Hodge, 1999; Bhorat, 2004; Horn, 2006; Dias & Possel, 2007; Bhorat et al., 2013). They further explain that the shift away from low-skilled work (such as agriculture), and the increase in demand for skills to support the financial and other service industries mean highly skilled workers are mostly in demand (Bhorat, 2005; Bhorat et al., 2013). Thus, it can be said that this shift marked the intensification of skills biased labour demand trajectory (Bhorat & Hodge, 1999; Bhorat, 2004; Horn, 2006; Dias & Possel, 2007; Bhorat et al., 2013). Which, they claim, was already established in the pre-1994 period and thus causing the demand for low skilled labour to decline (Bhorat, 2005; Bhorat et al., 2013). This is widely accepted as the structural challenge underlying the high levels of unemployment in the country (Bhoratet al., 2013).

Congruent to the varying views from literature about the causes of unemployment, the respondents expressed different opinions about what could cause unemployment. It was interesting to find that the employers' responses (unbeknownst to them) reflected the conflict between the neoclassical theory and the LMS theories explanations of the causes of unemployment. The respondents that echoed the neoclassical theory's sentiments concerning the causes of unemployment identified education or lack of it as one of the main causes of unemployment. The *Money Matters Accountancy Manager* (2020) stated: "I would say education [is the cause] some of the young people, you know, they didn't have time to go to school because of poverty they were born into, so I think that is the main factor that causes poverty and unemployment." This view was shared by the *Super Fuel Garage Supervisor* (2020): "I would say mostly, it's lack of, I don't know what to say, knowledge or lack of skills, but it's maybe certain education requirements they need to have, which they hardly have." Another similar view was provided by the *Chicken Corner restaurant Manager* (2020), who expressed that employers simply do not want to employ people without degrees; he stated: "These nowadays, most companies don't want to employ young people who do not have a degree or diploma." These views are also supported by Mlatsheni and Ranchhod (2017)—among other authors—as they submit that the significant difficulty facing young jobseekers, particularly, is that South Africa's labour market favours skilled employees.

This sentiment is also confirmed by the StatsSA reports (2017; 2018), that also echo many studies which all maintain that education puts people in a better position to secure employment than people with low or no education. It should be recognised that these

perceptions assume the notion advocated by the Human Capital theory (a tenet of the neoclassical theory). This theory also attributes the cause of poverty/unemployment to the fact that some people (those without employment) do not have the skills or education needed to enhance their employability, and to secure employment (Tan, 2014). However, this rationale, according to the critiques of the Human capital theory (i.e., Bowles & Gintis, 1975; Cassim, 1982; Tan, 2014), is flawed as it totally ignores some of the exogenous factors that can also contribute to the issue of unemployment or the inability of people to acquire education. Some of these exogenous factors are identified by another half of the respondents who, oppositely, echoed the arguments advanced by the LMS theories that will be discussed later in this section.

Other respondents gave views that further echo neoclassical views, which imputes unemployment predominantly to job-seekers themselves. The *Maboneng Theme Park Manager* (2020) stated: "Our young people, they don't like opportunities, they always find a way to sabotage the job opportunities given to them and that's why they end up without jobs". A similar response was provided by the *Stop & Shop Manager* (2020) who stated:

> Maybe some youth[s] don't take the initiative to actually go out there and apply for jobs. You'll find a young person sitting at home and not actually looking for a job. So, it will be best if most of the young people, and actually, all them go and apply for a job, because how else will they find job opportunities if they don't go out and search for them.

Analogous to these responses, the neoclassical theory is also famous for attributing unemployment to the supply-side (Cassim, 1989)—which in this case are the jobseekers. In fact, this theory claims that anyone who is in the labour market made a choice from two options: to invest in themselves or leisure, and if they are in the labour market, that means they choose to take part in the labour market over labour (Barker, 2007; Fleetwood, 2006; 2016; White, 2010). Therefore, according to this line of reasoning, the unemployed have chosen to be unemployed. It is for these assertions that the neoclassical theory has since been criticised, especially for this view. This view is deemed, by several authors, as unrealistic and unreasonable due to its tendency to overlook the role of employers, and other economic factors that serve as barriers that affect employment outcomes of jobseekers. Yet, despite that these responses—which echo the sentiments of the neoclassical theory—are flawed for only seeing education as the main cause of unemployment; they have also been raised and

confirmed by the reviewed literature encapsulated in chapter two. Dias and Possel (2007, 26) explain that the most cited causes of unemployment in South Africa are the supply-side determinants such as skills mismatch and lack of education. These same determinants were expressed by some of the sampled employers, as shown above. Although the correspondence between the views of the respondents, and those from the reviewed literature confirm that education is a prerequisite to gaining access to the labour market. It should be recognised that education, or a lack of it, is not on its own the cause or determinant of unemployment. Instead, there are other factors that influence whether a job seeker is employed or not, and some of the factors also hinder young people from so much as acquiring education.

Antithetical to the abovestated responses that mirror the premise of the neoclassical theory—as they suggest that lack of education is one of the causes of unemployment—evidence from the current study also denotes that less than half of the respondents gave views that are parallel to the LMS theories. These views essentially recognise that there are exogenous factors that affect jobseekers' employment outcomes. Firstly, it should be mentioned that the fact that only a minority of employers imputed unemployment to exogenous factors, while the majority cited the supply-side factors of unemployment, also suggests that supply-side causes are the most known about determinants of unemployment than the demand-side or economic factors. Only a few sampled employers were able to recognise that unemployment is not only dependent on the youths' employabiliy. But that there are other factors that pose as barriers that are not readily or easily surmountable, given that many people do not have access to a lot of things that make the transition into the labour market attainable (i.e., social capital). For example, one employer stated that one of the reasons for unemployment is: "I would say some don't have resources to, for example, they don't have money to make a CV or send CV to the firms that have vacancies, and poverty is a big challenge" (*Health First store Manager*, 2020).

Other respondents ascribed the cause of unemployment to the flawed/poor education system, claiming that it also hinders young people from getting proper education that is needed to enhance one's employability. An employer from the retail sector stated: "[poor] education is one of the factors. Our education system is not that good because most young people dropout of school and they start doing drugs and crime" (*Burger Club restaurant Supervisor*, 2020*).* An identical response was provided by a respondent from the financial sector: "Not being motivated enough, young children dropping out of school" (*East Bank Manager*, 2020). Both these responses are heavily supported by the LMS theory and some literature (i.e., Mlatsheni

& Rospabe, 2002; Moleke, 2005; Pauw et al., 2006; Branson et al., 2009; Bhorat et al., 2010; Mlatsheni & Ranchhod, 2017). These responses also serve as critics to the HCT, which fails to observe that the education system sometimes fails young people, despite that there are willing young people who want to get an education. Therefore, while the HCT hails education as the key to success, it also fails to recognise that young people are sometimes let down by the education system for various reasons—some of which have been encapsulated in chapter two.

As discussed in chapter two, LMS theories argue that education has relatively minor importance in the employment of people and especially the wage-setting process (Bowles & Gintis, 1975; Cassim, 1982; Tan, 2014). Instead, the theories argue that job positions are very much affected by employers' demand for labour. That is, the allocation for jobs is primarily demand-determined and not only based on supply-side factors (Bowles & Gintis, 1975; Cassim, 1982; Kraak, 1996; Leonatridi, 2008). The mechanism of job creation is treated as largely independent of the quality of the workforce as measured in terms of education and skills. In essence, LMS theories maintain that there are a series of factors that contribute to whether employers will employ or not (Kraak, 1996). While LMS theorists do not deny the role of education, they certainly also hold employers accountable for the discretion they exercise. It is against this background that lack of education alone cannot be ascribed to one's unemployment, in the same way it, alone, cannot take credit for one's employent. In essence, as also discovered by research, there are various factors that affect employment outcomes. For instance, there are people with the right education, but without any jobs or who are underemployed. Whereas, there are others who do not have the education but have secured primary sector jobs due to nepotism, social capital among other things. This stands to reason that education, though necessary in its own respect, it cannot be considered as a cause of unemployment in isolation, but should be considered with other factors that are identified in chapter two—and are acknowledged mainly by LMS theories than the neoclassical theory.

Moreover, data further reveals that some employers impute unemployment to the government—whether it is in what they do or what they omit to do. An employer from the retail sector specified: "It's the government; I think unemployment is also a result of the government failing to facilitate the state funds well, and also failing to create adequate policies that can foster equal access to employment. Our government is sleeping on the job" (*Dynamite Clothing Supervisor*, 2020). Another respondent cited corruption as the cause: "I really think it's because the government misappropriates money, we all know our

government is corrupt. If money could be sent to where it's needed then unemployment wouldn't be such a huge problem that it sadly is today" (*Multi-Drinks Factory Manager, 2020*). These views not only suggest that the government has a role to play in the unemployment situation (or in the labour market, in general), but they also show that jobseekers are not the only ones responsible for their fate of unemployment. For instance, there may be young people who have received poor education (and are unable to find employment) due to corruption (occurring in government institutions) as pointed out above by the two cited employers.

While corruption plays out in various ways, one of the ways that it has been reported is that the government (or government officials) misappropriates and misuses money. Ultimately the government fails to, among other things, support financially the schools from which many young people attend to gain basic, secondary or even tertiary education. Indeed, there are studies that show that poor basic education is one of the reasons why young people not only do not get jobs in the labour market, but sometimes cannot even get into university (i.e., Lam et al. 2007; Mlatsheni & Leibbrandt, 2011; Branson & Leibrandt, 2013; Spaull, 2013; 2015; DHET, 2019). Arguably, this is an issue that can be attributed to the government as it is the entity that predominantly provides basic education, and when it fails to deliver this efficiently, then many people are impacted as is the case now (see for example Lam et al. 2007; Mlatsheni & Leibbrandt, 2011; Branson & Leibrandt, 2013; Spaull2013; 2015; DHET, 2019). Certainly, these are some of the factors that diminish the employment prospects of young people.

Therefore, the responses provided by the other group of the sampled employers (who identify with the LMS theories' premise (that includes the demand-side and the state in the analysis of the labour market) further prove that supply-side explanations of unemployment are not sufficient as they leave out many other factors (demand-side factors included) from the equation. Needless to say, that the causes of unemployment cited above, are also supported by the literature, that concede that unemployment is exacerbated by external factors that are beyond the control of young people (i.e., Graham & De Lannoy, 2016). However, the fact that a minority of respondents understand the causes of unemployment from the LMS theory perspective—which takes cognisance of other factors that exist outside the job-seekers themselves—confirms what some scholars have already argued: that supply-side factors are predominantly studied, which means they are the most known about (i.e., Fynn, Mader & Oosterom, 2017). These are the same scholars who have advocated for research that should

focus on demand-side factors, especially given the critical role it plays concerning the employment outcomes of jobseekers. Again, this shift of focus does not do away or downplay the factors that emerge from the supply-side. Rather this focus on the demand-side will help understand the factors that emerge from the demand-side, other than just learning only about the supply-side factors. Both the supply and demand-side can explain a lot of the things that happen in the labour market; therefore, only focusing on the supply-side prevents us from gaining understanding about the inherent role that the demand-side plays.

Though it is not surprising that employers did not cite many causes of unemployment (they only mentioned a few), which suggests, among other things, that they may not know of the other causes of unemployment. This is understandable, because to know the causes of unemployment means you either are studying unemployment or you are affected by unemployment enough to want to know what causes unemployment (or what could be the solutions thereof). However, what was surprising about these findings is that the respondents did not specifically mention 'work experience', or lack of it, as one of the causes of unemployment. Considering that it is one of the most common and cited causes of unemployment for youth and graduate unemployment (see Bhorat & Hodge, 1999; Nattrass, 2000; Dias & Posel, 2007; Kingdon & Knight, 2007; Pauw & Oosthuizen, 2008; Bhorat, Kanbur & Stanwix, 2011; Rankin & Roberts, 2011; National Treasury, 2011; Van Aardt, 2012; Yu, 2013; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; Baah-Boateng, 2016; Chigunta, 2017). This, even though a few of the respondents had expressed that they require experience as one of the prerequisites to be considered for employment. However, the fact that most of the firms (from the retail sector) that recruit young people, do not require experience as a prerequisite; explains emphatically why the respondents from the retail sector would not think of lack of experience as one of the causes of unemployment. Therefore, this may be one of the reasons why it was not mentioned as one of the causes of unemployment.

In any case, the fact that the respondents did not recognise lack of experience as one of the causes breaks with what a large body of literature maintains about lack of experience. Much of the literature based on youth unemployment identifies lack of experience as one of the causes for unemployment among the youth. For instance, Mlatsheni and Ranchhod (2017), submit that inexperience frustrates students/youth employment prospects, and can explain some of the implicit age discrimination in the labour market. Especially, given that some employers prefer to employ older people who are more experienced than students coming straight from varsity. Likewise, Pauw et al. (2008,5), states that from a recruitment point of

view, firms feel that experienced employees are more attractive than recent graduates and much less than NEET youths, as a person with no experience needs substantial investment in training before they become an assert. This sentiment is also expressed by the National Treasury (2011), that published a report on youth unemployment wherein they highlight lack of experience as one of the main causes of youth unemployment. However, as mentioned above, given that most of the sampled emloyers are from the retail sector which does not necessarily need skilled/experienced workforce. This may further suggest that what may be a cause of unemployment for some may not necessarily be the case for others. For instance, work experience for some firms is a major requirement, but data shows that for the retail firms, experience or lack of it will not disadvantage jobseekers if the job is available.

Over and above, despite that the sampled employers are aware and quite opinionated about the unemployment crisis, the thesis finds that the data reflects the contradiction between ideas advocated by the LMS theory and the HCT (as a tenet of the neoclassical theory). Whereby there are some views that reflect the perspective advocated by the HCT, and some who echo views advanced by the LMS theory. Mlatsheni and Ranchhod (2017), explain that while the HCT would argue that unemployment is a result of lack of human capital—which is for the most part acquired from education. Conversely, the LMS theories argues that entry into the labour market is influenced by many factors such as one's race, gender, geographical, institutional factors etc. This sentiment was also expressed by some respondents whose general idea is that some people do not get jobs because they do not have the right connections. Or rather that nepotism advantages certain people at the expense of others, thereby rendering other people jobless. Therefore, the data suggest that there are respondents who perceive the issue of unemployment through the HCT perspective, and those that see it through the perspective advocated by LMS theories. The views that are consistent with the LMS theories cast light on the other exogenous factors that are perceived by respondents as the cause of unemployment. Unlike the views that only focus on education, or lack thereof, as the only cause of unemployment (as the neoclassical and HCT unrealistically assumes). Again, this is where LMS theories' premise is best suitable as it best explains the issue of unemployment—by providing a comprehensive and realistic account of the labour market. The LMS theories recognise that while the supply-side is responsible to enhance their employability, these efforts will always be met with barriers that stem from exogenous factors. And, particularly, that employers' preferences also play a significant role in terms of who is selected for the available job. As will be shown in chapter nine, employers have

preferences and dispositions that permeate their decision-making. Consequently, this decision-making, while not always negative or direct, does have a bearing on the jobseekers no matter their employability.

Another thing to note about the results of this section is that while there are many different determinants (there is no single cause) that contribute to unemployment; the causes of unemployment that have emerged from the data are consistent with those that were cited decades ago by Rees (1986:616). The one determinant that has remained constant is the lack of skills: as it emerged from a study conducted by Rees and again now from this current study. This parallel shows that there is a common theme throughout history of the causes of unemployment, even though some causes have evolved due to the shift to a more industrial economy. This continuity proves that unemployment has remained a complex issue, which not only needs efforts from different stakeholders in order to be abated; but that it also remains a subject of research inquiry in order to understand the varied, yet interrelated determinants that perpetuate the crisis. Yu (2012:13), states that "there is a myriad of reasons as to why unemployment is a negative phenomenon, from welfare effects, to output effects and other social consequences." Therefore, it can be argued that the views that respondents have provided to explain unemployment are tied to how they understand the labour market for themselves; which is also connected to their individual experiences or to the information that they are exposed to individually. The discussion above reveals the main findings regarding the employers' perceptions about the causes of unemployment. Generally, however, the data reveals that employers understand the seriousness of unemployment. All employers were able to see it as the problem that it is in the country. Not only are respondents aware of the unemployment issue, but they are concerned about how this problem can be addressed. This leads us to the next section that explores the employers' views about the solutions of unemployment.

7.3.4 Employers' Views on Solutions to Unemployment

Unemployment is one of the socio-economic long-standing problematics that has remained a central subject of research and agenda of governments and world organisations across the globe. In confronting the problem of youth unemployment, the South African government (in line with global trends) has created numerous multi-pronged policies. These policies include increasing youth employment targets, enhancing employment schemes such as the Expanded Public Works Programme and supporting youth entrepreneurship (National Treasury, 2011;

NDP, 2011; De Lannoy et al., 2018). The most current policies, which were created to address youth unemployment, include the Employment Tax Incentive (ETI) (National Treasury, 2011:7; Rankin & Schoer, 2011; Levinsohn et al., 2014; Mthembu & Govender, 2015; Ranchhold & Finn, 2016: De Lannoy et al., 2018). As pointed out in chapter two, ETI is a tax rebate awarded to employers when they employ low-skilled workers between the ages of 18 and 29 (National Treasury, 2011; Levinsohn et al., 2014; Ranchhold & Finn, 2016). The mechanism through which this occurs is by reducing the cost of employing a young person, thereby mitigating the financial risk associated with hiring inexperienced, low-skilled youth (Rankin & Schoer, 2011; Levinsohn et al., 2014; Mthembu & Govender, 2015). While this strategy aims to boost labour demand, some scholars and institutions have opposed it. For instance, COSATU (2013), is one of the foremost critics, raising concerns that, among other things, firms will have an incentive to let go of existing workers in order to employ subsidised ones. Therefore, with every strategy that has been created to address unemployment has also come critics that question their effectiveness, among other things.

When asked about the ways that unemployment can be curbed, the sampled employers gave different ideas about what could help abate the issue of unemployment. Most respondents expressed that "creating more jobs" is one of the ways to address unemployment. One such response was given by the *Maboneg Theme Park Manager* (2020), who stated: "Job creation is most likely what is needed at this point. Young people need jobs, so we need to give them jobs. That is the only way we can solve the unemployment problem that we are facing, we have to go to places and reach out to young people, and we give them work. I think that's how we going to win against unemployment." Another view on job creation was relayed by the *Chicken Corner restaurant Manager* (2020): "Job creation can solve unemployment because the youth can get off the street and do something with their lives." Another related view was expressed by the *Super Fuel Garage Supervisor* (2020):

> I think if we can maybe start having more firms, around in certain areas where there's a high rate of youth unemployment that can give young people job opportunities no matter how small. I think that can help the situation because that's what people need at the end of the day: jobs!

While these views seem to be simplistic and seem to downplay the severity and complexity of the issue of unemployment—as far as they assume that job creation can be achieved just as easily—the idea of job creation that is pointed out by the above-mentioned respondents is

also fervently echoed by governments and organisations such as the ILO, World Bank, and the UN. These organisations have identified job creation as one of the primary strategies against unemployment (World Bank, 2009; ILO, 2016). A myriad of policies in South Africa (in line with measures implemented globally) prioritise job creation as one of the primary national agendas. The National Development Plan (NDP) is one of the many South African policies that contains proposals and action plans for tackling the problems of poverty, inequality and unemployment and has set out a goal for full employment by 2030. In addition, President Cyril Ramaphosa echoed the same sentiments as he has announced in the State of the National address that the creation of jobs, especially for young people, was at the centre of the national agenda.

Although a call for job creation by governments, world organisations, as well as the proposition made by the abovementioned respondents is profoundly necessary—as it will provide jobseekers with the one thing that they need, and that is jobs/employment—it should also be noted that job creation is a strategy that is as long-standing as unemployment itself. Yet, after all these years, the South African economy, as well as other economies across the world, continue to report slow job creation (due to slow economic growth, amongst other factors). StatsSA also regularly reports a steady rise in unemployment, thereby proving that job creation policies are only good on paper as job creation remains a challenge. Indeed, much of the reviewed literature (global and local literature alike) on the subject of unemployment also find that job creation is not an easy feat against the rising number of unemployed people. As such many studies—some of which are commissioned by policymakers and governments—are constantly seeking new and improved ways or strategies to induce and bolster job creation (De Lannoy et al., 2018). Thereby, making ‘job creation' a time immemorial agenda that many countries continue to tackle. Considering all this, it stands to reason that, although job creation is the most desperately needed solution against unemployment, it is rather not as easy to achieve as it is frequently recommended. It is simply not that easy to create jobs for the millions of jobseekers that are desiring to find employment.

In addition, it can be argued that what exacerbates the lack of job creation is also the global agenda for ‘decent jobs.’ According to the ILO, decent work involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers fair income, security in the workplace ad social protection for families amongst other things (ILO, 2016). This simply means that not only should more jobs be created, which is a cumbersome task on its own; but, in addition to that, there should be

more creation of decent jobs. With decent work now included as the specific goal within SDGs goal 8, it will take twice as much effort and measures to not only create jobs, but to create 'decent' work. If it is already a challenge for businesses to make current jobs fit into the standard of decent jobs as defined by the ILO, how much more challenging will this be to create new decent jobs? Clearly, job creation—the kind that is needed for all the millions of jobseekers in the unemployment queues—is a strategy that will not be achieved anytime soon.

Notwithstanding 'job creation' being proposed as a strategy to mitigate unemployment, other respondents proposed that improvements in the education system would help fight unemployment. An employer from the financial sector stated: "the education system really needs a lot of work. If people cannot get the proper education that they actually need, then they fail to acquire the skills that they need that can put them in a position of getting employment. What I know is that employers want educated people" (*AfriTrans Manager*. 2020). This view was expressed by four other employers, who all expressed that better education would go some way in curbing unemployment. Similar to job creation, the subject of quality education has received considerable attention—as it is also identified as one of the major causes of unemployment. Also, because education is one of the systems that the government has set out to remedy after the transition to a democratic dispensation (DHET, 2019). Therefore, it is not surprising that some respondents are of the mind that the education system still needs a lot of work. Research also finds that, even after all these years, the education system in South Africa is still poor, and more efforts should be channeled into bettering the situation, so as to ameliorate its negative impact on many people (National Treasury, 2011; CDE, 2012; Brandson & Leibrandt, 2013; Bhorat, 2016; DHET, 2019).

Even though the respondents could not really outline how the education problem in South Africa can be addressed, they all seem to concede, on the one hand, that the South African education system fails many young people. Especially the ones from poor backgrounds, as they are the ones who are, comparatively, subjected to poor quality education. This issue is also recognised as the legacy of the apartheid education system, which granted poor education to predominantly black people (Lam, Leibbrandt and Mlatsheni, 2008; Gustafson, 2011; Burns, Edwards & Pauw, 2010; Yu, 2013; Van Broekhuizen, 2015; Bhorat, 2016). On the other hand, there seems to be a shared question of whether the education system provides learners or students with the adequate skills that are needed in the labour market. This question arises in light of the issue of skills mismatch—which is a crisis in its own respect—

as it entails that there are some skilled people who are unemployed, not because they do not have the skills. But they are unemployed as a result of having skills that are not marketable in the labour market or the skills that are already abundant in the labour market (Bhorat & Hodge, 1999; Bhorat, 2004; Dias & Posel, 2007; Kingdon & Knight, 2007; Pauw & Oosthuizen, 2008; Bhorat, Kanbur & Stanwix, 2011; Rankin & Roberts, 2011; National Treasury, 2011; Van Aardt, 2012; Yu, 2013; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015).

Considering the above-mentioned notions and the reviewed literature (that explores the solutions to unemployment and poverty), it can be argued that bettering the education problem in South Africa should involve improving the quality of education provided from the primary to the secondary level. In addition, education that is produced in tertiary level should also be evaluated regularly in order to check if it is affording people the skills that they actually need to make it into (and stay in) the labour market. This is especially necessary because numerous studies, as well as StatsSA, have pointed out that there is a considerable number of graduates that are without employment despite the degrees they have obtained (Pauw & Oosthuizen, 2008; Bhorat, Kanbur & Stanwix, 2011; Rankin & Roberts, 2011; Oluwajodu at al., 2015; Baldry, 2016). Even though graduate unemployment is not as rampant as youth unemployment, it still shows that some unemployed graduates do not get employment because some of them do not have the skills required by the employers. Even though there are other reasons why a graduate would not be employed (such as lack of experience and or frictional unemployment); skills mismatch appears to be the major unemployment determinant (Moleke, 2005; Altbeker & Storme, 2013; Ardington et al., 2016; Rogan, 2018). The very essence of skills-mismatch suggests that there is an abundance of required skills with little absorption rate, or that there is a shortage of skills that employers actually demand.

With skills-mismatch being the core determinant of unemployment, the country simply cannot afford to have any more young people leaving universities—some with student loan debt which they cannot pay off due to unemployment—with skills that they cannot utilise in any way in the labour market, because no employer finds them employable. This is, unfortunately, what many young people (who, unbeknownst to them, study for degrees which provide them with skills that are not in demand) are facing today as they sit at home, actively seeking unemployment with skills for which no employer would employ them. So, unless young people (i.e., graduates) creatively use the skills to start their own businesses—which is

also, for various reasons, complicated to achieve, otherwise many people would have resorted to entrepreneurship—they remain unemployed despite the skills they possess. This whole situation, as also correctly pointed out by the sampled employers, shows how critical the role of education is in mitigating unemployment. It also indicates that the focus should be no more on providing education than it should be on ensuring that the education provided is of the quality that will be appreciated by different employers who are the ones who actually recruit people.

Consequently, one of the ways to improve the quality of education is also to ensure that it provides people with the skills that are employable in the labour market. As profoundly stated by the Global Campaign for Education (2016), it will be difficult to narrow the skills gap—especially in developing countries—so long as there are hundreds of millions of children who never receive even primary school education; or get schooling of such poor quality that they actually do not really learn what they need to know. Likewise, the ILO (2017), as with other scholars, also criticise interventions against the global education crisis for lacking the great urgency and resources necessary to solve it. The latter may be true even for the South African situation as there has been measures and efforts put forward to address the crisis of education system in South Africa, and yet despite the arguably meagre achievements, just like with unemployment, the education problem still persists. In fact, the steady rise of unemployment in South Africa is still predominantly attributed to the poor education system and skills mismatch, among other things (Lam & Leibrandt & Mlatsheni, 2009; Branson & Leibrandt, 2013; Van Broekhuizen, 2015; DHET, 2019). In fact, the issue of education according to Global Campaign for Education (2016), is the much quieter crisis lurking behind youth unemployment. For this reason, the ILO (2017), maintains that global business and other major private sector institutions have a big stake in helping turn it around. Without such joint efforts the crisis will only grow worse.

In addition to the abovementioned strategies identified by the respondents, one of the strategies that the government in South Africa (as well as other nations across the globe) has adopted as a response to youth unemployment is the establishment of entrepreneurship programmes (Mayer et al., 2011; NDP, 2011; Altbeker et al., 2012; Bhorat, 2012; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; ILO, 2016; Kluve et al., 2017: De Lannoy et al., 2018). This strategy was also alluded to by two of the 20 respondents, when asked about the possible solutions to curtail unemployment. The *East Bank Manage*r (2020) stated: “by encouraging young people

to open their business." The *Burger Club Restaurant Supervisor* (2020) stated: "funding black people who want to start their own businesses." Despite this being one of the well-recognised strategies against youth unemployment. It begs the question as to whether it targets the young people who fall under the NEETs category, given that they are often the ones who lack the skills the employers demand, and they are the ones who are vulnerable to youth? Another question it begs is: if young people do not already have the skills that employers require, will they be able to carry out their own businesses, which is the outcome that entrepreneurial programmes aim to achieve?

In essence, entrepreneurship programmes are designed to empower people to start their own businesses, rather than (or while they) wait for employment (Kluve et al., 2017). In analysing the nub of entrepreneurship programmes, it seems that entrepreneurship programmes are lilely to target graduates (young people with some type of qualification) as they would have some skills or education to apply in the businesses that they venture on as an outcome of the entrepreneurial programmes. Graduates usually have the education which provides them with some skills that are sometimes not enough to get them employment due to lack of experience, among other things. The situation for the NEETs category is slightly different because most of them, sometimes, do not even have a matric certificate (due to dropping out of school because of economic or social challenges). Therefore, it is against this background that it can be argued that entrepreneurship programmes are most likely designed for graduate youths in comparison to the NEETs category. This makes for a sound concern, particularly given that there are debates about the success of the existing strategies that aim to promote and fund businesses through entrepreneurship programmes.

One of the questions around the success of these businesses has to do with the applicability of the training and skills acquired from these programmes. In other words, are people (especially the NEETs youths) able to take the very skills they learn from these programmes and successfully apply them by actually starting their businesses? Though there are many reasons why a business would not succeed, it appears that it would be harder for young people without skills to apply the knowledge from these programmes, than it would be for the graduates who already have some level of skills. If it is already hard for well educated people to start or maintain new businesses, how much harder will it be for young people who do not have the enducation and skills needed to carryout a business. As a result, unlike graduates who may have the education that may put them in good stead to start their business, the

NEETs may not be able to start a business, let alone maintain one. This is rather unfortunate because young people without skills are the ones who need work, and therefore, are more in need of programmes that promote their employability or their ability to start their own businesses. This is because the graduates are, comparatively, already in a better position of acquiring employment than the NEETS category.

This point I make does not undermine the need for entrepreneurship programmes as a measure against unemployment, because there are successful businesses (though not as many as entrepreneurship programmes forecast there will be) that have emerged from these programmes. However, this point raises one of the issues that may very well, in addition to other factors, impede the success of entrepreneurship programmes, especially among the NEETs category. This issue also means that policymakers should, among other things, evaluate who (is it graduates, school dropouts, matriculants?) the entrepreneurship programmes target so that they can be implemented effectively. Yes, the entrepreneurship programmes target young people, but this is a broad definition of young people because young people consist of different categories: graduates, young people with matric certificates but who cannot get into university; and school dropouts. If entrepreneurship programmes are open to people who will not be able to apply the skills and capital that these programmes are established to provide to people, then the programmes will be administered in vain. This is because, though resources will be spent to facilitate the programmes and to educate the candidates of these programmes, nothing concrete will actually come out of these programmes if the candidates are unable to apply the skills and capital they obtain from these programmes. The possibility of this happening poses a major issue that can waste a lot of funds that are injected into these programmes. However, it can be avoided by having a specific target of people to whom these programmes will be administered. As it stands now, there is enough reason to infer that entrepreneurship programmes do not seem to administer for the NEETs youths. Therefore, policymakers have to either qualify the young people that these programmes target; or they should design training within the entrepreneurship programmes that will also target young people (from NEETs category) in a way that will put them on the same position as graduates, where all can be able to start and maintain their businesses.

Another corollary question that emerges from the point made above is: what actually constitutes as success from these entrepreneurship programmes? (1) Is it to educate people

and provide them with the necessary skills, or (2) is it for the programme participants to have the ability to apply what they have learned, and actually start-up businesses that will fare well in the labour market? It would be interesting to investigate further if there are any successful businesses that were started as an outcome of the training provided in entrepreneurship programmes. Furthermore, De Lannoy et al. (2018), also submit that more research is needed to investigate the effectiveness of the current strategies to inform better developing policies and future strategies. The investigation of entrepreneurship programmes will help us understand if they do fulfill the purpose for which they are established—and that is to provide young people with the skills that will enable them to start their own businesses. Notwithstanding, entrepreneurship programmes as a strategy against unemployment seems promising, just as many other strategies that have been enacted to empower jobseekers in one way or the other. Entrepreneurial programmes are especially promising because if they succeed, then it means more people can be employed from one successful business created as a result of the entrepreneurship programme. However, the question that applies to all of the strategies designed to fight unemployment is whether they can fulfill the purpose of abating unemployment in a sustainable way?

Moreover, speaking on the possible solutions against unemployment, only one respondent was bold enough to call out the government on their corruption, stating that if the government puts and end to corruption; this might go some way in solving the unemployment issue. A *Supervisor from Dynamite clothing* (2020) expressed: “I don’t know, if the government can stop thinking for themselves and think of the country, giving back to young people or, like creating more jobs opportunities that will improve the unemployment situation.” This view echoes some of the suggestions made from one of the studies that find that corruption is one of the ways that lead to unemployment and can, if curtailed or attenuated, also help to abate unemployment. Adjor and Kebalo (2018), claim that the reduction of corruption can help address unemployment. They particularly assert that one of the things that can reduce unemployment in SADC is to reduce income inequalities and the mismatch between education and the labour market needs. But they posit, emphatically, that for youth unemployment, the reduction of corruption to all its forms should be the priority of political and economic decision-makers (Adjor & Kebalo, 2018). This is because central government revenues are mostly intended to finance the sectors of the economy (i.e., health, education, social welfare) through public expenditure channels. That is why political and economic

decision-makers, for the most part, use budgetary policy to combat the incident of unemployment, especially among young people.

Seeing that government corruption means that state's funds are misappropriated and misused only to benefit a few government officials, as a result of greed; thus disenfranchising the most vulnerable people of the sources they need to make a living. It is understandable why any one would identify the end of corruption as one of the strategies that can help abate unemployment. If corruption is attenuated, this feat would also mean that the state's funds go to the places that it needs to go to, which in turn will help neutralise unemployment. This assertion highlights the profound role that governments (across the globe) play to address unemployment, as one of the socio-economic challenges. While the prevention of corruption still will not fix unemployment overnight, nor can corruption itself be curtailed overnight; addressing corruption along with implementing the strategies created to fight unemployment will concurrently go a long way in mitigating the ever-increasing rate of unemployment.

Overall, the respondents proposed measures against unemployment that are consistent with those that are either already existing, or have also been recommended by the reviewed in literature. This is good on the part of employers, because it suggests that they too are concerned enough about unemployment to want to see it abated. However, there seems to be some ignorance on the part of the respondents—and perhaps even the policymakers—about the possibility and feasibility of achieving these strategies. This ignorance explains why some of these strategies have been promulgated, but have not yet made the difference that was initially proposed would be made. One may argue that it is either that these strategies are too ambitious and only look good on paper, or that the government officials and other stakeholders are not doing all there is to do to achieve the goals for which these strategies were enacted. Whatever the reason is, the persistence of unemployment only proves that achieving job creation (or unemployment reduction) is a mammoth task. Here are some of the responses that indicate that the respondents are ignorant of the feasibility of these strategies. A manager from the *Stop and Shop Groceries* (2020) stated: "Well, if people open businesses and employ the youth, I think that will also help in reducing the percentage of unemployment." The *Egoli Distellery Manager* (2020) also stated: "Well, I think more companies should create jobs and give young people opportunities to get jobs and others in our communities as well."

These respondents propose the creation of more jobs as though it is easy as they can express it to actually create more jobs. What is more concerning is that these proposals that the respondents outline are not altogether new. As already mentioned above, creating more jobs is at the forefront of the government's agenda, and has been so for many years. But due to factors like corruption, slow economy growth that retard the economy's ability to create the millions of the needed jobs to get a staggering number of jobseekers employment, millions of people are still without jobs. Another reason that job creation is not occuring as fast and as much as is needed, is because no one employer would just create jobs just for the sake of it. Since employers are only interested in profit maximisations (as correctly pointed out by the neoclassical theory), job creation will only take place if sustainable profit is guaranteed. If creating jobs will suffer any business financially then it is safe to reason that no one employer would venture in such a commitment. These are the issues that work against the success of job creation even though it is identified as one of the main strategies to fight unemployment. However, job creation has over the years proved that it is one of the hardest strategies to achieve even though it is not entirely impossible. Indeed, it is not that job creation is not occuring, rather it is just not happening as much as it is needed to cover the million of people without employment. As also pointed by StatsSA reports, the labour absorption rate remains low, and this simply means that not enough jobs are being created; and thus labour continues to struggle to be absorbed in the labour market. Mncayi and Shupping (2020:10), also note that the South African labour market is is characterised by limited job opportunities and a rapidly expanding labour force.

Notwithstanding, the notable thing about all these strategies suggested by the respondents is that they are consistent with the literature reviewed. While the incident of unemployment has proved to be no small feat, as some of the causes of unemployment have not yet been overcome, and they are from time immemorial. However, efforts should still be made to not only curb the unemployment itself, but the effects it causes. Hinged to the task of addressing unemployment is the agenda of inclusivity and decent jobs which goes hand in hand with job creation (ILO, 2008; 2012; 2015). This further intensifies the hardship that already exists to abate unemployment. Moreover, unemployment is not a stand-alone problem, underemployment is a problem very closely tied to unemployment so in fighting unemployment, the government and other stakeholders are having to concurrently fight against underemployment to promote decent jobs. Therefore, it stands to reason that confronting both these long-standing challenges may take some considerable amount of time

and more effort. Another reason, in addition to those outlined above—that may explain why little has been achieved—is that these strategies usually are unable to reach most vulnerable people (Moleke, 2003). That being the case, the remaining question is not whether strategies are being created, but the real question is whether these strategies are designed and implemented in such a way that they can reach the vast numbers of people that depend on these strategies the most. Therefore, this calls for more research to investigate the progress of the strategies created to curtail unemployment.

7.3.5 Do young people seek and apply for employment?

The inordinately high rates of unemployment among young people—which have come up to 54% in 2019—means that millions of young people are not being absorbed in the labour market. According to the expanded definition of unemployment there are some discouraged young people who have given up on their pursuit to secure employment. Therefore, in trying to understand what employers think of young jobseekers (and whether they accommodate them in their recruitment activities), it is also befitting to find out from the respondents whether there are any young jobseekers that have approached their firms to seek out employment. Therefore, the respondents were asked whether they have had or currently have young people who seek and apply for employment in their firms, respectively. This not only reveals whether these jobless young people are actively looking for employment; but also whether the respondents have considered employing some of these young jobseekers who happen to come to their firms looking for employment. The study finds that almost all firms have young people knocking on their doors to seek and apply for employment. A total of 18 employers expressed, in the affirmative, that they continually have young people seeking employment in their firms. Only two of the 18 employers stated that they do not have walk-ins from youthful jobseekers. For instance, the *Money Matters Accountancy Manager* (2020) stated: "No, we don't. We only have one channel of recruitment, through our website, and we do not allow walk-ins from jobseekers."

Moreover, as a follow-up question, respondents were asked whether they have recruited (or considered to recruit) young jobseekers that have sought for employment in their firms. Data reveals that some of these young people who come to their firms seeking employment have been considered for employment. Below are some of the responses from the employers who replied in the affirmative and have shared their experiences:

> Well, most [young people] were considered because they met the minimum requirements, and some were not. Some made it through the interview stage, but they cannot communicate, they do not have the communication skills. So no, we never recruit all young people, but we have recruited a few (*Ladies and Gents clothing Supervisor*, 2020)
>
> We first check their qualifications and which job they are applying for; we don't just recruit anyone who doesn't have qualifications (*General Bank Manager*, 2020).
>
> They [young people] are always considered, even though it is not everyone that gets employed, because we are trying to reduce unemployment. So we do employ young people who come here looking for jobs (*Eat & Dine hut Manager*, 2020).
>
> You'll find that the job is already occupied, or you'll find that they apply for the job just to try their luck. When they are asked to come for an interview, some of them never show up. (*Multi-drinks Factory Manager*, 2020).
>
> At the moment, we have few [young people] come; the reason why we take new young people is because they are still young and technology savvy, so they are able to learn quickly (*Money Matters Solutions Manager*, 2020).
>
> Yes, we have a lot of youth applying, and some of them are not considered because most of them are below the age of 18 (*Fresh Chicken Restaurant Manage*r, 2020).

These statements not only indicate that the youth are actively looking for employment—and they are not just only waiting to hear of job openings from the social media platforms or other ways that these firms advertise their available jobs. But they also indicate that young people are proactively approaching firms even when the firms are not advertising any new vacancies with the hopes of having some luck to be employed. These shared responses, in and of themselves, refute some of the assertions from the literature that have submitted that young people are lazy and do not care to find employment**.** There is a widespread assumption or belief that one of the reasons young people are unemployed is because they are lazy (see, for example, Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015). This has created an impression that makes employers overlook young people because no employer would want to employ a lazy employee (young or old). All employers want and carefully seek (through their recruitment strategies) is to employ hard-working employees, as also demonstrated in chapter six. Inversely, in this study, the respondents' views reveal that young people are not taking joblessness without making

efforts to find employment. Not only do young people seek employment, they also apply for these jobs. According to the above-cited responses, most of the firms young people approach actually consider them for employment. While these results cannot be generalised to the entire population given the small scale of the sample (and the views made therein), it does, however, suggest that some young people still actively seek employment, and they are even willing to do walk-ins to find employment.

The effort to find employment that is displayed by the young jobseekers (by seeking employment) shows that young people—at least the ones the respondents are referring to—really want to make a living in a decent way. Therefore, instead of assuming that they are unemployed because they are choosing not to be employed (as the neoclassical theory may assume). It should be recognised that one of the possibilities for the unemployment situation among some young people is because they might not have the means to enhance their employability (as would be argued by the LMS theories). After all, it is quite costly to be employable, one has to have an education, and once they have obtained an education, they still need financial means and social capital to apply for the vacant and advertised jobs. All this requires some form of skills and capital, and not all people who wish to be in the labour market can afford to gain access—in so far as it requires skills and education to enter the labour market. Since these are all the things that go into one eventually securing a job in the labour market. Then the inability to do these things (acquire education due to financial constraints) should be reckoned as the underlying factors that contribute to many young people being without employment. Nonetheless, the fact that some young people actively seek employment (as the ones referred to by the sampled respondents) makes no small impression, especially because StatsSA's and other world organisations (such as ILO) report that some jobseekers get discouraged along the way. While that may be true regarding some young people, it cannot necessarily be repeated about the young jobseekers referred to by the respondents.

Considering all the discussed themes, which have synthesised the data collected and the literature reviews, it stands to reason that even though the reason for unemployment amongst the youth is that they lack employability. Their unemployment is a result of a range of socio-economic factors which stem both from the supply and demand side as well as other economic and non-economic factors. For instance, it has been established from the discussion above that young people often have low levels of education, have dropped out of school, and due to poor education (for some who actually do get the education). They also lack

experience, which is deemed as being too risky for employers. All these socio-economic factors, as well as many others, surely pose as barriers that impede on young peoples' ability to enter the labour market. Despite respondents sharing what they perceive to be the causes of the high spells of unemployment among young people, data reveals that most of the sampled employers are not only willing to employ young people, but they have young recruits in their firms currently. This will be shown in the next section that explores the perceptions, attitudes, and experiences of employers regarding the employment of the youth.

7.4 EMPLOYERS' PERCEPTIONS OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

The previous section has painted a picture of the sampled employers' understanding of the incident of unemployment, and what they perceive to be the causes and solutions thereof. Having a sense of what employers' think about youth unemployment concurrently revealed some of the perceptions they have concerning young people. Overall, data shows that all the respondents are well aware of the crisis of youth unemployment, and that some of them are of the idea that young people are not entirely responsible for the unemployment situation in which they find themselves. This perception was implied in the data they provided concerning the causes and recommended solutions for unemployment. Both their responses on the causes and the solutions of unemployment took cognisance of exogenous factors that contribute to unemployment; and possibly mitigate the chances of young people to secure employment in the labour market. Therefore, this section mainly explores the perceptions, attitudes, and experiences (collectively referred to as dispositions) of employers concerning the employment of young people. Knowing what employers think about employing young people—especially in light of their awareness of the crisis of youth unemployment and their suggestions on how youth unemployment can be addressed—can also reveal whether these dispositions shape their decisions to accommodate the youth in their R&S strategies and practices.

7.4.1 Most Recruited Youth Age Group

To find out whether the respondents accommodate young people in their R&S strategies and whether they have any interest in employing the young people, it is first necessary to investigate whether the firms they represent have any young employees; and to also determine which age category the young people recruited in these firms fall under. This question is fundamental, given that there are different categories used to refer to the various groups of young people. South Africa has about two operational categories: the 15-24 and the

25-35 category (StatsSA). The 15-24 category is regarded as the operational definition used by the United Nations (Altman, 2007; Rogan, 2014). According to the reviewed literature this category is recognised as the most vulnerable to unemployment compared to the rest of the age cohorts. It is for this reason that this thesis is particularly concerned with the 15-24 category. As illustrated in Table 6.2, 16 of the 20 respondents have expressed that they have young recruits in their firms. Table 6.2, also indicates that 12 of the 16 firms are from the retail sector firms—making it the leading sampled sector that employs young people. Whereas, only one employer from the financial sector, and another from the manufacturing sector, and two from the transportation sector also stated that they do have young recruits in their firms.

Upon learning that the majority of the sampled firms have young workers, the respondents were further asked whether the young recruits they have in their firms fall under the 15-24 category, as it is the main foci of the study. In sum, the responses reveals that a majority (15 of the 16) of the sampled employers who recruit young jobseekers only recruit from 18 years and older. The data also show that the choice to recruit from 18 years and older can be explained by the different perceptions (among other factors) that employers have about different age groups. A few respondents, from a pool of employers that do employ the youth, stated that they only recruit from 18 years old and older, because they were of the mind that 15 to 17-year-olds are too young to be employed for paid work. This view was expressed by many other employers across the participating sectors and firms. In the words of a *Supervisor* from the *Eat and Dine restaurant* (2020): "We can't recruit people from 15 to 17, because they are still minors, but now 18 going up that is according to the law; so we only consider people from from 18 and above." This sentiment was embraced by four more employers in the affirmative:

> We don't have younger than 18, we only start from the age of 18. (*Dynamite Clothing Supervisor*, 2020)
>
> [We employ] from 21, I think it's illegal to hire someone who is under age especially because in our industry we deal with hard labour work. So, it might be dangerous to have anyone under 20 to work in such an environment. (*Exceptional Cars Corp Supervisor*, 2020)
>
> We do [recruit young people] but now let me not say 16 but from 18, because 16 they still young and they still have to go to school. I personally don't think it is wise to

> employ young people who still have to go to school because they can easily be distracted. (*AfriTrans Manager*, 2020)
>
> I mean, you can't employ an 18-year-old or even a 20-year-old. I mean, they don't have experience; they just got out of matric, they only just have matric. They haven't graduated and all, so the only position we can offer them is stock-taking. (*More for Less Wholesaler Manager*, 2020)

The common idea among these responses, which was shared by 15 employers in total, is that any person below 18 is too young, and probably not ready to be in the labour market as an employee. While this idea may be reasonable given that, on average, it takes a learner/pupil 18 years to complete secondary school (Spaull, 2013; 2015; Van Broekhuizen, 2015; DHET, 2019). This means that all things being equal, young people below the age of 18 should still be in school. However, it is not always the case that all pupils finish school at the age of 18. Research finds that there are young people who never get to matric at all, and there are various socio-economic factors that result in a vast majority of young people to be out of school, training, and employment (Branson & Leibrandt, 2013; Spaull, 2013; 2015; Van Broekhuizen, 2015; Rogan, 2018; DHET, 2019). In fact, the NEETs category, which is the hardest-hit category of young people, is made up of young people from the age of 15-24 who either dropped out of school, did not pass matric—among other reasons—and as a result, could not make it into tertiary school and could also not secure employment due to lack of skills or education either (Branson & Wittenberg, 2007; StatsSA, Rogan, 2018). Indeed, the reasons for the youth ending up in the NEETs category are numerous and may include, to name a few, socio-economic factors such as teenage pregnancy, financial constraints, child-headed households (Branson & Leibrandt, 2013; Spaull, 2013; 2015; Van Broekhuizen, 2015; Rogan, 2018). Therefore, such young people, at their tender age, may not be able to be in school to acquire education, but are still forced to find other ways to make a living, and the labour market is one such place.

One may argue that employers are justified in thinking that any age below 18 is too young: firstly, because employers look for work experience and as pointed out above by the *More for Less Wholesale Manager* (2020), it is unlikely to find an 18-year-old who would have considerable work experience that employers would appreciate. Secondly, because the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA) makes it a criminal offense to employ a child under 15 years of age or under minimum school-leaving age. Granted, most people under the age of

18 are presumably still in school, so employing them may come as a distraction to their learning. Nevertheless, the impression that anyone below 18 years old (but above 15 years) is too young to work tends to indicate that the sampled employers may not know that people from 15 years old are permitted by South African law to enter the labour market. The employment of people from 15 years old is permitted provided that the young workers obtain work permits and are not subject to employment that is exploitative or detrimental to their schooling and their well-being, amongst other things (BCEA, 1997). Indeed, it should be recognised that while BCEA definitively disapproves of the employment of children under the age of 15. It does, however, make exceptions for when children from 15 years of age and older can work. One of the exception is that young people can work whenever such work is not inappropriate, or their age or is not work that places them at risk (BCEA, 1997). It should be borne in mind that while there are restrictions for children (from the age of 15-18) to work in the labour market, there are also compelling reasons (some of which are mentioned in the previous paragraph) behind the need for young people to participate in the labour market. These reasons prove that even 15-18 year olds may not be so young for the labour market after all. Thus, it can be asserted that thinking of young people as "too young" is to alienate them from the very thing that they may need—an opportunity to work and make a living. Especially, considering that some of them are pressed by their circumstances not only to fend for themselves, but their families as well.

Notwithstanding the majority (15/16) of employers who have expressed that they do not have young people less than 18 years old, only one of 16 employers expressed that his firm has one youth as an employee (who was 15 years old at the time of the interview):

> Yes, we have recruited [young people], and the youngest was 15, and was a part-time worker, like when school closes, we hire young people. This is to give them an opportunity to gain experience and to make some money for themselves. In fact, when young people apply, they tell us that they need to make money. (*Health First store Manager*, 2020)

This response confirms the point alluded to above that there are several valid reasons why some people, as young as 15 years old, need to work. And since the nature of the job is not inappropriate nor is it detrimental to their schooling and is a part-time job, then it is well within the law—according to the exception provided by the BCEA—for such an employer to recruit the 15-year-old. The good thing about young people being employed is not only that

they can make a living that they may desperately need, but also that they are gaining experience that they may be able to use at a later stage (hen they need a permanent job). Therefore, the exception granted by the BCEA (for the circumstances under which young people from 15 years and older can actually be employe), considered together with the benefits (i.e., gaining exposure and experience from a young age) of employing young people, should be enough to encourage employers to at least consider hiring young people even from the age of 15. This, in turn, will benefit the employers because it means they will have a large pool of experienced young people (the experience which they would have gained from a young age) from which to select the most suitable candidates.

Given this possibility, employing young people may count as one of the ways employers can help to fight unemployment; and that is to give young people who are actually seeking employment—as young as 15-years-old—opportunities of developing their employability by actually recruiting them to expose them to working experience. In fact, seeing that there are some employers who employ young people from the age of 15, it would be interesting to find out whether this employment of young people who have to start working at a young age (for whatever reason) is beneficial in the long run; or whether there are any disadvantages for the young people who start working at that age. These questions /concerns warrant more research in that regard. If there are any advantages, as it is only reasonable to believe so, then that is all the more reason why employers should, at least, look into giving access to young people who, due to their pressing circumstances, have to enter the labour market early. Although I share the sentiments expressed by the 15 employers that any person less than 18 years is too young for employment; I personally, believe they are too young to so much as care for themselves, let alone their family members. However, I also realise that in the real world there are many pressing and unfortunate issues that leave some young people with no other choice but to undertake employment as young as 15 years of age.

Another reason why 15 year olds should be, at least, considered for employment is that, in line with ILO reports, StatsSA also not only includes people from 15 years old in their un/employment reports, but it reports consistently that the 15-24 category is most vulnerable to unemployment. For this reason, it is safe to assert that: to think that ages under 18 are too young is to be ignorant of the circumstances that force them to want or need to make a living at an early age. For instance, there are child-headed households wherein children as young as 15 have to provide for the family, because the parents are either not employed, they have died or are in prison, or their whereabouts are unknown. Therefore, they (young people, as young

as 15 year old) need to enter the labour market, which can provide them with opportunities to provide for themselves or their families. This alone is one of the social ills that South Africa is facing today: vast numbers of young people dropping out of school and, on the other hand, being unable to secure employment, because they are not skilled enough to impress any employer. In fact, the current data suggest that—in addition to 'lack of skills', and considering that the majority of the sampled employers do not recruit young people who are below 18 years old—employers' perceptions about young people being too young for employment may well be one of the reasons why young people are not being employed, especially those from 15-17 years old.

It is perceptions like these that need to be corrected by creating awareness of not only the fact that young people are permitted by law to work under exceptional cases, but also that some young people are pressured by their circumstances to work even before they can finish (primary, secondary or even tertiary) school. If more young people (from 15+) are to be integrated into the labour market—as is now increasingly becoming necessary—then employers should, in light of these reasons outlined above, at least consider providing part-time employment opportunities to young people who fall under the NEETs category whenever such opportunities are available. Instead of totally dismissing them because they think they are too young. I am of the view that doing this will kill two beds with one stone: (i) it will allow young people to make what little living they can make, and (ii) it will also exposse them to the work experience that can contribute to their overall employability at a later stage. Especially because while some of the young people in the NEETs category only need to work (part-time) until they can finish school or varsity; some of them may never have any other opportunity to get into the labour market because they have dropped out of school and cannot afford to go back to school. Therefore, if not considered for employment while young, they may be subjected to long-term unemployment which may even be harder to come out from. Therefore, being given the opportunity to enter the labour market (to expose them to the working environment while still young) may be the only opportunity they may ever have to enhance their employability. Indeed, offering such opportunities to young people will count more for those who do not have other options to develop skills and acquire employment. This can sure serve as a strategy against youth unemployment—as far as it can enable young people (i.e., school dropouts) to gain some skills, work exposure, and experience, without which they may never be employed later in life, if they are not being considered while young.

Another point to note is that one of the 16 firms (*Exceptional Motors Corp Supervisor,* 2020) that employ young people, only refers strictly to people with tertiary qualifications (graduates), not necessarily young people that fall under the NEETs category. Technically, this means that only 11 out of 20 firms accommodate young people from the NEETs category. This indicates the distinction between employers who recruit youths with no qualifications, and those who have qualifications (this point is dealt with in more detail in chapter nine). Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the rest of the employers recruit from 19, 20, and 21. Even though these cohorts are above 15-17, they still fall under the 15-24 category. Therefore, overall the results suggest that there are employers who recruit young people from the NEETs category, even though they all have preferences about the age that is more ready to start working. The employment of this age group is still promising, because even though the young people below 18 are excluded, at least those above 18-25 are being considered; ultimately this access given to this age group can make all the difference. The enunciated reluctance of employers to recruit young people from the 15-17, despite that they may need to work elucidates why there are very few young people (especially from 15-18 years old) in the labour market—as also reported by the StatsSA quarterly reports. There are innumerable reasons why that is so, however, this section shows that one of the reasons is that the sampled employers think of young people (especially those under 18 years old) as being "too young" to carry out the duty that comes with being employed.

7.4.2 Employers' Views of Young Recruits

Now that we have a sense of the age category of young people that the 16 out of 20 sampled firms (that recruit young people) have thus far (and are willing to recruit), we now get into what employers think of their young recruits and what they think about the employment of young jobseekers in general. The literature around un/employment claims that youth employment is a critical component of the overall unemployment challenge (O'Higgins, 2001; Mlatsheni & Rosapabe, 2002; Altman, 2007; Woolard 2012; Ardington et al., 2015; ILO, 2015). According to the ILO, youth employment is a challenge for both developed and developing countries alike. For this reason, youth employment is at the centre of each government's agenda. This is especially true for the South African government as it has made job creation the top of their agenda (see, for example, the NDP 2030). The young people are singled out as a specific target group for this agenda. President Ramaphosa has also echoed the claim made by the ILO that youth unemployment is a crisis. In almost every national address Pres. Ramaphosa delivers, he mentions the devastating situation of youth

unemployment in the country and assures the nation of the long-standing commitment of the government to fight youth unemployment. In one of his State of Nation Address speeches, he has claimed: “We need to make this country work for young people so that they can work for our country” (SONA, 2019).

The pressing need to create more jobs for young people makes it more necessary to investigate employers’ attitudes and perceptions concerning the employability of young people, given that employers are the ones who do the actual work of employing people. This inquiry is further necessitated by the claims that not much is known about what employers think of young people, from the perspective of the employers themselves. Much of what we know concerning what employers think of young job seekers or recruits are assumptions or inferences that have been made from some studies. For instance, De Lannoy et al. (2018), maintain that there is a range of assumptions about the nature of employer behaviour with regard to hiring. Including that employers are reluctant to hire young people because of higher training costs, and that labour market regulations (which prevent easy hiring and firing) inhibit them, or even that they prefer more experienced people.

While these are the tentative assumptions that people have of employers, this research sought to explore—as described by the sampled employers themselves—the reapondents perceptions, attitudes, and experiences concerning the employment of young people. The significance of investigating these dispositions is acknowledged by the CR paradigm, which argues that perceptions are some of the unseen/unobserved mechanisms that often influence observable events. Therefore, in understanding the sampled respondents’ dispositions of the employment of young people, this sub-theme and the three subsequent themes will be analysing the data and how it relates to the literature. In particular, the current theme looks at the views of the sampled employers concerning, exclusively, the employment of young people. The next theme explores the kinds of jobs that the youth are offered and tend to occupy. This will be followed by a theme that explores the respondents’ views concerning the employment of disabled young people. The last sub-theme looks at the main reasons that employers recruit the youth, as well as the advantages and disadvantages that come with employing young people.

Despite the reluctance of employers to employ young job seekers from the 15 to 17-year-olds category—as most of them only recruit young people from the age of 18 years and above—the data reveals that employers gave emotive responses when asked about their views about

the current state of the employment of the youth. All respondents, both the majority (16 employers) that employ the youth and the minority (4 employers) that do not employ the youth, expressed their frustrations with the lack of employment among young people. A Manager from *Burger Club Restaurant* (2020) simply stated: It's [youth employment] low, very low like it's scary because our unemployment is too high, which means a lot of young people are suffering due to lack of jobs. Sharing the same sentiment, a Manager from *Health First Pharmacy* (2020) stated:

> Eish! you know when we talk about this topic, I just get bored. The youth are not employed, and this is such an unfortunate situation, they [employers] need to employ more and more of the youth. And maybe if we can get a younger president, maybe youth unemployment will not be a problem anymore because maybe the young president will push for policies that prioritise the employment of young people, and that is what we need right now. So, my view in terms of youth employment is that the government must do something, but also the youth too must be willing to cooperate to do something.

One may argue that the latter view from the *Health First Manager* seems to trivialise the issue of unemployment insofar as it also suggests that a young president may fix the youth unemployment issue. It is clear by now that addressing unemployment takes more than a president vowing to fix the unemployment issue. That is simply because there is a plethora of factors that cause unemployment, and the solutions to unemployment need to address these factors accordingly. However, considering the sentiments of the abovementioned views together, as they were also shared by other respondents, it can be surmised that the sentiments not only indicates that employers are aware of the challenge of employment among the youth. But the data is also consistent with the literature reviewed, and especially the sentiments that President Ramaphosa has stated, in line with the ILO, that the employment situation is a desperate challenge (ILO, 2016; Ramaphosa, 2018). On this note, it can be inferred that the sampled employers recognise the importance of recruiting young people. In fact, the sampled employers from all industries and firms had views to share about the employment of the youth.

Even though the sampled employers share different reasons behind the lack of employment concerning young people, they all agree that the employment of young people is rather meagre, and thus assert that this should not be the case. A *Supervisor* from the *Exceptional*

Motors Corp (2020), from the manufacturing sector briefly stated: "I think it's important to give young people the opportunity to make their own living you know, being employed might just keep them from doing wrong things that negatively impact their lives." Another *Supervisor* from *Ladies & Gents clothing store* (2020), shared the same view but also emphasised that young people should be employed because they are the future of the country, she said: "It is important to employ young people, for they are the future of our country, so we should look mainly on employing young people." A similar response was upheld by the *Right Choice Supermarket Manager* (2020): "Employment of the youth is the first thing we must look at in our country so even our market can grow and possibly crime will also go down."

Looking at these views is as if the respondents were reading out of President Ramaphosa's speeches, because they sound exactly like what the President would say in his speeches concerning the unemployment of young people in South Africa. This same view is also echoed by the National Treasury (2011), as it has emphatically stated that the employment of young people is of great importance in the country. The fact that this sentiment is widely shared by different stakeholders shows that (as also already mentioned above), the notion of job creation for the youth is not a new idea, nor is it a new strategy that has been created to mitigate the rising unemployment rate and possibly the effects it precipitates. In fact, another sampled employer stated that the employment of young people would diminish some of the effects of unemployment that are mentioned in chapter two, He stated: "I believe the youth should be employed so they can have something that can keep them busy to avoid them being lazy and using drugs, and making a living in criminal ways" (*General Bank Manager*, 2020).

It is quite interesting that this particular respondent pointed out that young people should be employed, as he is one of the employers who stated that they do not employ young people in his firm (see table 6.3). The sentiment relayed by the *General Bank Manager* suggests that providing young people with jobs/employment has the potential of affording them a decent living and of keeping them out of trouble (i.e., criminal activity). However, considering that the *General Bank Manager* is one of the four respondents who claimed that they do not have any young recruits in their firms; the sentiment he expresses also seems to suggest that his choice to not employ young people is somewhat related to the idea that unemployed young people engage in delinquent behaviours—among other reasons that have been put forward as factors that make young jobseekers unattractive to employers. For instance, some scholars maintain that higher unemployment is a result of the behaviours of young people themselves.

This behaviour includes a host of behaviours, such as laziness, being irresponsible, but using drugs is one of the behaviours that some scholars cite as one of the causes of the high unemployment rate (see Ayllon & Ferreira-Batisa, 2017), because this is the kind of behaviour that employers do not appreciate. If such behaviour (especially the use of drugs) is also condemned in schools as misconduct, how much more is it unpalatable in a workplace environment.

An interesting point to note is that some of the reviewed literature regards these behaviours as the effects/consequences of unemployment instead of them being the reason for unemployment. For instance, scholars like Okojie (2003), Urdal (2012), Azenge & Yogo (2013), as well as 'thinking tanks' like the ILO (2015), submit that unemployment leads to social consequences (amongst others outlined in chapter two) such as gangsterism, crime, human trafficking, drug consumption, to mention a few. These varied explanations of the same behaviour (either being the cause or effect of unemployment) may point to the dichotomy that exists among the body of literature concerning the causes of unemployment. These different explanations about young peoples' demeanor may be attributed to the different theories people adopt to explain different things. For instance, both the two broad theories of the labour market (neoclassical theory and LMS theories) not only have different explanations of unemployment that, inevitably, bring them to two different conclusions about unemployment; but their views are conflicting due to the different premises they uphold respectively.

Therefore, one may infer that the qoute (mentioned above) by the *General Bank Manager* also tends to indicate—in as far as it suggests that he does not employ young people because of their delinquent behaviour—that the respondents have pre-conceived perceptions about young people that result from the misconceptions or different understandings they have about young people and their behaviour, and about the causes of unemployment. Be that as it may, I am of the opinion that a more comprehensive explanation of the delinquent behaviours of young people (in relation to them being unemployed) is the one that reckons the situation as being cyclical, as opposed to it being the cause or effect respectively. It should be understood, *in lieu*, that unemployment causes the effects (social, economic, and personal), and the effect, in turn, lead to the further exacerbation of unemployment. To only argue that young people's behaviour is the reason for their unemployment is to adopt a myopic view that overlooks the fact that unemployment itself is what causes people to resort to delinquent behaviour; as

unemployed people become desperate to find other ways to make money. A more panoramic view is the one that sees the whole situation as being cyclical, not one-sided.

In fact, a response that seems to refute the claim (or the perceptions) that unemployed young people tend to engage in destructive behaviour was provided by a Manager from *Star Bank* (2020), which is one of the firms that have young recruits.

> Honestly, really and truly, youth can bring in a drastic change; they've got better ideas and fresh minds that could uplift the business. It really needs to be taken into consideration as to how the youth can get better jobs that they deserve for the kind of skills they have.

Again, as pointed out above—and considering the different views shared by a Manager from the *General Bank* who does not employ young people, and an employer from the *Star Bank* who not only sees the potential young people have, but also has young recruits in his firm—it can be surmised that both these employers hold different perceptions about young people and possibly that their different views have shaped how they view the employability of young people. For instance, the *General Bank Manager's* choice to not employ young people seems to be informed by the perception that young people engage in delinquent behaviour. Conversely, the *Star Bank Manager* appears to be interested in young people because he believes that they have the potential and should be given a chance in the world of work. This conclusion suggests that employers perceptions should be understood to have some form of bearing on whether employers will recruit young people or not.

On the other hand, while most employers' responses support youth employment, as stated above, some of the sampled employers shifted the blame for the scant or non-employment of young people to the government. A Supervisor from the *Dynamite clothing store* (2020) stated: "our president is the reason for the youths being unemployed, honestly speaking, because the youths are the future, and youth unemployment is going up because of him; he is not doing anything about it." This statement was echoed by the *AfriTrans Manager* (2020), who stated: "like I said about the government, I'm not happy with this government, if you can research most of the government workers are families, it's all about connections and corruption." Again, these views echo the claims (made by some employers) that corruption by state officials affects the job creation process significantly, because of the misappropriation and misuse of state funds that could otherwise be used for the public good, instead of the few greedy officials.

Furthermore, data reveal that some respondents place the blame on the employers who do not employ young people. A Manager from the *Maboneg Theme Park* (2020) stated: “I personally don’t think that major companies are doing enough to encourage and help out the youth while they are in high school or look forward to certain subjects or certain values or certification that will enable them to transition from school to the workforce much easier.” It appears from the data that some sampled employers think that different people/institutions are responsible for unemployment, and that these same people can also do something towards fighting unemployment. Therefore, while the identification of various stakeholders (young people/jobseekers in general, the employers, and the government) that are implicated in the slow or non-employment show that each of them has a role to play, and thus contribute to the un/employment situation. It also supports the call (made by the South African government and world organisations alike) for various stakeholders to cast some effort and treat abating unemployment as a joint venture that can be successfully achieved only by collective effort (even though not as speedily as desired).

Another observation that may be made from the data discussed in this section is that most responses are in agreement with LMS theories, as they speak of the need for participation by different stakeholders: government and firms, and young people (which is essentially the supply and demand-side and the state) or lack of it (Wilkinson, 1983; Kraak, 1995; Peck, 1996). Conversely, a few respondents echo the sentiments of the neoclassical theory as they suggest that young jobseekers (the supply-side) should get more education in order to be employable. There was a widely held view that education is the key to better jobs. This view was held mostly by employers who had expressed that they do not employ young people who do not have any kind of qualification. For instance, the *Super Garage Supervisor* (2020) stated: "I think if we can have more education for the youths, I think they can have the opportunity to have better jobs than us.” Another *Supervisor* from the *More or Less Wholesaler* (2020), shared this sentiment: *“*I still do not agree with the employment of the youth without skills or with little education. I feel like youth should be more focused on their studies instead of earning peanuts, you know.”

Considering these views, it is apparent that just like with the opinions shared about youth unemployment, employers have strong perceptions about the employment of young people. However, there is a sharp divide between the views of employers who recruit the youth and those that do not. Employers, who employ young people, maintained views that champion the employment of young people, and some even blamed the government and lack of initiative

from the employers' side for the lack of employment. While some employers put the onus on young jobseekers, to educate themselves first, just as the neoclassical theory and the HCT also maintain. Therefore, the general idea to take from this section is that all employers realise that employment is as much a problem as unemployment. They share this idea with the ILO and other scholars who report that concurrent to the global youth unemployment crisis is the worldwide challenge of youth employment. Furthermore, it can be suggested from the data that the sampled employers have perceptions and attitudes that shape how they view the employability of young jobseekers. This indicates that these dispositions also impact the employment of the youths both negatively and positively, depending on whether the employers' dispositions are positive or negative towards young people.

The responses presented in this section (considered together with the previous sections) also indicate that various stakeholders are believed to contribute to unemployment (employers' discretion; the government with its alleged corruption and labour market regulation; and the young people with their lack of skills). Of course, these factors are not the only determinants of unemployment, but they contribute to it in one way or the other. Therefore, it will take action from all of these stakeholders among others (i.e., civil society, NGOs) to fight unemployment. What sort of action is required from each stakeholder is an issue that can be explored further and will be clear once the role of each stakeholder is clearly defined. This is especially necessary because the significant amelioration of youth unemployment remains one of the greatest concerns and a challenge for all political and economic decision-makers. As also acknowledged by the ILO, World Bank, the South African government, the agenda of curtailing unemployment has proved to be no small feat throughout the years and needs joint effort to be tackled.

7.4.3 Types of Jobs Offered to the Youth

Following up from table 6.3, which demonstrates that a majority (16) of the sampled firms reported that they have young recruits in their firms; the respondents were also asked about the kinds of jobs that their young employees tend to occupy when recruited in the sampled firms. Even though this question did not constitute as the main focus of the study—as I believe it is a topical subject that qualifies as an independent research topic—it is also clear that the issue of underemployment is not entirely divorced from the subject of youth employment. Therefore, it was necessary—in addition to finding out whether the sampled employers employ the youth—to also explore the kinds of jobs for which young people are

most likely to be recruited or considered. This is especially important because there is a growing body of research that finds that there are typical jobs that the youth tend to occupy (see Vosko, Macdonald & Campbell, 2009; Reynolds, 2012; Wilkins & Wooden, 2011; 2012; Mathebula, 2013; Nunley et al., 2014; Puerto, Kluve & Rother, 2016; ILO, 2017). The ILO (2017), finds that low skilled youth face a higher risk of joblessness and, if employed, often work in low-quality, low paid and precarious jobs in most countries. In light of these findings and as a follow-up question, the respondents were asked to outline the kinds of jobs that the youth they employ in their firms occupy (or would usually occupy, or rather for which positions they would consider recruiting the youth).

The data discussed in this section only refers to the 16 employers who maintained that they have young employees in their firms. Table 6.2 in chapter six indicates that while a majority of these employers are from the retail/hospitality sector, employers who have young recruits in their firms are also represented in other sampled sectors (Finance, Manufacturing Retail, and Hospitality). All 16 employers—across the four sectors—identified various jobs that young people are likely to be employed for in their firms. The thing to note about the jobs identified by the sampled employers (excluding the four who do not employ young people at all) is that for a majority of firms, the jobs offered to the youth are those that typically require minimal education, training, and experience. Therefore, for the purpose of this discussion, these jobs, as frequently identified by the sampled employers, will be classified or referred to as 'general jobs.' For instance, an employer from the retail sector stated: "They [young people] usually do stock taking, I mean stock-taking is a simple job, young people don't need to get experience for that" (*More for Less supermarket Supervisor*, 2020). Another employer from the financial sector firm explained the different positions that qualified and unqualified young recruits tend to occupy: [for unqualified young people] It's mostly cleaners, security guards and if they are qualified, we actually put them on the teller post (*Star Bank Manager*, 2020). Another employer from the retail sector also pointed out that youth are offered 'general jobs' because of their minimum (or lack of) skills/qualifications:

> Well, it's mostly stock taking, I mean, you can't employ an 18-year-old or a 20-year-old to be a supervisor or manager. I mean, they don't have experience, they just got out of matric, so they just have matric. They haven't graduated and all that, so the only position we can offer them is stock-taking or cashier. (*More for Less Wholesaler Manager*, 2020)

Another response that shows that young people mostly occupy general jobs is the one given by an employer from the hospitality sector, he stated:

> Mostly we start from the bottom up. So, I would say starting from a trainee, and then we take it to waitress and waiter bar, and we take you to baristas from baristas to bartending, and then you get to senior management (*Eat & Dine Restaurant* Supervisor, 2020).

These above-mentioned jobs seem to be the most common jobs in the retail/hospitality sector. However, for the few firms (from the remaining three sectors), the most recurring jobs filled by young people were low-level jobs such as, to mention a few: cleaner, kitchen workers, security guards, call centre. The *Money Matters Accountancy Manager* (2020) stated: "Yes, I do have [young people] in the call centre because most of the employees don't have the required qualifications for higher departments." Taking into consideration all the jobs that are identified thus far, it can be observed that there is a slight difference between the types of general entry jobs that the retail/hospitality sector offers, and those offered by the latter three sectors. For the retail and hospitality sectors, the jobs offered to young people are entry-level jobs while for the other three sectors it is largely general jobs. *Health First store Manager* (2020), emphasises this difference as he stated:

> Most of our staff are young people in all areas except security, security guards are not young people: most of them are old. You know we need to empower youth because they are our future for tomorrow, and you know they're vibrant, you know; they know how to deal with customers.

Notwithstanding the different jobs offered in different sectors, the recurring jobs from the data collected are cleaner, stock-taking, packer, security guards, waiter/waitresses, cashier, and call centre agent. The common thing about all these identified jobs is that they are considered, according to the LMS theory, as jobs that characterise the secondary sector. Unlike the neoclassical theory that assumes that the labour market is unified, LMS theories profoundly recognise that the labour market is segmented. This segmentation plays out in what Reich et al. (1976), maintain are four different segments/sectors of the labour market (as already presented in chapter two). The secondary sector is what applies here as it consists of the same (though not only) jobs that the respondents have outlined as being occupied by the young recruits in their firms. According to LMS theories, these jobs are said to be of low pay, poor working conditions, little to no opportunity to advance, and no job security. This is the

total opposite of primary sector jobs (see Doeringer & Piore, 1971; Peck, 1996; Fine, 2002; Fleetwood, 2006).

The LMS theories further explain that these kinds of jobs—found in the secondary sector—are usually filled by people with no skills or little skills and are overrepresented by young people, blacks, and mostly women. Several studies have also found that young people are amongst other social groups (i.e., women, Africans) that are most relegated to what LMS theories classify as secondary jobs (see Dooley & Prause, 2004, Denu, Tekeste & Van der Deijl, 2005; Garcia, 2008; Prause & Dooley, 2011; Reynolds & Myers, 2012; Gough & Langevang, 2013; Mathebula, 2013; Cam, 2014; Shehu & Nilsson, 2014; ILO, 2017; UN, 2018; WESO, 2019). Some of the reasons cited as to why young people (and other social groups) are over-represented in these jobs is that they have low skills or no skills at all. Another reason is that, because young people are the most vulnerable to unemployment (due to lack of skills), they tend to, out of desperation, settle for low-level jobs as an attempt to escape joblessness and poverty (Altman, 2007; Mathebula, 2013; Golub & Hayat, 2015; Puerto & Kluve, 2016; ILO, 2017. Similarly, the results of this study consistently show that these types of jobs are occupied mostly by young people who do not have any qualifications higher than matric. In fact, according to eight of the 16 respondents that employ young people, some of these jobs (identified above) are occupied by the youth who have grade 10 to matric as their qualification, and have no skills or experience. The *fashion Statement Manager* (2020) stated: "... I mean, stock-taking is a simple job, youth don't need to get experience for that." Another response that shows that young people normally fill low skills or low qualification jobs was provided by the *Egoli Distillery Manager* (2020), who stated: "Yes, I do have [young people] in the call centre because most of the young employees don't have the required qualifications for higher departments."

Contrary to the abovestated responses, only one (out of 16 respondents) employer from the firm that recruits graduates only expressed that young people (graduates) who work at his firm work as mechanics. This is a job position that definitely requires a tertiary qualification and, unlike the numerous jobs mentioned above, is not a general job. The employer explained:

> No, we recruit from 21 years, and the young people we have work as mechanics. They have to have a qualification for that job. Without a valid qualification, they cannot really do the job (Exceptional Motor Corp Supervisor, 2020).

Notwithstanding the one employer that recruits graduates only, and despite the difference between the jobs given to young people with low skills and qualifications therein; it can be concluded from these responses that there is a propensity of employers to relegate young people to secondary jobs as per the LMS definition (refer to chapter two: section 2.4). A total of 15 employers from all four sectors (excluding the *Exceptional Mort Corp* firm that only recruits young people with qualifications) have unequivocally stated that they consider young people for the general or entry-level jobs. These results are consistent with both LMS theories and the literature reviewed concerning the types of jobs for which young people are recruited or considered. Just as LMS theories distinguish between primary and secondary sector jobs and recognise that the secondary jobs are filled, predominantly, by young people. The literature reviewed also, consistently, maintains that young people are the ones who mostly occupy the general jobs that have also been identified by the 15 respondents. As already pointed above, both LMS theories and literature claim that this over-representation of young people (especially blacks and women) can be explained by numerous factors, but one of the factors that relate to young people is that—due to high rates of unemployment and the high standard of living—young people grow desperate and thus resort to taking up secondary jobs just to make what little living they can.

Access to either the secondary or the primary sector is conditioned by the different rules and procedures that govern each sector, which are also shaped by employers' discrimination or preferences, amongst other things (Kraak, 1995, Leonatridi, 2008). This, in turn, determines the employment and wage outcomes of potential recruits, as opposed to it just being the smooth interaction between supply and demand as assumed by the neoclassical theorists (Fleetwood, 2006; Leonatridi, 2008; White, 2018). It is for this reason that LMS theories claim that the labour market is a social construct, because this (i.e., rules and procedures, employers' preferences) also forms part of a series of filtering factors and social, ideological processes occurring within the labour market. These filtering factors serve to structure the system of employment, and in turn, is responsible for delegating different employees into the two distinct sectors (Kraak, 1995). It stands to reason from this consideration that though their (young people) human capital, or lack thereof, causes them to end up occupying secondary jobs, as pointed out by the respondents. It should also be understood that the demand-side also plays a role in establishing and sustaining the secondary sector, which, at the end of the day, benefits them in various ways. This ability of employers to relegate

different people to different sectors: primary or secondary, further proves the upper hand that employers have in the labour market.

In fact, another important thing to note about these jobs, which is corollary to the point maintained above, is that these jobs are usually offered on a non-standard basis which in this case is mostly part-time/temporary employment. Indeed, Table 6.2 shows, generally, that the recurring non-standard jobs that sampled employers recruit for are mostly part-time and casual types of jobs. The data reveal that jobs that the sampled employers recruit young people for are both general jobs and are offered on a part-time or casual basis. Again, these results corroborate LMS theories as they maintain that certain social groups are over-represented in the different types of non-standard employment (i.e., Africans, women, youth) (Standing et al., 1999; Felstead & Jewson, 1999; Allen & Henry, 2004; Fourie, 2008; Garcia, 2008; Yu, 2012; Mathebula, 2013). While adults are also represented in such employment, empirical evidence finds that young people are predominantly relegated to both general employment (as identified above) and non-standard employment. The idea behind young people being over-represented in non-standard employment is that most of the workers that occupy these jobs are unskilled or work in sectors with limited or no trade union organisation and collective bargaining coverage, thus leaving them vulnerable to unemployment (Allen & Henry, 1996; Bezuidenhout et al., 2004). Therefore, most young people who fall under the NEETs category are vulnerable to both unemployment and non-standard employment; and if they are fortunate enough to secure employment, they fall under the secondary sector. This is because they are the ones who are less employable to employers due to their lack of skills, education, and experience. In this case, it seems like general jobs and non-standard employment seem to go along. Young people are employed for general jobs that are offered to them on a non-standard employment basis.

Overall, these findings show that there is a tendency for employers to employ young people in the secondary sector—or that young people appeal to employers in the secondary sector, but are found to be too risky by the primary sector employers—which is characterised by general jobs that do not require significant skills to undertake. And is also characterised by non-standard employment, even though non-standard employment is not exclusive to the secondary sector. While this tendency to employ young people for these kinds of jobs can be explained by the fact that young people do not always have the skills to be considered for primary sector jobs. These findings can also be explained by the fact that non-standard employment is a strategy that benefits employers, given that they are able to employ people

that can do the work that is needed in their firms for little pay and without benefits (Gramm, 2001; Kalleberg, Reynolds & Marsden: 2003; Houseman, 2011). In other words, employers get to cut costs by filling positions in their firms at a low price and without having to pay for other benefits as they do for standard employment employees.

Moreover, flexible staffing solutions is a strategy that employers use to circumvent the commitment to labour legislation that, so far, provides protection to standard employment employees. Non-standard employees are not as protected by labour laws as the standard employees are (Allen & Henry, 2004; Fourie, 2008; Garcia, 2008; Yu, 2012; Mathebula, 2013). This explains why employers resort to non-standard employment, especially where it concerns young people. Since employers are said to regard young people as risky due to their inexperience, among other things, non-standard employment seems like another strategy that employers can employ young people without facing such a risk. It stands to reason that the intention behind recruiting a young person is to hire them on a temporary or short-term basis that can be terminated without the 'hassle' of following extensive procedures or going to the Labour Court. This may well explain why this strategy (flexible staffing) is widely used among all firms in all sectors, not exclusively for young jobseekers, but workers in general.

The conclusion that can be drawn from this analysis is that while youth unemployment is a global crisis (which means that many employers are unlikely to be recruiting young people for various reasons); the results of this section denote that the problem is not that young people are not being recruited, but that they are not being recruited to the degree that is needed to absorb the millions of unemployed young people. However, employers that do employ young people (especially those without skills) are likely to employ young people for secondary jobs and non-standard employment, which in this case is often temporary and part-time employment. The consequence of non-standard employment, however, is that it does not entirely address the rampant situation of unemployment, and it barely lifts jobseekers from the poverty line (which is the estimated minimum level income needed to secure the necessities of life). In fact, it provides temporary relieve that has small benefits, if any at all. In fact, some scholars regard these practices (flexible staffing) as problematic, arguing that it translates into less job security for workers, which LMS theories also argue that is found in secondary jobs.

It is for this reason that it can be argued that the flexible staffing solutions seem to negate the ILO agenda for decent work, which consists, among other things, of opportunities for work

that is productive and deliver fair income, security in the workplace, equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men, and is fundamental to ensure that the workforce is not subjected to precarious work. On the contrary, flexible staffing practices subject people, especially young people, to non-standard employment, which is usually characterised by the conditions that the agenda for decent work seems to exist to do away with. Therefore, for as long as decent work seeks to ensure security in the workplace, flexible practices appear to contravene or work against this agenda. According to the ILO (2017), most people are working under poor conditions that do not guarantee them a decent living. Other scholars also maintain that underemployment and poor working conditions are key features of youth employment in Africa due to the insufficient quantity and quality of jobs available (Okojie, 2003; Denu, Tekeste & Van der Deijl, 2005). Acting out of much desperation, many young people settle for precarious, underpaid, and seasonal work, and are most susceptible to the informal economy. In other words, they experience a lack of material well-being, economic security, equal opportunity, or scope for human development (ILO, 2017).

Therefore, these findings (that show that the sampled employers employ young people mostly for non-standard employment) depict that the agenda for decent work will remain a challenge especially given that unemployment is still increasing. Because in the effort to escape unemployment and the economic, social, and personal effects that accompany it, people end up settling for non-standard employment as it may help them eke out some living. This points to the fact that desperation leads people to these jobs, and because employers would do just about anything to make a profit, they take advantage of the desperation of unemployed people to cut costs and make a living. This indicates that employers also thrive of off this pool of desperate jobseekers, because it is the employers that benefit the most from non-standard employment. Whereas, non-standard employees do not have job security because of short-term employment. Again, this also shows that employers have the upper hand as they are the ones who benefit by saving money and making a profit, while also getting the work done, but non-standard employees barely make a living. Even though, on the other hand, young people have a chance to get into the labour market, this entry in the labour market is not sustainable, simply because it does not have employment security.

7.4.4 Employment of Disabled Youth

There is a growing body of literature that creates awareness about the fact that disabled jobseekers (of all working ages) are the most vulnerable to unemployment than any other

social group. While youth unemployment is a global crisis, it turns out disabled jobseekers are the hardest hit than abled young jobseekers (Barnes & Mercer, 2005; Natrass, 2005; Thornton, 2005; ILO, 2007; Maart et al., 2007; Achterberg et al., 2009; Greve, 2009; Eichhorst et al., 2010; Lindsay, 2011; Baumberg, 2014). This is because while disabled people may be subjected to unemployment for other reasons, their disability affects their employment prospects, due to the fact that many firms/organisations do not always cater for their unique and special needs. In South Africa, specifically, there are, among others, two pieces of legislation (discussed in chapter four) that obligate employers to integrate disabled employers—amongst other previously disadvantaged groups—in their employment considerations. However, despite the legislative framework, disabled jobseekers still find themselves in worse situations where being employed is concerned. This is evidenced by the literature reviewed and the data that was collected for this current study.

It is against this background that the question of how recruitment practices affect disabled people, especially within the category of the youth (as opposed to older disabled jobseekers), is relevant for this study. Firstly, and unfortunately, the data shows that a majority of the sampled employers do not have disabled workers in their respective firms. As presented in Table 6.3, only two out of 20 employers reported that they have disabled employees in their firms. However, not only are the disabled workers very few in these two firms (as roughly estimated by the two employers), but they are also not necessarily young recruits in terms of the age demographic. Notwithstanding that a substantial majority of the sampled firms do not have disabled workers in their firms, all 20 employers (including those who currently do not have disabled recruits) expressed what they thought about the employment of the disabled jobseekers. The responses are varied between employers who expressed that disabled youths should be employed, and some expressing that recruiting the disabled jobseekers would be more onerous for their firms.

A considerable number of the respondents expressed, unreservedly, that even though they did not currently have disabled workers in their firms, disabled people should be employed. These views were shared by respondents from across all four sectors. For instance, the *More for Less wholesaler Supervisor* (2020) stated: "Well, I think they should also be given opportunities to experience the work environment and make a living." Without making light of the varied conditions of disabled people, all employers shared the view that disabled people are also human and should be afforded the same employment opportunities as everyone else. The *Right Choice Supermarket Manager* (2020) stated:

> My personal thought is that a disability does not make you invalid. There are always certain aspects within the workplace that someone with a disability can do, and you can always use somebody who's able-bodied to perform the duties that require able people to carry out.

The *Money Matters Accountancy Manager* (2020), expressed that while they do not currently have disabled workers in his firm, employing disabled jobseekers is not entirely ruled out as they do consider employing disabled people.

> We are all the same, as you can still work with a disability, it doesn't mean you don't have skills, you don't have anything to bring in the world. So I think as a disabled person you are more welcome to work with us.

This view was shared by the *Burger Club Restaurant Supervisor* (2020), who stressed that disabled people should not be discriminated against, he stated: "That's one of the things we have to consider doing [employing disabled people], because we don't want to discriminate against them." Though these (above-mentioned) employers make a case for the employment of disabled individuals, they seem to not recognise that there are different cases of disability and as such different cases need special needs—this point is dealt with below. However, there are a few other employers who recognise that there are some disabilities that cannot be considered for employment such as chronic mental illness. These employers explain that the employment of disabled people should depend on whether they will be able to execute the duties that the occupation they fill requires of them. The *General Bank Manager* (2020) stated: " I think it should depend on the type of disability a certain person has, or what his/her health condition is, some people are physically disabled, and some are mentally disabled. So, the question is: will they be able to do the job effectively?" This view was shared by the *East Bank Manager* (2020):

> It depends on the career they will be applying for; you can't expect a disabled person to work for a 'hard labour' firm for example, because they work with equipment and they work in places where they actually have to climb escalators and carry heavy equipment. It's unlikely that a disabled person can do that. So, it would be futile to employ them.

The *Health First Manager* (2020), ent further to provide an example demonstrating the instances where it would be almost impossible to recruit a disabled person:

> Oh, you see, with disabled people, we are actually looking to hire someone who is disabled but who can, you know, at least get some work done. I mean, after all, they are human beings. But, again, when it comes to health conditions, certain conditions make it hard for us to hire people who have chronic conditions. For example, we cannot hire people who are mentally disturbed.

The *Stop & Shop Groceries Manager* (2020), explained that disabled employers should be considered for employment. But also cautioned that some disabilities cannot be accommodated given that doing so may be putting the disabled person in harm:

> People that are disabled, I feel like we shouldn't ostracise them, and I feel like they should also be given a chance, but then there can be disadvantages. Like, I would say we have a position where they have to actually pack the products on the shelves so you find a younger person in a wheelchair and can't reach the top. So, we wouldn't want to endanger them by actually putting them on equipment that will make them do what they are physically unable to do, something may happen, they fall down, we will be responsible, so we avoid such things by all means.

Taking all of these responses into consideration, data shows that a majority of the sampled employers do not have any disabled workers in their firms (only two firms have a fairly small number of disabled workers). However, they all expressed that they support the employment of disabled jobseekers. They also shared some sound reasons as to why they currently do not have disabled employees, or why they cannot afford to hire disabled jobseekers. According to the data, it is apparent that—for the majority of the workers—the main concern when it comes to the employment of disabled people is whether the disabled people will be able to carry out the duties that enable the firm to offer sservices/products to its customers. Here we see that employers' perceptions (among other things) concerning the disabled people/jobseekers tends to inform their decision to recruit the disabled youth. The general perception is that disabled people would not be able to perform their duties properly. Or that when recruited, their employment may impose some financial burdens on the firms—most of which are small firms in terms of size.

Indeed, despite the responses from a majority of employers who support the employment of young people, there is a minority of respondents who expressed diverging views. The latter employers maintained that it would be somewhat onerous to have disabled jobseekers work for their firms due to the nature of the business and the services they render. The general idea

amongst these few employers was that the nature of the jobs in their firms does not accommodate people with disabilities. The *Super Garage Supervisor* (2020) noted:

> "Ah, it's a problem [to hire disabled job seekers] because mostly, if for example, you have a customer you [as a disabled worker] don't know how to speak or you deaf, you can't hear, it's gonna be a problem for us."

This view was echoed by the *Dynamite Clothing Supervisor* (2020):

> In our company, we don't find it suitable to employ disabled people because we work with people and some of the people are not considerate of disabled people. They might offend the disabled person in other ways, rather keep them safe and not expose them to the environment here in our firm.

A Manager from the *Chicken Corner Restaurant Supervisor* (2020) stated:

> I think the public won't be as welcoming when they see someone disabled taking their orders. For instance, they will become too impatient and end up doing something that is not okay to the disabled worker.

One of the employers gave a view that summarises all the expressions made by most of the employers:

> I encourage [employers] to employ [disabled jobseekers] because you can have disabled people who are skilled but may have certain handicaps, whereby they can't physically do some tasks. So, I encourage companies to hire them, even though for health reasons it could be risky because they'll have to be responsible for [disabled workers] in case something happens to them [disabled workers]. I wouldn't want companies to be discriminating against them (*Fashion Statement Clothing Supervisor,* 2020).

The sentiment relayed in these responses was shared by a minority of respondents from the retail sector. Even though not all respondents (from retail firms) expressed that disabled people should be employed, this reluctance to employ disabled people may well be explained by the fact that retail sectors are usually small in size (in terms of the number of employees), and are likely to not have the facilities/equipmens that accommodate disabled jobseekers as big firms would—big firms are likely to have the means and ye capacity to install such facilities. That is why it is concerning to find that some of the few big firms do not have

disabled workers, as one would assume that they are in a better position (in terms of finances and space) to provide equipment and resources for the disabled workers.

Overall, it appears (which is also very important to note) that, in terms of unemployment rates, there are some differences between the abled youths and the youths with disabilities. According to the evidence from the current study, employment prospects are gloomier for the youth with disabilities than they are for the abled youths. These results corroborate the findings of the reviewed literature that acknowledges that today's youths face high unemployment and other labour-market challenges; yet these challenges are often worse for youth with disabilities (Barnes & Mercer, 2005; Natrass, 2005; Thornton, 2005; ILO, 2007; Maart et al., 2007; Achterberg et al., 2009; Greve, 2009; Eichhorst et al., 2010; Lindsay, 2011; Baumberg, 2014). There are obviously several reasons why disabled young jobseekers find it hard to secure employment. However, from the data, it seems that what causes the disabled youths to have low prospects is a matter of the cost and maintenance of equipment and facilities needed for disabled employees in the organisations; more than it is that employers think disabled people are unemployable. In fact, many employers have expressed that they would gladly employ disabled jobseekers given that they are humans well and may well possess the skills that abled people have. However, it appears that most firms do not have (nor are they in a position to afford) the types of equipment/facilities that are needed to employ and retain disabled workers. This is because most of the sampled firms are small in size. In addition to that, the data show that some of the sampled firms have jobs that require only abled people, whereby employing disabled people would be hazardous for disabled (or otherwise handicapped) jobseekers, instead of being a work-friendly environment.

Even though there are labour laws that advocate for the employment of especially disabled persons, the existence of the law has not achieved much change. One would expect disabled youths (or even adults) to be more advantaged given the provisions of the labour law (such as Affirmative Action, among others), that promote the employment of disabled people (as one of the previously disadvantaged categories). Similarly, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, among other things, identifies people with disabilities as one of several groups of vulnerable people who must be empowered. Furthermore, according to ILO (2017), the Sustainable Development Goals contained in the 2030 Agenda make explicit reference to disability in a number of labour market-related targets and their associated indicators. However, despite the significant attention cast on the issues of disability in the world of work, people with disabilities are still less likely to participate in the labour force; and if actually

employed, people with disabilities are less likely to have paid jobs (Barnes & Mercer, 2005; Natrass, 2005; Thornton, 2005; ILO, 2007; Maart et al., 2007; Achterberg et al., 2009; Greve, 2009; Eichhorst et al., 2010; Lindsay, 2011; Baumberg, 2014). For instance, the recent statistics (ILO Stats & StatsSA) show that people with disabilities continue to face higher unemployment rates than any other group. This indicates tha not only are more disability-friendly policies needed to promote the employment of disabled people, but so too should be the implementation of these policies. Which—much like policies that promote youth employment or employment in general—are often good on paper with very little effectiveness. This lack of effectiveness is exposed by the ever-increasing rates of youth unemployment and unemployment among disabled people.

Nonetheless, it can be surmised from the data that the unemployment of disabled people is not without any sound reasons, even though that can still be challenged. Some of the reasons why disabled youth are in a worse situation than the youths with no disabilities, will be discussed in section 9.3.2, (this section reveals that specific requirements for certain skills have a bearing on young people, especially the youth with disabilities). For instance, the fact that employers prefer particular attributes and characteristics, this means disabled people who do not have these characteristics and attributes cannot be considered for employment even though they may have the qualifications. It appears that in sectors like retail/hospitality, it would be hard for disabled workers to find work that can also accommodate their unique and special needs, given that the nature of most of the jobs require physical and aesthetic labour (such as walking around, talking to clients, having physical looks). Again, these findings support existing literature that finds that persons with disabilities tend to experience high unemployment and have lower earnings than persons without disabilities (Barnes & Mercer, 2005; Natrass, 2005; Thornton, 2005; ILO, 2007; Maart et al., 2007; Achterberg et al., 2009; Greve, 2009; Eichhorst et al., 2010; Lindsay, 2011; Baumberg, 2014).

Moreover, despite that 18 employers (excluding the two who do have disabled employers) provided reasons behind why their firms do not have disabled employees, it stands to reason from the data explored that employment for disabled people is as much a pressing need as is employment for the young people. Perhaps, disabled people may need more attention than it is needed for abled young people. Especially, because for disabled people, it means that not only should employers create jobs; but that they have to also make sure that they have the right equipment and resources that will accommodate the disabled people. Granted, having to ensure that there is such equipment for disabled people in the organisations may be one of the

reasons why most of the sampled firms do not have any disabled employees. The installation and maintenance of such equipment seems like an added cost that employers may not readily be willing to commit to, especially if it compromises their number one objective of generating profit. This further makes the creation of jobs even harder to achieve and also explains why it has been slow in coming. It appears that employers will only create employment if it guarantees more profit, and this also means that if job creation takes away from the profit of the employers, then employers may be reluctant to engage in such a commitment.

The conclusion of this section is echoed by Cominetti, Sissons, and Jones (2013), whose findings, among other things, reveal that the principal barriers to employing workers with disabilities are lack of awareness of disability and accommodation issues, concern over costs, and fear of legal liability. Indeed, considering the discussion above, there is a parallel between the data discussed above and the results of the study Cominetti, Sissons, and Jones (2013). In addition to that, it should also be understood from the data explored that employers' perceptions about disabled workers being unable to do the work, and the employets lack of disability friendly equipment, count as factors that negatively impacts disabled jobseekers. This is why the subject of unemployment among the disabled jobseekers needs more attention in order to address these issues, and to find a way that will help disabled jobseekers to be accommodated more in the labour market in the same way that there are ongoing agendas created for youth unemployment and gender equality. This is especially necessary because while this subject matter has managed to capture the attention of policy makers, more research is needed to educate both employers and jobseekers about disabled people.

There definitely is a need for education that will correct the perceptions and stereotypes that assume that disabled workers are unable to work as much as abled people. And also, to create awareness about the different kinds of disabilities because not all of them are the same—some disabilities are more chronic than others, and some disabilities do not incapacitate a person from working. For instance, a person may need to be on a wheelchair all day, but they may have administrative skills that most firms demand. Therefore, being on a wheelchair will not incapacitate the person from doing the administrative work, although it may mean that the firm has to install facilities to accomodate the mobility of such an employee. Whatever the case, there is definitely a need for more education in order for employers to make an informed decision, rather than only relying on their perceptions of disabled workers. If some

of the perceptions employers have of young people need to be corrected—as already posited above—then indeed such rethinking is needed for an even more vulnerable group of disabled jobseekers. Of course, in fostering the inclusivity of disabled people who want to and can work, research is needed to shed light on the different conditions of disabilities to better inform employers about the disabilites that can be accommodated and those that cannot. With that said, the next section looks at some of the reasons why employers recruit young people.

7.4.5 Reasons for Recruiting the Youth

In section 7.4.1, as well as other sections thereafter, it was mentioned in passing that the employers perception may count as one of the reasons why young people are considered for employment or not. This section explores more reasons—shared by the sampled employers themselves—that motivate the sampled employers to either recruit young people or not. Even though it could be inferred from the data why employers would want to employ young people (or why some do not), the respondents also provided their own reasons why they either employ or do not employ young jobseekers. The study inevitably finds, firstly, that employers who do recruit young people gave positive reasons. The most recurring and common reason is that youths "are eager, determined, and confident; and because some want to prove themselves, young people work extra hard" (*Ladies & Gents Clothing Manager*, 2020). A Manager from the *Eat & Dine Restaurant* (2020) also said: "young people are energetic. I mean, who wouldn't want to work with an energetic person." In addition, some employers went on to explain why they prefer to have the young recruits they employ fill certain positions (which have already been outlined in section 7.4.3.). Young people are described to be young, fresh, and energetic, which may also imply that these are the characteristics/qualities that are needed for the general and sometimes entry-level jobs that are offered to young people by these employers. This point is dealt with in chapter nine; however, it is sufficient to mention (in this section) that most of the 16 employers (across the four sampled firms) that do employ the youth responded affirmatively; and are of the view that young recruits are just the right people for the jobs that they occupy in their firms. Below are some of the examples they provided:

> We employ young people for waiters, waitresses, and dishwashers because we need people who are full of energy and who are young. And I think these positions are suitable for the youth because they can follow instructions and orders (*Super Garage Supervisor*, 2020).

> The reason why we recruit the young workforce is because we find them very eager to learn, you can always fill them with information and they will keep on gathering it, the youth is much stronger; they're much more in use, you'll have less people off sick from work when you have young people (*Right Choice Supermarket Manager*, 2020).
>
> We recruit them [young people] primarily because of their energy, they are still young, they are still vibrant, they still got a lot to learn, so I think they are the best, you know, in serving our customers (*Dynamite Clothing Supervisor*, 2020).
>
> As I said, young people are very energetic. They are fresh-minded. They come up with new ideas, so which company wouldn't like fresh new ideas that young people have to offer (*East Bank Manager*, 2020).

It is, therefore, apparent that employers' perceptions, about the youths', have a bearing on their decision to recruit young people. Based on the above-mentioned responses, it stands to reason that because these employers think young people are energetic and vibrant, that makes them the suitable candidates for the jobs the sampled employers offer in their firms—because why else will they recruit them. Even though this evidence indicates that employers' perceptions play a role in their decisions to employ young people, it should also be acknowledged that there is more to the employment of young people than just the positive perceptions employers have concerning young people. For instance, when we take into consideration the LMS theories' arguments—that the segmentations (Primary and Secondary segments) in the labour market are designed and serve to benefit employers than they do the workers—together with neoclassical theory acknowledging—that employers are only interested in profit maximisation. It can be concluded that, in actuality, the employment of young people occurs ultimately, if not mainly, because it also benefits the firms and guarantees them profit. It follows conversely, that where young people are not employed, or even so much as considered for employment in some firms; it could be that the employment of young people in those firms does not guarantee this kind of profit maximisation in those firms. Or at least, it could be that the employers who do not employ young people do not think that employing young people can contribute to their firms' profit maximisation.

Notwithstanding that most employers impute their reason to employ young people on the qualities that most young people have, some employers expressed that they just want to give the young people a chance, because of the acute unemployment issue that befalls them. The *Burger Club Restaurant Manager* (2020) stated: "I think they should be given an opportunity

for them [young people] to enter the labour market and make a living for themselves." This view was repeated by the *Multi-Drinks Factory Manager* (2020) who also explained: "I would recruit young people because they are hungry for success, hungry for money because they want to make ends meet." Again, it can be concluded that even though these responses imply that some employers care about the youths and may genuinely employ them because they want to give them the opportunity as a way to beat unemployment. This decision to employ young people is ultimately because the employers themselves will benefit from such employment. If employers could employ people contingent on the fact that employers genuinely wanted to give them an opportunity to make a living (as expressed by the two employers mentioned above); then many people would be employed because many people actually are desperate for such an opportunity. But the unfortunate reality is that millions of people remain jobless because hinged to the employers' reasons to employ people is the ultimate goal of making a profit. Which simply suggests that employers will create employment opportunities only if profit maximisation is guaranteed. This is ultimately what motivates employers to employ. It is quite critical to understand this because any strategy that is designed to encourage employers to employ young jobseekers (or jobseekers in general) should ensure that it addresses the number one goal of employers: profit maximisation.

Overall, in studying these responses, it was interesting to find that the reasons provided (for the employment of young people) did not mention anything about skills and qualifications that the young recruits have. Rather most of the reasons had a lot to do with the attributes/personalities of the young people than their qualifications or skills. This may imply that the sampled employers know that young people are most likely not to have any qualifications. As is also reported by StatsSA that many young people do not have any qualifications, and even a greater number of them are not in education, employment, and training. Furthermore, it can be inferred—as it will also be further explored in chapter nine—that one of the reasons why most of the employers (who recruit young people) do not mention qualification as one of the reasons why they recruit young people is, perhaps, that the job offered to young people are jobs that do not require the recruits to have any qualification. After all, employers also know that most young people do not have qualifications because some of them do not even make it to matric; and some do not pursue tertiary studies due to various reasons that have been alluded to above.

Despite that some employers did not have any reasons to share—as to why they recruit young people—because they did not have any young employees in their firms (see table 6.3). One of

the employers expressed her rather negative opinion, justifying why her firm does not recruit young in the first place.

> I wouldn't hire young people and because they don't take things seriously; some are dropouts from school, they only work because they just want money, nothing else (*General Bank Manager*, 2020).

These results point to a divide (though not significant) between the majority of employers who gave positive reasons as to why they choose to employ young jobseekers, and the minority of employers who gave somewhat negative reasons why they currently do not have young recruits (and why they would not consider hiring young recruits). These results prove that employers' perceptions concerning young people eventually inform their choice to employ the youth or not. Both groups of employers—those who employ young jobseekers and those that do not—provided reasons that are tied to what they thought about young people. Those who employed young people (and would consider doing so even in the future) thought well of young people, and those that did not, thought the worst of young jobseekers. While this does not downplay the perceptions that each group of employers has about young people and the role they play in the eventual decision to employ young people; by and large, these results tend to refute the studies that find that young people are not being employed due to lack of skills, experience, and thus representing a risk due to this lack. In fact, it should be recognised that there are employers who are open to employing young people while there are also those who do not think employing young people would be a good idea. These results help understand that there are employers who also have no issues employing young people as they find young people useful (even though it is for general jobs, it is still worth knowing that there are employers who are open to it). It would be incomplete only to think employers find young people to be high risk and of no use for their firms. This study, while it acknowledges that this may be true for some employers, it also rebuts this to be true for all employers as data reveals that young people with no qualifications do find employment in the labour market. And just like graduate employment, youth employment is also not occurring as much as is needed currently.

Considering all that has been discussed, it can be concluded that all these reasons provided by the sampled employers support the claim made by LMS theories that employers' dispositions filters into their decisions to recruit or not recruit jobseekers (Kraak, 1995; Leonatridi, 2008). Employers also have preferences that include a host of factors, but may also be on the

grounds of the jobseekers' age, race, and gender. In the case of these sampled employers, age seems to be one of the factors. On the one hand, employers prefer not to recruit young people because they are considered too young and not quite as responsible as adults employees are. On the other hand, employers expressed that they recruit young people because they are young and energetic and adapt to things quicker than their adult counterparts. These results not only further prove that employers' perceptions influence their decision to employ young people. But it also proves that demand-side factors have a bearing on jobseekers' employment outcomes. This conclusion is evidenced by, though not exclusively, the fact that perceptions of the employers (who did not employ young people) tend to impact young peoples' employment prospects negatively.

7.4.6 Advantages and Disadvantages of Recruiting Young People

The advantages and disadvantages of youth employment may also encourage or dissuade employers' interest in employing or considering employing young people. This is why this section explores the experiences that the sampled employers have concerning the recruitment of young people. All employers, both those who have expressed that they recruit young people, and those that had expressed that they do not, commented on the advantages and disadvantages that they think come with recruiting young people. These views reflect the lived experiences of the employers who recruit young people, and perceptions from those who do not recruit the youth. Expectedly, the data shows that all employers that employ young people had only advantages to speak of, the disadvantaged were pointed out mostly by employers who do not have young recruits in their firms (as presented in Table 6.2). And have also expressed that they do not have any interests of employing young people. Below are some of the responses from the employers who pointed out some of the advantages that come with employing young people.

> Young people are usually determined, and they are competent, so they make things a bit easier for us (*Ladies & Gents Clothing Supervisor*, 2020)

> What can I say? We hardly get complaints from customers since we have started hiring young people. I think it's because they [young people] know how to do the job better (*Health First Store Manager*, 2020)

> Well, when our customers enter the bank, they actually see young and fresh people. It also gives them the drive to actually know they will be well served (*East Bank Manager*, 2020)

Some employers attributed the advantages of recruiting the youths' to the abilities that young people have:

> We recruit youth because they're fresh, flexible they can even work for extra hours they don't mind, they have smiles on their faces, and they love their job they don't bring their stress to work (*Burger Club Manager*, 2020)

> Well, as I said, we work with young people they attract a lot of customers, it's not just our prices, but the people who work with our customers are mostly important. (*Stop & Shop Supermarket Manager*, 2020)

> I mean, we are reaching targets now, you know; they are reaching targets. We've never been behind with anything. I love my young employees; I love working with them. (*AfriTrans*, 2020)

> In the years, young people have been the ones who have been taking the numbers up for his company, so it means that the youth have the grit to work and get the job done (*More for Less supermarket Supervisor*, 2020).

While most employers attributed advantages to the fact that their businesses are doing well, two firms from the retail sector gave very interesting responses. They both expressed that one of the advantages is that unemployment is being reduced which is very much needed.

> It helps us to reduce unemployment. (*Eat & Dine restaurant supervisor*, 2020)

> Ah! we try to eliminate unemployment. (*Fashion Statement store Supervisor,* 2020)

Notwithstanding these advantages, some employers pointed out the disadvantages that come with hiring young people:

> Uhm, I mean, we've had situations whereby we'd hire young people, and the outcomes are bad. They do not get the job done, and we have had to dismiss them (*General Bank Manager*, 2020).

> It can be bad because young people, they are still young, and they don't have experience (*Multi-drinks Factory Manager*, 2020).

> Well, you know how young people are, they come at work drunk, some of them smoke weed during their lunch time (*Money Matters Accountancy Manager*, 2020).

One employer alluded to the fact that young people are selective with the jobs they take up.

> Sometimes somebody [a young jobseeker] would come in and when they come in, they'll ask which jobs are currently available and we'd say dish washer, they'll just refuse and walk away. (*Chicken Corner restaurant Manager*, 2020)

The advantages and disadvantages that employers have shared in this section tend to contradict each other. In fact, the advantages not only contradict the disadvantages presented above but they also contradict the one side of the debate about the causes of unemployment. Whereby some of the reviewed literature suggests that some of the disadvantages (i.e., being irresponsible, lack of experience) identified by the employers are what lead to some young people being unemployed. In comparison, some of the literature regards these same disadvantages as effects (or a byproduct) of young people being unemployed. This contradiction is not only consistent with the debate that is already encapsulated in much of the reviewed literature concerning youth unemployment, but it also points to the fact that different employers have different experiences and perceptions about working with young people. Again, this proves that neoclassical theory is correct in as far as it recognises that employers are interested in profit maximisation. Indeed, both the reason of the sampled employers to recruit or not, boils down to whether the employment of young people will generate profit or not. This is the part of the neoclassical theory that is applicable to these findings.

7.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter explored the perceptions, attitudes, and experiences (collectively referred to as 'dispositions') that employers have towards young people. It did this by looking at how employers understand unemployment, and what they propose to be the solutions thereof. The chapter also looked at the perceptions and attitudes that employers have concerning the employment of young people. This chapter also explored the types of jobs employers are most likely to offer the young people, and the reasons that employers have for recruiting the youth or lack thereof. Overall, the results of this chapter are two-fold: the majority of sampled employers have positive dispositions, and the minority of employers have negative dispositions. Accordingly, the former group is of the mind that young people are suitable for

their businesses. Whereas the other group felt that young people are risky and not suitable for their firms. Obviously, these opposite dispositions impact the youth differently. This indicates that while these dispositions (perceptions, attitudes, and experiences) are not an exclusive factor, as there are other factors that influence and shape any organisational activities (including the recruitment of potential candidates). Understanding the employers' dispositions will help understand how they factor in designing and practicing the R&S strategies, which will be discussed and analysed in chapter nine. The following chapter explores the perceptions that employers have concerning the government, and the interventions that the government has made concerning youth unemployment. Thereafter, the R&S strategies and practices of the sampled firms will be analysed in light of the employers' dispositions discussed in this chapter and chapter eight.

CHAPTER EIGHT

EMPLOYERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S INTERVENTIONS CONCERNING YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter explored the 'dispositions' that the sampled employers have towards young jobseekers. This discussion gives a sense of what the respondents think of young people and reveals some of the ways these views influence their decision-making when it comes to the employment or non-employment of young people. This current chapter, additionally, looks at the respondents' perceptions concerning the role that the government plays in mitigating youth unemployment. This chapter is also crucial to answering the main research question, given that the South African government—responding to the global initiative to fight unemployment—has created numerous strategies to respond to youth unemployment, some of which are designed to encourage employers to create more jobs. Therefore, it would be interesting to find out what employers think of the role the government plays in combating youth unemployment, and especially whether employers' perceptions of the government's role encourages or discourages them from employing young people.

Just like in many countries, the South African labour market is not autonomous, but there is significant government involvement through many initiatives designed to fight unemployment, reduce poverty and forge inclusivity (among other pressing socio-economic issues). Consequently, the government intervenes in the labour market through labour laws and policies to neutralise the relationship between the employers and worker—and sometimes even jobseekers. While this state's intervention is frowned upon by neoclassical theorists, who believe that the function of the labour market is organic, and can only be contravened by the state's intervention (Fleetwood, 2006). The LMS theories not only appreciate the state's intervention, but they vehemently advocate for the kind of intervention the state can provide, as they believe that the state plays a crucial role in regulating the labour market (Cassim, 1989; Wilkinson, 1982; Peck, 1995; Kraak, 1996).

Considering this regulatory role of the government in the labour market, it is—in addition to learning about the ways in which the respondents' perceptions impact young job seekers—also essential to understand the ways in which the government (through the policies and strategies it creates to fight unemployment), affects employers' decision to accommodate young people. This chapter set out to achieve this by first exploring the respondents' generic perceptions about the government, and their perceptions about its role in tackling youth unemployment. The chapter also looks at whether the respondents are aware of the strategies that the government has created as an attempt to abate youth unemployment.

The next section of this chapter looks at whether employers are involved in any of the strategies promulgated by the government. Lastly, the chapter looks at whether there are any incentives that employers get (from the government) for employing young people. All these themes are relevant to help understand the ways in which the government plays a part in the employment of young people or lack thereof. In other words, does the government encourage or discourage employers from employing young jobseekers? Eventually, chapters seven and eight considered together will help us understand how employers' dispositions about young people, and about the inevitable role of the government, factor into how employers design and practice their R&S strategies, and how this ultimately affects young people. The importance of both chapter seven and eight lies in the fact that they both set out the underlying factors, that Critical Realists refer to as the unobservable mechanisms, that are associated with the observable phenomenon (discussed in chapter nine), which in this case is the inclusivity of young people in recruitment strategies or lack thereof.

8.2 PERCEIVED ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT

The government assumes an incredibly significant role in society. This role is carried out for different aspects in society (i.e., administration of justice, national defense, provision of certain public goods) and in different ways (Hamann, 2009). This thesis focusses on the role the government plays in tackling youth unemployment. Fourie (2015), points out that the emphasis in policy today is on job creation (through economic growth) as a way to address (especially youth) unemployment (see also: World Bank, 2009; National Treasury, 2011; NDP, 2012; Independent Evaluation Group, 2013; Kluve et al., 2017; De Lannoy et al., 2018). As previously pointed out, the current President of South Africa, in his many speeches, has also delivered promises that indicate that the government has a role to play in addressing and curbing the issue of youth unemployment. Furthermore, as expressed in chapter two, the third

generation of the LMS theories also highlight that the government plays a regulatory role in the labour market and in the employment (as one employmentt the labour market) of jobseekers (Wilkinson, 1981; Craig et al., 1985; Kraak, 1995; Peck, 1996; Fine, 1998). Likewise, in the previous chapter, the respondents also alluded to the role they think the government plays in the un/employment of young people, with some employers being of the idea that unemployment is also (but not exclusively) caused (or perpetuated) by the government (whether it be that the government does something, or is not doing anything). As a result, the respondents identified the role of the government as the most critical in confronting the unemployment challenge and in implementing the solutions the sampled employers proposed in chapter seven.

Though it cannot possibly be entirely the responsibility of the government to address unemployment, given the intricate and stubborn nature of unemployment; the study is also interested to find out what the respondents perceive the role of the government to be in addressing the crisis of youth unemployment. Knowing these perceptions will give us a sense of what the sampled employers think of the government; and whether these perceptions influence their openness to work with and be involved in some of the strategies that the government has enacted to promote job creation for young people. This investigation is necessary because some of the (government created) strategies (i.e., youth subsidy) need the cooperation of employers for them to be fully implemented. Therefore, since employers cooperation is integral, it is important to find out what their dispositions are regarding these strategies. The data collected in this regard indicates that all 20 respondents believe that the government has a significant (if not the main) role in addressing and abating youth unemployment. In fact, the significant role of the government was alluded to by the respondents when they were first asked about their views on the causes and solutions of unemployment (discussed in the previous chapter). However, when the respondents were asked directly about the role of the government, they all pointed out the different things that think the government should (or can) do to tackle the unemployment phenomenon.

Taking into consideration all the responses shared by the sampled employers in chapter seven and in this section, the role of the government in this instance was explained in terms of what the government ‘can do’ to address the issue of youth unemployment. In other words, employers explained what they thought of the role of the government by explaining what they thought the government should be doing to address the issue of unemployment in the country. There are two main things that most of the sampled employers thought the government has a

fundamental role in implementing or carrying out, and that is: (i) to improve the poor education system, and to (ii) create strategies that improve job creation. Although these interventions were the two most recurring from most of the sampled employers, the literature reviewed indicates that they are, indeed, already amongst the multi-pronged agendas of many governments across the world that are created as a response to the global crisis of unemployment (see the most recent literature: Kluve et al., 2017; De Lannoy., 2018).

Since education was identified as one of the causes of unemployment in the previous chapter, some employers were of the mind that that the government has a role to play in overhauling the education system. The *Ladies & Gents store Supervisor* (2020) stated: "The government must give free education in order to o give more skills to the youth, then we can have many educated and skilled people." The *Eat & Dine restaurant Supervisor* (2020) also said: "As I said before, they [the government] should provide proper training of basic education and provide some sort of funding not only to university students but also in high schools, because some of the young people do not have the funds to enroll in a university. So, if they have good secondary education, they are still in a better position, than when they do not have such education." These sentiments were also supported by the other two employers who maintained:

> They [the government] should start in schools, and the government should develop legislation that will forge a good education system. Our education system is deeply flawed and inefficient. People are not doing their job in our schools, and that affects the young people as they are the ones who end up suffering from a lack of proper education and lack of skills. The government needs to deal with the school system first, and then everything will fall into place (*Right Choice Supermarket Manager*, 2020).

> The government misuses its power to do the right thing. If the government can invest enough in education, then half of our problems as a country will be solved. But the government is failing to execute the power it has to eradicate unemployment. We know we have an incompetent government by looking at how bad the education system is. I blame it all on our poor government. (*Exceptional Motors Corp Supervisor*, 2020).

The views raised above about the lack of proper education being the cause of unemployment—or it being one of the factors that perpetuate unemployment; and that the

government should work towards bettering the education system—have also been pointed out by numerous research studies (Development Bank of Southern Africa, 2011; Mayer, 2011; Goldin et al., 2015; Kluve et al., 2017; De Lannoy et al., 2018: DHET, 2019). These studies and reports also assert that the education system in South Africa has become a growing challenge, as it negatively affects young people who are subjected to poor education and poor infrastructure in schools. This reality makes it difficult for young people to study—or to attend school—thus resulting in them dropping out of school. For instance, a report published by Amnesty International (2020), submits that the state of the education system in South Africa is characterised by crumbling infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, and relatively poor educational outcomes, among other things. The report particularly highlights poor infrastructure in public schools, including sanitation (Amnesty International, 2020). Granted, there are other reasons why pupils drop out of school, but research has also revealed that poor education and lack of resources in schools also cause them to perform poorly in schools (Gustafsso, 2011; Branson, Hofmeyer & Lam, 2014; Van Broekhuizen, 2015; Bhorat, 2016).

These circumstances have resulted in many young people either leaving school with poor education, thus being unable to get into tertiary institutions; or with young people who drop out of school and, thereby, cannot make it into the labour market because of the skills they lack. These results have, therefore, caused many scholars, NGOs, amongst other stakeholders, to call for the government to do something about the education situation in South Africa, as has also been raised by the sampled employers. This call—made by most sampled employers—for the government to address the poor education system in South Africa is also in line with global trends. These results also show that even though education alone does not always guarantee employment—as employers need a well-rounded person and it takes more than education to be one such person—education does play a significant role in enhancing one's employability. As such, education offered to young people should be of good quality, it should be accessible to all people, and should afford young people with the knowledge and skills that they need to not only access the labour market, but also to be able to start their own business when they cannot find employment in the labour market. The National Development Plan (2012), also maintains (consistent with the abovementioned sentiments from some of the sampled employers) that "young people deserve better educational and economic opportunities and focused efforts are needed to eliminate gender inequality."

Furthermore, an Amnesty International report (2020:14), submits that "for South Africa to comply with both with its own constitutional and international human rights obligations with

respect to education, significant change is needed urgently." The report further explains that "the right to quality education includes having schools where learners are safe to learn and have the adequate infrastructure and facilities to do so." Yet many studies reveal that this is still not the case for many learners in the country. Again, this only indicates the critical role that education plays in the livelihoods of young people, and thus explains why many young people who do not have proper schooling (due to poor quality education or dropping out of school) are the hardest hit by unemployment. It is for this reason that fixing the education system is a pressing issue in its own respect, which by far has, arguably, not been effectively tackled by the government even after over 20+ years of the democratic dispensation (that promises to redress the apartheid legacy of poor education among black South Africans). While it is essential to acknowledge the considerable progress made since the advent of the democratic dispensation to right the injustices of the apartheid divisive educational system; the government still falls short of meeting its own targets when it comes to delivering the resources needed in many public schools, among other things (Lam, Leibrandt & Mlatsheni, 2009; Spaull, 2013; 2015; Amnesty International Report, 2020).

It is against this background that it should also be stressed—as has also been raised by the sampled employers—that more effort is still needed to improve the education system that seems to perpetuate poverty and unemployment in South Africa (as is the case in many African countries). Indeed, addressing the education crisis in South Africa should go beyond just realising that it is a crisis; and beyond just pointing it out it in the President's speeches, or the annual reports from the Department of Education. We need to see some tangible action being executed; we need to see the results. While any amount of action will not fix the situation as urgently as is desired, any amount of action can make a huge and much needed difference in the lives of many young people. Therefore, the call for the government to improve the education system raised by the sampled employers is consistent to a considerable body of literature as well as the government itself; as it has delivered speeches that prove that the government assumes the role to tackle the broken education system in South Africa, as it does many other social ills of the country. However, even though this points to the critical role that the government plays in tackling the social ills of the country, it should be understood that tackling the education issue cannot be a task left to the government alone. The government itself has called for a joint effort from other stakeholders, which it believes is needed to deal with the state of the education system.

As commendable and urgent as the call for the improvement of the education system is, it should be borne in mind that even though the education system can be improved, at best, it will afford many people (especially the disadvantaged people) good quality education that will enhance their employability. But at worst, it will only produce many educated people who cannot all, at the same time, be admitted into tertiary institutions—or who cannot all gain access into the labour market. This possibility can be explained by several reasons, some being that—as recorded by the StatsSA reports and mentioned in previous chapters—the absorption rate remains steadily low, and tertiary institutions are unable to accommodate the hundreds of thousands of matriculants that the secondary schools produces every year. Therefore, the limited access in tertiary institutions and in the labour market constitutes a separate issue that cannot be necessary fixed by a better education system. This is not to talk down the call to improve the education system as it proves to be a good cause, but rather to acknowledge the fact that the education system that we are hoping to have may—if it is even possible to achieve—do so much as enhancing the employability of those who acquire it. However, it still does not guarantee that the recipients of such education will be employed, because, in general, entry into the labour market is contingent on the continuous availability of jobs, and the demand for specific skills by employers. Therefore, having quality or higher-level education cannot be enough.

If only good and higher-level education could guarantee employment, then many people with good quality and higher education (i.e., post-graduate degree) would be employed. But in reality, we find that not only is youth unemployment a problem, but so too is graduate unemployment. Graduate unemployment—though comparatively better than youth unemployment—could be explained by the fact that unemployed graduates have degrees that are already in abundant supply or that are not marketable (skills-mismatch). But another reason for graduate unemployment is simply that the labour market is unable to absorb all of them (even the ones with marketable qualifications) due to various economic reasons. Some research shows that even when some graduates are being employed; they are usually absorbed into the secondary sector, thus making them underemployed due to the underuse of the skills they have. This situation indicates that addressing the unemployment crisis would take more than just improving the education system. This also shows that the HCT's assertion that human capital determines one's entry and wage in the labour market is flawed as it overlooks a number of factors that impede one's chances of securing employment. It stands to reason, then, that changing the education system may produce more educated people, but

falls short of actually ensuring that they will get employed. Therefore, strategies should not only focus on improving the education system, but should also focus on growing the economy, boosting labour demand and job creation. It takes all of this (and possibly) for people to be employed, not just having good quality education.

Moreover, another aspect that some of the sampled employers felt the government has a role in tackling is the much-needed job creation. While some employers thought that the governments' role was to fix the education system, as discussed above; other employers were of the opinion that the government's role is in establishing strategies that will assuage job creation for young people. A *Supervisor* from the *Dynamite Clothing Store* (2020) pointed out: "The government should start a programme where they train unskilled youths who don't have experience or qualifications and train them to be the many professions that are needed in the country." Also sharing this view was the *Egoli Distelliry Manager* (2020), who pointed out: "they [the government] should provide subsidies that will motivate companies to employ young people, while also giving young people opportunities to gain workplace experience. They [the government] should find ways to help young people." Taking into consideration these responses and the ones shared by employers in chapter seven (about the causes of unemployment), it appears that the general idea conveyed by these employers is that: because youth unemployment is also caused by lack of experience, the one way to address this issue is to create work programmes (i.e., leanerships and volunteering) that will expose young people to the training they need, and which is equivalent to the experience required by employers. Therefore, a comment that summarises the sentiment shared amongst these employers is the one provided by an employer from the finance sector:

> I think the government should work with employers to create programmes that will give them [young people] the taste of what it is like to be part of the labour force or workforce, then they [young people] will know how to conduct themselves when they are in, say interviews or if they out there in search of jobs. The government must subsidise these things because we all know the youths' do not have the capital for it. (*Money Matters Accountancy Manager*, 2020)

The viewpoint that job subsidies and training programmes should be offered to unemployed young people is also maintained by the ILO (2016), and many other scholars (see Phelps, 1996; Angel-Urdinola, Kuddo & Semlali, 2013; Almeida, Orr & Robalino, 2014; Meyers, 2014:11-13; Biavaschi et al., 2017). Even though the extent and nature of these subsidies are

also contested (as will be discussed below); Meyer (2014), maintains that the government, trade unions, businesses, and civil society must work together, especially to assist youths to access the job market. Meyer (2014), further explains that there should be government-funded job centres that need to provide practical and theoretical training, such as at vocational institutions, and that skills should focus on what industry wants and the services required (Meyers, 2014). This sentiment (about the government sponsoring employers through subsidies) leads us to another related set of responses from other respondents who—while they did not say how the government could create jobs—suggested that the government should invest in employers' firms so that they can provide employment. These respondents reasoned that the government could aid job creation by helping existing firms to expand their businesses.

This idea was primarily raised by employers from the retail sector who are in small firms. For instance, A *Supervisor from Dynamite Clothing* (2020) stated: "If they sponsor us to open more stores, then we can employ more people." And a similar response was expressed by a *Manager* from the *Stop & Shop Supermarket* (2020): "the government should invest in businesses or open more franchises to be able to create more jobs for young people." In being convinced that job creation is the way to curb unemployment, the *East Bank Manager* (2020), from the financial sector maintained: "Well, [the government can help] by just opening businesses. Basically, I feel there's no other way than that." As pointed out in the literature review chapters, these sentiments expressed by the respondents (about the creation of more jobs) are also contained, mostly, in policies such as the NDP. Similarly, the National Treasury has undertaken to provide strategies that can help mitigate unemployment by job creation, among a plethora of other strategies. For instance, the Budget Speech of 2017 delivered by Pravin Gordhan emphasised that employment creation has to be accelerated to forge inclusivity in the labour market. Pravin Gordhan, in his speech, stated: "We know that job creation is a central priority of the NDP." Again, this speech indicates that the government of this country has taken up the task of fighting unemployment and one of the strategies is 'job creation', among others.

However, while it seems like employers, some scholars (whose literature is reviewed in this thesis), and the government all share the same sentiment that job creation is the main strategy against unemployment. They all do not seem to share the sentiment on who is responsible for the much-needed, and constantly proposed job creation. Data shows that the sampled employers seem to imply (in their responses) that job creation is the government's

responsibility. Whereas the government always calls on joint effort from different stakeholders to fight unemployment. For instance, the President's speeches, as well as those delivered by the Minister of Finance, always highlight that in fighting unemployment (as well as other pressing social ills), 'all' people should be involved (the government, the private sector, civil society), to mention a few (National Treasury, 2011; Budget Speech, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017). Indeed, this is a critical point that cannot be stressed enough because eradicating unemployment cannot be a mission of the government alone. In fact, thinking that it is, is one of the reasons why reducing unemployment is such a challenge. Many people seem to be waiting on the government to deliver what they need on their doorstep, so to speak. However waiting on the government keeps them from taking their own initiative to do what they can do to, at least, meet the government half way. This assertion does not exonerate the government from the role it plays (and from executing the big changes it promises to its voters), but it recognises that the government needs help from other stakeholders.

Indeed, as profound as the role the government plays in any country/state is, it cannot possibly eradicate such a deep-seated, long-standing issue of unemployment on its own. In addition to that, it should also be understood that achieving the goal of curtailing unemployment will not happen overnight. It will surely take time and unwavering effort along the way. As explained in the Budget speech (2014), that the National Planning Commission has cautioned that "our [the country's] development objectives will take time and hard work to achieve this goal, measured year by year, district by district, there will be advances, and there will be setbacks. This caution by the National Planning Commission not only proves how stubborn and intricate the issue of unemployment is, but it also proves that the government alone cannot be made responsible for such a mission independently. Different institutions, organisations, and jobseekers need to know they play a role, and need to understand what their role is. Even more importantly, they need to execute their roles individually and collectively if unemployment has a chance of being curtailed at all. The government may have a major role, but its role in society is not exclusive of other stakeholders.

Another observation that can be made from the data is that the sentiments raised and discussed above are consistent with the LMS theories, insofar as they suggest that the government has a significant role in curbing unemployment. Indeed, LMS theories do not shy away from stressing the importance of the regulatory role that the government/state plays. This role not only serves to neutralise the power imbalances between employers and

employees by establishing employment conditions that preclude employers from exploiting employees. But essentially, it also serves to regulate the labour market, which otherwise cannot really function properly (i.e., fairly and equitably) without such regulation from the government. Only one of the samploed employers bet to differ from the notion that the government has a role to play in curbing unemployment, and rather stated that: "the people should stop blaming the government for everything, they must wake up and create something for themselves" (*General Bank Manager,* 2020). This view supports the neoclassical theory, in as far as it suggests that people should do something for themselves, and that the government only tends to interfere with the organic and smooth operation of the labour market.

The neoclassical theory is also of the view that the government should not have such a major role in the affairs of the labour market as they believe that this role interferes with the organic interaction between supply and demand (Kraak, 1995; Peck, 1996; Fleetwood, 2006; Barker, 2007). This polarity between responses points to the divide between the respondents' dispositions about the government's role, even though the division is disproportionate (majority vs. minority). The study finds that while a majority agree on the notion that the government has a major role, only a minority of employers' views tended towards the idea that the government has (or should have) only a limited role in mitigating unemployment. Only one employer explicitly expressed that the role of government is largely irrelevant in the un/employment of young people. Two employers agreed, tacitly, with this viewpoint, explaining that people should meet the government halfway as the government cannot be blamed for everything, nor can it be responsible for everything. This division also suggests that while employers all recognise that actions need to be taken against unemployment, these employers have varied perceptions about who bears the responsibility to curtail the issue of unemployment.

By and large, the data reveals that there is significant alignment between the employers' perceived strategies against unemployment, and the ones accounted for by existing literature. It is also worth noting that some of the strategies that the employers propose against unemployment are already established, such as the wage subsidy (which will be discussed further in the next section). Some strategies have even been in effect for a considerable number of years (i.e., public works) and are usually implemented as multi-pronged strategies that work concurrently to fight unemployment. All the unemployment strategies that are suggested by the respondent have been encapsulated in chapter two, and there is considerable

agreement, from the literature reviewed, that they have to be implemented as a response to unemployment. The only issue that seems to emerge from the data is the clarity of the responsibility of the entity(s)/organisations/people that will initiate or implement such strategies. This is a matter one may argue needs further research in order to shine light on who assumes what responsibility. While I agree with some of the suggestions of the respondents on what can be improved to address the issue of unemployment, and the fact that the government may have a critical role (as also maintained in numerous policies and government speeches and the Constitution of the country itself); I also assert that thinking it is only the responsibility of the government to tackle unemployment is to be mis/uninformed. And it is not to understand that the social ills of any country are a result of many factors which cannot possibly be fixed by the government alone. In fact, more research is needed to investigate and create awareness on what role different stakeholders can play, or what effort they can cast towards fighting the global unemployment crisis. As it stands, there is too much finger-pointing and blame-shifting that probably also explains why unemployment is still such a complex challenge to curb.

To emphasis the point made above, it is worth mentioning that although the majority of employers put the burden of curbing youth unemployment on the government; none of the employers mentioned how they could fit in the equation. Even the employer who stated that the government could not be responsible for everything did not mention how employers could be involved. Instead, some respondents mentioned that young people should be accountable for their employability. These sentiments break with what President Ramaphosa and other scholars have maintained, stating that there is shared responsibility amongst different stakeholders, including the employers, in combating unemployment. From the data, it is not clear whether employers recognise that while the government can spearhead and facilitate strategies designed to alleviate youth unemployment; it simply cannot only be the responsibility of the government and civil society to fight unemployment. The employers, as key players in the labour market and employment, also need to play a role and should be responsible for their part. For example, employers can cast in their lot by voluntarily taking part in government strategies (i.e., wage subsidies) that need employers' involvement. This sentiment is stressed by the third generation of the LMS theory, which recognises that employment is determined by the role of the state, the supply, and demand-side. For this reason, all these 'sides' have critical roles to play in addressing barriers to employment. This also implies that any venture to curtail unemployment will need joint effort from all these

parties. As to what exactly may be done by each party is a question that more research may help to clarify. This lack of clarity also appears to frustrate the efforts that have been made already—but perhaps need effort from other stakeholders (NGOs or employers) to be fully effected— because most people tend to think that it is the government only that must tackle unemployment as well as the many social ills facing the country.

There are many ways that employers can help the government and other stakeholders to fight unemployment, one of the ways is pointed out by Graham & De Lannoy (2016). They suggest that the solution for youth and graduate unemployment should entail the shift of the employment criteria that employers use. They argue that South African employers' doubt of the quality of education obtained by the youth has since made them to make the requirements for entry into low-level jobs even more stringent (Bhorat et al., 2013 cited in Graham & De Lannoy, 2016:4). They argue that, unfortunately, employers that escalate the educational requirements for entry-level jobs tend to shut out a large pool of potentially good young employees, thus creating more unemployment. It is for this reason that they suggest that the labour market must be adjusted in a way that should be more 'youth friendly' (Graham & De Lannoy, 2016:4). This also indicates that just as employers play an important role in creating employment, they equally have the power to alleviate the problem of unemployment. Therefore, while the majority of sampled employers correctly recognise the part of the government to curtail unemployment, they should also be mindful of theirs too. There are things employers can do (independently or in collaboration with the government and NGOs) to attenuate unemployment—such as taking part in government's strategies designed to tackle youth unemployment. This brings us to the next sub-theme that explores the respondents' awareness regarding government strategies.

8.3 AWARENESS OF GOVERNMENT YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SUBSIDIES

Part of the literature reviewed in chapter two shows that many governments across the globe have created numerous strategies/policies as an attempt to combat youth unemployment (Cunningham et al., 2010; Blattman, Fila & Martinez, 2011; Caliendo, Künn & Scmidl, 2011; Independent Evaluation Group, 2013; ILO, 2016: Kluve et al., 2017). The South African government has also produced multi-pronged policies to address unemployment (Altman, 2009; Development Bank of Southern Africa, 2011; Mayer, 2011; Bhorat, 2012; Graham, 2014; Mthembu & Govender, 2015; CDE, 2016; De Lannoy et al., 2018). The thesis only focuses on the two current subsidies: the ETI and YES programmes, because, unlike the other

strategies, these two programmes, firstly, focus on the youth specifically. Secondly, they both focus on the demand-side of the labour market, and thus are based on employer involvement (De Lannoy et al., 2018). As has been discussed in chapter two, the first and yet controversial policy promulgated by the NDP—to address youth unemployment—is the ETI. Suggested by the National Treasury (2011:7) under the Presidency of Jacob Zuma. The ETI is a tax rebate awarded to employers when they employ low-skilled workers between the ages of 18 and 29 who earn below the income tax threshold.

The purpose of the subsidy is to boost labour demand, and in doing so, increase employment (National Treasury, 2011:24). The mechanism through which this occurs is by reducing the cost of employing a young person, and thereby mitigating the financial risk associated with hiring inexperienced, low-skilled youths' (Yu, 2012:2; De Lannoy et al., 2018). Essentially, this rebate reduces the gap between the cost of employing a worker and worker's productivity while leaving wages unaffected (Yu, 2012:12). In addition to achieving short-term employment, it is hoped that young people will develop on-the-job skills, and will be productive enough by the end of the subsidided period to retain employment, or find un-subsidised permanent employment elsewhere (National Treasury, 2011:10). In addition (and similar) to the ETI, President Ramaphosa launched the Youth Employment Services (YES) initiative in 2018. YES is a joint initiative by the private sector and the government; and was designed to give impetus to job creation and the employment of young people in South Africa (Gerber, 2018; Investec, 2018; Yes4Youth, 2018). Much like the ETI, YES is designed to encourage the employment of black youths between the ages of 18-35 for at least 12 months on a fixed-term or temporary contract (Gerber, 2018; SABPP, 2018). The rationale behind the YES programmes is the same as the one that animated this thesis: which is the fact that youth unemployment is a problem that cannot be ignored or left unaddressed. Indeed, having around six million young people shut out of the economy is a pressing and grave issue that needs every bit of effort to curtail (Yes4Youth, 2018).

For this reason, the YES programme "seeks out ground-breaking ways, through innovation, collaboration, and technological best practices, to create, at least, one million jobs for South Africa's youths" (Yes4Youth, 2018). Though YES has just commenced (which is also around the same time as the commencement of this study), it has, much like the ETI, also been met with mixed reactions. As some critics contend that the initiative is a mere substitution of the existing accredited training and leadership programmes, and would not correct the structural deficiencies in the SA labour market (Gerber, 2018). Nonetheless, the

common thing about these two current subsidies is that they aim to place unemployed youths into paid employment from the demand side. Other strategies focus on the supply-side (like skills development or entrepreneurship development which are important and necessary in their own respect); but both the ETI and YES are, by far, the only two programmes that engage the demand side regarding young jobseekers. Both these strategies have one goal in common, and that is to curb youth unemployment by encouraging incentivised job creation from the demand side. Despite the mixed reactions about these programmes, it can be argued that they both seem to be promising—as far as they seek to achieve job creation for young people. However, it begs many questions (i.e., whether these programmes are actually effective in achieving job creation among young people?). One of the questions that the thesis is primarily interested in is whether employers know about these programmes since they are designed to encourage them (employers) to create jobs for young people?

This is why the thesis found it befitting to find out if the employers—as the ones who are in the position to create jobs—know about these programmes and, even more significantly, whether they are involved in these programmes. De Lannoy et al. (2018), submits that the limited evidence on the effect of labour market regulations on employer behaviour is another gap in our understanding of youth unemployment. In response to this gap, this section reports on the awareness or lack thereof of employers concerning these abovementioned strategies. This chapter also explores if the sampled respondents are currently or have been involved in these interventions (which will be discussed in the next section). These questions are central to understanding whether employers have any intentions of employing young people, because the strategies/programmes need the direct involvement of the employers in order for them to be implemented. However, for employers to be involved, they would first need to know about these programmes in order to decide whether they want to be involved or not. Without their involvement, these programmes would only be created in vain as they would not achieve what they were created to achieve; which is to encourage employers to recruit young jobseekers. Therefore, this intervention of the government to fight unemployment by encouraging employers—through wage subsidies—to employ young people makes it particularly important to know whether employers know about and take advantage of these strategies promulgated by the government to create employment for young people.

This investigation is also necessary to determine if these strategies have played a part in either assuaging the sampled employers to employ or to consider employing young people. Or whether the strategies dissuade employers from hiring young people. Considering the data

gathered, it was rather disappointing and concerning to find out that a majority of the respondents do not only not know about these strategies; but that because of their lack of knowledge of these strategies, among other things, they do not participate in these strategies. By and large, this implies that most of the sampled employers do not recruit young people through these programmes despite that these programmes already exist to boost demand and employment by subsidising employers. This section answers whether the sampled employers are aware of these strategies, and the next section will explore whether employers are involved/participate in these strategies. The results are illustrated in the table below and elaborated further by direct quotes from the respondents.

Table 8.1: Respondents' knowledge of and participation in government youth employment subsidies

Firms and Employers	Knowledge of Government Programmes	Involvement in Government Programmes
Ladies & Gents clothing Manager	No	No
Health First Pharmacy Manager	No	No
Eat & Dine restaurant	Yes	Yes
More for less supermarket	No	No
Burger Club restaurant	No	No
Chicken Corner restaurant	No	No
Stop & Shop supermarket	No	No
Right Choice Supermarket	No	No
Maboneng Theme Park	Yes	Yes
Fashion Statement store	No	No
Dynamite Clothing Store	Yes	No
Super Fuel Garage	No	No
General Bank	Yes	No
East Bank	No	No
Star Bank	Yes	No
Money Matters Accountancy	No	No
Egoli Distillery	Yes	No
Exceptional Motors Corp	No	No
Multi-Drinks Factory	No	No
AfriTrans	No	No

Table 8.1, illustrates that a majority of the respondents—even amongst the 16 respondents that have articulated that they employ young people in their firms—do not know about any of the two programmes/subsidies outlined above. All 14 respondents replied to the question with

an emphatic ‘no.’ Most of the 14 did not even pause to think about it; they just did not have any idea about these programmes. The *Manager* from the *Money Matters Accountancy* (2020), firm unreservedly stated: “I don’t know anything about that.” The table above shows that this view was shared by a majority of respondents. Conversely, it is also observable from the table that only six respondents know about either one or both the abovementioned job creation programmes. In fact, according to the data, four of the six respondents have somewhat of an idea even though they also expressed that they are not really sure how the job creation programmes operate. For instance, the *Fashion Statement Store Supervisor* (2020), had this to say: “This [employment subsidy] is where the government assists the youth financially through tenders, I think, but I don't know much about it, hey.” Another employer from the manufacturing sector indicated that he has an idea about the programme, but does not really know what it is about:

> Yes, uhm, for example, the subsidies work with…I could say privately-owned companies, which also work hand in hand with government. It is not for government companies, so they also help with supplying young people with skills. I think it’s something like that (*Egoli Distillery Manager*, 2020).

As it can be picked up from the responses above, four of the six employers (who claimed to be aware of the subsidies) only had a vague understanding of the employment programmes. They all stated that they heard about the programmes, but could not say precisely what they were all about. Clearly, these employers have a nebulous comprehension of the programmes because none of the programmes are actually about the government giving tenders to the youths’. While that may be the case concerning other strategies that provide tenders or funds—such as the entrepreneurial programmes—this is not necessarily the case with the subsidies in question. Again, this proves that a majority of the employers are not aware of the subsidies, which may explain the low involvement/participation rate, as also illustrated in table 8.1. In essence, only six employers had an idea about the subsidies, and even still, their ideas were distorted because of the bleak understanding they have of the subsidies. The rest of the employers, which is a vast majority of the respondents, did not have any idea or knowledge of the subsidy.

This lack of awareness (of the programmes described above) may possibly be explained by numerous factors, but the dissemination of information or lack thereof is one determinant to which it can be attributed. Looking closely at the data, even from previously discussed

sections, this lack of awareness not only explains why employers obliviously suggested in the previous section that the government should create these programmes—not knowing that they already exists. But it also points to another serious issue of the dissemination of information. Dissemination of information according to OMB (1985), is "the function of distributing government information to the public, whether through printed documents or electronic or other media outlets" (OMB, 1985: 52735). More broadly defined "the dissemination is a proactive concept providing for more than the availability and distribution of government information. Dissemination recognises the role of the government to… announce, circulate, communicate, diffuse, publicise, publish abroad and carry publications" (Hermon & McClure, 1996: 67). Therefore, the lack of such information (i.e., wage subsidies promulgated by the government) in this case would mean that the employers—who are the very people that need to know that they could be subsidised to create jobs—do not know about such arrangements made by the government.

As a result, employee fail to possibly participate in the programmes and actually create jobs for some of the many people that need the jobs. Hence, it can be argued that the poor, or lack of dissemination of such information may be one of the reasons why the majority of the sampled employers do not have any concrete knowledge of the subsidies. While this argument does not necessarily mean the dissemination of information about the employment subsidies will automatically encourage employers to create jobs for young people. The argument does, however, mean that the disemination of such information is necessary because it will afford employers the information they need to be aware of in order to decide whether to participate in the progrmmes or not. This also does not mean that the government is entirely responsible for getting information to all people, as people should have their own responsibility to familiarise themselves with the current affairs. However, the issue of unemployment, especially concerning the measures created to abate unemployment, is quite a different case. Since it is the government and policymakers that develop policies and strategies to address unemployment, they should also put in the effort to publicise/broadcast information about these interventions—if the strategies they (policymakers) create are going to do the work that they are designed to do from the first place.

Furthermore, this dissemination is especially necessary since even the constitution imposes a mandate on the government to keep communication with the citizens by regularly updating them on the services available for the improvement of their lives; and further to constantly

report back on progress made in implementing government policies (Netshitomboni, 2007). Without this communication, it would be in vain for the government to create all the measures against unemployment, while it fail to put in the effort to try and disseminate the information to the people who these measures need the involvement/participation of. As well as the people that the knowledge should reach so as to make good use of the information—that is, to bring about the change that these measures/strategies are purposed to produce. Dissemination of such information is also crucial because it is the government that calls on other stakeholders, including employers, to participate in the fight against unemployment in the country. Therefore, when the government creates strategies designed to fight unemployment that need the involvement of a particular group of people to be involved, then the government should also play a part in disseminating the information (as far as it is possible) about the new strategies/measures. And even about the effectiveness and progress of those strategies as a way to keep people informed and involved.

These findings also further suggest that the lack of the dissemination of information regarding the measures adopted to curtail unemployment (which in this case translates into the lack of knowledge about the employment subsidies designed to address youth unemployment) is one of the many factors that contribute to unemployment of young people. This is because lack of knowledge can slow down (or totally impede) the employment of young people that could otherwise occur through subsidised employment. For instance, and related to the data gathered, if employers do not know of the programmes that subsidise them to creatr jobs for young people—as a way to fight youth unemployment—how can they be expected to take part in these strategies, without knowing they are available for them to make use of? The impact of this lack of knowledge is somewhat negative because it means that young people who these programmes could advantaged are not able to have that opportunity. Especially in the case where there are employers who—even though they would not employ young people in any other way—would probably be opened to employ them in response to (or being motivated by) the availability of government's employment subsidies. Again, this is not to claim that the dissemination of information about the government measures against unemployment will solve the stubborn and intricate youth unemployment phenomenon that the country is facing. But it is to point out that the dissemination of such information is necessary and might make a difference, however small, in fighting unemployment.

In essence, the argument the thesis makes with this data is that the dissemination of information concerning the interventions designed to curb unemployment—especially those intimated by the government—plays a critical role in bringing the change that the unemployment interventions (or any socio-economic interventions) are created to bring in the society. Of course, the next step is for the strategies/policies to be implemented and regularly monitored to see if they are fulfilling their purpose. However, the dissemination of information proves to be the first step to such implementation, as it is a measure that creates the awareness and affords people (employers) the information to decide whether they want to be involved in an initiative or not. In this case, employers should only be left to determine whether they want to participate or not, but should not be found not participating due to lack of knowledge. This is particularly concerning because most of the respondents who expressed that they do not know about the employment subsidies are among the ones who had suggested in section 7.4 that the government should create employment subsidies—to respond to the appalling youth unemployment situation in the country. Therefore, it can be argued that while some respondents are willing to employ young pepeopland have themselves also suggested that one of the solutions would be the enactment and implementation of employment subsidies; their lack of awareness is among the factors that may have thwarted them from creating jobs for young people with the advantage of these subsidies. Indeed, considering these findings, one can be led to argue that the employers' suggestion for the government to encourage job creation by subsidising them (as mentioned in the previous chapter) proves that some of the sampled employers are willing to recruit young people if the government can only ubsidise them.

This consideration, conversely, also indicates that sometimes employers are reluctant to create jobs because they may lose the profit by using it to create more jobs in order to employ more people. But this also implies that if employers can receive subsidies from the government then they may be open to creating jobs, if doing so means they do not lose so much of their profit—while also increasing the productivity of their firm by employing more employees subsidised by the government. However, it can be concluded that, for as long as employers do not know of the incentives given to them to create jobs; they simply will not be as open to employing young people as much as they would otherwise be open to it if they know about the incentives they can get for it. This assertion only refers to the employers who are willing and open to employing young people (just like the 16 sampled employers) but are hindered by other factors (i.e., losing profit; lack of knowledge). However, it excludes some

of the employers who categorically do not want to employ young people—much like the four sampled employers who expressed that they do not want any young employees in their firms. It turns out from the data that, while the government has managed to create two subsidies by far, there may be many employers who do not know about these strategies/policies, and thus are not involved in achieving the purpose for which they were created.

This (lack of knowledge) surely must have some negative impact on the many young unemployed jobseekers who could use such opportunities that the wage subsidies can afford them. To have any strategy/policy promulgated which is not taken advantage of by the people who need the government's intervention is an unfortunate and a negligent drawback, that the country cannot afford to have—considering the enormous challenge it is to curtail unemployment. But if anything, it only points to the inefficiency of policymakers—among other stakeholders—to follow through on the policies they create to gauge if indeed they are producing the results that these strategies are designed to achieve. This follow-up is particularly necessary given the large sums of money (taxpayers' money) injected into the development processes of these strategies, only for the strategies to not be implemented because the key players do not know about them. If youth unemployment is going to be mitigated at all, such needless mistakes cannot be tolerated. It is good that policies are created to deal with youth unemployment, but what use will they be if no one knows about them? This calls for policymakers to not only create policies, but also to create awareness of these policies, especially to key players or beneficiaries. More research may need to be conducted to explore the ways that this can be made possible. The following section explores some of the reasons why most of these employers are not involved in the employment subsidies created by the government.

8.4 EMPLOYERS' INVOLVEMENT IN GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES

Notwithstanding that most respondents do not know about the government employment subsidies, and that a few only have a vague idea about the programmes/subsidies. Table 8.1, also indicates that only six respondents are actually aware of the strategies in focus. However, this still does not mean that all six of them participate or are involved in the programmes. As demonstrated in the last column of Table 8.1, only two of the six respondents who knew about the programmes also said that they are involved in either one of the wage subsidy programmes. It is clear from this consideration that the level of participation is just as low as the level of knowledge that the respondents have of these strategies. Only two out of the 20

sampled firms are both aware and are involved in one of the programmes. One of the two employers particularly stated that he is involved in the YES programme, and went on to explain that his firm even benefits from the programme.

> Yes, I'm aware of the YES subsidy, and it's one of the benefits that our firm is reaping, as we have been able to employ the youths' through the programme, mostly in temporary jobs. But there are, by now, few people who we were able to recruit permanently who started off in the programme. And even now we are looking forward to hiring more young people. The subsidy really helps us find young people that can help us achieve our work every day (*Right Choice Supermarket Manager*, 2020).

This response, though expressed by one respondent, tends to oppose the, mostly anecdotal concerns that the employment subsidies are unable to achieve the purpose of job creation. The statement made by the *Right Choice Supermarket Manager* (2020), that his firm has managed to employ some young people as a result of one of the employment subsidy strategies (YES programme) implies that the programmes may be able to encourage employers to recruit young people. Even though this cannot be said about all employers, it still does suggest that the subsidies can boost the employment of young people. The only concern from this evidence would be the question of whether the programmes—when administered—are able to reach the close to six million young people who are without jobs. However, considering that the programmes are relatively recent, more studies may need to be conducted to investigate their effectiveness as time progresses. This view is also expressed by De Lannoy et al. (2018), as they assert—while also highlighting that there is limited evidence on employer behaviour with regards to hiring preferences—that there is a need for more studies that will trace the effectiveness of the programmes from the employers' perspective. This was one of the interview questions of this study, but given that the majority of the employers expressed that they do not know the employment subsidies, let alone be involved in them, they could not speak directly about the effectiveness of the programmes. However, they did, at least, share their perceptions (about the effectiveness of the programmes) which will be discussed in section 8.4.2. below. The following sub-section, however, looks at some of the reasons why the majority of employers do not participate or are not involved in the above-mentioned employment subsidies.

8.4.1 Reasons for Non-involvement/Participation

Following the disappointing data that reveals the scant knowledge and poor involvement of the sampled employers in the government strategies (that are designed and in full operation to promote employment and curtail youth unemployment). The respondents were asked—as a follow-up question—whether they would participate in the strategies if they knew about them, considering that they are initiated by the government. A majority of the respondents expressed that they would not be involved. It can be inferred from the data that lack of knowledge is one of the reasons for employers' non-participation in the current employment subsidies. However, the respondents gave other reasons why they do not (or will not) participate in government strategies. These reasons all point to and further prove their lack of knowledge about these strategies and of why they are created to achieve. The respondents attributed their lack of participation to factors ranging from '*busyness,'* some expressed their '*distrust'* of the government, whereas others expressed that they did '*not have any reason(s)'* to give. The responses are grouped according to these different categories and presented below accordingly.

A considerable number of respondents cited *busyness* as being the reason they are not involved in government's programmes. For instance, a *Manager* from the *Money Matters Accountancy* (2020) stated: "My work is a bit stressful because I'm a manager, I work a lot of shifts, I don't have time to attend such programmes." A few other employers ascribed their non-participation to their distrust of the government. For instance, the *Dynamite Clothing Store Supervisor* (2020) said:

> Well, for me, personally, I don't trust the government. They are corrupt, and I don't believe in our government unless they do something that will make me happy, and they have not done that for a long time. So, I don't really trust what they have to offer.

Another group of the sampled employers expressed in affirmation that they had no reason why they were not involved in the employment subsidies that are created by the government. Some simply stated that they were not interested:

> No, I don't have a reason, our firm is just not interested (*Chicken Corner Restaurant Manager*, 2020).

> No, there is no reason (*Stop & Shop Groceries Manager*, 2020).

> It's because I've never heard of it (*Exceptional Motors Corp Supervisor*, 2020).

> No, I don’t have a reason (*Health First Pharmacy Manager*, 2020).

A related reason was articulated by some of the respondents:

> I mean. I don’t think it’s necessary for me to participate (*More for Less Wholesale Supervisor*, 2020).

> I've never been invited to one (*Fashion Statement Clothing Supervisor*, 2020).

This data points to various things: firstly, most of the respondents genuinely do not have any idea what these strategies are about because if they did, they would know that busyness would not necessarily halt them from participating in the programmes. Some employers think that being involved in these strategies will compromise their time, but that is not necessarily the case. Taking part in wage subsidy programmes simply means that as an employer, you are willing to employ young people, and be subsidised by the government to do so. Of course there are some terms and conditions (such as being registered for Employees’ Tax (PAYE); being a B-BBEE scorecard entity which must have previously tried to improve or at least maintain their B-BBEE level status, among others) that need to be met by the employers in order to be part of and qualify for the employment subsidy. However, this is only just administrative work that cannot necessarily interfere with their daily duties to the point that they choose not to sign up for the programmes. Therefore, to cite ‘busyness’ as one of the reasons for non-involvement is not only a flimsy excuse—particularly given the difference that such participation can make in fighting unemployment. But it further proves the lack of knowledge about what the employment subsidies are really for and how they operate.

Secondly, the data reveal that the attitudes of some employers about the government affect their interest in anything the government initiates. When asked about their perceptions concerning the government, some employers expressed their misgivings for the government; with most of them being of the mind that the government is corrupt and fails to meet the needs of the public. This may be one of the reasons why some employers are just not interested in what the government has to offer. This may especially be the case given that—in addition to most employers' belief that the government is corrupt—some employers detest the government's regulation in the labour market (e.g., minimum wage regulation). Some of the reviewed literature (see Nataraj, 2012; Betcherman, 2019) reveal that government’s intervention in the labour market takes various forms (i.e., legislation to prevent discrimination on the ground of sex, age, gender, or creating policies to regulate employment, among others). This regulation is not always received by employers in a way that the

government intends for it to be; that is to protect workers, improve labour market efficiency, among other things. Instead, several studies have identified some adverse employment effects that ensue as a result of the labour market regulation; for instance, the minimum wage has been found to reduce employment.

It is believed that such regulation depresses the demand for labour (Boockmann, 2010; Mayet, 2010; Bhorat, Kanbur & Stanwix, 2011, 2015; Nataraj, 2012; Ayhan, 2013; Forti & Vandeweyer, 2017; Betcherman, 2019). The cost of it all, it is asserted, is borne by workers, especially young workers who are then priced out of the labour market (Chowdhury, 2011). In essence, and from a business perspective, rigid labour market regulation imposes constraints on business operations (Mayet, 2010; Bhorat, Kanbur & Stanwix, 2011, 2015; Nataraj, 2012; Ayhan, 2013; Forti & Vandeweyer, 2017). This surely cannot be something that impresses employers, and may also explain why some employers would be discouraged from being involved (or from wanting to be involved) in government strategies—as also pointed out by some of the sampled employers. Moreover, the neoclassical theorists also argue that this regulation disturbs the organic interaction between demand and supply, and thus affects the employment outcomes of many people (Fleetwood, 2006). Therefore, the undesirable role of the government, which is deemed by others to be an interference—along with the belief that the government is corrupt—may be the reason why some of the sampled employers are not interested in the interventions of the government. This, however, stands in stark contrast with some of the employers who believe that the role of the government is necessary and is the main thing that can help to spearhead the fight against unemployment.

Indeed, despite the fact that employers are not impressed with labour market regulation and that this, in many ways, may discourage them from getting involved in government interventions; labour market regulation simply cannot be done away with. As also maintained by LMS theories, labour market regulation can, among many things, improve the employment situation of vulnerable workers, and can provide incentives for employers to implement productivity and enhance job opportunities (Cassim, 1989), at least this is what such regulation should achieve. As a way to support this idea, some studies have also recommended that as necessary and important as labour market regulation is, decisions on setting employment regulations should be based on empirical evidence of what is likely to affect employers. This is because careful empirical monitoring and evaluation can identify the positive and negative effects of regulations, and thus improve the design of labour market rules in future (see Bertola, 2000; Betcherman, 2019). This is why studies—such as the one

this thesis is carrying out—are crucial as they help to discover and understand the actual experiences of employers, which can potentially be incorporated in the creation, revisions, and/or reform processes of the labour market regulations and policies. Especially the regulations that need employers' direct participation/involvement to be implemented and to be successful. In this way, employers also can have a say (and direct participation) in the creation process of labour market regulations. In this way, they will have no choice, but to comply because their concerns and experiences will also be incorporated in the design of the labour market regulations.

Overall, data further points to the fact that the sampled employers are not knowledgeable about the wage subsidies that have been created, thus far, by the government (to tackle unemployment). While there are undoubtedly a number of reasons why the sampled employers are not aware of the government subsidies, the reasons the respondents have provided are arguably not good enough to justify why they should not be involved in the wage subsidies. Instead, what emerges as a good enough reason why the sampled employers not only know of the wage subsidies, but also why they are not involved in those strategies is that employers are not well informed about the strategies? This indicates that the underlying problem, though not the only one, is the dissemination of information or lack thereof from the side of the government. Granted, the government cannot be charged with the responsibility of disseminating all information in the country, but certain matters (i.e., the unemployment crisis) should be an exception and a priority. For instance, since tackling youth unemployment or unemployment, in general, is a pressing issue and the top agenda of the government. And since the government calls on the business community, among other stakeholders, to cast resources or some form of effort in fighting unemployment. Then it is only reasonable to argue that the government has the responsibility of not only creating policies to tackle unemployment. But also of seeing to it that the relevant parties—which in this case are the employers—can access the information about the strategies/policies that depend on the participation/engagement of employers to fight unemployment. What employers do with that information will then be left to their own discretion. However, and as already mentioned above, it should not be that employers—especially those who are willing to employ young people—are not involved in government un/employment initiatives because they just simply do not know about such strategies. This lack of information would constitute a tragedy of its own, for as long as it sets back (or slows down) the already sluggish course of fighting unemployment.

8.5 PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNMENT YOUTH SUBSIDIES

Some scholars—commenting on government interventions or any other strategies designed to address unemployment—have argued that although a number of policies and strategies have been implemented, few have actually been rigorously assessed for their impact and effectiveness over time. These authors emphasise that assessments of current policies are necessary as they will reveal, among other things, whether or not the strategies are fulfilling their purpose (Moleke, 2003; Altman, 2007, 2009; Blattman, Fiala & Martinez, 2011; Caliendo, Künn & Scmidl, 2011; Van Aard, 2012; Holden, 2013; Bernstein 2014; Burger and Von Fintel 2014; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2016; Kluve et al., 2016; De Lannoy et al., 2018). Therefore, inspired by these assertions (expressed by the above-mentioned authors), and as part of understanding how government subsidies affect the recruitment of young jobseekers, it was also necessary to ask the respondents about the effectiveness of these subsidies. Little knowing that a majority of the sampled employers do not only not participate in these programmes, but they also do not know about the programmes. However, since the majority of respondents could not speak from their experiences—because they do not know about the subsidies—they shared their perceptions and attitudes about the effectiveness of these strategies.

The need to know about employers perceptions in this matter (the efectiveness off wage subsidies) is specifically important given that some scholars (i.e., McGurk, 2014; van Berkel and van der Aa, 2014; Ingold & Stuart, 2015; Bredgaard & Halkjær, 2016), point out that literature on HRM has begun to explore the demand side (employers) and, more specifically, employer participation and 'employer engagement' in active labour market policies. De Lannoy et al. (2018), also argue that while some research has demonstrated the impact of programmes in other countries, we do not know how well interventions aimed at increasing youth employment operate in South Africa, and indeed in particular contexts. For this reason, there is a need to explore any and all employment strategies that are established to fight unemployment. Investigating the effectiveness of these strategies helps to reveal if they are actually doing the work for which they are created. Or whether they need to be overhauled in order to serve the purpose for which they are initially created.

Additionally, the inquiry into the sampled employers' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of government strategies mirrors the study conducted by Mthembu and Govender (2015), which originally explored the perceptions of selected employers and unemployed youths on

the employment wage subsidy incentive (ETI). However, at the time of this study, the wage subsidy had not yet been effected; it was still in the proposal stage. So, the study was conducted to get a sense of what both the employers' and young people thought about the implementation of the subsidy. Among other things, the study found that 93% of the young people and 90% of employers of the sample were in full support of the wage subsidy in terms of how it should be structured and implemented. About 80% of respondents in the employer survey preferred the tax rebate and incentive option as most of them stated that it will be an easier process to manage and monitor. More than 50% of employers believed that it would ease the wage burden and ensure business sustainability. On the other hand, 88% of the youths' surveyed believed it would increase youth employment. Findings furthermore reveal that 10% of employers and 28% of the youth were concerned that the subsidy has the potential to exploit older workers (i.e., those who are already in employment) and feared corruption from some employers; otherwise, they are in support of its implementation.

This current study borrowed—from Mthembu and Govendor's study—the idea of exploring employers' perceptions about the wage subsidies (both the ETI & YES) created by the government—especially whether employers think the subsidies are effective or not. Consistent with much of the data already explored above, and consistent with the study by Mthembu & Govender (2015), there was a divide between respondents who thought that the strategies were effective and those that did not share the same sentiments. The majority of employers were of the view that the strategies were not effective. Only a minority of employers think the subsidies have the potential to be effective. The responses of the minority indicate that they are convinced that the subsidies will achieve the purpose for which they are created: which is essentially to promote job creation for the unskilled youths. A *Manager* from *AfriTrans* stated: "well, I personally do not know about the subsidy, but look, the subsidy could be a good idea for job creation for young people, because it meets employers halfway, so instead of the employers paying all the money, half of it comes from the government, and that is a good way to help employers to create jobs for young people." This perception was confirmed by the two employers who shared their experiences with the subsidies, as they are the only two that expressed that they are involved in either one of the wage subsidies. *Right Choice Supermarket Manager* (2020) stated:

> Ah! I think the [wage subsidy] is effective, for as long as it will encourage employers to look into employing young people, because they know they will be getting something out of it. At least there will be a few people that can benefit from it.

Contrarily, this belief was refuted by a majority of respondents who were of the mind that the subsidies might not be a good idea after all. The data denotes that these perceptions are tied to the views that these respondents previously provided about the role of the government (see the sections above). These are the same respondents that thought the government was not doing a good job with dealing with unemployment. Some of them cited corruption as one other reason why the government fails to deal with unemployment. Considering that, one would argue that these perceptions—that sampled employers have concerning the government—go some way in explaining why they would doubt any initiative created by the government. Again here, employers connect their perceived ineffectiveness of the youth subsidies to the government's alleged corruption and/or nepotism. For instance, the *Egoli Distillery Manager* (2020) stated: "The government is highly corrupt, I don't think they will use the money set aside for these subsidies well, they will either misuse it or use it only for the people they know." These responses expressed by the sampled employers reverberate the existing and ongoing debate in the literature about the effectiveness of government strategies, especially the youth wage subsidies in this case.

Research shows that from the inception of these subsidies, there has been mixed reactions about their effectiveness (Rankin and Schöer, 2011; Levinsohn et al., 2014; Mthembu & Govender, 2015). Some research commissioned by international organisations and think tanks, such as the ILO and World Bank Group, maintain that these strategies will go a long way in boosting job creation, but some scholars bet to differ. The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) is one of the biggest critics of the wage subsidy in South Africa, as it asserts that the youth subsidy is not an effective job creation strategy. According to COSATU (2012), international literature shows that the wage subsidy is extremely costly and wasteful, with massive deadweight losses. The ILO (2011), also reports that research in various countries has demonstrated that wage subsidies lead to combined deadweight. In fact, an estimate by National Treasury puts the deadweight loss alone to be 58%—which means 58% of the promised jobs from the subsidy would have been created without the subsidy (COSATU, 2012). Despite this, and the main reason why COSATU rejects wage subsidy as the strategy against youth unemployment is that COSATU (2012), believes that the wage

subsidy will have significant substitution effects. Essentially, firms will have an incentive to let go of the existing workers in order to employ subsidised ones.

Furthermore, according to COSATU (2012), the substitution effects are likely to be widespread, especially with the existence of labour brokers. This substitution will most likely hit the unskilled and semi-skilled parts of the workforce. Conversely, the National Treasury, as well as other scholars, bet to differ and counter-argue that the assertions made by COSATU are unfounded and have yet to be proven. These mixed reactions persist today. For instance, De Lannoy et al. (2018), also find that the evidence on the overall effectiveness of the ETI is mixed, but there seems to be some agreement that there are positive effects amongst small firms. As also pointed out above, Mthembu and Govender (2015), 90% of employers of the sample were in full support of the wage subsidy, with more than 50% of employers that believed that it would at least ease the wage burdens. These findings also correspond with Rankin and Schöer's (2011), findings in which most small business employers were in full support of the subsidy. As well as the findings from the SME Growth Index research, which also in its findings mentioned that 'around 75% of firms employing between 31 and 40 people supported the subsidy. Support for the subsidy was highest in the manufacturing sector' (SBP, 2013). The mixed reactions that emerged from these studies were corroboratd by the mixed reactions that were revealed by the current research.

Over and above, there seems to be a gap between employers' perceptions about the government's role in job creation, and their awareness of the strategies the government has enacted (as a way to respond to youth unemployment). As presented in Table 8.1, very few employers have an awareness of these strategies. Most employers who do not know about the strategies of the government are the same ones who emphatically expressed that it is the duty of the government to mitigate unemployment. The real question is whose responsibility is it concerning the awareness of what the government is up to, when it comes to addressing the socio-economic ills (i.e., youth unemployment)? Does the government have to make sure that it creates awareness, or do employers have a responsibility themselves to educate themselves about what is going on? It is against this background that the dissemination of information also promises to be one of the strategies to curb youth unemployment. For example, it would make a considerable difference when people know of the strategies available for them to access the labour market. Therefore, the importance of the dissemination of information cannot be stressed enough.

However, more research may need to investigate the different channels needed to enable the dissemination of information as different people from different backgrounds and different geographical locations may need different channels and mediums to access such information. The positive experiences of employers that use government strategies (though they are few) are even all the more reason why dissemination of these strategies should be taken more seriously. Especially, because most of the employers that do not participate in these strategies are those who have no awareness of the strategies. The importance and difference these strategies can make in addressing youth unemployment warrants a further inquiry into employers' involvement in the government'strategies. Indeed, notwithstanding the mixed reactions, it can be argued that the subsidies—for as long as they promise job creation and skills development for young people who are vulnerable to unemployment—seem to have a potential to get young people into the labour market and expose them to the working environment. The question that seems to be pressing at this moment is whether these wage subsidies are able to reach as many young people as is needed. Observing the persistent incident of youth unemployment, one may be of the view that it is relatively premature to make definitive conclusions about the success of the above-mentioned policies (wage subsidy) to create jobs to the extent required to absorb the numbers of work seekers (and of young work seekers in particular). This is because the policies are relatively new (at least in South Africa)—the ETI came into effect in 2012, and the YES programme came into effect shortly after the demise of the ETI in 2016. Also, because it appears that there is a lack of knowledge about the existence of the programmes. Therefore, what remains of great concern is the problem of lack of information.

Although the results of this study are not extensive enough to be generalised, it does point to the fact that there is more research needed that will explore the knowledge and awareness of these policies/strategies. In light of these findings, the thesis asserts that it would be rather futile to explore the effectiveness of the subsidies before it can be discovered whether employers actually know about and actually apply these policies. In other words, employers can only concretely comment about the effectiveness of the employment strategies when they know and have applied them in their firms. Without this experience, what they have to say about the effectiveness of unemployment remains just mere opinion. While employers' opinions may give us a sense of their position concerning certain matters (i.e., wage subsidy). Assessing the effectiveness of wage subsidy as a strategy against unemployment needs more

than just mere opinion, especially if evaluating the effectiveness of the policieswill ultimately inform policymakers further to improve or reform future policies.

8.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter addressed one of the secondary questions of the thesis: that is, to find out the ways in which the government influences job creation—where it concerns young people. It did this by exploring whether the sampled employers are aware and whether they take part in the employment subsidies that the government has enacted as an attempt to fight youth unemployment. The chapter also looked at the reasons why employers take part (or not) in the employment subsidies and whether they support these strategies. Data reveals that the majority of the sampled employers are both not aware and, as a consequence, do not take part in the subsidies. While there are surely many reasons why that is the case, the underscoring reason that emerges from the data tends to fault the government. All these themes helped to explore whether the role of the government, concerning youth unemployment specifically, encourages or dissuades job creation for youth unemployment.

On the whole, the collected data reveals that the perceptions that the sampled employers have concerning the government influence whether they will be involved in the interventions the government enacts to fight unemployment or not. Employers who expressed distrust for the government tend to not be interested in what the government does. Conversely, those who believe that the government plays an important role tend to be receptive to being involved in the government interventions, even though they were currently not involved. In fact, most of these latter employers are the same ones who suggested that the government has a critical and leading role in curtailing the youth unemployment situation in the country. It stands to reason therefore, that the dispositions that the sampled employers have about the government consequently, among the many other factors, negatively impact young people who depend on the interventions that the government creates against unemploymen; and who may have these employment subsidies as their only fighting chance in entering the labour market.

However, the employment subsidies particularly can only be in full operation if the employers themselves are also willing to be involved and work together with the government to open up the opportunity of entering the labour market for young people through these wage subsidies. The questions that ensue, however—as also raised by COSATU and some scholars who tend to believe that the youth wage subsidies are not as effective as they appear—is whether the subsidies will reach the millions of young people; and whether the

meager number of young people it reaches actually get to acquire the skills that the subsidy sets out to impart to them. As well as whether these subsidies actually translate into long-term employment, or they just only afford young people the short-term employment that does not really address the long-term unemployment issue. As these young people end up going back to employment if they are not employed on a permanent employment basis.

While the youth wage subsidy may not, by itself, eradicate unemployment, and it would be unrealistic to expect it (given the many factors that cause unemployment) to eliminate the long-standing and persistent youth unemployment crisis. The piecemeal difference it makes is still worth having these subsidies operate for as long as they still make a difference, however small. Wanting to do away with the subsidy because of the reported small-scale outreach is not only a premature call but unrealistic; as the undertone of that is that the subsidy should solve the youth unemployment problem, which a lot of previous strategies have also been unable to tackle. What this shows then is that there is a need for other demand-side strategies that can work concurrently with the youth subsidy. There is also a need for studies that will investigate and examine the progress and effectiveness of these subsidies for as long as they are still in effect. Furthermore, the data also suggests that there is a need for the dissemination of information that will create awareness about these strategies.

Both this current chapter and chapter two (especially the section on unemployment strategies) denote that the government has significant responsibility for tackling youth unemployment. It has the powers to do so through macroeconomic decisions, the design, and scale of active labour market programmes, the education system. However, employers also have a particularly important role in addressing youth unemployment. This is because employers determine who they employ and how they go about recruiting people. Decisions on both these fronts can favour or hinder young people from being employed. In exploring whether these decisions favour or hinder the youth, we now turn to the next chapter, which essentially explores not only whether the sampled employers accommodate young people in their recruitment strategies. But also explores the ways in which the employers' dispositions of young people, and the role of the government in tackling youth unemployment influence employers' interest to accommodate young people.

CHAPTER NINE

RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES OF THE SELECTED FIRMS

9.1 INTRODUCTION

The reader is reminded that this thesis is animated by the grave phenomenon of youth unemployment and thus sets out to understand the demand-side factors that contribute to youth unemployment. In exploring the myriad demand-side factors, the thesis aimed primarily to examine the ways in which the recruitment practices of the sampled firms encourage or impede the employment of young jobseekers. The secondary aims include (a) examining how employers' perceptions, attitudes, and experiences regarding the youth influences their decision/s to include the youth in their recruitment strategies. And (b) understanding the ways in which the government strategies against youth unemployment influence their decisions to recruit young people. The preceding chapters have already provided a snapshot of the selected employers' 'dispositions' where it concerns the youth and the role of the government corncerning the employment of young people or lack thereof. Therefore, this chapter is a consolidation of the data from the preceding chapters, and an analysis of the data gathered from the respondents concerning the recruitment strategies and practices of their firms. While the discussion will look at the R&S practices in general, the main focus will be cast on the findings concerning young people as that is the main and narrowed-down focus of the study.

With this chapter, the thesis seeks to answer three main research questions. (i) What are the current recruitment and selection strategies of the sampled firms? (ii) Do these current strategies accommodate or preempt the employment of young people. (iii) What are the ways in which employers' dispositions (discussed in chapters seven and eight) about young people and about government interventions (enacted to fight youth unemployment) influence employers' choices to accommodate or exclude the youths' in their recruitment considerations. Answering these questions will help us understand the ways in which the demand-side dynamics of the selected firms preempt or encourage the employment of young people. Before examining the evidence relating to the recruitment of young people (15 to 24-year-olds in particular), it is important to consider the general recruitment practices that provide the broad context for the recruitment of young people at the sampled firms. Recruiting young

people is just one recruitment option for employers among other groups (i.e., graduates and adult recruits). Therefore, having a general understanding of when employers recruit, how they recruit, and what they want from the people they recruit is fundamental to understanding why they may, or may not, choose to recruit from the group of young people.

This understanding, in turn, will shed light on the position of young people in the labour market—at least from the perspective of the sampled employers—and will help identify specific aspects of the recruitment process that may be dis/advantageous to young people. As discussed in chapter four, R&S practices are processes used to provide jobseekers with an opportunity to participate in the labour market, and thus allowing them to make a living for themselves. Everyone in the labour market had to undergo some form of R&S process in order to be part of the labour force. This is why exploring R&S practices—which is a method through which jobseekers enter the labour market—will help reveal, not only, whether the sampled employers accommodate young people or not; but also reveal the dynamics of recruitment strategies and practices that encourage or discourage the employment of young people. To this end, a host of questions were posed to the respondents, which evoked information about the position of young people in their R&S strategies.

Drawing from the theoretical and conceptual framework presented in the previous chapters and the data collected, the thesis formulated themes under which different topics will be analysed to answer the central research question. The first theme of the chapter looks at the R&S practices as an alleged neglected subject. The next theme explores the R&S strategies of the sampled firms with a focus on key R&S methods. The third theme looks at the difference between formal and informal recruitment practices and the reasons why employers use either one of the practices. The fourth theme looks at the skills that are most demanded by the sampled employers. This is followed by a theme that explores the similarities and differences between practices designed for adults and young recruits. The final theme then explores the factors that affect recruitment in the sampled firms.

9.2 RECRUITMENT & SELECTION PRACTICES: A NEGLECTED SUBJECT

In investigating the role of employers (which can be investigated in a myriad of ways, focusing on different aspects of employers activities), this study elected to focus on the R&S practices—which are very crucial in who gets employed, and for what jobs they are employed. While there are many ways that the role of employers plays out in the labour market, the focus on their recruitment practices—as one of the ways they execute their role—

is all the more necessary. This is because R&S practices, amongst other labour market factors, are especially significant in determining the suitability of jobseekers to enter employment. Indeed, every organisation has some type of R&S processes that are deployed to recruit suitable candidates for any vacancies. Recruitment is necessitated by many different reasons, which are discussed in Chapter four (Llorens & Kellough, 2007; Grobler, 2011; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015). Yet, some literature submits that not only is the role of employers (concerning the employment of jobseekers) under-researched compared to supply-side studies (De Lannoy et al., 2018). But so too are the R&S practices, especially regarding how they affect the employment outcomes of jobseekers (Keep & James, 2010).

Speaking specifically to the subject of R&S, a fairly recent article by Keep and James (2010), assert that the subject of R&S is a neglected subject. They argue that within general discussions about skills, education, training, and their relationship with the labour market; recruitment and selection is often either wholly absent as a topic or is regarded as being of relatively marginal importance. They also argue that the supply of skills has generally been seen as central [to employment], whereas the process of its absorption (which is a process of R&S) into employment within organisations is viewed as a relatively unproblematic, minor issue. Keep and James (2010), further assert that the scant world of research mirrors the silence of policy debates on the topic. This is the basis on which Keep and James (2010), argue that the R&S practices are neglected concerning their impact on the employment of jobseekers. While Keep and James (2010), single out the R&S practices as being the neglected subject, De Lannoy et al. (2018), generically point out that considerable research identifies significant gaps in our understanding of exactly how employer behaviour shapes youth unemployment. Particularly, De Lannoy et al. (2018), argue that there is limited evidence on employer behaviour regarding hiring preferences and how that affects jobseekers. It is for this reason that the research is focusing on the R&S practices—amongst the many other aspects of the demand-side that can be explored—to understand how the practices encourage or preempt the employment of young people.

This focus on the R&S practices—as a demand-side activity—is also endorsed by the LMS theories (which serve as the theoretical framework of this thesis). While LMS theories argue that both the demand and supply-side impact the employment prospects of jobseekers, the theories also recognise and highlight the importance and impact of recruitment strategies not only on the employees, but also on the jobseekers. For instance, the dualist model of LMS theories maintains that while the process of job creation could be responsive to human capital

considerations—as individuals could be assigned places in job queues according to their potential productivity. Conversely, the theories also explain that employment outcomes are well impacted by different sets of selection criteria for different sectors: Primary and Secondary. Therefore, a focus on R&S will not only show whether the sampled employers employ young people or not, but it will, essentially, also help understand the main issues thwarting the recruitment of young people.

To the end of getting a sense of the R&S channels and practices of the participating firms, the respondents were asked a range of descriptive questions that would give an overview of the firms' strategies and practices. Bearing in mind that one of the main goals of the research is to understand the ways in which employers' R&S strategies encourage or preempt the employment of young people specifically; it was imperative for the thesis to explore the R&S practices that facilitate the recruitment activity of each sampled firm. This investigation, though it includes the generic recruitment practices, it sought to understand these practices in respect of young jobseekers. In light of the role that R&S practices play in creating an entry point in the labour market for job-seekers, investigating how employers design these practices in relation to young people will shed light on the factors that influence their (youth's) access to employment or impede it. Therefore, the following section explores the configuration and practice of these R&S strategies in each sampled firm. It does this also by considering how employers' dispositions of young people, and the role of the government in fighting unemployment have shaped (or continue) to shape how employers design and practice their R&S practices with respect to young people. Consequently, the following theme explores the key aspects of R&S, which will be presented in three sub-themes. These sub-themes are interrelated but respectively explore (a) 'formal' recruitment and selection methods that the sampled employers use in their firms, (b) 'informal' recruitment and selection methods, (c) and the specific channels used to target the young people.

9.3 RECRUITMENT & SELECTION METHODS USED BY SAMPLED FIRMS

In order to get a picture of and understand the recruitment channels of all 20 sampled firms, the respondents were asked to describe how vacancies are filled and what methods they use to do so. The respondents were open about the R&S methods they use in their firms, and their responses revealed some differences and similarities in the types of different methods that the firms have adopted. Before we explore the types of methods described by the respondents, it is worth mentioning that the first thing that could be picked up from the data—and as also alluded to in chapter six—is that there is a difference between (i) the firms that have special

personnel (HR Managers) that carries out the recruitment activities in some firms; (ii) firms that use the services of their general or line managers to perform the recruitment activities in those firms; (iii) and firms whose recruitment activities are predominantly carried out with the assistance of recruitment agencies. To be exact, only five of the sampled firms have an HR department with dedicated personnel responsible for the recruitment activities of those firms—among other functions that such a department would execute. The rest of the 15 sampled respondents expressed that their recruitment activities are usually conducted by managers and/or supervisors. Or sometimes the firms rely on the recruitment agencies for their recruitment needs. For the 15 firms, there is no HR department that specialises in the recruitment activities of the firms as is the case with the former five firms.

Notwithstanding this disparity, it can be concluded from the interviews that the sampled firms, irrespective of the composition of the HR department or lack thereof, have more or less the same recruitment methods. A typical recruitment process was outlined by the *Ladies & Gents Clothing Manager* (2020), who succinctly reported: "We usually advertise on social media, then people have to email their applications or apply online on the website. We then screen their applications and shortlist potential candidates. Then from the shortlist, we invite the candidates for interviews." This sentiment was shared by most respondents (those with and without HR department alike) thus, indicating that this is a common recruitment process for most firms. Even though the respondents also expressed that they sometimes tailor-make their processes as they find suitable, the recruitment process described by the *Ladies & Gents Clothing Manager* seems to be the most common model that the majority of respondents use to recruit potential candidates.

Furthermore, and contrary to the abovementioned statement, six of the 15 employers (who do not have HR personnel) reported that they neither have the HR department nor do they conduct recruitments independently. Instead, they expressed that they work with employment agencies that provide them with a list of candidates from which the respondents can choose suitable candidates. This means that these employers only recruit from the shortlist provided by the recruitment agencies with which they work. Therefore, in contrast to the majority of firms that deploy the full process of recruitment and selection, these firms only do a part of it. For instance, the *General Bank Manager* (2020), stated: "We normally use our recruitment agency, but you can also go to the internet/website and apply directly from the website, but

we also have agencies we work with." Another employer whose firm also uses recruitment agencies stated:

> There are agencies we have; we have a couple of recruiting agencies we work with. Whenever there is a job we need to fill, we just let them know what kind of personnel we need and for what job, and they bring us the candidate/s. (*Health First Store Manager*, 2020).

A similar response was provided by an employer from the retail sector:

> Most of the time, here in our firm, we use our webpage. So, we would often upload the available jobs. But sometimes, depending on the kind of job we need to be filled, we would get help from the recruiting agencies that we work with because they are able to get everything done. (*Dynamite Clothing Store Supervisor*, 2020)

The response shared by the *Dynamite Clothing Supervisor* (2020), tends to suggest that the use of different recruitment methods is based on the kind of jobs that need to be filled. This means that employers consider the type of job before choosing the type of recruitment methods they want to apply. This view is also implied in a response shared by a *Multi-Drinks Factory Manager* (2020):

> We have various methods we use to recruit suitable candidates, and we use different methods for different vacancies. When we just recruit general staff, we usually use recruitment agencies, but when we recruit someone with a unique set of skills, then it's usually internal recruitment.

This data shows that different firms have different personnel/department(s) in charge of the recruitment activities of the firms—with only a minority of the firms boasting the composition of HR departments in their firms, and the majority of the firms not having this such department to speak of. However, the common thing about all these sampled firms is that they inevitably have recruitment activities that they carry out every now and again—driven by the inherent need to recruit suitable candidates who will contribute to the success of the businesses. While there is no question that firms have recruitment activities, even though the frequency of the recruitment activities and scale of recruitment may vary from firm to firm. The question that the thesis is animated by and sought to address is: whether the recruitment activities of all these 20 firms are inclusive of young people; Or whether these

strategies are designed and practiced in such a way that they exclude young people. One of the ways to find out whether the R&S strategies and practices of these firms are inclusive of young people or not, was to explore the methods that are used by the firms, which generally reveal the kind of people the firms target to work in their firms, and the human capital they look for in their prospective employees. After all, that is what recruitment methods/channels are essentially for: to attract people with certain human capital and skills-set which will make them the best candidate for the firms.

9.3.1 Formal Recruitment and Selection Methods Used by the Sampled Firms

An extensive body of literature regarding R&S practices distinguishes between the formal and informal recruitment strategies (Lego, 2002; Myers & Dreachslin, 2007; Gursdorf, 2008; Keep & James 2010; Hasluck, 2011; Swanepoel et al., 2011; Greenidge et al., 2012; Westford, 2015; Sameen, 2016; Ingold & Valizade, 2017). In essence, formal practices include employment agencies, television and newspaper advertisements, while informal practices refer to: referrals (by friends, business partners, or current employees), word of mouth, self-initiated walk-ins, just to mention a few (Lego, 2002; Myers & Dreachslin, 2007; Hasluck. 2011; Greenidge et al., 2012; Westford, 2015; Sameen, 2016; Ingold & Valizade, 2017). In addition, there are two typical processes in formal recruitment: 'recruitment' and 'selection' processes. The recruitment process includes the development of fitting methods for attracting more candidates to a vacancy. Whereas the selection process entails identifying the most suitable candidate for the vacancy (Llorens & Kellough, 2007; Grobler, 2011; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015). In finding out what kind of R&S strategies the sampled firms deploy in their individual firms, respondents were asked about their R&S methods first to determine the processes they use to attract and encourage jobseekers to apply for their vacancies whenever there is a need to do so. And secondly to understand the processes they adopt to select and appoint the suitable candidates from a pool of applicants. Therefore, this section presents and analyses data concerning the formal R&S methods as described by the respondents, and the next section will separately explore the informal R&S methods.

The first observable thing about the R&S methods of the sampled firms is that although the reviewed literature draws a distinction between formal and informal methods of recruitments, the sampled employers use a combination of processes that comprise both formal and informal methods. From the data collected, there is no one employer that uses either formal

or informal methods exclusively; all of them, in one way or the other, seems to conflate the two methods depending on different recruitment conditions. Below are some of the responses that illustrate that recruitment practices are not mutually exclusive (formal or informal), but rather are an amalgamation of methods and strategies:

> We use multiple recruitment strategies, just to name a few: social media, newspapers, we also post on our web, and we also put out flyers (*Stop & Shop Supermarket Manager*, 2020).

> We use our social media for advertising vacancies or positions that are available at that time. We advertise; if you walk through our store, there will be a sign stating that we are hiring at the moment (*Chicken Corner Restaurant Manager*, 2020).

> We usually consider first who [the personnel] we need in our company. Is it an entry-level position or an extensively experienced person that we need? Then we post our vacancies on our social media platforms, and sometimes we also encourage our employees to spread the word. (*Money Matters Accountancy Manager*, 2020)

These responses show that firms from all sectors and of different sizes use numerous recruitment methods that often combine both formal and formal strategies. Judging from this recurring data, it is safe to conclude that there is no significant difference between the sectors and the different sizes of the sampled firms—in terms of whether they use either formal or informal recruitment methods. In other words, there is no firm that uses the formal or informal practices independently or exclusively; all firms concede to using a combination of both practices most of the time. However, the only difference that is apparent from the examples provided above (and from some of the responses that are not included in this thesis for the sake of avoiding repetition) is concerning the ways in which each firm juxtaposes both the formal and informal methods; the circumstances under which both methods (formal and informal) are used; and the concentration or degree to which each firm applies the formal and informal methods. For instance, while all firms agreed that they use both formal and informal methods, the above-mentioned responses show that some firms use formal methods more than they use informal methods—and vice versa.

In the main, these results indicate that though there is a typical R&S process as maintained by the literature reviewed (see Llorens & Kellough, 2007; Grobler, 2011; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnichet al., 2015), the recruitment methods are not hard and fast, but are flexible and can

be tailor-made by the employers based on different factors and considerations (i.e., kind of occupation being filled, availability of resources, cost, time). This point is supported by a view made above, by the *Money Matters Accountancy Manager* (2020). This point is also maintained by Hasluck (2011), who acknowledges that there is a typical and widely-used process of recruitment; but also elucidates that these processes can be tailor-made to fit the specific needs of the different organisations. Therefore, because recruitment processes can be tailor-made based on different circumstances, this means there are no two similar processes—they differ with each firm. And the processes are likely to change with each recruitment activity, depending on the type of personnel being recruited for, among other deciding factors.

From the data shared by the respondnets, there are two most commonly used methods from both the formal (social media platforms) and informal (word of mouth) categories. Expectedly, the widely used formal recruitment channel amongst the sampled firms is 'social media.' This method is used by all firms (those that have the HR department; those whose recruitment is conducted either by the managers or supervisors; and those whose recruitment is carried out by employment agencies). A majority of the respondents expressed that when they conduct recruitment in their firms, they use social media to attract a pool of potential candidates, from which they will make their selection of the most suitable candidate. A response that was shared by most of the respondents is the one provided by a *Manager* from the *More for Less* (2020) retail store who stated: " [we use] Social media ma'am. We just use social media, well that is one platform that I know of." This view was reinforced by the *Dynamite Clothing Store Supervisor* (2020), submitting: "just like many companies, we also use social media platforms, we post on google online, Facebook, Instagram and so forth."

It can be inferred that this common use of social media is tied to, among other things, its ability to reach a vast number of people, as the information can be shared on social media platforms limitlessly, and thus be noticed by many people. The general idea is that social media is used by almost everyone and is not only effective in disseminating the information about the advertised vacancies that can get to social media users quickly and widely; but it is also convenient in that it also saves time and money. Indeed, all 'social media' benefits can explain why the sampled employers (as well as the millions of social media users) use social media for recruitment. However, despite this widespread advantage, both anecdotal evidence and academic research finds that the use of social media—for, practically, anything (not just recruitment)—can have disadvantages that can be harmful, and thus put peoples' lives at risk (Gibbs, MacDonald & MacKay, 2015; Davison et al., 2016; Vroman et al., 2016; Murire et

al., 2020). This is no different when it comes to looking for, or applying for employment on social media. News outlets also have and continue to create awareness about the dangers of using social media, which can negatively affect jobseekers.

In fact, there have been stories (reported by mainstream news) of desperate job-seekers who have been misled into thinking they could be offered employment, which turned out not to be legitimate or not to exist at all (see, for example, online articles: 'Bogus Recruitment Agencies Feed Off Vulnerable Jobseekers'; 'Desperate job-seekers are falling victim to fake employment offers'; and 'Warning! Desperate jobseekers are tricked by online scammers to pay for fake jobs and learnerships'). This observation does not undermine the use of social media, which has been very advantageous in certain recruitment circumstances, and very successful in disseminating information. But it underscores the fact that social media can (and has been) misused by ill-meaning people to scam desperate and vulnerable jobseekers, thus putting them in harm's way—as they are the ones who are often lured into the social media scams by being promised employment. Given that such cases are persistent, the use of social media becomes concerning because there seem to be more desperate jobseekers who are impressionable. Therefore, owing to their desperation for employment (or of making a living)—and the wide use of social media—they fall into the scams of social media. This only indicates how complicated the use of social media is and how it can—while positively impacting some people—also negatively affect others.

Notwithstanding the use of social media, another formal recruitment method that was identified is recruitment agencies. Some respondents articulated that they rely on recruitment agencies to match their firms with suitable candidates. An employer from the retail sector expressed: "we only work with young people, so we work with some recruitment agencies, which bring us candidates whenever we need new recruits or casual staff. That is how we get our employees; we just work with various agencies that have provided us with most of the employees we have" (Health First Store Manager, 2020). Though recruitment agencies are mostly used by a group of employers who solely relied on recruitment agencies to get the candidates that they are looking for, there were also a few respondents who mentioned that they use recruitment agencies in addition to their own independent recruitment practices. Another employer from the retail sector explained: "Most of the time, in our firm we advertise jobs on our website, but sometimes we would get help from our recruiting agencies that we work with, because they get everything done for us" (*Fashion Statement Supervisor*, 2020). This view was shared by another employer from the financial sector who stated: "We

normally use our recruitment agency, but you can also go to the internet/website and apply directly from the website. But we also have agencies we work with" (*East Bank Manager*, 2020).

The data denote that recruitment agencies are used by respondents across the four sectors and by both the big and small firms. Generally, the recruitment agencies are seen by these firms as the effective recruitment method. This may be explained by the fact that recruitment agencies, among other things, do the pre-screening (sometimes even pre-assessment) and selection prior, and oofte have a large talent pool to choose from (Sinha & Thaly, 2013; Florea, 2014). This idea is also alluded to above by the *Ladies & Gents Supervisor* (2020), who stated that his firm is filled with employees who were recruited through recruitment agencies. Overall, employers who use this method seemed pleased with this technique; in fact, they seemed to prefer it over the other ones (i.e., in-house recruiting). However, even though no employer reported any complaints about the use or the effectiveness of the recruitment agencies, this widespread use (of employment agencies) seems to deviate from the literature that suggests that the recruitment agency method has some disadvantages. Such as—among other things—that recruitment agencies can be costly, and sometimes tend to fail to match employers with suitable candidates (see Hasluck, 2011). The data of this current study indicates that—when asked about it as a follow-up question—every respondent who admitted to using recruitment agencies did not report any such grievances about the recruitment agencies. Instead, they seem to appreciate that they get the employees they need from the recruiment agencies without having to conduct recruitment themselves.

Nonetheless, the satisfaction that these above-mentioned employers have with the recruitment agencies may not necessarily be that recruitment agencies do not have any disadvantages. After all, it is inevitable that any method would have both advantages and disadvantages. However, the contentment these employers have with recruitment agencies may be explained by the fact that the respondents who use the recruitment agencies are mostly those who recruit for general and part-time jobs—that do not really need the candidates to have a specific skills-set. One can argue that it may well be a different case if the candidates sought after need to have specific skills, because this would make the task of recruitment agencies—which is to match employers with the right respondents—a challenging task as they must ensure that the employer finally gets the suitable candidate. But, given that the general jobs (offered by a majority of the same employers who prefer recruitment agencies) do not need that kind of circumspection, this may explain why the recruitment agencies can easily match

the employers with the candidates that they are looking for, and ultimately why the sampled employers prefer this method. Moreover, while literature also maintains that due to the high cost of recruitment agency the use of this method is mostly among the big firms (Hasluck, 2011; Florea, 2014), the current data reveal that some of the retail firms who are mostly small in size (as defined in chapter six) also make use of these recruitment agencies to obtain the employees that they look for. This evidence suggests that recruitment agencies are not only used by big firms, but also by small firms who, in this case, usually recruit for general employment and temporary employment. As expressed above by the *Ladies & Gents Store Manager* (2020) from the retail sector, recruitment agencies are of good use even in finding candidates for temporary employment, which, according to Table 6.2, most small firms recruit for.

Overall, even though there are many formal R&S methods, the responses reveals that both the social media and recruitment agencies tend to be the most cited formal methods of recruitment used in the majority of the sampled firms. While these are the recurring formal methods, the data reveals that they are used in conjunction with other informal methods. The general sentiment is that these respondents use social media, employment agencies, newspaper advertisements, flyers, and allow walk-ins as well. One employer who admitted to using a combination of both the formal and informal recruitment tools stated:

> We use social media for advertising vacancies that are available at that time. And if you walk through our store, there will be a sign stating that we are hiring at the moment. And sometimes, but not often, we approach recruitment agencies. (*Right Choice Supermarket Manager*, 2020)

It appears from the data that no matter the combination of recruitment methods that they choose to use, social media is the recurring method used by all the respondents—even though some employers use it in conjunction with other methods (i.e., newspaper, walk-ins). Again, considering the useful benefits of social media, it can be concluded that this common and wide use of social media may be explained by its renowned and prominent accessibility. However, though the respondents did not report any negative effects of the use of social media—as one of their main recruitment methods; some research highlights that despite that there are countless advantages that come with using social media, there are also disadvantages that negatively affect people differently. How this affects firms could be evaluated further in separate studies. This will help explore whether the benefits of the use of

social media outweighs the disadvantages that concurrently ensue from the use of social media—where recruitment is concerned. This research will go towards creating more awarness about the pros and cons of social media, and how it affects different firms (and perhaps even jobseekers).

Nevertheless, another relevant aspect of employers' recruitment processes is the selection criteria, otherwise known as selective hiring (Llorens & Kellough, 2007; Grobler, 2011; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015). The selection processes are an integral part of the recruitment process. Generally, hiring includes the selection stage—a process were the applicants that managed to apply (by way of either one of the recruitment methods explored above) are sifted and shortlisted until the suitable candidate(s) is selected and offered employment (Gursdorf, 2008, Hasluck, 2011; Keep & James, 2010; Swanepoel et al., 2011). But before a suitable candidate can be hired, several different methods are conducted to allow for this sifting and shortlisting. Therefore, in finding out about the formal recruitment strategies that the respondents use in their firms, it was also necessary to ask about the most used or preferred formal selection method. Inevitably, the data reveal that 'interviews' are the most common method in the selection process. Most of the respondents indicated that—when they predominantly apply the formal recruitment methods—they use the interviews method to select candidates from the large pool of applications that they receive each time a vacancy is advertised (through the methods that have been described above). A view that serves as a snapshot of the majority of employers, who expressed that they used interviews, was articulated by the *AfriTrans Manager* (2020):

> Once we have a shortlist of candidates following the process of screening their applications, which is usually their CVs and supporting documents. We call (and/or send out emails to) the shortlisted candidates for interviews. We prefer interviews because they help us get to know the person better. So, even the questions we ask them are designed to make the interviewees open up and tell us more about themselves, and tell us what they have to offer our firm.

While this view was shared by most employers, some few employers, however, reported that they use other methods in addition to interviews. For instance, the *Multi-Drinks Factory Manager* (2020) stated: "in the selection processes, we use numerous methods. We make the candidates come for an interview, and when that is successful, we make them take training assessments, and that is what decides whether a person will be hired or not." The *Chicken-*

Corner Restaurant Manager (2020) stated: "even after we interview the potential candidates we still need to know if they can actually do the job. So, we assign them to a one to three days' training before we can officially hire them." Considering these responses and the kinds of jobs that these respondents recruit for—which are mostly general and entry-level jobs as already described in chapters six and seven—one may conclude that the choice of the methods used is contingent on, among other things, the kinds of jobs for which the sampled employers are recruiting.

This point is also made in light of the response provided by the Eat *& Dine Restaurant Supervisor* (2020) from the hospitality sector, who explained that depending on the job/s they are recruiting for, they sometimes do not interview some of the people they hire:

> When we are looking to hire people to clean in the firm or to work in our kitchen, we just show them how the job needs to be done, then we hire them on the spot. Many of the people we have hired like that are some of the people who come in the store asking for employment. Most of them get the job without being interviewed because the jobs are simple and do not need any qualifications.

From this response, it appears that the decision to interview different candidates may be informed by other factors (i.e., time, costs), but it is mainly based on the kind of occupation for which the candidates are being considered. Having to consider all these factors also explains why the sampled employers use a variety of methods. Some methods may not be necessary for the filling of menial jobs (i.e., cleaner) than they would be for filling senior positions (i.e., manager, director). For instance, while a person employed for cleaning may be recruited on the spot, as explained by the *Eat & Dine Restaurant Supervis*or, more sophisticated methods may need to be applied for a senior position so that they can ensure that the best candidate (with the specific skills) is employed. Indeed, it may be too costly and unnecessary to conduct interviews for a cleaning position that does not need any particular set of skills, and thus, can be filled by anyone. However, no matter how costly the conducting of interviews may be to find the suitable candidate for a senior or professional position, it is necessary because the method/s will ensure that the suitable candidate is singled out from many others. This simply proves that employers take into consideration a number of factors before they decide which recruitment method to apply. There is a consensus from the literature that these R&S methods and practices vary greatly, and particularly, in respect of the skills (among other things) being sought after by employers (see Sanha & Thaly, 2013).

Therefore, according to the data, this consideration (kinds of jobs being filled) is among the other factors that inform the employers' decision to use either the formal and informal methods or even a combination of both methods.

Overall, just as 'social media' was the most recurring method used for attracting potential candidates for the vacant job, 'interviews' was also the most cited method used for the selection process carried out in the sampled firms. The rationale from responses is that interviews help select suitable candidates from a group of potential applicants who applied for a job. Indeed, the reviewed literature maintains that the use of interviews helps in gathering a wide range of information about the applicants' attitude, feelings, and motivations, which in turn helps in the decision-making process to hire suitable candidates (Hasluck. 2010; Keep, 2010; Swanepoel et al., 2011). Likewise, data reveals that the sampled employers use interviews to get to know the potential candidates better. This use of interviews was communicated by both the big and small firms from all four sampled sectors. An employer from the *Maboneng Theme Park* (2020), had this to say: "here in our firm, we mainly use interviews to choose the best candidate. When we interview the candidates, we get to know them on a personal level, and we get to hear from them in person than just from their CVs." When asked whether they thought that interviews are effective, the same employer stated:

> Uhm, well…the reason we use interviews is because we want to get to know more about the person we want to hire before we can work with them; interviews enable us to gauge whether they have communication skills and whether they can present themselves well. Interviews also allow for face-to-face interaction, you know, so they are a good way to know the prospective candidate better. (*Maboneng Theme Park Manager*, 2020)

This data denotes that in the same way social media was identified as the common method to advertise and publicise vacant jobs; the interview method, in most instances, was identified as the central test/assessment of the applicant's suitability that allows for the recruiters to select the best candidate. Again, here we see that the choice the selection methods used in each firm is also dependent on the job being filled (entry or seniority level), among other factors. However, given that most of the firms are in the retail/hospitality sector are of small size, most employers from these firms only needed to recruit for entry-level jobs, which are offered on a short-term basis (i.e., part-time employment). Therefore, this may explain why 'interviews' appear as the commonly used method to select recruits as there seems to be no

need for more sophisticated method—because the unskilled labour sought after is already abundant in supply and can be hired on the spot. In fact, considering all the responses shared above (and some will be explored below), the unskilled workforce—which is hired by the majority of the firms—has been hired using informal methods. Therefore, 'interviews' just seem to be the common or general formal method used, but these employers may well use informal methods based on which method can effectively get the best candidate hired. This further points out that the selection method that employers elect to use to select the suitable candidate/s is based on whether the method is effective to ensure that the best candidate is recruited at the end of the day. But it is also based on the circumstances (in terms of finances, and the urgency for the post to be filled) that each firms finds itself in and the different needs that each firms have. Hence, the recruitment methods look different for each firm.

However, while interviews remain the most commonly used method (owing to its benefits) of sifting and selecting recruits, it is apparent though that organisations can (sometimes inadvertently) discriminate against candidates based on the language barrier, among other things (Hasluck, 2011). This may especially have a negative bearing on young people in the NEETs category (if they are even able to make it to the selection stage) as they may not know how to conduct themselves in the interviews. Indeed, considering that most of them are school dropouts, they may not have an idea about how they need to conduct themselves in interviews. Also, some young people (and other old job-seekers) may not be able to articulate themselves using a non-mother tongue as they can express themselves using their mother tongue. Therefore, this may negatively impact them for as long as they cannot express themselves in an interview, even though they may be able to do the job. This view is confirmed by one of the employers who stated: "We look for employees who are confident and competent, you know. Who can communicate because you know, we deal with customers? So, communication is key" (*AfriTrans Manager*, 2020).

This response suggests—in so far as it claims that communication is key—that if an interviewee fails to communicate well in an interview, they may be disadvantaged just on the basis that they were unable to communicate well in an interview. But this employer fails to recognise that their inability to communicate well may result from many things and not necessarily that they are unable do the job. Therefore, another issue about this method (interviews) is that the qualities that employers look for may not be well tested in interviews. For instance, someone may not be able to articulate themselves well when they are nervous—as some people find interviews nerve-wracking—but may be good communicators under

normal circumstances. This means someone may be disadvantaged for failing to show communication skills in an interview, even though they may be good communicators outside of an interview setting. Therefore, despite that, the respondents have confidence in their choice for interviews as the main selection method. It begs the question as to whether the interview methods are effective in getting suitable candidates. In other words, are these methods effective predictors of future jobs performance, or do they fail to reveal someone's potential to do well in the job by only focussing on one moment of ones life (interview appointment)? I raise this argument not to undermine the benefits of interviews—some which have been pointed by the respondents above. But rather to suggest that interviews may not always be appropriate predictors of one's ability to do the job by only focusing on one moment in a life of an interviewee. As such, interviews, in general, can negatively impact jobseekers who may fail to express themselves well in an isolated interview even though they may be able to do the actual job.

This question can be explored further in an independent research study, but it is especially important as far as it concerns young jobseekers who, for many reasons, do not know how to conduct themselves in an interview—which is (oftentimes) the only opportunity they get to impress the recruiters. While this method can benefit (and has benefited) recruits who could give the best interviews, it does, however, seem to disadvantage jobseekers, especially young people who may never be able to learn how to conduct themselves in an interview. Of course, this argument may not apply to young people who are still in school or university, or those who are already in the labour market, or even the unemployed graduates. As they are not only in a better position than the NEETs category but, unlike the NEETs category, they may know how to look for employment or to conduct themselves in interviews, given that they are likely to learn these things at school and can educate themselves on the internet. Unfortunately, however, there is a group of young people who do not have that luxury to learn these things from school (because they have dropped out), or to access the internet to educate themselves; and are, as a result, disadvantaged.

Indeed, the same negative bearing that the 'interview' method—used for the selection process—has on young jobseekers is apparent regarding social media, since it was identified as the commonly used recruitment method by the sampled employers. While social media is widely used, it is a tool that is not readily accessible to use either (especially in terms of finances). Many people who use social media pay a certain fee to use it, and with this being the case, not everyone can afford social media. This, in turn, means not all people are able to

not only access the information that is circulated via social media—whether it is the available jobs or about current affairs—but they are also not able to apply for the advertised jobs, which is widely done via social media. While this cannot be said about everyone—given the widespread use of social media, which suggests that an inestimable number of people are using it—it can, however, be inferred that some old jobseekers and young jobseekers, especially from the NEETs category, are the least likely to have access to social media. This means that they may be in the position of not being informed about the jobs advertised on social media, nor be able to apply for these jobs even if they may hear about them by word of mouth.

Therefore, while the use of social media may be an advantage for many users, it has a negative impact on those who cannot afford it at all, or cannot afford it some of the time. This may be one of the many reasons why young people are the most vulnerable to unemployment. For instance, even though there are some firms that can employ young people with no skills (for unskilled labour), many young people (due to not being able to afford social media—as the widely used by the sampled employers) may not be informed of the job openings that are posted and circulated on social media. And thus, miss on the opportunities of hearing about or even applying for employment, especially when job openings are communicated via social media, which has become a trend now. This is also where the neoclassical theory gets it wrong as far as it assumes that there is perfect information in the labour market. In real labour markets (such as in South Africa), there is no perfect knowledge because the mediums used to disseminate information are not afforded by everyone who actually needs to hear about employment opportunities. Therefore, not everyone has an equal opportunity to not only access information about employment opportunities but also to apply for these jobs.

This is one of the ways that people are disadvantaged, especially unemployed young people who also have unemployed parents or guardians, or do not have any other form of social capital. Being in a position where they cannot afford social media as the widespread method of recruitment further compounds their already diminishing employment outcomes due to lack of skills, among other things. Indeed, empirical research has found that lack of social capital (which also involves having access to social media in order to be informed about vacant jobs and also to apply for the vacant jobs) exacerbates the situation of youth unemployment (see Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015). It stands to reason from this consideration that even though social media is the preferred recruitment method; like any other method (i.e., interviews), social media also has its cons that are mostly felt by those who are most

vulnerable and desperate for employment. In fact, in most cases where social media was negatively used to defraud jobseekers of what little money they have, the victims therein have almost invariably been people who are vulnerable to unemployment; and out of desperation to make a living, fall prey to this such misuse and abuse of social media. Therefore, while social media undoubtedly and undeniably benefits many firms and even jobseekers who, as a result of social media, were able to secure employment. This same use of social media that benefits others seems to have an adverse impact on some young people who cannot afford social media and, as a result, miss out on the employment opportunities that they would otherwise have (by having access to social media) been able to obtain.

While this argument does not suggest that lack of access to social media is the only factor that disadvantages young people, it does reveal the (negative) impact that social media may have on the employment outcomes of young people—especially to those who do not have access to it for the purposes of accessing information about and applying for vacancies. The same can be said about 'interviews' method, as it is also likely to make the entry of young people in the labour even more difficult than it already is. This is because young people, having dropped out of school, may be the least able to conduct themselves in interviews, let alone compile a CV. Some of these things (how to draft a CV and conduct yourself in interviews) are learned at school, yet research shows that most young people drop out of school, thus missing out on the education that can help them fair well at school. Considering this discussion it can be concluded that the formal R&S methods may not be responsible for the unemployment incident that young people are faced with. But they may constitute as some of the factors that may preempt young people from being employed, or they are factors that compound their unemployment situation. The following section explores the informal practices that some of the sampled employers use in conjunction with some of the above-mentioned formal methods.

9.3.2 Informal Recruitment and Selection Methods

Despite the use of formal R&S methods that have been discussed above, respondents also noted that, even though they deploy formal practices for their recruitment, they occasionally mix those with informal methods. This study reveals that the common informal method that the sampled employers tend to use is the 'word of mouth' or referrals (as described by some literature). For instance, the *Exceptional Motors Corp Supervisor* (2020) explained: "I sometimes speak to my workers to call the people they know." When asked (as a follow-up question) why he preferred this method, he explained: "It is more effective because it saves

time and money." This use of informal strategies, however, is not in isolation; it is often used in addition to (or as a temporary alternative to) the formal practices. In fact, according to the data, the informal methods are used only for adhoc recruitments. The respondents explained how they occasionally use their current employees to recommend or find potential candidates to fill vacant positions in their firms. *Fashion Statement Store Supervisor* (2020) stated:

> For the [general] jobs that we recruit for regularly, like cleaners and security guards, I just speak to my workers to call the people they know, and I just hire on a first-time basis. Sometimes we even recruit people who randomly walk into our firm if a temporary job is available.

The use of informal methods (in recruitment activity) is also acknowledged by the literature reviewed. Burns, Gordlonton and Kesnel (2008), submit that social networks (which play out as word of mouth, referrals, or even nepotism) are increasingly recognised as having an important influence on the labour market outcomes since they facilitate the exchange of job-related information. The reviewed literature further points out that reliance on the social networks (to find employment) typically results in better matching between the job candidate and the available job, it also reduces employer uncertainty about worker productivity and may even enhance satisfaction and employee loyalty (Burns, Gordlonton & Kesnel, 2008*;* Bernstein 2014; Burger & Von Fintel 2014; Abel, Burger & Piraino 2017). However, while the responses from the abovementioned respondents indicate that the use of word of mouth (as a recruitment method) is used for general or entry-level vacancies. One would find it interesting, however, to find that some of the firms that use these informal practices are the big firms that have HR departments. While this may be expected from the small firms, who, among other reasons, are most likely to conduct in-house recruitment and rarely would have an HR department that is responsible for their recruitment activities. As a result, small firms may want to resort to the ad-hoc (informal) way of recruiting practices, as they may not always afford to carry out the formal recruitments that are usually time consuming and costly.

It was somewhat surprising that there are some big firms that are among the sampled firms that use informal methods. The expectation is that, because they have HR departments that are responsible for recruitment, they can afford to do it formally or would rather enlist recruitment agencies to do the recruitment for them. Nevertheless, the data gathered shows that there are justifiable reasons informal practices are used in both the small and big sampled firms. Firstly, considering that employers are profit-driven, and would do anything to cut

costs in order to retain more profit. Secondly, considering that most sampled firms offer general jobs and may want to employ people for these jobs through informal strategies—which allows them to get available jobs filled without undertaking the whole process of recruitment. For instance, when asked why they use informal practices the *Exceptional Motors Corp Supervisor* (2020) stated: "it is more effective because it saves time and money from taking the long process of recruiting." This response suggests that while any employer wants to ultimately hire the suitable or best candidate for any vacant job; any employer will always seek out the least costly method. Especially when the least costly method can successfully get them the personnel they need without having to go for the more costly and time-consuming route. This also stands to reason that when recruiting for general jobs, employers are, justifiably, reluctant to spend more money and time that formal recruitment practices require. Therefore, they opt for informal practices, which in comparison to formal practices, are less time-consuming and cost-effective

Be that as it may, it can be concluded from this consideration that employers usually vacillate between using formal and informal methods of R&S. The reason for this adhocracy concerning the recruitment methods, is that employers take into consideration several factors for different recruitment event. While employers ultimately conduct recruitments to fill up vacant positions and ultimately to increase the productivity of the firm, the data reveals that employers want to achieve this at less expense and less time. This stands to reason that the recruitment strategies will look different for each rising R&S occasion, depending on the different factors of each different vacant position. This shows that employers carefully strategise their practices, and it also proves the control that they have in the final employment of their recruits. Indeed, it is also notable that much like formal practices, informal practices may negatively affect jobseekers. In general, 'word of mouth' basically means that some jobseekers may not know about the information and, as a result, do not get the chance of applying for the job as they would, if it had been formally advertised. Some studies also find that, even though preferred by organisations for various reasons, this informal channel further excludes unemployed people. It is argued that 'word of mouth' recruitment has been proven to perpetuate the existing workforce profile leading to indirect discrimination of minority groups and social exclusion (Carroll et al., 1999; Hogarth et al., 2003).

This analysis points to the fact that even though formal practices do not reach all people looking for employment—given that some people may not have access to some platforms that firms advertise on—the informal practices also worsen this lack of access to information

as it ensures that only a few people know about the job opening. Therefore, this informal practice though it benefits the employers (cuts costs and time), it tends to disadvantage job seekers in general and especially the youths. Since this method is centred on the existing workforce and its extended network of contacts, this means that young job seekers have little chance of knowing about the vacant jobs and thus may not be considered for employment—given that the workforce is mainly constituted by older workers. This reality is confirmed by literature and by StatsSA reports, which submits that most of the youth are outside of the labour market; this implies that the labour force is mostly made up of older workers. So, if the firms use 'word of mouth,' this means more and more older workers will be employed as the existing employees will refer their friends or neighbours for any available vacancy. Or at least, it could mean that the children of the older friends or neighbours are the ones who are employed; but still it also excludes many others who do not have such social networking.

This reasoning is consistent with findings from a study conducted by Hasluck (2011). In this study, one of the findings was that the use of informal recruitment channels by employers tends to disadvantage young people. This is because such channels are centred on the workplace and the social network among the existing workforce. Young people seeking work appear to have only a limited awareness or access to such networks, thus limiting the job opportunities open to them. This informal recruitment method also introduces an element of unfairness in as far as access to employment may depend more on family connections than upon one's ability or that one was competitive enough to earn the job (Hasluck. 2011). Additionally, such strategies also limit the diversity of the workforce, which can be achieved by the application and consideration of labour laws that advocate for diversity, and thus obligate employers to avoid discrimination. However, informal methods seem to circumvent the application of such laws, thus circumventing diversity in the workplace, as not all job seekers are exposed to an equal opportunity to hear about and to apply for the vacant jobs. Only those who have some form of social network get the information and the jobs.

Indeed, it can be concluded that it is less costly and rather expedient for employers to rely on social networks of referral and word-of-mouth. These, however, are discriminatory ways of matching work seekers with jobs because it excludes other people from not only acquiring information, but also from applying for the vacant jobs themselves, thus making them more vulnerable to unemployment compared to those who have social capital. So, one can argue that while employers exercise their discretion to choose which practice (formal or informal) to get the suitable candidate objectively, this sometimes translates into unemployment for

certain people who these decisions affect negatively. In supporting this view, Adams et al. (2000), argue that the characteristics of employers and their recruitment practices are also an essential factor in 'locking out' the unemployed from evolving employment opportunities. This poses a serious issue on jobseekers as it shows that there are other factors that impede on many jobseekers' ability to secure employment.

Again, here we see how critical the role of employers is, that just by their decision to get someone recruited by 'word of mouth'—instead of administering the formal process—this may mean that someone does not get to know about the job opening, and thus does not get the chance to be employed. This does not suggest that youth unemployment can be directly linked to the recruitment strategies and practices, but it shows how these employment decisions contribute to the difficulty that young people have with regards to entering the labour market. This again confirms the notion advanced by the LMS theory that though education is key to finding employment. There are usually other exogenous factors that influence whether one finds employment or not. This also shows what has been showed by critiques of HCT, who argue that the theory ignores several variables that are outside of the individual control (Cassim, 1989). In this case, corruption and having connections (nepotism) can be argued to be such factors that people (especially young people) do not have control over. Yet, they will most likely determine the youths' outcomes in the labour market. It stands to reason that the young people can be disadvantaged by employers' recruitment methods. For this reason, it can be concluded that formalised practices can promote the recruitment of disadvantaged groups by helping to reduce the scope for personal judgments and prejudice that can result in discrimination. While formal practices may not circumvent the inevitable discrimination, it is, comparatively, a better strategy in alleviating it than the informal strategies of recruitment. In fact, Hasluck (2011:27), belives that "in part, the job prospects for young people could be improved if employers were to adopt more formal human resource practices that made indirect, or unintentional, discrimination less likely."

It can be inferred from the data that the choice to use either formal or informal processes is linked to the advantages or disadvantages tied to each method. The reasons that employers articulate for their choice of either one of the types of recruitments (formal or informal) stand in stark contrast with the negative effects that they have on most people who are disadvantaged as a result thereof. However, though these choices are for the benefit of the firms, they have a bearing on jobseekers, and mostly the youth as they are the most vulnerable to unemployment. While it should be recognised that employers are entitled to

their choices, this is where labour law comes in to restrict the extent to which employers can have their way, and inevitably disadvantages most jobseekers if their choices are not fettered. This is especially true given that the neoclassical theory recognises that employers serve their own interests, and their main goal is profit maximisation. This shows that employers would do anything to make sure that they get profit; however, the government's intervention is integral to constrain just how far employers can go with maximising profits. Indeed, it is the law that can restrict employers' upper hand in R&S. As a matter of fact, the AA and the EEA—among others—are designed for this purpose (Moleke, 2004).

Considering all these findings from the data, a few conclusions can be made about the general recruitment practices of the sampled employers and the impact they have on the youths specifically. Firstly, it is clear that hiring decisions are complex due to many factors that need to be considered throughout the recruitment process. Given the complexity of all that goes into the design and practice of these recruitment strategies, it is only natural that they would breed both advantages and disadvantages that affect different job seekers differently. Over and above, the evidence shows that there was considerable uniformity concerning the recruitment methods that all firms use. Social media seems to be the main recruitment tool for recruitment in all the firms, even though some firms use other methods in addition to social media. Similarly, 'interviews' was another method that emerged from the data as the most used tool for selection. In this respect, there was no considerable difference regarding the methods as there was a collective agreement from the respondents about the use of both the formal and informal methods. However, evidence shows that there is a considerable difference regarding when and how these methods are used. This difference is contingent on various factors, such as the nature of the vacancy itself, the efficiency of the methods for different recruitment needs, and it can be argued that it is mostly whether they are cost-effective or not.

Therefore, given that these considerations look different for each firm, then they are most likely to shape and influence the recruitment practices differently. This means that not only will the recruitment practices differ with each firm, but they will differ even with each recruitment activity that takes place on different occasions in each firm. In turn, it is this constant consideration of different determinants that makes the recruitment practices flexible and subject to change, in order to accommodate every consideration that arises in each firm. Be that as it may, and as argued above, it should also be understood that as justifiable as the use of both the formal and informal methods (that employers have outlined) is, these methods

or strategies generally tend to have a negative bearing on the employment outcomes of jobseekers—in as far as they contribute to lessening the employment prospects of young people. Considering the data, it can be argued, however, that this negative bearing is indirect because a majority of the sampled employers have and continue to consider employing young people. Therefore, while the negative bearing may be deliberate (or direct) from the side of employers who categorically stated that they do not have any intentions to employ young people, the same cannot be necessarily said about the employers who, contrarily, seem to be open and to support the employment of young people. In fact, the next section explores some of the recruitment channels that most of the sampled employers have espoused in their firms to attract and hire young people.

9.3.3 Recruitment Channels Targeting the Youth

The previous section provides a general discussion of the R&S methods/strategies that the sampled employers apply in their firms. However, the thesis is primarily interested in employers' recruitment activities concerning young people in particular. Even though the discussion above shows, to some extent, how the general R&S strategies affect young people, it was imperative to also explore if the sampled employers have any recruitment channels that target young people specifically. Doing this will also reveal whether there are any differences and similarities between the recruitment strategies used for any jobseekers (i.e., adults, graduates), and those used for young jobseekers. Investigating the differences and/or similarities between different groups is also crucial, given that where unemployment is concerned, the difference between young and old workers is made significantly in the reviewed literature. In fact, there is a body of literature that focuses on these groups in a disaggregated manner (either young workers or older workers), yet some consider both age cohorts. This age gap (or difference) is also exemplified in the Stats SA quarterly reports, which show that there is a significant unemployment rate gap between the two age groups. As already mentioned in chapter three, the overall (general) unemployment rate (using the official definition) had come up to 29.1% and 59, 0% for the youth in the 15-24 category (StatsSA: Q2, 2018). Considering these statistics and the literature, it was important for this thesis to explore how the respondents' recruitment decisions contribute to (or perpetuate) the gap between the two groups. In other words, are the recruitment strategies similar for both groups, or are there different strategies applied to target different groups (i.e., adults, graduates, and youth)?

Over and above, the data reveal that there are both similarities and differences in terms of the recruitment strategies that the sampled employers apply concerning people in general and the youths'. However, the differences are not as significant as can be expected—especially considering the gap between the youth unemployment rate and the overall unemployment rate, which suggests that employers' recruitment strategies are advantageous for adults than they are for young people. Rather, the similarities outweigh the differences. Data shared by the employers (who recruit both adults and youth people) reveal that there are no significant differences concerning the recruitment practices the respondents use for the recruitment of young people. These employers use more or less the same recruitment methods for young people as they do for the adult they recruit in their firms. This means that for the respondents that recruit both age groups, the general methods that were outlined in the previous section are also used to employ young people.

Therefore, it can be surmised that the typically formal recruitment method used for both age groups is *'social media'*. This view is confirmed by the *Health First store Manager* (2020), who stated: "through social media and internet we have our webpages where they can go, we also have our app, our firm's App." The commonly used R&S informal method is the 'word of mouth.' The *Right Choice Supermarket Manager* (2020), pointed out: "we have also recruited our young employees via word of mouth or social media platforms. We know social media is their platform." This same sentiment was shared by the *Maboneg Theme Park Manager* (2020), who also stated: "You can go online, or you can get a word from your brother or friend, it's easier and quicker that way." The motivation to use social media—as a good medium to reach the youth—was shared by all employers across sectors that recruit young people. One employer shared: "We use social media the most because that's how most people can ee what we advertise when it comes to vacancies…" (*East Bank Manager*, 2020). This view is supported by an employer from the finance sector who stated:

> If you want to get hold of young people for anything, you should just put it on social media. In a matter of minutes, many people would know about it. Social media is the playground for most young people. (*Money Matters Accountancy Junior Manager*, 2020).

On the contrary, two out of 16 employers that recruit young people maintained different views about which method is better to use to target the youth, one of the two employers said:

> There is no one way; it depends on the kind of young people the firm targets. Some young people do have internet, but for those who do not have internet, using other methods may be necessary, like posters. (*AfriTrans Manager*, 2020)

Again, this data reveal that, similar to the general R&S discussed above, the methods used across firms and sectors to attract young job seekers are social media platforms. Only a minority of employers added that they would use methods other than social media to reach young jobseekers. In addition to what has been concluded in the previous section, the data about recruitment methods concerning young people also indicate that employers are aware that, despite that this is a social media era, there is still a possibility that some people do not have access to social media for reasons that have been alluded to in the previous chapter (among other reasons). In fact, the issue of unemployment alone creates this inability for some people to not have access to social media or other recruitment methods (that require finances to access). For instance, if people do not have the income to make (finance) a living, it is only inevitable that they would find social media expensive to maintain. The use of social media by young people (that some respondents refer to) may pertain to young people who are in university and are able to access the internet therein; or even young people whose parents can afford the internet at home. However, there is another group of young people who, due to various factors (i.e., teenage pregnancy, school dropouts, low-income families, taking care of other siblings or family members), cannot afford food to eat, let alone afford social media. Therefore, due to this lack, they fail to (among other things) access social media to search for the available jobs, muchless apply for them. Sadly, this is a reality for many young people who are worse of than varsity students, or other young people whose family members have jobs and can assist them, in one way or the other, to use/access social media.

The overall findings—based on the question of the recruitment methods/strategies that the respondents use—indicate that as efficient as employers think the recruitment methods (described above) are (given that they are common, and are still go-to methods in most of these firms); they tend to negatively impact those who do not have access to social media to both access vacancy information and to apply for these vacancies. What is worse is that, in most cases, this is a matter that is beyond their control and they often cannot do much about it. Many of the people that do not have access to social media are the same ones who are desperately seeking employment. And it seems that the lack of access to social media (as the generic recruitment strategy) counts as one of the factors that further exacerbates their unemployment situation; as it tends to exclude those who cannot afford social media. This

consideration helps us understand that recruitment methods are the first point of reference—from the demand side—that exclude particular job seekers (as much as it attracts some). This does not only refer to young people, as these commonly used methods are likely to also exclude people who have skills and experience; but who may not have access to social media platforms where they can see and apply for the vacant jobs match. For instance, word of mouth (used by other employers as a strategy to recruit people) may never reach some of the people that may have the skill-set required, but do not have the social capital by which to know about which jobs are available.

Numerous examples indicate that the recruitment methods (outlined above) are not all-inclusive of job seekers—since even those with all the human capital that employers demand can still be negatively affected. In as much as recruitment methods are designed to attract suitable candidates for the advertised job, they tend to exclude both the skilled and unskilled people who may not have access to the methods that the employers choose to use. While this exclusion may not be deliberate, especially from the employers that are open to employing young people, it still can negatively impact young people who may not have access to the methods used by the sampled employers. In fact, this can be true about the four employers who expressed that they do not recruit young people. For them, the use of ‘word of mouth' and ‘websites' as a recruitment method may be their strategy to exclude certain groups of job seekers. It should be noted, then, that all these strategies may be efficient in getting the suitable candidates employed—and doing so with the least costs, which is a bargain to employers given their propensity towards profit-making. However, the results of this study suggest that young people bear the brunt of these recruitment considerations, given that their exclusion is also due to the fact that they usually do not have the skill-set, and are thought of as a risk to employ.

Notwithstanding the previous section and the discussion presented above, the data show that the sampled employers use similar recruitment methods for their recruitment activities; and when recruiting both old and young jobseekers. The difference that emerged between the employment of young and old jobseekers is the deployment of specific employment programmes that are used to target young people—whereby older workers are deliberately excluded. The employers who expressed that they employ young people also identified some of the programmes (i.e., learnerships) they use in their firms through which they have employed and consider employing young people. Therefore, we now turn to some of the programmes that have allowed for the recruitment of young people in the 16 firms of the

employers who recruit young people. Of course, this discussion excludes the rest of the four employers who categorically expressed that they do not recruit young people (15-24 years old). The table below presents the types of programmes that the employers have in their firms, as well as the duration of this programmes. This table gives a sense of how long employers have considered employing young people through these programmes. The direct quotes of the respondents will be outlined to substantiate the data presented in the table below.

Table 9.1: Recruitment programmes targeting young people

Firms	Youth Recruitment Programmes	Type of Programmes	Duration of Programmes
Ladies & Gents Store	No	Learnerships	N/A
Super Fuel Garage	No	N/A	N/A
Health First Store	Yes	Learnerships	16 years
Maboneng Theme Park	Yes	Learnerships	8 years
General Bank	No	N/A	N/A
Eat & Dine Restaurant	Yes	Learnerships	Not sure
East Bank	No	N/A	N/A
Burger Club Restaurant	Yes	Youth employment programmes	Not sure
Dynamite Clothing Store	Yes	Learnerships	2 years
Chicken Corner Restaurant	Yes	Youth employment programmes	3-4 years
Stop & Shop Supermarket	Yes	Other	6 years
Money Matters Accountancy	Yes	Graduate programme	Not sure
Egoli Distillery	Yes	Learnerships	Not sure
More for Less Wholesale	Yes	Youth employment programmes	>15 years
Star Bank	No	N/A	N/A
Right Choice Supermarket	Yes	Youth employment programmes	About 5 years
Fashion Statement Clothing	Yes	Youth employment programmes	6-8 years
Exceptional CarsMotor Corp	Yes	Graduates programme	10years+
Multi-Drinks Factory	No	Leanerships	10years+
AfriTrans	Yes	Graduate programmes and Learnerships	10years+

As illustrated in Table 9.1, only 16 employers have recruitment programmes targeting young job seekers. The remaining four are the employers who expressed in chapter 6 (Table 6.2) that they do not employ young people at all. The programmes that the 16 employers have

identified range from *learnerships* to *graduate programmes*; and as has been described in the table, other programmes are referred to as *youth employment programmes*. This is because they are not—in their nature and purpose—necessarily leanerships nor graduate programmes, but are also designed to provide employment opportunities to young people. Essentially, the difference between the employment programmes and learnership programmes is that the latter is a structured learning process for gaining theoretical and practical skills in the workplace, leading to a qualification registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (De Louw, 2009; Visser & Kruss, 2009; Kluve et al., 2017).

Youth employment programmes, by contrast, provide employment opportunities without granting the programme participants a qualification as done by learnerships. Whereas graduate programmes essentially provide graduates who already have qualifications with workplace experience and exposure to enhance their employability. The idea to categorise the types of programmes (as has been done in the table above) emerges from the data collected. Some employers expressed that they have graduate programmes, while some identified leanerships and others explained that the programmes they offer to accommodate the young people are neither like the learnerships nor graduate programmes—in that they do not grant any qualifications at the end of the programmes. As also explained by one of the employers:

> In our firm, we do not necessarily have learnerships or graduate programmes. We just have programmes through which we employ young people, but at the end of the programmes they do not get a qualification or certificate like it is done with learnerships. And unlike the graduate programmes that are meant to attract graduates, we just employ young people who do not have skills and tertiary education. But we give them workplace exposure. (Chicken Corner Restaurant Manager, 2020)

Some of these programmes, as described in the abovementioned response, were alluded to mainly by the retail/hospitality sector firms (who make up the majority of the sampled employers). Hence the programmes they provide are not either referred to as learnerships or graduate internships because, while they all offer employment opportunities and expose young people to the workplace experience; youth employment programmes tend to operate differently than the learnership and graduate programmes. The difference between these programmes is also explained by *Burger Club Restaurant Manager* (2020):

> Yes, our firm has certain programs that target youth, and, in most cases, we do state that the programme is for the youths. In this programme, we just recruit the youth for

a certain period of time which is usually 3-12 months. However, these programmes do not guarantee permanent employment.

Multi-Drinks Factory Manager (2020), also specified that they use learnership programmes to target the youths that choose to work just after their secondary schooling: "we offer learnership programmes for the ones fresh from high school." Contrary to this view (of programmes that target only young people coming from secondary school), is a view shared by an employer from the manufacturing sector whose firm offers graduate programmes: "Like I said, in our industry, we usually go for graduates who are young, so we do have a graduate internships that we provide every year" (*Exceptional Motors Corp Supervisor*, 2020). Regardless of this, most employers, as can be observed from the table, do not have any particular programmes (as outlined by others), but still do employ young people, as expressed by *More for Less Wholesale* (2020) Supervisor: "yes, we are not involved in any programmes at the moment, but we do employ young people straight from high-school, and we also have part-time students that are studying and want to work at the same time."

Table 9.1, further indicates the tendency of the majority of the sampled firms (across all four sectors) to recruit young people. The only thing about these programmes is that they seem to target different groups of young people. For instance, some programmes target graduates while others are open to young people who have a matric certificate. It should be recognised, however, that even though employers could not reveal the exact figures of the intake of these programmes; it is evident that these programmes reach a small scale of young people. This is evidenced by the relatively small number of employees in most of the firms as depicted in chapter six. And also considering that StatsSA reports continue to show that many young people are not in training and employment—and basically not in the labour market. This is despite the fact that there are learnerships and graduate programmes that are used by some firms to accommodate young people into the labour market. While numerous factors can explain the paucity of young people in the labour market, an argument can be made from—considering the data and the youth unemployment statistics—that the existence of these programmes only scratches the surface because usually, these programmes are open to a small number of candidates even in big firms (see Rankin, Roberts & Schöer, 2015). This meagre outreach of the programmes means that many young people are still left outside the labour market, since only a few people can be admitted through these programmes.

Furthermore, the data shows that the majority of employers use different kinds of employment programmes. These findings are consistent with the literature—which maintains that employment programmes are widely used in the labour market for the purpose of, among other things, transitioning young people from school to employment (De Louw, 2009; Visser & Kruss, 2009; Rankin, Roberts & Schöer, 2015; De Lannoy et al., 2018). However, an issue that ensues from these findings—which has also been raised in the previous chapter concerning youth wage subsidies—is whether these programmes are able to achieve secure and permant employent for the candidates even after the programmes come to an end. This should be the primary goal (or the determining factor) that makes the programmes efficacious in the first place; otherwise, what good are these programmes if they do not lead to full employment eventually. It is already a devastating issue of its own that many young people are not absorbed in (or by) these programmes due to the small intake of these programmes. And, it is yet another problem when the few young people who participate in these programmes, are also not able to secure full-time employment even after the programmes have ended. This assertion does not suggest that employers have the onus to ensure that these programmes lead to permanent employment—but it is also fair to put the responsibility of securing employment entirely on young people given that many factors encourage or impede unemployment. However, it does point to the desperate need for more sustainable solutions that can actually abate unemployment, failing which the unemployment situation will remain the same, if not grow worse.

However, while it is a good thing that some firms have these programmes and that some young people actually do benefit from these programmes; it should be understood that these programmes alone cannot abate the long-standing issue of youth unemployment. This means many more young people have very little to no chance of making it in the labour market, unless more strategies are put in place. Giving young people—a fraction of young people for that matter, out of the millions more that are unemployed—the skills (i.e., experience and skills) without the guarantee of secure employment is not a sustainable way of dealing with unemployment. Such employment may be efficient in providing young people with experience and job-related skills; but, by not guaranteeing permanent employment the programmes still fall short of dealing with the unemployment issues in a manner that is needed. Instead, this leads to many people with skills and experience and qualifications, but with no jobs with which they can make good use of their skills and experience. This is the two-fold conundrum we find ourselves in as a nation: the shortage of skills on the one hand

and the abundance of skills, with a low absorption rate, on another the hand. Of course, job creation takes more than a perfect match between skills and occupations; otherwise, many skilled people would be employed. Instead, as also recognised by LMS theories, there are many other factors that tend to discourage employment in society. Therefore, any strategy that will succeed in abating unemployment must take these factors into account. Indeed, this is the challenge that policymakers are faced with: creating multi-pronged strategies that can actually be sustainable in abating unemployment. It is unfortunate that while we wait for such strategies, many young people, and old jobseekers alike, are enduring the most objectionable effects that come with being unemployed. For example, the National Treasury (2011), cautions that unemployment strips the unemployed of their dignity and their ability to make a living.

In conclusion, when this section and section 9.3.1. to 9.3.2. are considered together, a few inferences can be made. Firstly, there is not much difference to speak of among the sampled firms; almost all the firms use the same recruitment strategies for both age cohorts. Data has—from the current and previous sections—revealed that the sampled employers use a combination of both the formal and informal methods, and these methods are applied for the recruitment of both old and young people. The employers' choice of recruitment strategies, in turn, means young job seekers are not the only ones affected, all jobseekers tend to be affected by whatever combination of recruitment methods employers elect to use to fill up their vacancies. It is just that the situation for young people is exacerbated by the lack of skills and experience, thus making them the most unlikely to be considered by employers. However, the only difference that is notable concerning the recruitment activities of the sampled firms is that some firms (mostly the retail/hospitality sector firms) prefer recruiting the youths (from the NEETs category). However, some firms from the manufacturing, finance, and transportation sector prefer only to recruit young people with qualifications. Therefore, inspired by some of the employers' dispositions regarding young people (among other things), these employers deploy specific employment programmes (which differ with each firm) that are designed to target young people. Based on these results it can be concluded that a majority of sampled employers have strategies that target the youths, in addition to the general recruitment strategies that they have in their firms. Whereas only a few employers have general recruitment methods, but with no specific strategies that target youth people.

Even though there are a plethora of determinants that allow for, or even those that impede, the recruitment of young people; it can be inferred from the data that the sampled employers' dispositions—particularly concerning young people—have a bearing, in their own respect, on the recruitment of young people. In particular, these results indicate that employers' decisions to target (or not) young people in their firms are also influenced by employers' dispositions concerning young people. The majority of employers who expressed positive dispositions (in chapter seven) about young people are the same ones who have employment programmes that accommodate young people in their firms. Conversely, the minority of employers who have negative dispositions about young people, are the ones who do not have the employment programmes, and have also unequivocally expressed that they do not have any intentions to recruit young people. Indeed, data indicates that the respondents have different perceptions and attitudes about the different age groups. Some studies refer to these perceptions as age stereotypes (see Arrowsmith & McGoldrick, 1998; Chiu et al., 2001; Gelderblom, De Kooning & Kris's, 2005; Henkens, 2005; van Dalen, Henkens & Shippers, 2010). It is well documented in the literature that many stereotypes prevail, among employers, regarding the productivity of older workers (see Finkelstein, Burke & Raju 1995; Hassell & Perrewe 1995; Taylor & Walker 1998; Loretto, Duncan & White 2000; Chiu et al. 2001; Remery et al. 2003; Henkens 2005).

There is evidence that show that employers hold stereotypical attitudes, which are associated with employment practices that are disadvantageous to older workers (see Casey et al. 1993). For instance, van Dalen, Henkens and Schippers (2010), examined how employers are currently shaping their policies to foster productivity and participation of older workers in the Netherlands. They found that employers are especially skeptical about the application of measures imposed by the government or sector-wide labour agreements as these measures reduce older workers' employability and raise costs (van Dalen, Henkens and Schippers, 2010). Indeed, despite the overwhelming evidence that indicates that young people are the most vulnerable to unemployment, some studies denote that unemployment is a problem for older workers as well. This is due to various reasons, some of which are similar to those imputed to regarding youth unemployment. Consistently, the results of the current study also reveal that age stereotypes still persist about both younger and older workers. These age stereotypes are expressed by both the majority of respondents who recruit young jobseekers; and the minority of respondents that have few young recruits; and some who do not have young recruits at all. Particularly, the respondents that predominantly or solely recruit young

people maintained positive dispositions towards young people, while they oncurrently expressed somewhat negative things about the older workers. In explaining the reasons, they prefer to recruit young people, the *Ladies & Gents Store Manager* (2020) stated: "young people are usually determined, and they are competent, so they make things easier for me as the manager because they get work done without me having to go after them." The *Maboneng Theme Park Manager* (2020) explained: "we have issues sometimes getting our old workers to adapt to the technological changes. But young people in our firm are always up to speed. So that is why we like employing young workers."

Conversely, the firms that expressed their disapproval for recruiting young people had negative things to say about the youth, while they said positive things about adult workers. The *General Bank Manager* (2020), explained why they only have older workers and deliberately choose to not recruit the youth.

> We only work with people who have qualifications and have years-long work experience. Most of the youth do not have these things and they are quite immature. They are still young, and their lack of responsibilities makes them unreliable. I don't think they understand the value of hard work. Older people on the other hand, have years of experience under their belt and due to their family responsibilities, they always mean business, they don't have time to fool around.

The first thing that is noticeable about the divide between the sampled employers is that both have negative and positive views about the two groups of workers. These responses confirm the sharp difference of dispositions that was discussed in chapter seven, and it shows how these age stereotypes also play a role in assuaging or dissuade the resultant decision to recruit young people, or not. For instance, the minority of the respondents, who do not consider recruiting young people, seemed to think that the yosuth are immature and unreliable. This indicates that, for these employers, young people are perceived as not being mature enough to manage the work. In contrast with the response above from the *Ladies & Gents Manager* (2020), we see an apparent divide in response between firms that have positive views and those with negative views.

Furthermore, the data denotes that the less favourable views of the young people include the notion (perceived or experienced) that young people have less (life and work) experience. As such, they may not have the ability and the capacity to handle the work that specific jobs require. These age stereotypes may not always be true, but they do explain why some

employers find employing young people as high-risk, than employing older jobseekers. This view is echoed by the National Treasury reports (2011), as well as other studies (see Altman, 2009; Bhorat, 2014), as they maintain that employers are more reluctant to employ the youth because they see them as high risk. It is clear from these findings, considered together with the literature, that employers' have strong perceptions about the employability of different age groups. While some of their views on jobseekers employability can be challenged for being stereotypical, it suggests that their percetions filter into the decisions they make about the people they employ, and for what reasons they recruit them. If employers see young people in some negative way and regard their recruitment as more of a risk, then it likely that young job applicants may be sifted out at the screening stage. In view of this, there seems to be a competition between older and young workers as there also exists between jobseekers with same qualifications looking for same jobs. But this competition (between young and old) is com by employers' preferences, which tends to impose barriers against the employment of the the group that they are less in favour of. For instance, firms that prefer young employers would not consider older jobseekers and vice versa.

Moreover, it is not just these two groups (old and young) that are affected by employers' perceptions and stereotypes. Table 6.2. above shows that even the disabled jobseekers are affected by the stereotypes that the sampled employers have concerning them (which were discussed in chapter seven). In addition to the data that indicate that the sampled employers' dispositions have a bearing on their decision to recruit either the older or younger jobseekers; more data further suggest that the recruitment of either young or old jobseekers is also influenced by other variables such as: nature of business (types of products and services offered by the firm); kind of vacancy (professional, senior/entry level, general); who has the skills-set most appreciated by employers. These are some of the factors that have emerged from the data and seem to influence the recruitment decisions. Indeed, some firms have businesses that require a certain personnel who must possess certain skills and be able to carryout certain tasks. These requirements, in turn, tend to exclude some jobseekers; and the disabled jobseekers feel the brunt of this more than any other group.

From this consideration it stands to reason that when employers are of the mind (dispositions) that older workers have more experience (skills-set) than young recruits, then they prioritise older workers. The decisions to recruit either one of these sub-groups differs and is based on who each employer thinks possess the skills-set needed in the firm, and on who can best contribute to the production (nature of business) of the firm. For instance, most sampled

employers preferred employing young people because firstly they value certain characteristics that they think young people possess. The general notion here is that young workers can do the job better than older workers. The same is true for employers that prefer to employ older workers. In addition to being motivated by the nature of vacancies offered to young unskilled people and the perception that young people can carry out duties because of their energy (and all the other qualities that the sampled employers think young people have in comparison to older workers); it can also be concluded that the consideration and openness to recruit young people is also induced by the fact that such employment of young people (as referenced in the previous chapter) saves them money. The data already discussed show that most of the young people (employed by most of the sampled employer) tend to occupy non-standard employment, and are recruited through flexible staffing arrangements. As discussed above, these arrangements are used mainly to save costs for the firms.

Bearing this in mind, it is safe to suggest that if the employment of young people, especially those without skills, was not as easy and cost-effective as it is on the side of employers, then the employers might not consider employing young people after all, especially those without skills. This suggests that young people (without skills) are being recruited only because it benefits the employers. Certainly, non-standard employment does not benefit the workers as much as it does employers. While employers get to save on costs, while also getting the work done. Non-standard employment is not sustainable for the employed workers. It stands to reason from this consideration that the motivation behind the choice to employ young people (or jobseekers in general) always has something to do with saving time and saving money. Employers always want to save both money and time, anything that compromises these goals is a risk for them. Therefore, these results reveal the factors that are likely to influence the employers' choice to adopt the recruitment strategies (they use for their recruitment activities), and why employers choose to employ some people and not others. These results further prove that employers have the upper hand in deciding the labour market outcomes of jobseekers. Furthermore, it is more apparent now that having skills and experience is essential, but has little significance compared to the fact that employers get to exercise their discretion and make the final decision on who eventually gets the job. Employers are the ones who decide, based on what will be more beneficial for their businesses better.

9.4 OTHER ASPECTS RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

At this point, not only did the data provide a picture of the typical R&S methods used by the sampled firms, and some of the recruitment programmes used by the majority of the employers to target or accommodate young people. But, the data also revealed some of these specific recruitment strategies are most likely to impact young jobseekers—both positively and negatively. This section (and sub-section therein) explores other aspects that characterise R&S activities; and that can further help us understand the employment behaviour of the sampled employers, especially where it concerns young people. After all, this entire chapter not only explores the R&S methods and processes (as already presented above), but it also explores other activities associated with employers' recruitment behaviour. Accordingly, a series of structured questions (and follow-up questions) that were answered by the sampled employers also revealed some aspects/features of recruitment that seem to have a bearing on whether the R&S practices are inclusive of young people or not. These will be explored below as follows: the (i) frequency of recruitment occasions in the firms; and the (ii) availability of training and volunteering programmes in the firms. By far, we know that the majority of sampled employers recruit young people, and the thesis has also explored the reasons why some employers tend to recruit young people. However, there is also data that tends to show further what goes into employers' decision to recruit or not recruit people, especially young people.

9.4.1 Frequency of Recruitment Activity

The thesis is not only concerned with whether employers recruit young people or not, but also investigates the factors that encourage or preempt the recruitment of young people. Therefore, exploring how frequently the sampled employers tend to recruit will help us understand how that tends to impact young jobseekers. The responses concerning the frequency of recruitment from the sampled firms are categorised in three sections—which are the most expressed responses: (a) regularly (daily or monthly basis), (b) during busy periods, and (c) when need arise/ every now and again. As a related matter, this section also explores whether the employers have any preferences between internal and external recruitment as well as the reasons why they prefer one or the other. The findings will be tabulated to illustrate how often respondents recruit; and whether they recruit externally or internally. Direct quotes from the respondents will be referred to where necessary to elucidate the illustrations in the table.

Table 9.2: Recruitment frequency and preferences

Employer	Frequency	Internal/External/Both
Ladies & Gents Clothing	On busy occasions	Both
Heath First Store	On busy occasions	Both
Eat & Dine restaurant	Regularly	External
Burger Club restaurant	Regularly	Internally
Dynamite Clothing store	Regularly	Both
Chicken Corner Restaurant	When the need arises	Both
Stop & Shop Supermarket	When the need arises	External
More for Less Supermarket	When the need arises	Internally
Right Choice Supermarket	Regularly	Internally
Fashion Statement Store	Regularly	External
Maboneng Theme Park	Regularly	Both
Super Fuel Garage	When the need arises	Both
General Bank	When the need arises	Both
East Bank	When the need arises	Both
Star Bank	When the need arises	Internally
Money MattersAccountancy	When the need arises	Both
Egoli Distillery	Regularly	Both
Exceptional Motors Corp	When the need arises	Both
Multi-Drinks Factory	Regularly	Both
AfriTrans	When the need arises	Both

Table 9.3, illustrates the frequency of recruitment that occurs in each sampled firm, as well as whether firms prefer to recruit internally, externally, or both. The first column of the table demonstrates that most firms employ regularly. And though most of these firms are from the retail/hospitality sector, there are also firms from other sectors (i.e., manufacturing) that have expressed that they recruit people regularly. For instance, the *Eat & Dine Restaurant*

*Manage*r (2020), simply stated: "we recruit at least on a monthly basis for waitressing, baristas, and chefs, to name a few." The *Health First Manager* (2020), asserted: " [We recruit] once in three months for stock takers and cashiers." While for most firms it was on a monthly basis; one employer stated that in his firm they have weekly recruitments: "It's usually monthly, but because we usually have menial work available all the time, we sometimes employ weekly some of those people who seek employment and do walk-ins" (*Exceptional Motors Corp Supervisor*, 2020). The regular employment activities that happens in the nine firms (as presented in the table) can be explained by numerous factors—some that have actually been expressed by the respondents themselves; and some which can be inferred from the data.

Firstly, the data indicates that the nature of different businesses (services or products) offered tends to be one of the things that motivate the regular recruitment activities that occur in some firms. For instance, some businesses have seasonal demands for the products and services that they render to their customers. Therefore, when the demand is high for the products or services rendered in those firms, then they may need to employ more employees to meet or maintain the demand from clients. But, when the demand is low, some businesses never need to employ any new employees, and even worse, they sometimes need to lay off the current employees. This periodic employment of jobseekers (described by some employers) is also explained by the 'seasonal type of unemployment' (outlined in chapter two). The seasonal type of unemployment recognises that there are seasons that stimulate more employment, and there are some seasons that deter recruitment (Altman, 2007). This all depends on the increase and decrease of demand concerning certain products and services rendered in certain firms.

Therefore, the regular recruitment/employment that takes place in the retail and hospitality sector, as depicted in the table, suggests that these firms tend to have a need to employ regularly, based on the increase and decrease of demand of the services or products they render to their clientele. Whereby, there are seasons that the firms need to have more employees to be able to keep up with the rising demand for the services and products rendered by that particular businesses. This likelihood was alluded to by the *Ladies & Gents Clothing Manager* (2020), who explained:

> We regularly employ people, because we always need more staff to help with the workload because people always buy clothes, and we always have new fashions

> delivered. To keep from having long queues, we get new temporary staff members to help keep the smooth operation of the business, because we do not want our customers to find shopping in our stores tedious. And we recruit even more regularly during long weekends and especially festive seasons, because that is when many people come into our stores to by our products.

This response further proves that the nature of business rendered is one of the factors that necessitate the regular employment of new employees in the retail/hospitality sector firms—especially those that provide services and products that are constantly in demand (i.e., clothes, food). In addition, it can also be inferred from the data that the kinds of jobs that these employers offer to the jobseekers they employ, is also a determining factor as to why the retail firms have regular employment/recruitment taking place in their firms. As already indicated in chapters six and seven, most of the firms that recruit young people often employ people for general employment (i.e., cleaning, bar-tending, and teller). And as expressed by the employers themselves, these jobs are often offered on a temporary (or part-time) basis, which not only means that employers can terminate this kind of employment at any time. But, it also means that they may need to employ more employees for the same job for as long as there is no permanent incumbent filling that post; and for as long as the duties carried out by such an incumbent are needed in the firm. In essence, temporary employment offered in these firms means that jobs may be abruptly terminated, and it also means that the employers may need to keep employing for the same jobs when they terminate the short term employment contract with one employee. Therefore, the flexibility that comes with these jobs may also explain why these employers employ as regularly as they do.

In addition to the above-mentioned reasons that were inferred from the data, other employers shared their own reasons why they need to recruit regularly. As explained by the *Chicken Corner restaurant Manager* (2020): "[We recruit] every second month for waiters and waitresses because sometimes we have waitresses that fall pregnant, others are immigrants and their work permits expire so we are regularly in need of new replacements." The *Dynamite Clothing Supervisor* (2020), stated: "I would say [we recruit] once every three months for store associates, because we just find ourselves needing more store associates." Another response that shows why there is a need for regular recruitment in some firms was provided by another retail employer:

> Well, I can say in this firm, we have recruitment taking place on a daily basis because there is always a job that needs to be filled, because we have a lot of theft or misconduct cases, so people get fired, and others get hired daily in this company (*Right Choice supermarket Manager*, 2020)

Considering all these responses, and when we juxtapose this data with the data presented in Table 6.2, both firms that recruit regularly and during certain occasions are the same firms that highly employ part-time workers. Therefore, the nature of non-standard employment means that their contracts can be terminated hassle-free, and employees can be replaced just as easily, given that the pool of desperate unemployed people are abundant. This is all the more reason why it can be concluded, then, that the nature of work done, especially in retail/hospitality stores, explains why there is a need for regular recruitment. For instance, two employers from the retail firms highlighted why there is a need for recruitment in certain occasions. The *Health First Store Manager (*2020), stated: "we usually recruit on busy occasions. Like now, we are close to Easter time, so we will be needing more staff. I would say we recruit when a need arises." This view shared by the *Health First Store Manager* (2020), supports half of the employers (10 out of 20) who maintained that they only need to recruit when there is a need for more staff, which is does not occur as often as it does in other firms that have regular recruitment activities. Another employer explained that even though he has managed to keep his staff for a long time, the firm has needed to recruit more people, especially when more employees are required to help out with the firm's workload. The *Burger Club Restaurant Supervisor* (2020), stated: "our staff has been here for some time, so the last time we recruited was three months back when we recruited five young people for the kitchen, but one as a cleaner, as casual employees."

Over and above, these results show that recruitment takes place, relatively speaking, more frequently in the majority of the firms. Although it ranges from those who recruit regularly, those who recruit on busy occasions, and those who recruit when the need arises; it still indicates that the firms are likely to recruit every now and again. While the need to employ regularly was predominantly expressed by all employers from the retail/hospitality sector and a few from the manufacturing sector; the finance and transportation sectors firms maintained that recruitment in their firms happens only when there is a need for a new employee. This slight divide is explained by a number of factors: one of the reasons is that some firms have services and products in constant demand, no matter the season. Whereby, this continuous

demand calls for more employees to be able to keep up with the demand. On the other hand, some firms produce products or render services that are in demand on certain occasions or seasons, and more employees are only needed during those busy times. These are some of the reasons that emerge from the data collected. However, according to the literature reviewed in chapter four, there are a number of factors that affect recruitment, both external and internal factors, which are often cyclical and not mutually exclusive. Notwithstanding, it should be recognised that employers do not employ people just for the sake of employing them; no one employer would do that. There has to be a valid reason why an employer would consider opening a vacancy to offer it to a new employee (whether internally or externally). Sometimes even with vacant positions, some employers may be reluctant to go ahead and recruit new employees given the costs that come with conducting such recruitments. Hence, some employers circumvent the costs of recruitment whenever there is a need to employ—by just resorting to informal recruitment methods such as referrals from their current employees.

It stands to reason from this discussion that just like the recruitment methods have an impact on young jobseekers (and job seekers in general), so too is the frequency of recruitment/employment taking place in each firm. Which is often stimulated by unforeseen circumstances (i.e., a current employee falling pregnant, dying, being fired). However. This frequency can also be necessitated by other factors, such as the high demand of products, and services that need more employees to produce the services and products rendered by a particular firm. It should be borne in mind that the relatively frequent employment in the sampled firms may positively impact young people, especially from retail/hospitality sector firms (as they are the ones who employ young people). This means that because they recruit often, then young people can benefit from the regular job openings. One of the issues that can ensue from this regular employment is that only a few young people actually get the job, because no one firm can ever be able to employ the millions of people that are in the un/employment queues. This indicates that many other young jobseekers stay stuck outside the labour market, because no matter how willing some employers are to employ jobseekers, they simply cannot be able to employ every single jobseeker that is actively seeking employment.

Another issue with this regular employment is that the young people who are fortunate enough to be employed, are often recruited for non-standard jobs that are unsustainable—this means they are only employed for a short period of time. This such employment does not

really dismantle the youth unemployment epidemic, as the young people who are employed tend to go back to being unemployed when the part-time/temporary/casual employment ends. Again, as already raised in the previous chapters, this back and forth between being employed for a short time and going back to being unemployed is a reality for many young people. But it cannot be accepted as the normal way of employment for young people who seek out—and are actually in desperate need of—more sustainable ways of making a living. Therefore, this way of employment among young people needs to be challenged for as long as it does not contribute to solving unemployment in a sustainable and lasting way. Indeed, this way of being employed does not produce any significant results in terms of addressing unemployment.

On a different, but related note, the findings in Table 9.3 show that employers have different preferences when it comes to the option to recruit internally or externally. These preferences are shaped by various motivations. A majority (13 out of 20) of employers expressed that they use both external and internal ways to recruit. These employers shared the same sentiments, they believe that recruiting both internally and externally allows them to keep old staff, and to accommodate fresh talent at the same time. The *Shop & Stop Supermarket* (2020), explained:

> We recruit both internal and external, but external approach has been most successful. I think it's because a lot of people that are in our business are already older, so looking externally helps us to attract most young people who are hungry to work, and are also technologically advanced.

However, some employers maintained that despite the aadvantage that both approaches have, the most successful approach is the external method, compared to internal recruitment. Again—as has been recurrent throughout the data—this choice for external recruitment is also contingent on the type of job for which people are recruited. One employer stated:

> It depends on which position we need to fill, [but] recruiting externally has been most effective because we have a lot of people from different areas wanting to come work for this particular company (*Dynamite clothing Supervisor,* 2020).

The *Egoli Distillery Manager* (2020), went on to explain why both approaches are beneficial:

> Both internal and external recruitments have been most successful because people build experience in the company, and who to better recruit than the employee who has the kind of experience the firm needs. But at the same time, recruiting new entrants means we have fresh minds that will bring in new and trending ways of doing business.

By contrast, some responses highlighted that the internal approach is the most important, especially where it concerns senior or leadership positions. The common idea is that internal recruitment means that employers get to choose from a pool of people who know more about the firm, and is also cost-effective. Employers gave different reasons why they think recruiting internally is the most effective practice. These views were shared by employers from across firms and sectors. The *Burger Club Restaurant Manager* (2020), mentioned that it depends on the occupation: "Yes, as for positions like that of a supervisor or team leader, we look internally we don't do externally." Some employers emphasised that internal recruitment is beneficial because it means people are more experienced and more knowledgeable. Similarly, the *More for Less Wholesale* Supervisor (2020), stated: "We prefer recruiting internally, well internally has been the most effective. People who know more about the company are the best." The *Star Bank Manager* (2020), also shared: "I think recruiting internally is always effective. You don't need to start from scratch with training internal applicants, because they are familiar with a lot of how the business operates, and how things need to be done." In addition, the *Exceptional Motors Corp* Supervisor (2020), asserted that not recruiting internally is unfair for the long-term staff:

> I think it's important that you recruit inside the company, because it won't be fair recruiting or giving a higher position to someone who is outside the company, while there are suitable candidates inside the company. The longer you stay in the company, the more experience you gain about the company, so the better in position you are to be the best candidate.

By and large, the data shows that while most employers use both approaches, there is dissent about which approach is most effective to find the suitable candidate. Most employers commend the internal approach as the most effective approach, due to its benefits of attracting the most experienced candidates that are already knowledgeable about the firms. However, some employers deem the external approach as the most advantageous in that it gives opportunity to the new job seekers, and it is also an opportunity for the firms to have

fresh talent. Generally, just like with the recruitment methods used (as discussed in section 9.4.), the choice for which recruitment method or approach is contingent (to some extent) on the kind of jobs that are vacant in the firms at any given time. Considering that most of the sampled employers are from the retail and hospitality sectors, most of the vacancies they recruit for are general jobs; it makes sense why they usually recruit externally for these jobs. For the firms that need to recruit for occupations that require more experience and expertise, internal recruitment is most preferred and successful because it can attract suitable candidates who know more about the firms (and have experience for the firms) than external applicants.

Therefore, as noted in section 9.3.1, the employers' choice—to adopt formal or informal recruitment and selection methods—is motivated by whether they would save costs and still be able to attract and recruit a suitable candidate. Those findings also apply in this section, and further prove that employers always consider costs, among other things, before they decide which recruitment approach or method to go for. Again, data highlights that in pursuit of saving costs, employers tend to use different methods for different recruitment needs. Therefore, their strategies are not rigid and fixed, but they tend to tailor-make their recruitment activities based on many factors. However, seeing that most sampled employers use a combination of both internal and external recruitment approaches. It stands to reason that the tendency for the majority of sampled employers to recruit both internally and externally—depending on which approach is suitable at the time—bodes well for new job seekers as they are likely to be considered for employment. Even though this (considering the jobs that the sampled firms usually recruit for) means the recruitment would, most likely, be for entry-level jobs—as also suggested by the data that indicates that most employers employ for these kinds of non-standard jobs. Nonetheless, recruiting both internally and externally strikes a balance between keeping existing workers, while also giving new opportunities to the millions of job seekers who are looking for employment.

9.4.2 Training and Volunteering Programmes

Moreover, in the interest of exploring more about the recruitment activities of the sampled firms, the respondents were also asked whether they have any training programmes in their firms. As well as whether they offer volunteering programmes to any job seekers looking to get into the labour market to enhance their employability, while they still wait for the ideal employment or a job opening. Finding out whether employers have training and volunteering programmes is also necessary because young people are most likely to need training, since

they often do not have the experience that employers usually require. Therefore, employers' susceptibility to provide workplace training and/or volunteering programmes further revealed whether young jobseekers have a place in the sampled firms or not. Data, concerning whether employers provide training, reveal that there was a unanimous "yes" when respondents were asked about whether they have training programmes. In confirming that training is part of every firm's recruitment process, the *Burger Club Restaurant Manager* (2020), stated: "yes, we have training programmes in this firm, just like any company or organisation would do, but with us, it's just three days training." The *Money Matters Accountancy Manager* (2020), stated: "yes, there's training, because the new staff is usually inexperienced, and training is what can familiarise them with how things are done in our firm particularly."

Data also indicate that not only do the sampled employers have different types of training programmes, but they also have different reasons why they provide such training. The *Super Garage Supervisor* (2020), explained the kind of training they provide to their recruits: "yes, [we have training programmes] especially when it comes to the cashiers. We make them take some assessments to test their basic maths literacy." Overall, all 20 firms expressed that they have training programmes, and each firm pointed to the specific reasons why they provide such training. Here are some of the relevant excerpts from the interviews:

> Yes, mainly to improve their skills. Well, our training focuses on computer skills. So, it's usually done on computers so that we can test their computer skills and literacy. (*Ladies & Gents Clothing Supervisor*, 2020)

> Oh yes, we have [training]. We don't want them to do wrong things when they're on duty, so we have to train them and show them how to do things here [in our firm]. (*Health First Store Manager*, 2020)

> Yes, we do have [training] so that they'll know what to do, get experience and know-how to communicate and present themselves to customers. (*General Bank Manager*, 2020)

> Yes, we have training programmes, whereby the new recruits do the training in the store, because some of them don't know how to hold a tray properly. So we train them about the small and basic things like how to hold the tray and present the food to customers. Presentation is everything in this firm, so they need to get that right. (*Chicken Corner Restaurant Manager*, 2020)

It is clear from these statements that the main objective of having training programmes in these firms is to familiarise the new recruits with the work that they will have to do, and to train them on how to do the work—for as long as they are employed in that specific firm. The purpose of training as detailed by the sampled employers, is consistent with some of the literature that comments on organisational training, and has also investigated the effects of training in the employees, among other things (see Nikandrou et al., 2008; Olaniyan & Ojo, 2008). However, for some firms, this kind of training not only serves as an induction process, but also helps decide whether the trainees can do the job well. In this case, the training serves as a trial test. As explained by the *Dynamite Clothing Supervisor* (2020), from the retail sector: "Yes, before they sign their employment contracts, we make sure we give them training, and we see how they work, and we'll take the decision from their training."

Overall, the responses are self-explanatory as they indicate that—although different firms train conduct training for their recruits (or potential recruits) differently—sampled employers generally provide training for the new employees in their firms. Again, one of the recurring reasons why training is undertaken is to initiate them in their workplace environments, and also to gauge whether the new employees will be able to carry out the work for which they are being employed. The fact that all employers provide training—for the purposes of acquanting recruits to the workplace and expanding the employees' knowledge base (among other things)—may also explain why a majority of the sampled employers are willing to employ young people without experience. This is because, through training, employers can expose the young recruits to the tasks that their jobs entail, and thus indoctrinate them (in the same way work experience does makes one knowledgeable) with how things should be done.

However, this also begs the question as to why some employers (the minority) are reluctant to employ people without experience or specific skills, if they can just train the inexperienced people? If training is also about teaching new employees how to do the work, why do employers disregard people with no experience? In other words, why is working experience such a big deal for employers—when they have training programmes that may well acquant their recruits with the experience they need through training programmes—as some research has also shown (see Bhorat & Hodge, 1999; Nattrass, 2000; Dias & Possel, 2007; Kingdon & Knight, 2007; Pauw & Oosthuizen, 2008; Bhorat, Kanbur & Stanwix, 2011; Rankin & Roberts, 2011; National Treasury, 2011; Van Aardt, 2012; Yu, 2013; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; Baah-Boateng, 2016; Chigunta, 2017). Of course, this question does not apply to most

workers who have expressed (in chapter seven) that they do not necessarily look for experience from their young employees. However, the question does apply to the employers who stated that lack of experience is one of the reasons why they do not employ young people.

The answer to this question is found in the research studies that show that despite the positive outcomes of training (i.e., the training presents a prime opportunity to expand the knowledge base of all employees, among other things) (Elnaga & Imran, 2013; Naqvi & Khan, 2013), some employers find training to be expensive and time-consuming to carry out in their firms. Hence, some employers, in the pursuit of saving costs and time, would rather employ candidates who already have work experience and the skills needed, or rather those who need minimal training—instead of hiring someone who may need extensive training for them to be employed. According to National Treasury (2011), and Bhorat (2016), employers look for skills and experience so much that they regard unskilled, inexperienced job seekers as a risky investment. It stands to reason that, from the employers' point of view, employing inexperienced, unskilled means extensive training is needed to get them ready to start doing the job for which they are employed. Whereas experienced people will probably need minimum training, if at all, since they already have the knowledge and experience?

Considering this analysis, it can be concluded that, though employers have training programmes, they can do everything in their power to avoid incurring the costs that come with undertaking specific training. Just because employers have training programmes in place does not necessarily mean they really want to undertake training. One of the ways employers circumvent training is by outlining work experience as a prerequisite for any vacancy; or even by resorting to informal recruitment (i.e., referrals/recommendations)—as also revealed in the previous sections. The tendency of employers to look for people with long years of experience—in order to save time and costs that come with applying formal recruitment strategies and training programmes—may explain why young people, even graduates, are the hardest hit by the requirement/s of working experience from employers. This is because young people are less likely to have experience, among other things that cause them to be unemployable.

Furthermore, considering that some employers regard training programmes as costly and time-consuming, this may also indicate why the four sampled employers (who expressed that they do not employ young people) actually would not employ young job seekers. These four

employers are from firms that require a great deal of skills, experience, and also require specific qualifications from their employees for them to carry out their jobs. Therefore, these firms cannot afford to recruit young people (without such skills and experience), not only because young people (without skills and experience) would not know how to do the job without having the required/necessary skills-set. But also, because having to train young people (with no skills and experience) will be too costly, than only training people with the required work experience and skills needed for a particular firm. Employers already view such jobseekers as a risky investment. Conversely, the rest of the 16 employers can employ such young people, and have made it clear in the previous chapters that experience is not a prerequisite in their firms (as it is in some firms from other sectors). The fact that retail/hospitality firms have no issues with recruiting inexperienced young people may be explained by the fact that—as opposed to the other sampled sectors (manufacturing, finance, transportation)—jobs in these sectors are general and menial occupations that often need minimal (or no) skills or experience. So, the training that can be offered is that of menial work, which is not as extensive and costly as training required/needed for jobs that require people with an extensive skill set and experience.

While all 20 firms shared a similar sentiment about the importance and benefits of having training programmes in their firms; this unanimity was not repeated when they were asked about whether they had any volunteering programmes. From the data collected, only six employers expressed that they have volunteering programmes in their firms. The rest of the 14 firms did not have (at the time of this study) any volunteering programmes. Below are some examples of responses from the 14 respondents who responded, in the affirmation, that they do not offer volunteering programmes. They also provide reasons why they do not have any such programmes.

> We don't [have volunteering orogrammes] because we don't see it necessary to have them in our firm (*General Bank Manager*, 2020).

> We don't have any volunteering programs, unless we catch you stealing in our shop. We make you work and clean the shop. But formal volunteering programmes we do not have currently. (*Dynamite clothing Supervisor,* 2020).

> No, [we do not have volunteering programmes] because there's no space for volunteers, we have enough part-time workers and permanent staff (*Chicken Corner restaurant Manager*, 2020).

It is an unfortunate thing that most of the sampled employers do not offer such programmes. Especially, given that—despite that it may be added administration for the firms—such programmes can serve as one of the ways that young people can gain experience without it being costly to firms. The purpose of volunteering programmes is to expose job seekers to the working environment and work experience, among other things (Cavallaro, 2006; Holmes, 2006; Rodell et al., 2016). For this reason, volunteering programmes seem to serve as one of the strategies against unemployment, as far as unemployment is attributed to lack of experience. Volunteering programmes may be one of the platforms where young people (who are inexperienced) can get gain work experience. If young people (or any job seekers who are willing to volunteer) can gain experience and specific skills through volunteering to work for any firm, then, this also means participating in volunteering programmes is tantamount to enhancing their employability. Indeed, enhancing employability is one of the things that specific supply-side unemployment strategies/policies (i.e., Skills development policies) are created to achieve in fighting unemployment. For instance, one of the aims of the Skills Development Act (SDA) is to develop the skills of the South African workforce, and to (among other things) encourage workers to use their workplace as an active learning environment; to provide employees with the opportunities to acquire new skills; to provide opportunities for new entrants to the labour market to gain work experience (SDA, 1998).

All these aims are amongst many others that tend to qualify volunteering programmes as one of the strategies that can fight unemployment, and foster the transition of job seekers into the labour market. In fact, it can be argued that volunteering programmes serve the same purpose as workplace training, as far as they both expose people to the working environment. The only difference is that with training, it means the trainees are considered for employment, and with volunteering programmes, employment is not guaranteed, and neither do the volunteers get compensated for their work. Nonetheless, both training and volunteering programmes enhance the employability of people. Therefore, the reasons employers expressed for not providing volunteering programmes suggest that some of the sampled employers may not fully understand the purpose or benefits of volunteering programmes, and how they also serve as training programmes. Except that with volunteering programmes, employers save

even more costs by getting more volunteering staff to contribute to the firm's productivity, while also offering volunteers the opportunity to gain skills and experience, so that they can be at a better place of securing employment in the future. However, another reason that may explain why some employers do not have volunteering programmes could just be that the majority of the sampled employers not only already have training programmes, but they are also amongst the employers who already employ (or consider employing) young people.

According to the data, only six out of 20 employers expressed that they offer volunteering programmes to young people. The reason they provide access/availability of such programmes is that—though young people do not get to make money off of the programmes—they get to earn invaluable experience that they can use in applying for future employment. For instance, the *Exceptional Motors Corp Supervisor* (2020) said: "Yes, our volunteering programmes are mostly for young people, they are the ones who come looking for jobs, and when we do not have any vacant jobs, some of them ask to volunteer." In agreement with this statement, the *More for Less Wholesale Supervisor* (2020) stated:

> Yes, we have volunteering programmes, and we find that young people are willing to volunteer with the hopes that they will secure permanent jobs. I personally do not like that they do not make money from volunteering, but I also know volunteering programmes will benefit them a lot.

It appears from this data that employers offer these volunteering programmes because they believe young people are keen and open to participating in these volunteering programmes—even though they are not getting paid for the services they provide to these firms. This suggests that some employers recognise that young jobseekers are desperate enough to work for free just for the benefit of gaining the exposure and experience. In turn—knowing that many employers value experience—young people who volunteer will be able to include the acquired experience in their resumes and apply for better jobs. Or perhaps, employers will see how hard the volunteers work and may, for that reason, offer them permanent positions.

Again, these responses—that show that young people participate in the volunteering programmes that some employers offer in their firms—tend to contradict the assumption that young people are lazy and picky. In fact, being lazy and picky has been cited, presumably, as one of the reasons why young people are out of employment. The perception is that young people only want what they want and will not take up something they feel will not serve them.

Indeed, there are perceptions, both from literature (see Graham & De Lannoy, 2015), and the data (discussed in chapter seven), that young people do not usually participate in volunteering programmes (or even accept offers into entry-level jobs) because they, in fact, expect to be paid more and will not even take entry-level jobs. These sentiments have also been shared by some sampled employers who have negative perceptions that suggest that young people are lazy and would not take up volunteering jobs (see chapter seven)—especially if they are not even going to be paid for it. This may be true of some young people, but it cannot possibly be true of all young people, who are desperate enough to do anything to make a living and to enhance their skills (Gracia, 2008; Mathebula, 2013; Paola & Pons-Vignon, 2013; Golub & Hayat, 2014; Beukes et al., 2017). Instead, it appears that desperate young people would want to make use of any opportunity they can get to enhance their skills, while they wait to obtain a proper job. In fact, the willingness of some young people to be involved in volunteering programmes—as pointed out by some of the six employers that have volunteering programmes in their firms—not only proves that some young people are desperate enough; but also that they understand that experience and skills are of paramount importance to employers. Hence, even though they do not yet make a living from volunteering, they are willing to work just for the purposes of gaining the necessary skills and experience (without getting paid), which they can later use when applying for a paying job.

The the lack of volunteering programmes in 14 out of 20 firms suggests a number things (as also pointed out by the sampled employers) such as that: (i) these programmes may not be taken seriously (by employers and people in general), (ii) employers may not really know about the benefits of having these programmes, and (iii) employers genuinely believe that these programmes are not necessary for their firms. However, considering the benefits of volunteering programmes (as expressed by the six employers and by the literature), it seems that these programmes can go some way in fighting unemployment—insofar as they have the potential to help young people (who participate in these programmes) to gain workplace skills, experience, and exposure. In fact, these programmes promise to be effectively in providing the very skills and experience that employers can appreciate, mainly because the programmes take place in the workplace environment where young people get to observe and learn exactly what employers need from their employees. After all, what better way to gain experience and exposure than in a place where you aspire to work?

It is for this reason that volunteering programmes seem to have the same effect that training programmes have. The only difference is that with training, the candidates are either appointed or shortlisted to be recruited. In contrast, with volunteering programmes, the firms may not have any job openings to make the volunteers permanent. This may be the reason why employers who already have training programmes do not offer volunteering programmes. However, this same reason tends to explain why it may be suitable for those who do not have training programmes for young people to at least consider to have volunteering programmes. In order to give young people a chance to enter the labour market and learn all there is to learn, so that they can use what they have learned to find and make their way in the labour market. I am convinced that volunteering programmes are among the strategies needed to fight unemployment, especially since no one strategy alone can be able to fight the long-standing nature of unemployment. Volunteering programmes may not guarantee employment, but like many other programmes (learnerships, graduate programmes), they may all work towards fighting unemployment by providing skills and experience to young people. Mainly because lack of skills and experience are the main determinants of unemployment.

Nonetheless, much like with the employment subsidies discussed in chapter eight, more research may be needed to explore whether partakers of these volunteering programmes are able to gain workplace experience and skills from the programmes. And more importantly, whether they are, in the long run, able to secure employment with the same skills and experience they gain from the volunteering programmes. The results of such studies will either intensify the call for employers to consider installing volunteering programmes in their firms—as a way to address youth unemployment—for as long as the unemployed young people can gain experience and skills; or it will rule out the volunteering programmes as a strategy against unemployment, if at all these programmes are found to not address unemployment in any way that is significant or sustainable. Or, perhaps the results can show the instances in which programmes would be effective, and instances where they would not necessarily be as effective. All these possibilities can be revealed by the results of these much-needed studies. Indeed, this kind of research is needed for every unemployment strategy that has been enacted to address unemployment, as it will reveal not only whether they are effective or not. But also whether they should be discontinued or not, depending on the results they yield.

9.5 SKILLS-SET DEMANDED BY THE SAMPLED EMPLOYERS

The previous themes have presented the recruitment activities and processes used to attract and recruit suitable candidates that are needed in sampled firms. This section explores the skills/qualifications/characteristics (which will, for ease of reference, be referred throughout the chapter as human capital or skills-set) that employers look for when they recruit job seekers for vacant positions in their firms. Examining what the sampled employers look for when recruiting will helped ascertain not only the kinds of skills the sampled employers demand in their firms, but also revealed how this demand for particular sills-set (as identified by the sampled employers) encourages or preempts the recruitment of young people. The crisis of skills-mismatch in South Africa makes it even more imperative to explore the skills that the sampled employers demand or require. Skills mismatch suggests that job seekers do not have the skills demanded/required by employers, or that the skills already in supply are not the ones required by employers at any given time (see Bhorat & Hodge, 1999; Bhorat, 2004; Dias & Posel, 2007; Kingdon & Knight, 2007; Pauw & Oosthuizen, 2008; Bhorat, Kanbur & Stanwix, 2011; Rankin & Roberts, 2011; National Treasury, 2011; Van Aardt, 2012; Yu, 2013; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015). While recruitment in any firm is necessitated by the availability of a job, the success of recruitment—that is, an employer finding a suitable candidate to recruit—is determined by whether employers can get candidates who have the skills that the firms actually need. It is against this background that the research sought to investigate the skills-set (i.e., skills/attributes and characteristics) that the respondents demand (or look for) when they consider employing potential candidates.

In line with the reviewed literature (concerning the skills-set that employers deem as employable), the data has revealed that employers do not just look for one particular skill or attribute, but they look for an amalgamation of skills set. This, according to the respondents, entails that a person should have multiple skills (ranging from people's skills to interpersonal skills, problem-solving, creativity, to mention a few) to be considered for employment. This is what employers refer to as an all-rounder, or well-rounded candidate: an individual who can have a combination of skills as demanded by any employer (Symington, 2012; Saunders & Zuzel, 2015). In studying the data, it became apparent that there are different types of skills, attributes, and characteristics that the sampled employers want their recruits to possess.

From the data, there are different types of skills that employers deem as most relevant, and they are categorised as: (i) soft skills, (ii) transferable skills (team working, problem-solving).

(iii) In addition to these skills, employers also highlighted the need for particular attitudes and outlooks that candidates should have: including motivation, tenacity, and commitment. The study also found that even though there are general skills employers require from all jobseekers, regardless of industry/sector type, and that is often peoples' skills; there are also skills-sets that are unique to (or required for) specific occupations. Furthermore, in sorting the data, it also became apparent that though terms like skills, characteristics, and qualities are used interchangeably, there is actually a distinction between what is termed employability 'skills' (i.e., communication, teamwork, self-management) and 'personal attributes' (i.e., loyalty, commitment, enthusiasm) as also distinguished in the study by Cunningham and Villaseñor (2016). Indeed, the range of skills employers seek to recruit for has continuously and consistently been codified and grouped into different typologies and classifications. Both these different categories (employability skills and personal attributes) were identified and outlined by respondents as pertinent and seriously sought after skills-set.

It is worth noting, at this point, that in studying the types of skills-set that employers require, three major findings emerged: firstly, data reveals that there are skills/qualities that are sought after across all the sampled firms (irrespective of the sectors under which they fall). Secondly, data shows that some skills are only specific to particular firms. This difference is based, chiefly (though not exclusively), on the nature of business of each sampled firm, and the types of jobs for which employers usually set out to fill. Thirdly, the results denote that most sampled employers did not emphasise (or even just outline) qualifications as the part of the human capital they require from jobseekers, as they did other employability skills and personal attributes. Another notable thing from the data is that each respondent gave a list of requirements, which indicates that in order to please employers one needs to have a set of characteristics and attributes. As explained by the *Dynamite Clothing Supervisor* (2020), from the retail sector: "We are looking for young people who have good communication skills, time management, and many more competencies like teamwork, problem-solving."

Below are more examples of the responses (of respondents from all firms and sectors that recruit young people) that indicate that employers require their employees to have a set of skills. All employers did not give exhaustive lists of the skills they need, but the responses below suggest that they usually demand a combination of skills:

> You have to be a hard worker and be able to work with customers, because we need to make sure our customers are happy. (*Super Fuel Garage Supervisor*, 2020)

> [We require] Listening skills and communication skills, and computer skills. (*AfriTrans Manager*, 2020)

> [We consider you] if you have people's skills, customer skills, respect, and patience. (*Eat & Dine Restaurant Supervisor*, 2020)

> Uh, we're looking for punctuality, hard worker, and diligence, among others (*Money Matters Accountancy Manager*, 2020)

Indeed, when asked about the skills employers demand, there was a greater emphasis on soft (e.g., interpersonal and communication skills); with an even greater emphasis on *communication skills*. The *General Bank Manager* (2020), from the finance sector stated: "I would say communication skills are very important, but you also need to be a problem solver. We always deal with cases that need our employees to be quick on their feet." Agreeing to this sentiment, the *Ladies & Gents clothing Manager* (2020), from the retail sector explained that, while there are other skills they demand from potential candidates, the most sought-after is communication skills. She also explained that the emphasis on communication skills was owing to the nature of the business of the firm.

> I mean they [employees/job applicants] should show leadership skills, they should show professionalism, and obviously have good communication skills. We work with people, so we always need to have direct contact with people throughout the day. So, in our firm, everything relies on communication with our customers. (*Ladies & Gents Clothing store Manager*, 2020)

Supporting this view, the *More for Less Wholesale Supervisor* (2020), stated:

> [We require] good communication skills, they [employees/job applicants] should be able to communicate, I mean that's the first thing we look for and other skills like teamwork, time management are an added advantage. (*More for Less Wholesale Supervisor*, 2020)

The emphasis on communication skills was made by employers, mostly from retail/hospitality firms; and may be explained by the fact that these firms deal with service work that requires constant communication in order for products/services to be rendered. However, this demand for communication skills was also shared across other sampled sectors. According to the data. there is a significant consensus across all four sectors about

communication and leadership skills being some of the most important skills for job seekers (job applicants) to have, in order to be considered in these firms. In fact, this sentiment is underscored by *Egoli Distillery Manager* (2020), from the manufacturing who stated: "we actually look for hardworking skills, leadership skills, computer skill. You also need to prove that you can work under pressure, and I think most importantly, our job applicants should have communication skills. They really must be able to communicate with the clients and their colleagues."

All these sentiments are confirmed by Pauw et al. (2008:55), who explain that [soft] skills such as "communication skills, presentation skills, financial management, time management skills, and creative thinking skills play a very important role in the ability of candidates to adapt to a professional working environment and, as such, are most demanded by employers." This evidence confirms that employers place considerable emphasis on 'soft' skills, and that they expect employees (or job applicants) to have these skills prior to being employed. As also stated above by the *More for Less Wholesale Supervisor* (2020), who highlighted above that "communication skills is the first thing they look for." It is quite understandable why communication skills emerge as the most demanded skills, among others. One would infer that the fact that most of the jobs offered by the sampled firm are interactive in nature (e.g., retailing, hospitality), explains why the sampled employers have put emphasis on personal attributes than other skills. In other words, it is because communication is simply the channel through which people interact, and with which customers can be attracted and convinced about how good the products/services are, rendered in a specific firm are. Therefore, the benefit—whether it be presentations, public speaking, convincing customers of products and services—of having this skill is what makes it one of the most common skills across firms and sectors.

Most of the above-cited responses indicate that a majority of the sampled employers concede (more or less) on the skills-set that job seekers have to possess in order to be considered for employment—with communication skills being the most cited soft skill. But, furthermore, the study also finds that some skills (identified by the sampled employers) are unique to different sectors. Unlike the abovementioned skills that are shared across firms, here, the set of skills that employers expressed to be the most required/demanded, differ by each sector and firm. The following responses show the differences between firms in the same sector. For instance, some of the respondents from the financial sector valued marketing skills and computer skills. The *General Bank Manager* (2020), started "…marketing skills can be one of them."

Comparatively, The *Money Matters Accountancy Manager* (2020), from the same sector stated: "practical skills, computer skills, problem-solving." Both these responses denote that though these employers work for firms that both fall under the same sector (finance), and though they have similar skills they demand; still there are skills that are unique to the different firms that they do not share, despite that they fall under the same sector. The same divergence (regarding the demand for skills) among the finance sector is found also in the retail/hospitality sector. Some employers from the retail/hospitality sector gave examples of the characteristics and skills that are unique to their firms, but are not necessarily required in other firms from the same sector)

> We look for somebody who is handy, and somebody who is good with their hands because our employees use their hands a lot. And we also want someone who is time punctual and always on time. (*More for Less wholesale Supervisor*, 2020)

> A person must have listening skills, I mean we work with customers, we work with different people. So, you need to be patient, and you need to have good listening skills in order to be able to deliver what the customer needs. (*Chicken Corner restaurant Manager,* 2020)

Both these responses serve as examples of how different retail/hospitality sectors have specific requirements that are unique to the individual firms, and that are not necessarily required by other firms even though they are under the same sector. This may well be explained by—among other things—the obvious fact that different firms have different types of businesses and different services they render in their firms. As a consequence, both firms would naturally have a demand for different skills—to carry out the various duties—that allow for the different services and products to be delivered in each individual firm. Hence, the *Chicken Corner restaurant Manager* highlighted different characteristics from those identified by the *More for Less wholesale Supervisor*; even though both firms have also previously expressed that they demand similar skills (such as communication and hardworking skills). In addition to the differences that exist among firms within each sampled sector, the data further indicate that there are differences that exist on sector level. In other words, all four sampled sectors had skills requirements that are shared by firms within the individual sectors, but are not required in other sectors. For instance, the respondents from the manufacturing sector valued hard labour skills. This view is exemplified by the *Exceptional Motors Corp Supervisor* (2020), who commented: "In this firm, we do a lot of

hard labour, so we need people who can do hard labour, mam. So our employers should have the capacity for physical labour."

Conversely, the respondents from the retail sector identified customer service skills as the core skills needed in their firms. Contrary to the response by the *Exceptional Motors Corp Supervisor* (2020), The *Right Choice Supermarket Manager* (2020), from another sector explained: "when we hire people, we always look for people who can demonstrate that they can work with customers, they have to be friendly and communicate well." Here it can be detected that even though most employers had previously identified skills they share across all sampled sectors; they also have skills they value as individual firms. These results corroborate the findings of previous studies that that have also found that employers' skills requirements vary by region, sector, and occupation (Miller & Kellie, 2002; Newton et al., 2005; Taylor & Collins, 2005; Reddy et al., 2016; Tsotsotsi, 2017; DHET, 2019). Similarly, taking all the data into consideration, the convergence and divergence of skills demanded by the sampled employers proves to be a result of a number of factors—and the reccuring one from the data is the nature of business rendered in each participating firm. As pointed out in chapter six, the businesses that the sampled firms render range from restaurants, clothing stores, grocery stores, wholesalers, banks, and so forth. Therefore, in order to carry out the duties needed to render the different businesses represented in the study's sample, employees need to have different skills required for different positions in any single firm. This, inevitably, makes each sector value and demand specific skills that are not necessarily demanded (or regarded as integral) by other firms. For instance, as has already been described above, retail firms may value different skills from those valued by the other three sectors. However, at the same time, all four sectors still have similar skills they all require, and all deem essential for their employees to have

This point is further exemplified by the data that shows that the respondents from clothing stores valued aesthetic attributes. The *Ladies & Gents Manager* (2020), explained: "we need people who are confident and can present themselves well because they represent the firm." A response from the *Burger Club restaurant Manager* (2020), suggests that there are some minor differences between the attributes valued by clothing stores and those valued by restaurants. This respondent stated: "we look for somebody who is handy and somebody who is good with their hands and someone who is punctual and always on time." All these respondents are from the retail sector, but they both highlight different skills sought after in

their individual firms. Again, this further indicates that, in addition to the common skills/attributes that they share (i.e., communication skills), both firms also seem to diverge concerning certain attributes (that not only have an impact on who gets employed or not, but also determine the gender that gets employed). It follows then that because *Ladies & Gents store Manager* (2020), requires aesthetic attributes, his firm may most likely recruit female individuals (or good-looking females depending on what constitutes as best aesthetics for the firm). However, because *Dynamite Clothing Supervisor* (2020), expressed that his firms wants someone who is handy, his firm may look to employ male individuals (or males that look more masculine). This analysis not only indicates that skills requirements influence the candidates being sought after, but that job seekers are subject to indirect discrimination based on employers' inherent preferences. For instance, the attributes required in different firms may either advantages or disadvantage certain people over others (females/males, young people/adults etc.), depending on who employers believe possess the attributes they are looking for.

Following from the discussion above, the evidence of this study also shows that skills requirements also differ based on different types of occupation levels (i.e., from entry to senior level). For instance, skills required from someone to occupy a managerial position would be considerably different from the types of skills required from someone whose duty is to clean the whole day. Nonetheless, since the retail sector is the domineering sector from the selected sample, most of the skills that were outlined as the most demanded are those of general (and sometimes entry level) employment (as these are the jobs for which retail sector firms usually employ). Moreover, among the significant findings—and despite the similarities and differences among the sampled firms—was a strong emphasis by some employers on the importance of personality characteristics such as honesty and integrity. Here, communication and people 'skills' are integrated with characteristics that are regarded as personality traits, such as a 'positive attitude,' dependability, and enthusiasm. The *Eat & Dine restaurant Supervisor* (2020), from the retail sector stated: "We look for people skills, respect, honestly, focus and they [applicants/jobseekers] should have a drive of what they want in life." This widespread requirement/demand for personality traits has also been acknowledged by literature. As pointed out by Bunt (2005), amongst core characteristics, employers also look for traits such as motivation and flexibility. According to Cunningham as Villasenñor (2016), the traits employers look for include willingness to work and learn, appearance, behaviour, confidence, and positive gestures and mannerisms.

Again, while these different categories of skills shows that employers look for an amalgamation of skills-set; it also stands to reason that different traits will be valued differently by different employers—all of which is predicated upon what the job requires from an individual. These particularities, in turn, shape who gets employed in each firm, as employers will only employ candidates who they think best possess the best combination of skills-set demanded in each firm. As maintained by Rothwell and Arnold (2005:23), among others, "employability concerns the extent to which people possess the skills and other attributes to find and stay in work." This suggests that without having the skills-set—not just any skills, but the specific combination of skills—required by specific firms, one may not be able to find and retain employment. Among other things, these results confirm why the lack of skills is one of the significant factors of unemployment (as abundantly emphasised in the literature concerning unemployment). However, the fact that it takes a host of skills to be employed, also indicates just how complex the employment process is for both employers and job seekers. On the one hand, employers need to devise appropriate and effective processes that will be able to match employers with the specific candidate they want. On the other hand, jobseekers need to ensure that they hold the right combination of skills in order to be considered for employment. This match (between employers and the suitable candidates) proves to not be an easy feat; and this is precisely why more focused studies are needed to investigate the skills that employers require. The results of such investigations can also serve as (a much needed) update of the skills that employers demand and are willing to recruit people for. But, this update must be publicised so that people can educate themselves about the skills that are in demand.

This kind of investigation is especially important, because as the world constantly shifts to do things differently—inspired by, among other things, the frequent new development of technology—certain skills become redundant while other skills become increasingly demanded. Therefore, keeping a regular update on the changes in skills requirements will allow job seekers to enhance their skills and employability accordingly. And it will also encourage upcoming job seekers to develop the skills they know will, at least, get them considered by employers/recruiters. It is better for jobseekers to seek ways to develop marketable and pertinent skills, than for them to remain unemployed because—unbeknowst to them—they have skills that are no longer needed in any firm. While educating people (or disseminating information) about the skills-set that different employers demand will not automatically fix the stubborn unemployment crisis the country finds itself mired in—neither

is it realistic to suggest that it should—it can at least prevent people from acquiring skills that no employer will recruit them for. In other words, it will address the issue of skills-mismatch that is, to a great extent responsible for the unemployment issue, especially among young people.

Even more than that, the collected data reveal that 'qualifications' (as part of human capital) do not appear to be a prerequisite for a majority of the sampled employers. In fact, for most employers, the skills and characteristics that are already mentioned above were valued more than educational qualifications. Only a few respondents pointed out 'qualifications' as one of the things that they look for when they look to employ suitable candidates for vacant jobs in their firms. These few respondents are mostly from the Finance, Manufacturing, and Transportation sectors. The first thing the data revealed in this regard, is that the value employers place on qualifications varies considerably according to sector and occupation. It was clear from the responses given by these few respondents that certain qualifications are a prerequisite for some jobs, especially for more highly skilled or technical roles. For instance, the *General Bank Manager* (2020), from the finance sector stated: "we only hire people with qualifications, we have tried hiring people without qualifications before, but it did not work out well. You see, our jobs here need people to have both the theory and the practice." A sentiment that supports this was provided by *Exceptional Motors Corp Supervisor* (2020), from the manufacturing sector: "we are interested in graduates; they are the ones who would be able to do the job in our firm. So, in addition to the other skills, it is important that our employees have qualifications as well."

Conversely, for the retail sector, there is no particular preference amongst employers for academic qualifications. Some employers interestingly pointed out that when it comes to recruiting young people, they do not look for any particular skills, because they train the young recruits that they employ. The *Health First Store Manager* (2020), stated:

> We don't necessarily look for qualifications because once they [new recruits] come work for our company we give the training and show them how to do the job. The jobs we have here do not need for someone to have a degree/diploma or even matric; they must be able to do the work and demonstrate that they are committed to the work.

Another response that suggests that the requirement/demand for 'qualifications' is not of paramount importance in recruiting young people was provided by the *Right Choice Supermarket Manager* (2020):

> In our firm, we have hired younger guys coming out from school, some of them without matric and only have grade 10 or 11. Qualifications are needed only for senior positions such as manager or supervisor. But for our general jobs, which are often offered to young people, qualifications are not a prerequisite.

These responses collectively suggest that—contrary to the three abovementioned sectors—for the retail/hospitality sector, qualifications play only a limited (or inconsequential) role regarding an individual's employment outcomes. Employers from the retail firms place relatively little emphasis on formal qualifications—or even specific technical skills or eexperience—when identifying the skills-set (human capital) they look for in new recruits. Instead, as already pointed out above, greater weight appears to be given to soft and generic skills (i.e., attitudes, motivation, and flexibility). This evidence—denoting the difference between two groups of employers who identify qualifications as a prerequisite for employment, and those who do not place the same value on qualifications—not only shows that not all employers have a prerequisite of a qualification from their prospective employees. But it also indicates that the demand for qualifications is heavily sector dependent and is based on the job that employers seek to fill at any given time.

Consequently, the contrast between these two groups of respondents proves that the employers put a disproportionate value on qualifications which are likely to affect their recruitment practices differently. For instance, the responses reveal that some employers only want to employ graduates and adult employees who have considerable years of experience under their belt. Accordingly, these employers would deploy recruitment strategies that target graduates. According to the data presented in the first sections of this chapter, these recruitment methods are graduate programmes and word of mouth. These strategies may be effective in recruiting the desired group (i.e, graduates), but it should be recocked that, as pointed in section 9.3, these strategies likely to disadvantage young people who are unable to access these methods. Notwithstanding, data shows that the majority of the employers—who do not have the prerequisite for qualifications—have recruitment strategies that accommodate or target even job seekers without qualifications. Again, section 9.4 shows that, in addition to the recruitment method that accommodate young people, most of these employers also have recruitment channels (i.e., learnerships) through which they recruit young people who do not have qualifications, and from whom they do not require experience or any particular set of skills.

Therefore, this data suggest that the employment of young people (without qualifications and skills) by the majority of sampled employers indicates that young people are not totally shut out from the retail sector; given that they are considered by the retail sector among other sectors. However, the prerequisite for a qualification by employers from the three sampled sectors (other than the retail sector) not only privileges graduates, but it also explains why graduate unemployment is better off in the labour market when compared to youth unemployment. One of the reasons is that graduates are a group of people who, unlike the NEETs youths, actually have qualifications and, as a result, may be appealing to many employers who require for their employees to have qualifications. Therefore, possessing a qualification puts graduates in better stead, than people without a higher level of education. The only issue with graduates, however, is that some of the qualifications are deemed unemployable, while some of the graduates do not have the experience and other skills that employers demand (Moleke, 2005). This problem indicates that though qualifications are important for some sectors, it is still not enough for people to have the qualification if they do not have other relevant skills/competencies that should complement the qualifications they obtain. Hence, graduate unemployment is also a problem in its own respect, even though it is, comparatively, not as bad as youth unemployment.

Atfield and Purcell (2010), maintain that research on employers' perceptions of the graduate labour market has consistently found that employers generally have a positive impression of graduates overall. However, the employers also point out the lack of some capacities in job applicants and recruits, particularly a lack of business awareness and capacity for self-management, among other competencies (Bhorat et al., 2006; Atfield & Purcell, 2010). Indeed, employers not only look at a qualification, but they also need someone who has other skills and abilities, hence the term 'well-rounded.' Benson (2003), explains that due to the changing nature of the labour market, employers no longer hire based on education only. But they now also seek individuals that are not only educated but are also adaptable, flexible and innovative, the list goes on. Therefore, though graduates have qualifications, that alone does not make them employable. It should also be noted that not all qualifications are marketable in the labour market; in the same way, not all skills that job seekers have, are what employers actually need in their firms. In fact, Keep and James (2010:11), posit that the potential cause of the apparent decline in the salience of qualifications within the R&S process is that in a world where levels of education and qualifications are high, qualifications have become a much weaker distinguisher or signifier of unique talent as they are more or less ubiquitous

(Coughlan, 2008). The massification of higher education and the huge expansion in the number of graduates entering the labour force is one example. In other words, the abundance of degrees diminishes their power as a signifier of rare, higher-order, cognitive ability (Brown and Hesketh, 2004; Keep and Mayhew, 2004).

It stands to reason, then, that these results concerning employers' preference of qualification holders (or lack thereof) reflects the conundrum that exists globally: On the one hand, literature and statistical reports—as well as the Human Capital Theory—claim that the chances of employment rise with the level of qualification held; and that possession of some forms of qualifications, on average generate positive wage effects. On the other hand, there are people with skills and qualifications, but remain unemployed for various reasons—including the issue of skills-mismatch. This is the dilemma of skills mismatch, which cannot (entirely) be attributed to the people that happen to obtain non-marketable qualifications/skills. Instead, it also points to the problem of the lack of the disseminating information (or of education) regarding the qualifications and skills that are actually needed and marketable in the labour market. Earlier an argument was made that there is a responsibility for people to be educated; and for people to educate themselves about the skills and qualifications that they need to pursue, in order to be considered by employers. The degree to which people need to be educated and to which they need to educate themselves is subject to debate. However, it can be argued that the lack of such information is where the issue of skills-mismatch lies. When people cannot differentiate between the marketable skills and those that have become redundant, they will indiscriminately pursue any skills or qualifications, only to be unemployed because they have skills that no employer would want to employ for.

Following this analysis, it stands to reason that, athough lack of skills has been cited as the main cause of the high rate of youth unemployment; the skills identified by the majority of the sampled respondents do not pose significant difficulties for young people, since most of the sampled firms do not have any specific demand for qualifications. While a few firms have expressed that they would not hire jobseekers without qualifications, the majority of firms place little significance on qualifications. This means that young people (without qualifications) are accommodated in these firms. However, it should also be acknowledged that while this appears favourable to unemployed people (who are often unqualified), many have difficulty demonstrating that they possess any of the soft skills that all firms require. Furthermore, the overall evidence shows that perceptions of youth employability are based on

each firms' recruitment requirements, and especially the services that each firm renders. The evidence also corroborates the concept of employability that entails that one actually needs to have a combination of skills (well-rounded) in order to be employable. For example, for some firms, aesthetics make young people employable, because the firm renders beauty services. For other firms, having technical skills is what makes one employable.

However, in addition to aesthetics and having technical skills, employers also look for soft, and personality skill; whereby it would not be enough to only have the looks, but be dishonest; or to have the technical skills, but not be professional. These results indicate that the combination of skills that one should have in order to be employed is dependent on the job profile and requirements of each firm. In other words, there are general attributes that make young people employable, and attributes that are subjective and unique to specific firms. What a manufacturing firm regards as employable may not necessarily be employable for a retail firm. What is essential for one firm is not so important for another firm. This not only explains why retail employers prefer to employ young people, but it shows the bearing that this has on older workers as they will likely be disadvantaged in the selection process, if they do not possess any such skills/attributes. The fact that skills rrequirements(from retail firms is not as particular and stringent as it is with firms from other sectors) may explains why the retail firms are the leading employers of young people, as indicated by the data from the current study, and also from other studies conducted on the same subject matter (i.e., Broadbridge, Gillian, Maxwell, and Ogden, 2007)

Another critical point to note is that though the data has revealed that the skills identified by the sampled employers (excluding the ones who do not employ young people at all) accommodate young people with no skills or qualifications; this may not necessarily be the case for young people living with disabilities, even in the firms that generally employ young people. Consistent with a growing body of research, the current study also finds that disabled jobseekers are often disadvantaged by most of the skills requirements that employers have, among other things (i.e., lack of equipment of facilities that accommodate disabled people). Many of the ‘ideal’ skill-set identified by employers are likely to disadvantage youths with disabilities who may not have the ability to carry out the jobs that are offered in these sectors—as they may not have the characteristics that the retail sector requires. As revealed above, respondents from the retail sector seek workers who, among other characteristics, can present themselves well, who look good, who will be able to work all working hours on their feet, and have good communication skills.

Such skills-set requirements tend to have a bearing, significantly, on the youths with disabilities, as they may be perceived not to represent these characteristics well. Therefore, these preferences or requirements that employers have may also explain why most sampled firms do not have disabled workers, as demonstrated in chapter six. This point is also observed by Hasluck (2011), whose study found that in workplaces where the employees are expected to be the physical embodiment of the brand, employers may deliberately avoid hiring someone with a disability. He further explains that workers with disabilities may not be the ideal 'aesthetic' labour some employers seek. This indicates that though employers have many reasons for not employing people with disabilities, the exclusion of people with disabilities from employment opportunities may also be linked to the skills requirements of each firm. This clearly means that disabled people are not considered for employment given their (perceived or real) inability to carry out some of the work that is most needed in the respective firms.

These findings indicate, emphatically, that the demand for skills predominantly lies with the nature of the business, which, in turn, shapes the kind of skills needed to run the business and render (productively and profitably) the services offered by each firm. According to Ashton and Sung (2006), and Lloyd (2007), these requirements (or demand for skills) and their relative importance will also be influenced by a wide range of factors, including product-market strategy, people management strategies and practices, the skill mix dictated by particular production technologies and process choices, work organisation, job design, and organisational culture and history. In fact, there is a myriad of factors that shape employers' skills requirements, indicating that, although some skills are common across firms; some skills are sector-specific. In other words, there are no two firms that demand the same skills-set from the people they seek to employ, because the skills demanded are shaped and influenced by different factors—such as the specificities of the job, the nature of the business, the organisational goals, among other things. This, in turn, informs how R&S strategies are designed and practiced to ensure that they are able to attract the suitable candidates (that possess the skills-set) desired or pursued by employers.

It can be inferred (or even confirmed) that in the same way employers' recruitment practices are designed to be tools that match the jobs with suitable candidates (based on the skills demanded); these recruitment strategies are also intended (perhaps indirectly) to exclude anyone who does not have the skill-set required by employers. This exclusion is one of the ways that the R&S practices impact job seekers, and this explains why the few sampled

employers (who demand qualifications) do not have young employees (without qualifications) in their firms. The requirement for qualifications (from the few firms) simply does not accommodate such young people, and the R&S strategies of these firms are designed in a manner that ensures that young people (without qualifications and other specific skills) are not employed. This is where the literature (concerning youth unemployment) claims that youth are unemployed simply because they do not have the skills employers seek. Though this assertion is true to some degree, the only problem is that it puts the blame on young people—inasfar as it maintains that they are unemployed because they do not have the skills. Such strong claims fail to consider and show how demand-side factors—and other economic factors—come into play in contributing or perpetuating the situation young people find themselves in. Indeed, many young people lack skills, but as already pointed out, there are factors—some of which have been highlighted throughout this thesis—that impede their choice and ability to acquire skills. Therefore, their lack of skills is not an isolated problem, but is in itself induced by other factors. While this point does not excuse the fact that lack of skills is one of the causes of youth unemployment, it does, however, seek to suggest that a more comprehensive way to explain the notorious lack of skills as a determinant of unemployment, is to also consider other underlying (exogenous) factors that are associated with young peoples inability to obtain these skills.

In sum, this data points to a few things; the first is that there are general and common skills-sets that employers look for. But, as it is most likely, some skills are only exclusive to the different sectors and firms. This evidence is confirmed by literature which acknowledges that different sectors seek different skills (Newton, 2005; Hasluck, 2010; Tsotsotso et al., 2017). This difference all rests on the kind of business they render, and what skills are needed to successfully render that business. Another thing the data reveals is that the skills-sets required are based on the job one would have to execute daily. For instance, employers have different skills they require from someone who must execute managerial or leadership skills than for someone who will be employed just to guard or clean the facilities. Therefore, considering the jobs that the majority of employers are most likely to employ the youths for, one can infer that the skills-set will most definitely be different. In fact, the employers themselves unequivocally stated that they do not require the young people to have many skills, because the nature of the jobs they are employed for does not need hard-core skills. However, it does appear that basic skills are similar to those required of all employees (punctuality, hard-

working); these skills or qualities are needed across different occupations and fields of employment.

Therefore, recruitment practices and the resultant employment/non-employment of individuals (that takes place in each firm) are all informed mostly by size, culture, and nature of business of each firm, which means all recruitment practices are essentially tailor-made to fit the mission and objectives of firms. This means that though recruitment practices may converge (under certain circumstances), they are primarily designed to suit the individual needs of the firms, and the end products (final recruitment strategies) get to affect job seekers differently. For instance, data shows that since there is a divide between the three other sectors and the retail sector, this distinction proves that young people are impacted differently by the recruitment practices firms from all these sectors. Again, these results expose how employers play a very significant role in determining what skills/attributes/qualifications are employable and the skills that are not. Essentially, employers determine the employability of job-seekers. The role of employers is so fundamental in that it does not really matter what skills-set one possesses; if these skills/characteristics/qualifications are not demanded by any employer, then no employer will employ what they simply do not see as marketable. This indicates that it is really the employers who decide who is employable and who is not. Therefore, it follows from this consideration that their recruitment activities will be inevitably influenced by these perceptions and attitudes (concerning what's employable, or not). This also shows how employability is important in recruitment, as it is the main thing that employers are concerned with when hiring a suitable candidate. And though there are numerous reasons why skills-mismatch exists, one of the reasons is that people do not really know what employers demand. So, it is of paramount importance to learn from the employers themselves the skills-set they require.

Emerging as important, which this particular thesis did not explore in detail, is the question of how these sampled employers assess jobseekers to ascertain whether they do possess the skills they demand, and thus determine which candidate best possesses the required skill-set. Though qualifications can be verified, other skills that have been mentioned above are not as easily verified as qualifications can be. For instance, the has revealed that there is a greater emphasis on soft skills (e.g., interpersonal and communication skills), but assessing how these are measured precisely is questionable. Hogarth and Wilson (2003), state that, often, measurement (of ones ability to do the job) is based on employers' perceptions of their interaction with candidates at interviews. Therefore, it really does beg the question of how

employers ensure that they get suitable candidates who possess the skills they are looking for. It is my view that this question can qualify as a research inquiry on its own (as it will explore the types of assessments and their effectiveness, among other things,), hence it was not the focus of the research. Taylor (1996:33), cautions that "if attributes, particularly such as the ones outlined by the respondents, are to be measured, there has to be a great deal of clarity about the precise nature of each, and how they apply within the culture of the employing organisation." It is for this reason that more research is needed, to not explore the effectiveness of the assessments; but also, how these assessments affect jobseekers in general.

9.6 OTHER FACTORS THAT AFFECT RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

9.6.1 Challenges in Recruitment and Selection

Up to now, this chapter has attempted to draw a picture of the current R&S practices of the sampled firms; as well as the skills-sets that they demand or seek in their individual firms. In the interest of finding out the ways in which the sampled employers' R&S practices encourage or preempt the employment of young people; the respondents were asked about the challenges (or difficulties) they encounter concerning their recruitment processes and practices. Employers were also asked if there were any instances where they had to modify or adjust their practices to remedy or ameliorate, or even circumvent these challenges. Exploring the factors that affect recruitment from the respondents' experience (and point of view) has—like the themes presented above—shed some light on the various issues that impact the overall recruitment activities in each firm. In turn, knowing this, will also help us understand the demand-side factors that either promote or dissuade recruitment in the sampled firms. The question, therefore, is not whether firms have any challenges that affect their recruitment activities, but rather to find out what these factors/challenges are, and how they affect young jobseekers?

The literature on R&S (as reviewed in chapter four) has revealed that there are numerous factors that affect the practice of R&S (Grobler, 2011; Mashaba, 2013; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Kapur, 2018). These factors are said to be a combination of various determinants, but can be categorised as either internal or external factors (Grobler, 2011; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015). The difference between the two is that the internal factors are those that occur within the organisations (i.e.), and the external factors are those that occur outside the organisations, but still have an impact on the organisations (i.e., economy and labour market conditions). It should be noted that even though the factors

are categorised as internal or external, both these factors are not mutually exclusive, but are rather interrelated and tend to influence each other. This point is corroborated by the data provided by sampled employers. The factors that the sampled employers identified—as affecting the success of their recruitment practices and outcomes—are an amalgamation of both the internal and external factors; and thus prove the interaction between internal and external factors. One of the factors that emerged from the data as one of the recruitment challenges, is that some of the applicants do not meet the minimum requirements for the jobs advertised in some of the sampled firms. A considerable number of respondents reported that some of the vacancies in their firms could not be filled due to a combination of various issues (i.e., lack of applicants with the necessary requirements as set out by the employers). This view was held by respondents across the sectors, and among respondents who recruit young people and those that do not.

Generally, respondents explained how they sometimes receive job applications, only to find that some of the applicants do not meet the requirements. Therefore, this means that recruitment has to be halted, or deferred due to not finding the applicants that meet the vacant job requirements at any given time. The *AfriTrans Manager* (2020), from the transportation sector explained:

> The issue we always have is that we do not get people who actually have the skills and qualities that we need, you know. When we recruit for entry-level positions, it's not that much of a problem, but when it is other positions, it's hard to find people who have all the skills we need from them, so that is a big challenge for us.

This sentiment was shared by the *Health First store Manager* (2020), from the retail sector:

> Yes, we do have challenges, some people do not meet the minimum requirements. So sometimes the recruitment process never gets to the shortlisting stage, because of not receiving the potential candidates that we want. And sometimes the shortlisted candidates do not make it even after the interview stage. Then depending on how urgent we need to fill the vacancy; we sometimes have to re-advertise the position. And that is quite a setback because it means more time and more money is wasted.

The *General Bank Manager* (2020), highlighted the lack of experience as a factor that is a challenge to the success of their recruitment programmes. The Manager said:

> Yah, we usually need work experience that ranges from 5-7 years, and most of the people who apply for employment do not have the minimum experience that we need. So, it slows down the process of finalising recruitment.

First of all, considering the rampant issue of skills mismatch in the country and globally, it is no surprise that some of the employers have identified a lack of skills or experience as one of the challenges they have when it comes to recruiting employees. The reviewed literature makes it very clear and actually puts an emphasis on the fact that skills-mismatch is one of the attributes of unemployment, if not one of the main ones (Bhorat & Hodge, 1999; Bhorat, 2004; Dias & Posel, 2007; Kingdon & Knight, 2007; Pauw & Oosthuizen, 2008; Bhorat, Kanbur & Stanwix, 2011; Rankin & Roberts, 2011; National Treasury, 2011; Van Aardt, 2012; Yu, 2013; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015; DHET, 2019). This issue is not only so serious that it animated this study—but seeing that the employers also echo the sentiments of the incalculable research studies that have and continue to unveil skills mismatch as one of the causes of unemployment—substantiates just how important skills are to employers. The employers deem it a risk to employ people who do not have appropriate skills—based on what they think are valuable skills in their firms. As highlighted in the previous sector, just how valuable or marketable the skills are, is up to the employers as they are the ones who get to pay for the skills they are willing to employ. This is what makes them the gatekeepers for jobs/employment in the labour market.

Furthermore, given the gravity and extent of skills mismatch, finding the skills that actually match the requirements of the employers proves to be a frustrating pursuit as it may result in, among other things, a loss of capital (and sometimes the firms profit) and time if the suitable candidate for the job advertised is never hired. This has been the case for some of the sampled employers; for instance, the *Chicken Corner restaurant Manager* (2020), reported that:

> We sometimes have to postpone the recruitment process and re-advertise the posts, because we find that the applicants that we receive do not have half of the characteristics that we are looking for most of the time. So, we never just want to hire just anybody and not have a candidate that we feel is suitable during the screening of the CVs. When this happens we are kind of forced to re-advertise or put off recruitment. Either way that goes, we still incur losses of money and time, until we find the right candidate, which sometimes does not ever happen.

These challenges suggests that, sometimes, conducting recruitment activities may cost more for employers than it actually makes them gain. This happens, as stated by the *Chicken Corner Manager*, when the suitable candidate is never recruited due to the lack of skills they find in most people. And since employers like to cut on costs, this may likely discourage them from going ahead with the recruitment activities. This possibility may explain why employers sometimes freeze their recruitment programmes, even though that (halting recruitment activities) can also be stimulated by other economic factors (e.g., recession). It stands to reason, then, that the lack of skills is one of the challenges that may frustrate employers, and thus, may lead them to being reluctant to conduct recruitment activities in their firms. As to why lack of skills poses as a challenge to recruitment activities in any firm is quite self-evident. However, the fact that employers raised it as a challenge may also explain why some employers would prefer informal recruitment methods such as referrals or word of mouth. Informal recruitment is when the suitable candidate can be recruited as a referral or recommendation, instead of having the formal method, which tends to not only be costly, but also does not guarantee that the suitable candidate will be hired (as referring or recommending someone can). The preference that some sampled firms have for informal recruitment methods over formal methods (as shown in section 9.3) is simply to avoid spending time and money on recruitment processes that may need to be re-done or postponed if the first recruitment attempt did not successfully match the right candidate with the employers.

Furthermore, some employers imputed their challenges with recruitment to the fact that other people get better job offers in other firms—this loss opens up vacancies that may force firms to find new recruits. This view is mainly pointed out by employers from the retail sector, who seemed to have experienced this challenge. The *Stop & Shop Supermarket Manager* (2020) stated: “Other people leave because they get better jobs offers elsewhere. This, sometimes, causes us to have to look for replacements for the staff members that go to other companies.” While firms from other sectors may also experience this as poaching—whereby employers get better offers in other firms and leave their current place of employment (see Lindsay & Santon, 2011; Li & Sheldon, 2011;); this sort of challenge can also be explained by a number of things (see Kim. 2014). However, given that this comment was shared by an employer from the retail sector (which in this study is the sector with most firms that employ young people), then it can be inferred that one of the reasons for this (employees finding better

employment at other firms) may be attributed to the fact that most of the jobs offered in the retail sector are general jobs that are easy to get and easy to leave (resign from).

Although poaching may be a challenge experienced in all firms and sectors (and is caused by different factors), it may occur more often in the secondary sector (where there is easy mobility due to low employment and poor working conditions), and less so in the primary sector (where mobility in and across firms is not as easy as in the secondary sector). This is because in the primary sector, employment requirements are stringent (i.e., requirement for lengthy work experience, post-graduate qualifications, a combination of skills)—thus leaving employment may not be easy, because it means having to face the same exact stringent requirements elsewhere in order to find the same job (or even a much better job). Another reason why poaching is less likely to happen in primary sector jobs is because employees in these sectors may not need to leave their jobs, because they may be satisfied with the job conditions and remuneration they receive in these sectors. However, due to the flexibility and lack of security in other sectors (such as retail), employees there tend to leave jobs as easily as they get them, when they find better offers elsewhere. One of the reasons why retail sector employees would leave the retail sector for a better offer in other sectors is provided by (Broadbridge, Gillian, Maxwell, and Ogden, 2007). These authors explain that the retail sector is most likely to employ a young person, and as a resut, has a key role to perform in developing the core employability skills. However, when young people have enhanced their employability in the retail sector (which is likely to employ them easily than in other sectors), and are able to secure employment in other sectors, they leave the retail sector. Unless they can find secure employment (i.e., permanent contract, promotion) in the retail sector.

Of course, this outcome may not refer to young people who do not have skills or any qualifications—and as a result, may have significant difficulty to secure employment in other sectors. Rather it refers to young people who have qualifications, but may not have the experience. So, while they wait to find jobs that can match their qualifications, they go into the easily accessible retail sector (where they are often underemployed) just to gain work experience. And once they have ammassed the skills-set they need, they tend to leave the retail sector for more secure employment. When this happens, previous employers are somewhat forced to find replacements (especially if there is a pressing vacancy that needs to be filled) for people who find better employment elsewhere. As also pointed out by some

sampled retail employers whose responses are exemplified above by the *Shop & Stop Supermarket Manager* (2020).

Moreover, other employers identified minimum wage as one of the challenges that tends to affect recruitment in their firm; one employer stated that:

> Lack of skills from most of our applicants and minimum wage are affecting our recruitment at the moment, we are looking for experienced workers, and since the minimum wage has gone up, we are hesitant to recruit, because it means more has to go into paying the new employees. (*Egoli Distillery Manager*, 2020)

This sentiment is consistent with the reviewed literature. In fact, there is a growing body of literature that creates the awareness that minimum wage is one of the causes of unemployment (Kingdon & Knight, 2007; Bhorat, Kanbur, & Mayet, 2013), thus, suggesting that minimum wage affects recruitment. The relationship between minimum wages and employment outcomes has been debated for many years. Literature points out that a higher minimum wage could push up costs causing a firm to go out of business, because they may not be able to afford wage costs (Bhorat, Kanbur, & Stanwix, 2014; Cassim, Jourdan & Pillay, 2015; Issac, 2016; Forti & Vandeweyer, 2017). The literature also finds that the minimum wage affects different firms differently (in terms of the size). Although all firms are affected, the small firms feel the brunt of this more than the large firms, because they are more likely not to afford the regulated wages than the large firms, thus discouraging (small firms) employers from recruiting (Rankin & Roberts, 2011; Bhorat, Kanbur, & Stanwix, 2014). In some cases, the latter firms, which are more labour-intensive and, potentially, the main source of employment creation, would then either close down or retrench workers (often youths are more likely to be retrenched first) (Nattrass, 2000; Mayet, 2010; Bhorat, Kanbur & Stanwix, 2011; Rankin & Roberts, 2011; National Treasury, 2011; Issac, 2016; Forti & Vandeweyer, 2017). Let alone recruit any younger jobseekers.

However, besides the varying degrees to which different firms (small or large) are affected by the minimum wage (or any other labour market regulations), the bottom line is that all firms are affected as the minimum wage tends to discourage them from employing as much as they would want. Nonetheless, it is also important to note that some literature also shows, contrarily, that minimum wage is not altogether negative, as it may increase the income of the already low-paid workers, and may increase the incentive for people to enter the labour

market and accept the jobs, among other things (Cassim, Jourdan & Pillay, 2015; Issac, 2016). This likelihood, in turn, may help to reduce relative poverty as people get to earn a little better than they did before the minimum wage was implemented. These pros and cons only indicate that minimum wage is a complex issue; hence it is still hotly debated, with some scholars and researchers being for it and some being against it. However, considering the pros and cons, it can be concluded that while the minimum wage strategy is not well received by employers (in fact, it makes them shy away from having to recruit); the minimum wage strategy seems to be a positive strategy on the part of the supply side.

The conundrum that ensues from this, though, is that while the minimum wage is needed to reduce poverty by fostering a minimum standard of living. It rather leads to poverty even more because employers will—in the spirit of securing their profit—do whatever they can to circumvent having to implement the minimum wages in their firms. Basically, when employers dodge the minimum wage by not employing people, this means more people are unemployed, and thus live in poverty. This is why some scholars attribute unemployment to the promulgation of minimum wage by the government. On the contrary, the minimum wage is a course that the socio-economic account of the labour market (such as the LMS theories) supports and advocate for. These theorists do not see the minimum wage as a determinant of unemployment; instead, they see it as one of the strategies that can contribute towards eradicating unemployment and poverty; and that can also keep employers from exploiting employees with little pay (Cassim, 1986; Kraak, 1996). Conversely, the neoclassical theorists view this strategy as a problematic interference from the government's side that can compromise the labour market's interaction between supply and demand.

Another factor that emerged from the data collected as likely to have a bearing on recruitment is the 'lack of demand' for new recruits. Some sampled employers explained that they have seasons when they do not need to recruit any more people, because they already have people doing all the jobs required in those firms. Indeed, the literature also acknowledges that employers recruit only if there is a need (stimulated by different factors, i.e., deaths of a current employee, maternity leave) in the firm for new personnel (Anderson, 2002; Grobler, 2011; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Warnich et al., 2015; Sameen, 2016; Kapur, 2018). This suggests that without there ever being such a need, then recruitment in any firm is not necessary. The *General Bank Manager* (2020), had the following to say: "We have had our current staff for a long time, so we never really need new staff. We actually have not recruited in the last two years." This view was shared by respondents from three other firms

who had also mentioned in chapter six that they do not have regular recruitments, and that they do not have part-time employees in their firms.

Inevitably, this lack of demand, not only limits the job opportunities available to young people, but is a limitation to jobseekers of all age groups. This also shows that young people compete with an increasing number of job seekers for a diminishing number of jobs. The fact that firms can stay for prolonged periods of time without needing to recruit, means that many people stay a long time without getting a chance of entering the labour market—which can be opened by a job opening in any firm. Table 9.2. above shows the recruitment patterns and activities of the sampled firms. According to the table some firms recruit regularly; these firms were mostly from the retail sector. However, some firms reported that they spent a considerable amount of time without recruiting. Considering this evidence, it stands to reason that, in a grand scheme of things, recruitment (at least that occurs in these firms) is few and far between. This lack of job creation is explained by several factors, both micro, and macro (i.e., the inability of the economy to absorb the number of job seekers into the labour market).

Moreover, it is worth noting that literature on recruitment practices (discussed in chapter four) posits that labour laws are some of the factors that affect recruitment (see Mlatsheni & Rospabé, 2002; Kingdon & Knight, 2004; Altman, 2007; Bhorat, 2009; Burger, Van der Berg & von Fintel, 2013; Yu, 2013; Festus et al., 2016; Tabengwa, 2017). For instance, Fedderke & Mariotti (2002), points out that the South African labour market is also characterised by 'stricter labour market regulations that make it more challenging to hire and fire people, among other things. However, it is somewhat surprising to find that the respondents did not point this (labour law restrictions) out as one of the determinants that affect their employment and recruitment. A majority did not mention this at all, while only one mentioned it in passing (by mentioning the effects of minimum wage, instead of mentioning it as a specific factor). None of the respondents attributed their recruitment challenges to any of the existing labour legislation (Employment Equity Act and affirmative action)—even when they were directly asked about the impact of this legislation on their employment activities. Therefore, the extent to which labour market laws or regulations affect recruitment in the sampled firms is unclear as the sampled employers did not have anything to say about that. The lack of acknowledgment of labour laws can either mean that employers have no problems adhering to the stipulations of these laws, or they do not observe them at all; or perhaps that the sampled employers were not at liberty to divulge the details in that respect. However, this

issue may need to be evaluated further, as it may be interesting to find out, from the employers' perspective, how the labour laws affect employers' recruitment practices.

It can be inferred from the evidence—both from the data collected and the reviewed literature—that there are innumerable factors that affect recruitment. These factors, in turn, have a bearing on the un/employment of jobseekers. In fact, they have the potential of compounding the current issue of unemployment. This is because the more the employers are faced with the challenges identified above (among others), the more these challenges/mishaps are likely to discouraged them from employing young people. Or the more employers are likely to resort to informal recruitment practices (referrals), which are rarely, if at all, accessed by young people. The fact that there are factors (internal and external) that affect recruitment—thereby shaping the recruitment methods/processes that employers choose to apply on different recruitment occasions, also helps us understand why employers make the decisions they make (as an attempt to circumvent or maneuver the challenges). But it also reveals some of the ways that the resultant decisions (regarding their recruitment strategies and practices, which are a product of careful consideration of the factors that affect R&S), in turn, affect job seekers in general, especially those from poorer socioeconomic backgrounds, without a clear pathway to employment. However, given that the majority of the sampled employers have young recruits (and consider recruiting young people) in their firms, it can be inferred that these factors do not have any negative bearing on young people. Especially, in as far as the challenges identified do not preempt the employment of young people in these firms. Conversely, the opposite may be true about the minority of employers; the factors that these employers identified as having an impact on their recruitment activities may negatively impact the youth, in as far it preempts their employment.

Overall, considering the previous chapters together with this current chapter, the results indicate that not only do the sampled employers' dispositions (about young people and the government's unemployment strategies) shape and influence the inclusion of young people in their recruitment strategies. But, so too are the skills the sampled employers demand (informed by the nature of business and types of jobs they offer), as well as the factors that affect their recruitment activities. All these make up some of the demand-side drivers that help us understand the unemployment situation of young job seekers more, and in conjunction with the supply-side drivers. While this proves that the employment (or unemployment) of young people is a very complex phenomenon; it does, however, help us

understand the bearing that the demand-side (revealed by this particular study) has on the employment of some young people. It also reveals the ways in which the employment of young people is preempted by these demand-side factors in other circumstances. Having this knowledge—of some of the demand-side drives of unemployment (especially among young people)—is ultimately what the study sought to achieve. The next section presents the advice that employers would give to the youth concerning the ways in which they can enhance their employability.

9.7 EMPLOYERS' ADVICE FOR UNEMPLOYED YOUTH

Finally, the respondents were asked to provide some advice to the unemployed people (especially young people), concerning the ways that they can enhance their employment prospects. As well as how they can increase their chances of gaining access into the labour market—which is becoming more and more impenetrable. This question was posed to all respondents as the last question and is essential, not only, because the advice would be coming from the employers (the very people who make executive decisions about who gets the jobs). But, the advice will further reveals what is important to employers, in terms of the attributes they think make a person employable. For this reason, employers are in a better position to inform young job seekers about what they need to do to become employable, than anybody else ever can. Therefore, in light of the grim labour market trends (i.e., all time high unemployment rate) and challenges, it is befitting to find out what advice employers can give young people (NEETs ccategory), whose chances in the labour market are slim compared to graduates or young people with matric. This is especially necessary given that, unlike the neoclassical theories of the labour market, particularly the Human Capital theory—which posits that human capital determines the employment and remuneration of workers—the LMS theorists emphasise the fact that education (and human capital) on its own cannot guarantee employment, as there are other variables outside the individual's control that also factor in how and where one gets employed. With this in mind, it would be interesting to find out what advise the sampled employers would offer young people.

Indeed, the respondents were willing to share their advice on what the youths can do to increase their chances of being employed. Again here, it can be concluded that not only is their advice informed by the different perceptions they have about young people (initially revealed in chapter seven). But also, that their views mirrored the dissension between the neoclassical theory and the LMS theories. Some employers shared the same views that

neoclassical theorists uphold, while others seem to share their opinions with the LMS theories. The general idea among the former respondents was that education is the tool that will put the youths at a better stance in securing employment. These are the same employers whose perception (as revealed firstly, in chapter seven, and also throughout the subsequent chapters) was that unemployment is caused by the jobseekers' lack of investment in school/education. Therefore, employers gave advice along those lines, stating that young people should invest in school. The *Money Matters Accountancy Manager* (2020) stated: "I'd say first you must go to school, make sure that you get your matric, you get into university, and you get your qualifications." This view was seconded by the *More for Less Wholesale Employer* (2020), who stated: "well, I would say, go to school, study and get education, in order for you to become a manager instead of becoming a butcher store worker or stock-taking worker."

A related sentiment—as far as it puts emphasis on what youths/jobseekers can do for themselves—was expressed by other employers who shared the idea that the youths should work hard and stay focused. This view was expressed mostly by employers from the finance sector and was also supported by an employer from the retail sector. The *General Bank Manager* (2020) stated: "I'd advise young people to have passion and work hard. They should not always depend on their parents, but rather they need to build their own future." This was also expressed by the *Eat & Dine Restaurant Supervisor* (2020): "they [young people] should be focused, they should stop doing the wrong things, and they should also know what they want in life and go after it, nothing comes easy." As The *East Bank Manager* (2020) noted:

> They should be focused; they should be dedicated; they should always try to find new things to learn and do what will enhance their employability. I don't think they should sit down and do nothing with their unemployment situation; they should actually go out and look for jobs that can help them acquire skills.

Some employers advised that young people should persevere, and not give up easily, in their pursuit for employment. The general idea is that the transition into the labour market is not smooth, but can be quite difficult and usually takes time. For this reason, the youths need to persevere as it may take time for them to get into the labour market eventually. Below are some of the advice that highlight perseverance as something job seekers should have:

> Ah! I would say they should keep on trying because they'll never know which door might open. There are a number of opportunities out there which need them to not give up, but to keep applying until they get something, anything (*Super Garage Supervisor*, 2020).
>
> My advice would be that they shouldn't give up. They must continue to drop off their CVs at different places, and at the end something will come up for them (*Health First Store Manager*, 2020).
>
> My advice is that they shouldn't stop looking, they should keep applying until they find jobs; they should invest and create more initiatives for themselves to learn more about the work industry (*Maboneng Theme Park Manager*, 2020).

Some employers stated that young people should be open to anything, implying that they should not be picky. The *AfriTrans Manager* (2020) said: "Yes, the government should play a big part, and I think the youths themselves they should be willing to take any job that comes their way." The *Stop & Shop Supermarket Manager* (2020) stated: "When you are looking for a job, you are supposed to sell yourself. You can't arrive and act like you are not interested in the job, conduct yourself in a way that shows that you just want the job, show passion, show that you are interested in what you are applying for." These views are—as much as they advise job seekers not to be picky when it come to the jobs they want—consistent with the findings of some of the studies that claim that employers perceive young people as lazy and too picky when it comes to specific jobs (see for example Graham & De Lannoy, 2016). Seeing that some employers think young people are unemployed because of laziness or the tendency to pick and choose the jobs they want. It is not a surprise that some employers would give such advice. Overall, the advice given by the sampled employers indicates that entering the labour market takes more than just one thing. Rather, it takes an amalgamation of things to make one person employable—both from the supply and demand side, and even the state plays a role.

However, some of the sampled employers' advice tend to only focus on the supply-side as some of them only gave advice based on what the jobseekers' (young people) can do to help themselves. This is what we see the neoclassical theorists also do, which is to only focus on the supply-side (what jobseekers should do or not). Yet, the staggering figures of unemployment on a global scale and locally (in South Africa) show that young people have

very little to do (if they have anything at all) to escape their unemployment situation. If being employed only depends on jobseekers (supply-side), then they will all of have jobs because no one wants to not be able to make a living. And if education is the only key to success in the labour market, then all graduates would be employed. However, research shows that even some of the most educated/experienced/skilled people are without jobs; or are without jobs that match their qualifications/skills/work experience. This is because, in the real labour market, there are many factors at play that make employment for certain people (and in certain seasons) rather impossible. Hence, the government has (and continues) to create interventions that are designed to fight unemployment, most of these interventions focus on enhancing peoples' employability, while others focus on boosting the economy, and a few others also seek to boost demand.

The disproportionate focus on both the supply and demands side is a problem on its own because it implies—much like the neoclassical theorists—that being employed relies on the supply-side (workers/job seekers). But, it fails to recognise that the demand-side (employers) also play a significant role, and in fact, has the upper hand regarding employment decisions. For instance, the previous sections have shown how employers' simple choice between formal or informal recruitment methods, or employers' preferences of old/young, male/female employees can (among other factors) negatively impact job seekers' employment prospects. For this reason it should be understood that, in addition to both the supply and demand-side factors, there are other economic and social factors (to mention a few) that impede the economy's ability to create jobs, and absorb the new labour market entrants. This again proves how complex the un/employment situation is, but it also suggests that all sides (factors) need to be considered if we are to understand the dynamics of unemployment as the perennial trend it is. It is against this background that the thesis—while also acknowledging that there are supply-side factors that lead to unemployment—chose to focus on the demand-side aspects that have been, by far, afforded little attention in comparison to the supply side.

Taking the complexity of the un/employment situation into account, it can be argued that the results also reveal how some of the sampled employers are oblivious to the barriers that impede the youths' ability to invest in education, even if they wish to acquire the education and skills. However, only a significantly few (2/20) employers seem to understand this, as they stated (when asked about the solutions of unemployment discussed in chapter eight, but

will not be repeated in this section) not only that the government should help fight unemployment; but also, that the government actually has a predominant role in the fighting against unemployment. Although the advice provided by employers cannot be invalidated because they are entitled to their own views; an argument can be made, however, that some of their advice—which is tied to some of the opinions discussed from chapter six—is flawed for the same reasons that the HCT is declared flawed by the LMS theories. The one-sidedness of the advice the employers have given reveals the ignorance (or lack of knowledge) of some employers concerning the factors that impede one's success or difficulty in obtaining an education. Therefore, while the advice that urges young people to get an education is valid, it should be recognised that there are social and economic factors (among others) that impede young people's ability to people to actually get an education. Overlooking the social structures behind, for instance, young people's lack of skills makes addressing unemployment even more difficult, because any strategy that fails to be cognisant of the social structures behind unemployment, only deals with the symptoms of unemployment, and not the roots of it.

As can be observed from the data—and much like neoclassical theory, some of the sampled employers' advice fails to take cognisance of the exogenous factors that act as barriers to young jobseekers' ability to enter the labour market, let alone flourish in it. These barriers range from one's background, geographical area, gender, race, age, financial status—these are collectively referred to as social structures by Fleetwood (2006). Research, as encapsulated in chapter two shows that the barriers even begin at school where some young people drop out of school due to various reasons, some of which are not within their control. When someone does not have basic education (for whatever reason), that lack already puts that person at the back of the employment line. Then the situation is further compounded by race, gender, and even the perceptions that employers have about certain groups of people. Indeed, the issue of unemployment cannot be understood as a supply-side problem only, nor a demand-side issue, but rather both should be considered together along with economic, global drivers (to mention a few), which all contribute to the crisis of unemployment.

This is why addressing the unemployment crisis will take exploring both the supply and demand side, as well as adopting strategies and policies that will equally focus on both these sides. These sentiments echo those maintained by governments, think tanks, and even recommendations from some academic research, which all suggest that the way to fight

unemployment is by joint effort from all the concerned stakeholders, jobseekers, the government, businesses, NGOs, and civil society. Indeed, if unemployment is going to be abated, then all these stakeholders will have to cast in their lot. The real question, however, is who is responsible for what? That is what seems to be unclear, as to what role each party plays in fighting unemployment. For instance, with young people, what is it that they can possibly do if their circumstances force them to drop out of school—which is one of the reason why they do not finish basic and secondary school, let alone go to tertiary. How then can they be able to help themselves, or what kind of effort is expected from them when there are many social and economic factors that thwart them from doing so much as finishing their basic education? If already in that stage they have difficulties getting in their way of acquiring the education they need, what effort can they put in to help themselves to gain access into the labour market, which is their ultimate goal? This point does not in any way suggest that young people are not responsible to some extent for their employability, but it begs the question as to how that can be done from their side? Therefore, the HCT's views that the poor are poor because they choose to, is a rather myopic view that fails to recognise the many factors (some of which have been deliberated in the findings of this study) that preclude young jobseekers from getting employed, even if they try.

9.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter explored the recruitment practices and tendencies of employers on a daily basis. Since the thesis is interested in young people, it was most important to examine the recruitment patterns regarding the young people, and to see if the practices are inclusive or exclusive of young people. This chapter also discussed employers recruitment practices in conjunction with employers' dispositions of young people, and employers' perceptions of the government's role in addressing unemployment (discussed in chapters seven and eight, respectively), in order to explore the ways in which these dispositions influence the sampled employers' decisions to employ young people. To this end, this chapter first looked at the general recruitment practices of the sampled firms; and whether the sampled employers have any practices that specifically target young people. The chapter also looked at whether there are any differences between general practices, and those designed for young jobseekers.

By finding out whether the sampled employers accommodate young people in their recruitment strategies, the chapter also explored the skills these employers look for in general, and how this demand may affect young jobseekers. This was followed by a discussion of the

factors (from employers' perspective) that impacts their recruitment activities. And lastly, the chapter looked at the factors that are likely to shape or influence, in one way or the other, the recruitment of young people. The overarching conclusion of this chapter is that, although, the majority of employers currently employ (and have intentions of recruiting) young people, there are several barriers relating to employer behaviour that impact young peoples' ability to find work. For instance, the R&S strategies that employers choose to use on different recruitment occasions may be inaccessible to certain young people. These demand-side-based barriers come to play with other non-economical factors that tend to preempt the employment of young people. The following chapter consolidates all the findings and highlights the key results of this study.

CHAPTER TEN

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Nothing short of a renewed international commitment to full employment is required to reverse the poverty, unemployment, and underemployment now prevailing in so many parts of the globe (International Labour Organisation).

This chapter summarises the key findings, which are a confluence of the data collected, the theoretical framework, and the literature reviewed. The chapter also draws main conclusions from these findings and presents the recommendations that have been inspired by the overall results of the study. Once again, the reader is reminded that the thesis is animated by the chronic issue of youth unemployment globally and in South Africa; and especially its severity among the NEETs category. Indeed, the statistical reports, both globally and locally, show that many young people are not only unemployed, but they are also not in any training or school—a situation which further compounds their already compromised employment outcomes. Therefore, seeing that many young people—by virtue of falling under the NEETs category—are not only currently unemployed, but may face long-term unemployment, unlike graduates (and even matriculants) whose chances are better than those who fall under the NEETs category. The thesis set out to not only explore whether the sampled employers have any intentions (or consider) to employ young people; but to mainly investigate the factors (from their recruitment activities) that have a bearing on the unemployment of young people. According to the theories of the labour market, any analysis of the labour market should take into consideration the relationship between supply and demand. Therefore, given that many studies have investigated the supply-side factors that contribute to (overall, graduate and youth) unemployment. In comparison, the demand-side studies have yet to catch up to the number of the supply-side studies.

It is due to this purported gap that this study elected to focus on the demand-side factors—which is basically a focus on employers' recruitment activities—to explore the bearing that they may have on the unemployment of young people. The study focuses on the employers' R&S activities due to the fact that these activities are strategies employers use to employ jobseekers. Therefore, investigating these activities will not only reveal the kinds of people (labour) that the sampled employers seek to employ and the types of jobs for which they employ people—and thus use the R&S practices to attract. But it will also reveal the bearing

that the R&S strategies employers devise have on the job seekers, especially the young ones. To this end, the main goal of the thesis was to explore the R&S strategies and practices to investigate the bearing they have on young jobseekers' employment outcomes. The secondary goals were to investigate employers' dispositions concerning young peoples' employability, and concerning the government's unemployment interventions that have been enacted to encourage employers to recruit young people. Employers dispositions were explored, particularly, to investigate the ways in which they influence the employers' decisions to include or exclude young people from their R&S considerations

The overarching conclusion that emerged from the data is that—even though young people are the hardest hit by unemployment—young people are actually being employed and are being considered for employment. In fact, most of the sampled employers expressed that their staff members are predominantly young. As a result, it can be concluded that the recruitment strategies that most sampled employers utilise in their firms are inclusive of young jobseekers. However, the age group that the most sampled employers recruited from was around 18 years old and above. Most of the employers were of the opinion that 15-17 years old jobseekers were too young to be employed. Only a few employers categorically stated that they do not employ young people, and do not even have intentions to do so. Notwithstanding these few employers, the aggregate data has revealed that there are some sampled sectors and firms that employ young people. The leading sampled sector that employs young people is the retail/hospitality sector; however, employers from some sectors like the manufacturing and transportation sectors also expressed that they have young recruits, and that they consider employing young people. The fact that the retail sector is the leading employer of young people may be explained by the fact that retail firms were the dominant firms in the selected sample. But again, the fact that the retail sector is the predominant employer of young people is also corroborated by the literature that also finds that the retail sector, in general, is the largest employer of young people. Indeed, some studies find that businesses within this sector of the economy have always performed a key role in assisting young people to achieve an entry-level job and get started in the world of work.

It stands to reason, then, that the employent of young people is not an issue at all in the retail (and hospitality) sectors. Indisputably, the data stands in agreement with the literature in revealing that retail sector firms are the leading recruiters of young people. Of course there are other sampled sectors that also consider recruiting young people. However, the

employment of young people in these other firms is, comparatively, not to the same degree as it is in the retail sector. For instance, chapter six illustrates that most of the sampled employers (from the retail sector) estimated to have more young recruits than adult recruits. Whereas few employers from the three sectors estimated that they have more adult recruits than young people. Data further reveal that the types of jobs offered to young people by the retail sector and the other sectors are no more than entry-level jobs (i.e., waiter, cashier, administrator), and general jobs (i.e., cleaner, dishwasher, security guard). According to the data these jobs are often offered on a non-standard employment basis (mostly part-time and temporary employment). This further highlights that young people are being employed, even though one may contend that this kind of employment is not sustainable, as it does not guarantee young people (recruited in these firms) permanent unemployment.

In fact, when the non-standard employment contracts come to an end, these young people are most likely to head back to the unemployment queues searching for employment over and over again. Unless, of course—with the skills they acquire during their short tenure in the general and entry-level jobs they get—they manage to secure standard employment jobs. The likelihood of that happening can be revealed by further research in that regard. However, securing better employment in other sectors is something that, according to the LMS theories, is rather not easy to achieve due to mobility barriers between sectors (primary and secondary). This means that employees that are relegated to the secondary sector (where most young people, women, and Africans are over-represented) are most likely to get stuck in this sector, because it is generally hard to access the primary sector. Therefore, while this data denotes that young people are, in fact, being granted access and exposure to the labour market; the problem with the jobs they undertake in such sectors (i.e., retail) is that the the jobs are unsustainable. Seeing as these jobs are usually offered as non-standard employment—which, among other things, does not have the security for permanent employment. An additional problem is that even though these sectors are open to employing young people; they are often unable to absorb the many people that need the jobs. Therefore, many are still left without employment and thus are subject to suffer the incidental effects that come with being unemployed. Notwithstanding, the persistence of unemployment may also be explained by the fact that the kind of employment offered to young people is not sustainable. This means that as easy as young people get these jobs, is as easy as they tend to lose them. Inversely, the fact that these jobs are easily accessed and as easily terminated is probably the main reason

young people are employed or considered for employment in the majority of the sampled firms. Employers benefit, veritably, from this flexibility.

Certainly, the evidence of the study also suggests that, as has been pointed out in Comisitti et al.'s (2011) study, there is more to recruiting young people than some employers would be willing to let up. While there is, undoubtedly, a real basis for the concerns expressed by some employers about young people (such as the lack of skills and experience, perceived lazyness, or poor attitudes and motivation); it is also the case that many businesses benefit immensely by recruiting young people (without the skills and high-level education). In fact, much like in Comisitti et al.'s study, employers in the current study expressed significant reasons (some which are selfself-serving) for employing young people. The first reason has to do with the abundant availability of young people, owing to their desperation, to take up part-time/short-term jobs. Indeed, employing young people can bring a range of benefits—compared with recruiting people already in employment—such as being immediately available, having lower recruitment costs, lower wage costs; and they may be more productive and less likely to leave the firm as a result of loyalty to an employer that has given them a chance. Indeed, young peoples' contribution to the firms' productivity and profitability was cited as one of the motivations for their employment. Another motivating factor for the employment of young people included philanthropic reasons such as giving back to society, or contributing to the mammoth course fighting unemployment by actually providing work opportunities to young people. These are some of the reasons the majority of sampled employers provided (and some that were implied in their responses) for their choice to employ young people.

Despite that young people are being employed by the majority of the sampled employers, it still begs the question—considering that over six million young people are unemployed in South Africa—as to what are the demand-side factors that may not even necessarily cause, but contribute to the unemployment situation among young people? In other words, what do employers directly or indirectly do (concerning recruitment) that either enables or thwarts young people from being hired? In fact, this is the question that the entire thesis seeks to answer. Even though the secondary objectives of the thesis were to investigate the ways in which employers' dispositions affect their decisions to include or exclude them in their recruitment considerations; the data revealed other inherent factors that, in addition to employers dispositions, prove to have a bearing on the employment of young people. In sum, the main factors that emerged from the indepth data analysis as having a bearing on the

employment outcomes of young people are, of course, the employers' dispositions (of both young people and the government's strategies); the nature of business rendered in each firm; the types of jobs offered in each firm; the skills employers' demand; and the advantages and disadvantages that affect recruitment strategies and practices.

In particular, chapters seven and eight show the ways in which employers' perceptions preempt or encourage the employment of young people. Whereas chapters six and nine reveal the intrinsic factors that also influence the inclusivity or exclusivity of young people in the recruitment considerations of the sampled firms. While there are, undoubtedly, countless factors that affect young peoples' employment outcomes (both from the supply and demand sides, as well as the regulatory role of the state), the factors that emerged from this study make up the (demand-side) underlying factors that the thesis sought to investigate. Although most of these factors are not readily observable, they prove to also have a part they play in the employment outcomes of young people. These main findings are discussed separately below.

Chapter seven explored the general dispositions that employers have towards young people. According to the chapter's overall data, there is a stark polarity between the majority of employers who held positive thoughts concerning young people, and the minority of employers who had negative thoughts. It is worth noting that all employers, in sharing their dispositions concerning young people, also referred to what they thought of older workers. The majority of employers generally believe that young people are energetic, innovative and knowledgeable, and technology savvy. Therefore, these employers were of the opinion that young people have characteristics that make them employable and easy to work with, as they are flexible and can quickly adapt to the ever-changing world of work. By comparison, these same employers thought that old workers do not have these qualities, and as a result, they are thought be less employable or less easy to work with because they take time to adapt to the social media era. On the other hand, the minority group of employers conveyed negative thoughts about young people. In general, these employers believe that young people are too young to work and have no sense of responsibility as adults do, or that they hardly have the qualifications and experience needed in specific firms. One employer even mentioned how older workers are likely to have a sense of responsibility because they have a family to take care of, and thus need to work hard to provide for. Yet, young people have no such

responsibilities, thus being irresponsible with their lives. It seems for this reason, these employers preferred hiring older workers than younger jobseekers.

In essence, chapter seven indicate that the majority of employers believe that young people are still employable (even though they lack skills, working experience, qualifications). These employers believe that young jobseekers' youthfulness and ability to adjust to any changes is what makes them employable. Whereas the minority of employers believe that young people's lack of skills, experience, and qualifications makes them unemployable. While the majority of employers believe that even though young people do not have extensive skills (i.e., lack of experience), they still have some attributes employers can work with; contrarily, the minority of employers seem to overlook the slightest characteristics that young people may have (that the majority of employers appreciate). Or perhaps they just think those attributes are still not enough to make the young people employable. It can be concluded from the data that these strong dispositions that employers have expressed (both positive and negative) are likely to influence/shape recruitment decisions of both the group of employers who recruit (or will consider recruiting) young people, as well as they do the decisions of those who firmly stated that they do not recruit (and will not consider employing) young job seekers in their firms. This conclusion is also evidenced by the responses employers gave when directly asked about the reasons why they employ or do not employ young people.

Expectedly, those who had positive dispositions believed that young people could help grow their businesses, and render their business productively and profitably. Unfortunately, those who had negative dispositions about young people did not see eye to eye with the majority of employers; they rather believe employing young people would serve as a threat to their business. For this reason, the minority of employers rather seem to think that young people would be a liability to their businesses rather than an asset. Considering these results, it stands to reason that although employers' dispositions are not the only factor that either make employers employ (or not employ) young people; they, however, may influence whether employers would recruit young people or not. In other words, employers' decisions to employ (or not) young people are also informed (not exclusively) by their beliefs and perceptions about young people. This suggestion is justified by the fact that the majority of employers who have positive thoughts regarding young people are the same ones who recruit (and consider recruiting) young people. Conversely, the minority of employers who maintained negative dispositions of employers are the ones who do not only not employ

young people, but also categorically stated that they have no intentions to do so. In essence, there is a parallel between what each group of employers thought about young peoples' employability and whether they employ young people or not. This is also explained by the fact that when employers were asked why they either recruit or do not recruit young people, the answers they provided reflected the dispositions that they had shared about young people. Again, these results suggests that while employers' willingness (of the majority of employers) or reluctance (in the case of the minority of employers) may be explained by other factors (as will be further discussed below), the dispositions also factor into whether the sampled employers will employ young people or not.

Chapter eight reveals the dispositions that employers have about the government's role in combating youth unemployment. The chapter also shows employers dispositions concerning the two strategies that have been created to abate youth unemployment. The data denotes that employers have strong perceptions and attitudes towards the government—every respondent had something to say. Firstly, some employers held negative perceptions about the government; stating that the government is corrupt and incompetent in addressing the unemployment phenomenon. These employers not only believe that the government fails to address unemployment, but they also believe that the government contributes to the incident of unemployment in various ways (i.e., corruption and misappropriation of states funds). Therefore, the employers were of the opinion that the corruption committed by the government perpetuates social ills (i.e., having schools that do not have proper infrastructure and teaching resources), which negatively affects young people in the long run. Secondly, the data shows that only a few respondents did not share these negative dispositions about the government. In fact, these few employers seem to have hope that the government can help curtail the incidence of youth unemployment. These employers were of the mind that the government can, through its regulatory power, enact strategies/policies that can help tackle youth unemployment.

Notwithstanding, it can be concluded from these results that the employers' dispositions concerning the government do not appear to influence employers' decision to employ young people—as can be said about their dispositions regarding young people. This is because the majority of employers who expressed negative dispositions about the role of the government already employ young people despite the negative dispositions they have about the government. Hence, it cannot be said that their negative dispositions (concerning the

government) have a bearing on their decisions to recruit young people. However, the aggregate results seem to suggest that the employers' dispositions about the government affect their involvement/participation in the government's employment strategies (ETI and YES programmes). Indeed, the data also reveal that there was poor involvement of the sampled employers regarding these particular programmes. The majority of employers do not know about the participation, and thus did not participate in any of them at the time of the data collection. Only six out of 20 employers stated that they were aware of the programmes. Only two of the six employers indicated that they were involved in either one of the programmes, and even had recruited young people through these programmes. Even though, lack of awareness of these programmes emerged as one of the reasons why most employers did not participate in the programmes. The data also suggests that the negative dispositions that the majority of employers have (concerning the government) can explain why they do not participate in either one of the two strategies specified above.

This is because, among other responses, the respondents themselves stated that they would not want to be involved in anything that the government initiates. Most of these employers expressed their misgivings concerning any government initiatives; claiming, among other things, that the government does not care about the wellbeing of young people. While these dispositions do not dissuade the sampled employers from recruiting young people by their own accord, it may prevent them from participating in the strategies that could encourage them to employ more young people (through subsidised work). It could be inferred from these results that because these employers do not participate in the wage subsidy strategies; then, they do not get to employ young people who could be advantaged by these wage subsidies, if the employers utilised them.

Therefore, the lack of participation on the side of employers (whether it be that they genuinely do not know about the strategies, or whether it is because they do not want to be involved in anything the government initiates) may have a bearing on the opportunities of young people who could be employed through wage subsidies. In this view, it can be said that employers' negative dispositions about the government have an indirect negative impact on young people. Especially, for as long as the dispositions they have about the government deter employers from being involved in the programmes that create employment opportunities for young people. Therefore, considering chapters seven and eight, it can be concluded that employers' dispositions (concerning young people and the role of the

government) can be understood as non-economic factors that have—in one way or the other—a bearing on the employment of young people. However, despite employers' dispositions, the aggregate data (discussed in other chapters) further reveal other factors that are inherent to the organisations themselves and that, in addition to (if not predominantly) the employers' dispositions, also have a bearing on the employment of job seekers (especially young jobseekers). These factors will be collectively referred to as organisational factors where relevant.

Data discussed in chapters six and nine reveal other factors, namely: sector/nature of business, types of jobs offered; skills required; recruitment channels; and the challenges/difficulties that employers encounter, and that influence the inclusivity or exclusivity of young people in the firms' recruitment activities. Firstly, the nature of business (sector)—which is defined by the products and services rendered in each firm and, in turn, also determines the kinds of jobs being offered in each firm—proves to have a bearing on the types of people that get employed in each firm. For instance, some of the sampled sectors (i.e., Finance. Manufacturing, and Transportation) have businesses that require their employees to have some technical skills (or a specific set of skills) in order to produce the services or products rendered in those firms. Consequently, the types of jobs that these firms have to offer (e.g., engineers, accountants) are for people who possess the specific set of skills and qualifications that these firms demand. Oppositely, other sectors (i.e., retail) conduct businesses that do not necessarily require qualifications or particular skills—with the exception of the generic skills that every firm requires. Indeed, data confirms that the jobs offered in these sectors are usually entry-level and menial jobs that anyone can do without needing a particular set of skills. Here we see the link between the nature of business in each firm and the skills demanded from potential recruits (who will suitably occupy and fulfill the duties of the jobs that these firms have), in order to produce and make profit from the services/products they produce/render to their client base.

Secondly, a related organisational factor that appears to have a bearing on job seekers' employment outcomes is the skills-set requirements from each sampled firm. Section 9.5, shows how skills requirements both converged and differed across the sampled firms. It also revealed how the nature of business shapes the skills that are demanded and the types of jobs these businesses offer (among other things). For instance, apart from the generic skills that all firms require, the majority of employers focused more on personality traits to the total neglect

of qualifications. Whereas the minority outlined a wide range of skills-set that they demand and, unlike the retail/hospitality sectors, also emphasised the demand for academic qualification. It is against these results that it can be concluded that the need for particular skills (which are, chiefly, determined by the nature of business of each firm) in some firms is what negatively affects (young) job seekers who do not have the skills-set required in those firms. In contrast, the firms that do not have this particular need (of specific skills) appear to accommodate young people—just by virtue of being opened to employing people without skills and qualifications.

In as much as these factors (nature of business, types of jobs, and skills required) can explain why the majority of firms employ young people, they also can explain why the minority of firms do not hire young people. In essence, the nature of business and the jobs offered in the majority of the sampled firms is simply advantageous to young jobseekers. At the same time, the minority have requirements that outright ostracise young people from being employed. This explains why young people are overrepresented in the retail/hospitality sector. In fact, all sampled employers from the retai/hospitality sector not only had positive dispositions, but they also expressed that they recruit young people. However, the same cannot be said about the nature of business and the types of jobs offered in the other sectors requiring incredibly high skills and work experience. Employing young people who do not have the skills-set required in these firms will not only be futile, but it will be more costly than it would advantage these firms. This is because the unskilled recruits would not be able to conduct the job requirements that can only be undertaken by having specific knowledge and skills and even experience. If is already hard for young people (who have qualifications, but have not yet gathered enough working experience) to secure employment in these firms, how much harder will it be for young people who not only do not have work experience, but do not also have the skills and qualifications specified by these firms? Therefore, the data show that, in addition to the negative dispositions that the minority of the sampled have of young people, such organisational factors make it even more difficult for young jobseekers to be considered for employment in these firms.

Another organisational factor that seems to affect the recruitment of, not only young people, but job seekers in general, is the size of these firms. Chapter six illustrated that most firms are small in size (in terms of employee turnover in each firm). Only six firms could be classified as big firms owing to their veritable number of employees. With that said, one would expect

the sampled big firms to be most likely to recruit more people, given that they may be able to accommodate more employees as they are likely to make more profit. But, instead, it was the majority of the small firms (who were made up of firms from the retail/hospitality sector and a few from the finance sector) who seemed to recruit job seekers more than the big firms. Correspondingly, data in chapter nine also indicate that employers from the small firms conduct frequent recruitments (ranging from weekly to every three months). The frequency of recruitments in these firms may be explained by a couple of inferences (at least from the data). Firstly, it should be noted that these firms render services and products (that are always in demand, and sometimes are in high demand during certain seasons than others). As a result, the firms may, regularly, need to recruit more people to help produce the demand of their customers. Secondly, data denote that these firms offer non-standard employment, which simply means that as contracts end (and if there the demand is still high), then employers either have to renew existing part-time or temporary employees. Or they may need to re-advertise the posts and recruit over and over again—for as long as they do not want to make the posts permanent. On the contrary, the sampled big firms did not report this kind of frequent recruitment activities.

In fact, most of the employers from the big firms stated that they have not recruited in the last year or two. Some of the reasons that these employers gave for the less frequent recruitment in their firms is that they did not have any vacant positions, and that most of their employees are permanent workers. Therefore, in these firms there is rarely a need to hire new employees except under certain, rare circumstances (i.e., resignation, death). The frequent recruitments that occur in the majority of the small firms means that more young jobseekers will likely be employed. Comparatively, the infrequent recruitments in the sampled firms may not necessarily have a bearing on young jobseekers—because, due to their inherent requirements, they would not employ young people anyway. However, it does have a bearing on jobseekers in general. If these firms never need to hire new workers for extended periods of time, this translates into more unemployed people (who may have been absorbed by these firms if they had frequent recruitments). Indeed, this lack of jobs (recruitments) is one of the main reasons why people are unemployed. Hence, the major strategy against unemployment—which is the most intricate to achieve—is the creation of more jobs.

Furthermore, the study suggests that the way in which the sampled employers design and practice their recruitment strategies constitutes as one of the factors that affect job seekers in

general (not just young jobseekers). Even though it is indicated above that the majority of employers do employ young people, the methods they use for recruitment and selection are likely to disadvantage job seekers in general, even young people. According to the data, all employers predominantly use social media as a method to publicise their vacancies. While this method is used by many people and has innumerable benefits, it may, however, not be afforded by the young people from the NEETs category who need social media the most. Young people in tertiary may have access to social media (i.e., supplied at school), and others may have parents (or other family members) who work and can afford internet. However, some young people come from backgrounds where not one single family member works (i.e., parents have died, and thus they had to drop out of school, among other factors). And may, as a result—of not being able to access social media (as the widespread recruitment methods that employers use) be negatively impacted. Granted, the minority of firms use recruitment methods that are exclusive of young job seekers. But young people can also be negatively affected by the methods that even employers who recruit young people use, especially when they cannot access the methods that those employers choose to use.

For instance, another recruitment method that the respondents admitted to using is 'word-of-mouth. This method may benefit employers because it is cost-effective (among other things). But it sure can impede the employment of young jobseekers who do not have any connections (social capital) that one must have in order to be recommended for work. The same applies to the selection methods that all firms use. The selection method that was identified (especially in the majority of firms that employ young people) is the interview method. While this is also a commonly used method, not everyone knows how to make it in job interviews. Therefore, even though, graduates (or tertiary students) and other young people (matriculants) can either be education, or can afford to educate themselves (online) on how job interviews are facilitated (and how to secure an interview, how to draft a CV). This method proves to negatively impact young people—unlike graduates or matriculants—who have dropped out of school, and as a result, may not be able to conduct themselves in a job interview. Neither can they afford to access platforms that offer education on these matters.

So even though some employers are open to recruiting young people (even those without skills and matric), some young people by virtue of being unemployed, not being able to draft a CV, or to conduct themselves in an interview (among other things) may not be able to apply and secure such employment. While there may be nothing wrong with the recruitment

methods employers choose to adopt in their firms, it still appears that such methods can pose as barriers to job seekers who are not knowledgeable about (or do not have access to) the recruitment strategies employers utilise in their firms. In addition, the results of this study also indicate that the challenges that employers have with their R&S activities (discussed in chapter six and nine) may also impact the employment of young people. All respondents cited a number of the challenges (which will not be repeated here) that they face during their recruitment activities. The conclusion that can be made concerning these challenges is that they may either discourage employers from conducting recruitment—or employers may try to circumvent these challenges by putting off recruitment altogether (as alluded to by the respondents themselves). Whatever be the case, young job seekers tend to be indirectly disadvantaged by the challenges and difficulties that employers have identified—for as long as these challenges/difficulties get in the way of the employment of young people (or people in general).

These results show, on the whole, that employment decisions are quite intricate. There is no one hard and fast factor that can explain why some employers hire young people, and why others do not. Instead, there is a multitude of intertwined factors that can help understand the incident of unemployment from the dmand-side (as with the supply-side). Nevertheless, the current study (inspired by the research questions) has revealed the factors that have been discussed in the previous chapters (and encapsulated above) as some of the demand-side factors that can help explain the ways in which the sampled employers' recruitment considerations and decisions advantage or disadvantages young job seekers. Therefore, if a comparison can be made between the two groups of employers who, on the one hand, employ young people, and those who do not; this distinction would show that—despite that the majority of firms employ young people—both the majority and minority firms have recruitment strategies and practices that form as barriers that impede young people's ability to secure employment. For the minority firms, the barriers are in relation to the non-economic factors such as the negative perceptions that employers have concerning young people, but also because of organisational factors such as the nature of business, skills demand (demanding that recruits have work experience, or certain qualifications), and types of jobs.

Primarily, 'skills requirements' in these firms are the major hurdle for young people, but other factors (that are inherent characteristics of the firms) also make it hard for employers to employ young people. As a result, it must be acknowledged that not all employers have

suitable jobs for many unemployed people, since the jobs they have to offer require levels of skills and experience that some young jobseekers lack. For this reason, it would be irrational to expect employers to hire young people, if they are not in a position to carry out the job requirements of any firm. Even if employers from these firms may have positive perceptions concerning young people, there are intrinsic organisational factors that will still impede the employment of certain social groups (i.e., disabled, young jobseekers). Be that as it may, it is rather unfortunate that that some employers would (even for low-skilled, or no skills jobs that they offer) never employ young people, because of the negative perceptions or the bad experiences they have encountered concerning young people. Accordingly, employers' dispositions may not be the cause of youth unemployment, but should at least be understood as a subset or a demand-side driver that negatively impacts young people's outcomes.

On the other hand, the majority of firms seem to be youth friendly, since these employers have positive dispositions about young people; and they do not require a specific set of skills, and also given that the kinds of jobs offered can be occupied by young people—because the nature of business therein does not necessarily need them to have any skills. In a nutshell, this means young people are not only accommodated, but they are also targeted in these firms. However, the data concurrently indicates that though the inherent characteristics of these firms (unlike those of the minority of firms) allow for the employment of young people; the recruitment methods that these employers use may be what hampers the employment of some young people. Indeed, this research denotes that the ways that sampled employers conduct their recruitments may hinder young people's employment chances. This is because most of the recruitment methods employers identified (as their go-to methods for recruitment) are often out of reach, or less accessible to young people. This inaccessibility can form a real barrier that can prevent young people from finding work. Therefore, although it is clear by now that some employers are willing and open to hire young people, it should be understood that there are—in addition to the economic or supply-side factors—non-economical factors that also serve as barriers to the employment of young people. All these factors are not mutually exclusive; they are interrelated and prove to concurrently affect the choice of recruitment strategies that employers will use, and thus affect who gets recruited. Accordingly, while these factors may ultimately affect job seekers differently, it is safe to state that the R&S practices of the sampled firms do not entirely shut young people out of the labour market. In fact, as also noted above, the majority of the sampled employers want to work with young people, so that means young people are still advantaged in that sense.

Furthermore, the results also show—as argued by LMS theories—that contrary to the neoclassical theorists, who assume that employers adjust to supply-side shifts in education and skills. It should be borne in mind that employers' agency in the labour market (together with the wider economic conditions) play a critical role in shaping, *inter alia*, labour market outcomes, segmentation and inequalities in the labor market, and selective access to career and training opportunities. According to LMS theories, employment or lack thereof can also result from formal and informal institutionalised policies and practices in the labour market and workplaces. Consistent with the arguments made by the LMS theories, the results of the thesis suggest there are other economic factors that do not necessarily cause, but may contribute to unemployment (i.e., weak capacity and economic growth to create the jobs needed to absorb young people). This being the case, it should be understood, as also projected by LMS theories, that the ways in which employers devise and practice their recruitment strategies also have a bearing on the un/employment outcomes of people in general (and young people especially). Some employers intentionally use these strategies to accommodate young people, and others intentionally preempt young people from being employed in their firms. However, the results also show that despite that employers may be intentional about their recruitment choices; sometimes the use of some recruitment strategies may dissuade the employment of certain jobseekers indirectly or unintentionally—it is not always intentional.

This reasoning is also emphasised in a study conducted by Cominetti, Sissons, and Jones (2013:37), they maintain that "[N]on-economic phenomena are integral to the nature and functioning of labour markets and, if labour markets … are to be understood more fully, these non-economic phenomena must be seen as endogenous to our model of labour markets…[T]he labour market, whilst being influenced, is not dominated by economistic price signal. With this bold assertion Cominetti, Sissons, and Jones (2013:38), recommend that the task ahead is to build such an inclusive view of non-economic phenomena into our model of the labour market and, by doing so, move beyond the simple mainstream economistic policies of continually deregulating labour markets. And on to the more positive possibility of negotiating the development of programmes and policies that consider the plurality of social, cultural, and political forces operating on labour markets (Callaghan, 1998: 193 cited in Cominetti et al. 2013). This point made in the study by Cominetti, Sissons, and Jones (2013), parallels the main findings of the current study. These findings help us understand that the inclusion or exclusion of young people in the firms' R&S strategies is a

result of numerous factors, one being the supply side (skills), the demand side (preferences and the resources at the disposal of employers: these include the government's employment policies/strategies, among other things. As well as other factors that are beyond the control of both job seekers and employers, but well affect the decision to recruit (on the part of employers), and affects employment outcomes (on the part of job seekers). Therefore, in addition to the supply-side factors that numerous studies have discovered, this research finds that the demand-side factors that have emerged from the collected data are a sub-set of youth unemployment; as they also prove to form part of the barriers that hinder young people from entering the labour market. It stands to reason that, while young people have a duty and responsibility to get themselves employed, their employability will always be met with the discretion of employers, as well as other economic and social factors—that either works for them or against them. Therefore, labour outcomes are both a result of jobseekers' employability, but also of employers' preferences. As such, both sides have to be taken into consideration when analysing the issue of unemployment. And then, this consideration—to include both demand and supply-side factors when analysing unemployment—will have a ripple effect on policies developed to tackle unemployment.

According to the data analysis carried out in the previous four chapters and the findings that have been highlighted above, the thesis has drawn a few conclusions. The first conclusion that can be made is that most of the factors that have been presented above (as barriers to the employment of young jobseekers) are inherent and embedded in the firms; they make up the firms themselves. This means that some firms just cannot employ young people who do not have the skills they require. Therefore, the negative bearing these inherent factors have on young job seekers may not be deliberate or even direct. This simply means that these firms' characteristics make it rather impossible to employ not only young jobseeker, but any job seeker that does not possess the skills set that some sectors require. The opposite is true concerning the inherent characteristics or the requirements of other sectors (i.e., retail, hospitality) that make it possible for almost any jobseeker to be employed, just as long there are any vacant jobs. Be that as it may, it should be understood that as far as employers' dispositions are concerned, it stands to reason that most of the perceptions of the sampled employers are misconceptions that are not necessarily true of all young people—and this goes both ways: the positive and negative perceptions.

This thesis firmly asserts that it is somewhat unlikely that all young people are irresponsible, careless, and picky, as some employers perceive. This is because some young people simply cannot afford to be irresponsible or picky as they are forced by their circumstances to work hard and provide for their families. Therefore, the same circumstances that make them need employment from a young age are the same circumstances that force them to adopt a sense of responsibility from a young age. The opposite is true that not all young people actually want to work. But the anecdotal evidence (often based on employers' perceptions)—that suggests that some young people are picky in terms of the jobs they want and the salaries they think they should get—has yet to be proved with more compelling evidence. The fact that employers think (as revealed by some literature) that young people are picky (among other perceptions) is not compelling evidence to make it accurate. More research is needed (that will mainly analyse young people's willingness to work) to prove what currently seems like mere opinion (from the employers' side).

However, in the absence of such evidence and considering the circumstances that cause young people to fall under the NEETs category, an argument can be made that the perceptions (that insinuate that young people are lazy and picky) do not necessarily apply to the NEETs young people who actually have no many options to make them picky. Instead, if there are any picky young people, it can be assumed that these are probably matrc certificate holders or graduates, as they are the ones who may have (or think they have) the luxury to pick and choose jobs. It is less likely that NEETs category youth would be picky and irresponsible. However, the fact that the NEETs find themselves in a worse situation than the other groups of young people is one of the reasons why more studies are needed to focus on the NEETs category, in order to understand their unemployment dynamics, and how they vary from other youth groups. As it stands now, one can assert it is rather unlikely that the NEETs would be picky and irresponsible given their desperate need to make a living—not only for themselves but sometimes even for their family members. They may not have the privilege to acquire the demanded education and skills-set, but it seems that out of desperation, they would do anything to secure employment—to make a living. In fact, the reviewed literature corroborates this observation, in as far it acknowledges that there are young people who, out of desperation and having few to no options, take up non-standard and secondary jobs in order to make whatever living this kind of employment can afford. These results support the aassertion made above that some perceptions about young people (especially the NEETs) are, rather, misconceptions from employers/people who are oblivious

of the despondent situation most young people find themselves in; and thus makes them want to take up secondary jobs, rather than it would make them lazy or picky.

This point leads us to another corollary conclusion concerning the employment of young people in the majority of the sampled firms. Although it is commendable that young people are being employed, it should be noted that the kind of employment of young people in these firms (i.e., non-standard employment) is problematic, in as far as it is unsustainable. In fact, this kind of employment raises some questions: (1) whether the sampled firms' jobs are sustainable and uphold the principles of decent work, and (2) whether the firms are able to employ the vast number of young people who are vulnerable to unemployment. Judging by the transient nature of these jobs, it is obvious that these jobs are not sustainable. Simply because, while these jobs may grant labour market exposure to the recruits, they provide no job security. In fact, these kinds of jobs seem to benefit employers more than they benefit young people who take up these jobs. Certainly, research shows that employers' have resorted to flexible staffing practices because of the benefits of saving costs, among other benefits. The benefits attached to such employment also explain why these firms employ young people; in fact, even qualified people also tend to ccupy these kinds of jobs, while they wait to get job openings that match their skills and qualifications. However, although non-standard employment can provide opportunities for some workers (especially young people) to enter the labour market; due to the lack of job security attached to these jobs, the non-standard employment recruits are often at much higher risk of unemployment than their counterparts in standard employment. With exceptions for non-standard employment in high-demand, specialised professions, where non-standard workers can earn more and are, due to being in high demand, not vulnerable to unemployment as non-standard workers who do not have skills and can be easily replaced. This means the proliferation of non-standard forms of employment does not impact all workers the same.

Moreover, non-standard jobs often go against the ILO's agenda of decent work. This agenda, crudely, refers to employment that respects the fundamental rights of the humans and the rights of conditions of work safety and remuneration, as well as respect for the physical and mental integrity of the worker in the exercise of his/her employment. According to the ILO, in most instances, non-standard jobs divert from the idea of decent work. This is because workers in non-standard employment often face barriers (in law or practice) to joining a union and are not always covered by collective bargaining. Therefore, lack of representaton

makes it more difficult for them to access other rights at work. In some instances, non-standard workers have a greater risk of injury at work due to poor induction, training, and supervision. Job insecurity can also have negative impacts on mental health. In general, young people are among the other social groups that are relegated to such unemployment, owing to their lack of skills and qualifications, and thus being desperate enough to settle for this kind of employment. This means that they are not only vulnerable to unemployment but also to non-standard work, which still does not guarantee them secure, permanent employment. Therefore, taking this into consideration, it stands to reason that the agenda of 'decent work' imposes even more difficulties on the agenda of job creation, as a strategy against unemployment, because not only should jobs be created—which proves to be no small feat on its own—but employers should ensure that any job they offer is consistent to the agenda of decent work. This is especially a challenge given that decent work is central to efforts to reduce poverty, and is also a means to achieve equitable, inclusive, and sustainable development. Accordingly, any job that does not encompass these characteristics is, by definition, unsustainable.

For this reason, such employment cannot be, in any way, regarded as a strategy that can help combat unemployment. This is because people who are employed under these terms stand to lose these jobs as quick as they acquire them. For instance, as soon as the contracts end, these people are back in the unemployment queues, and thus get included in the unemployment rate all over again. This may explain why, even though young people are being employed, youth unemployment keeps rising, instead of decreasing. One reason is that many young people keep joining the unemployment queues; but even those who manage to get a job are often employed on a part-time, casual, temporary basis, or even through employment subsidies (as alluded to by some employers), all of which do not guarantee permanent employment. In essence, this kind of employment does not solve unemployment at all—not in a sustainable way anyway. Such employment does not make any significant difference, if it only leads back to unemployment after three to six months—and if the recruits are lucky, it is usually 12 months long for their non-standard employment contracts to end. This argument does not downplay the benefits of non-standard employment for young people (i.e., exposure to work environment and experience). But at the same time, it should be understood that it is not enough (and should also be disconcerting) that young people are being considered for non-standard employment, by which they barely make a living. Acknowledging the shortcomings of non-standard employment shows that non-standard employment cannot be relied upon as a

way of granting labour market access to young people; and it indicates that more effective strategies are still needed. Indeed, it can be asserted that current strategies are not doing such a great job, at least not to the extent that is actually needed, since youth unemployment is increasing—and most that are employed are not being retained in the labour market. If youth unemployment has a fighting chance to be curtailed, then more sustainable employment strategies need to be devised as a matter of urgency.

What further necessitates better and more sustainable ways of addressing youth unemployment is the idea that wage subsidies (as strategies against unemployment) also do not seem to be sustainable. Even though the majority of employers do not know or participate in the strategies mentioned above, there are a few questions that ensue regarding these particular strategies, as well as other strategies designed to mitigate unemployment. As alluded to in chapter eight, other scholars and commentators do not think these strategies are effective—in terms of guaranteeing permanent employment, and also of reaching the millions of unemployed youths. But even if these employment strategies manage to get some people employed, it further begs the question of whether the young people who are recruited through these strategies are able to secure permanent employment even after the programmes come to an end. After all, that is what employment strategies should achieve: full or permanent employment. It would be of little (or no) use for young people to be recruited through employment programmes if at the end of the day they only go back to being unemployed. This renders any strategy that does not achieve full-time/permanent employment unsustainable, in the same way as it is with non-standard employment. This probably also goes into explaining why the youth unemployment rate keeps increasing, even despite the many multi-pronged strategies that have been enacted to combat unemployment. Though there are, indeed, a number of factors that can be attributed to the ineffectiveness of unemployment interventions/strategies, one of the reasons is that they are unsustainable, in that—even though they grant entry and exposure to the labour market—they do not guarantee full-time employment. If unemployment is going to be curtailed, we need more sustainable strategies that will achieve a little more than just to expose young people to the labour market. A sustainable strategy is that which will ensure permanent employment, if not, unemployment will never be significantly abated—the results will only be short-term and will yeild nominal benefits without any lasting effects.

Moreover, the need for more strategies is further necessitated by the possibility that some strategies that are enacted to address youth unemployment may not be reaching the group of young people who need these interventions the most. Indeed, despite that global and local youth unemployment statistics reveal that different youth categories are affected; several strategies (including the ETI and the YES) have been administered as a one-size-fits-all, instead of addressing the different groups in a disaggregated manner. Therefore, it appears that even though these strategies are implemented to curtail youth unemployment, they may only be more accessible to young people who have matric or degree (who happen to be unemployed due to lack of experience). This is a possibility, firstly, because both matric certificate and degree holders are in a better position to get employment; therefore, employers would choose them first over young people with no skills or qualifications. However, the youth in the NEETs category may not be able to access these programmes because of their lack of skills, and for the same reasons that they may not be able to access the recruitment channels that employers use (i.e., due to lack of funds to access social platforms that advertise these programmes). It is against this background that it can be inferred that these programmes—though they are enacted to combat unemployment among young people—they seem more likely to accommodate unemployed graduates and young people with matric than they do young people without matric, let alone a tertiary qualification. Further research may be necessary to investigate this in more detail.

However, following the point made above an argument can be made that youth unemployment among young people should be treated separately—according to their distinct categories. In the same way that youth unemployment is being separated from overall unemployment, unemployment amongst the NEETs should be further treated as constituting its own crisis which cannot be tackled with the same strategies as with other youth categories (graduates, matrics, varsity students) who are already at a better place of acquiring unemployment than the NEETs category youths. Owing to the distinct positions of different youth groups, there should be different unemployment interventions that focus on different groups. In fact, since graduates and matriculants are in a better position than the NEETs category, there is a pressing need for strategies that should address unemployment among the NEETs category, respectively. This means more research is needed that will mainly focus on the NEETs category in order to unveil the ways in which NEETs category can be catered for in away that will be accessible to them. This is primarily necessary because some literature acknowledges the NEETs category as the most vulnerable group. Yet, much attention has

been given to graduate unemployment and other youth groups that are not in a worse position like the NEETs category.

Perhaps graduates (and matric certificate holders) are given more attention because it is easier to address unemployment among graduates and matriculants than people who have dropped out of school. The latter seems like a hopeless situation compared to the two former cohorts. However, the fact that the NEETs category are worse off than graduates is reason enough to focus on them as a special case, since they are at the back of the line. If unemployed graduates need interventions even though they are in a better position, how much more does the NEETs category need interventions, given that there is little to no hope for them to secure standard employment. It is against this backdrop that this thesis focused on the NEETs category and thus strongly recommends more studies that will shed more light on the circumstances of the youths who fall under the NEETs category—in order to come up with ways that unemployment, among these young people, can be addressed in a way that is desperately needee, and that they too deserve. Especially given that most of the factors that landed them in the unemployment situation are beyond their own control. If there is a group of people that needs much policy makers' attention, it is the NEETs category. Failure to address the unemployment situation that many of these young people find themselves in does not only subject them to the effects of unemployment, but it also invites social trouble that desperate people can eeengender After all, youth unemployment is described as a ticking bomb. Therefore, addressing unemployment among young people (who may not have any other ways, but the ones that the interventions can afford) will not only work towards de-escalating the global crisis, but it also avoids the social and economic effects that can mushroom into an even greater crisis due to severe and perpetual unemployment.

From the totality of the findings of this thesis, the overarching conclusion that this thesis makes is that even though young people are being considered for employment in some sectors, the employment they currently get (at least in the majority of the sampled firms) is unsustainable. This is unsatisfactory because it only leads back to unemployment. This kind of employment—as well as the employment afforded to young people through wage subsidies—deals with unemployment on a surface level. For this reason, there is still a need for strategies that will deal with umployment at the grassroots level, in order to produce the sustainable change that is needed. Although this cannot be achieved overnight—and it will probably take different approaches and strategies to address unemployment—there are still

actions that need to be taken to work towards curtailing unemployment. This thesis submits three recommendations of the actions that can be taken to help address unemployment among young people (especially the NEETs category). These recommendations have been inspired chiefly by the findings of the study, and are made through the prism of the LMS theories (as the framework of the study). The first recommendation is in alignment with the one also made by Comisetti et al. (2013). This recommendation points out that, among other things that policymakers have to do, they should also challenge some of the misperceptions (about young people) that some employers hold. Although employers are entitled to their dispositions, an argument can be made—especially in as far as the role of employers is integral in finding ways to integrate young people in the labour market—that employers (whose negative perceptions discourage them to look into employing young people) need to see young people (who fall under the NEETs) from a perspective that takes into account the unfortunate circumstances and hardships that these young people find themselves in. These circumstances, ultimately, force them to seek out ways to make a living in order to provide for themselves and their families.

Essentially, this means employers should either reconsider their perceptions about young people, or they need to be careful not paint all young people with the same brush. Because not all young people are the same—all young people cone from different backgrounds that motivate them in different ways. To see all young people through the same lens (lazy, unmotivated, irresponsible) is problematic because these negative perceptions are generalisations that do not take into account the different circumstances and backgrounds—or even the individual potential, determination that some young people have to do whatever it takes to enter the labour market. Exactly how employers' perceptions can be corrected, or whether that is even possible is another question that can perhaps be answered by a separate research study. But from the findings it appears that if employers could really know what some young people (referred to in this study) are going through—which means that if employers could have a different perspective about young people's situations that force them to enter into the labour market at an early age, then they might want, to at the atleast, consider opening their employment doors to young people. It would help for some employers to know that there are actually young people who are in desperate need (forced by their circumstances) of any job and would, upon being given a chance, do their best because they cannot afford to the let employers down. In fact, there are responses from two sampled employers who (when asked why they employ young people) they stated that it was because young people

desperately need employment. These are the employers that understand that for some young people it really is a desperate need, and in turn, that is what will motivate them to do the best they can to be employed and stay employed.

Furthermore—and also related to a conclusion made concerning the jobs that sampled employers offer to young jobseekers—Graham and De Lannoy (2016), also suggest that policymakers could begin by changing the way in which employers recruit their employees, particularly for entry-level jobs. If society, at large, recognised the youths' willingness to work—and particularly, if key role-players engaged with them in ways that made job searches easier and less expensive—this would foster opportunities that will better connect young people with the jobs they may be able to fill. These are the things that employers can do as way to try to integrate young people into the labour market. Of course, more strategies are needed, especially ones that should focus on making young people employable (skills development). However, challenging the negative perceptions that employers have about young people—inasfar as these perceptions keep employers from employing young people even for general or entry-level jobs—may go some way to encourage employers to accommodate young people. The government has created skills-development programmes (and recently the wage subsidies) that are aimed to boost demand. However, it will not do much good to give young people the skills, or offer wage subsidies to encourage employers to employ people that they already have preconceived negative dispositions (misconceptions) about.

This is why challenging employers' perceptions is also part of addressing unemployment among young people who are often perceived negatively by employers. This does not in any way suggest that employers' dispositions of young people will solve unemployment, especially given that there are many other factors at play in determining one's employment outcomes. But it does suggest that correcting employers perceptions about young people may serve as a strategy against unemployment to some degree—in as far as it can encourage employers (who have negative perceptions concerning young people) to think differently about young people. And perhaps it can also encourage them to consider giving young people a chance, whether it be through the wage subsidies that the government has created, or as a way to give back to society. The whole point is to extingush the doubts that some employers have about young people and to eliminate the negative perceptions or

generalisations, for as long as it is one of the factors that impede on the employment of young people.

Moreover, it can also be recommended that the development of strategies against unemployment—particular, demand-side strategies that are aimed at encouraging employers to employ young people—need to be inclusive or take into account the opinions and ideas of employers from all sectors. In other words, employers need to take part in the creation process of strategies that need their cooperation and involvement. Not only because they are the ones who create jobs, but because they are the ones who know what skills they demand, and thus are in better position to help young people acquire exactly what is needed by them. This is why employers from all sectors need to have an imput in the strategies that are created to encourage them to create jobs for young people. Furthermore, and in light of the fact that employers' number one goal is profit maximisation, it stands to reason that any strategy designed to boost demand must take cognisance of and address this voracious need of employers to make money. The employment of any job seeker is not done in a vacuum, but it is ultimately contingent on whether it further contributes to profit maximisation or not. No one employer will just employ jobseekers just because some people happen to need a job. Employers will only create jobs or opportunities for employment if they also stand to gain from the job creation. But if there is nothing in it for them, they simply will not do it. Therefore, if making more profit is one of the ways employers would create jobs, then it appears that there should be strategies that will first enable profit maximisation, which will in turn encourage employers to create jobs.

Although this sounds like a mission impossible or rather a mission far from being achieved, it really dies form part of the necessary steps that need to be taken if job creation is going to be achieved at all. These are the issues policymakers need to tackle first, before and during, the processes of creating these strategies. We can nolonger afford to have policies/strategies that look good on paper, but are almost impossible to implement, or ultimately yield nominal results. One of the conclusions this thesis makes is to echo what has been discovered by other studies that, although there has been strategies placed to address the issue of unemployment, these policies have not been vastly helpful in tackling the challenge of unemployment. Therefore, the ever-rising unemployment challenge necessitates the implementation of new, revised, and practical policies that will meet the wide-ranging problem of youth unemployment. The consensus is that youth employment is not only high priority of all

societal challenges, but it is also a cross-cutting issue that needs to be addressed within the framework of an interdisciplinary, multi-sectoral, and multi-stakeholder approach.

It remains, then, that an integrated, and coherent approach that combines macro and microeconomic interventions, that also addresses both labour demand and supply and the quantity and quality of employment, and which scales up innovative interventions, is critical to addressing the specific vulnerabilities and needs of young people where it concerns transition to the world of work (ILO 2015; Brics, 2018). Indeed, while the thesis focuses on the demand-side factors, it does not at all blame employers for unemployment. Neither does it assert that employers are, solely, responsible to curtail unemployment. A large body of literature, which continues to grow, shows unquestionably that unemployment is an outcome of a wide range of factors. Indeed, while there are many actions that employers could take that would improve the job market position for unemployed people; it should also be borne in mind that helping young people into employment is not the sole responsibility of employers. Rather, it should be a venture shared with the individual job seekers and the State, among other stakeholders. However, this thesis focuses on the most vulnerable group to unemployment whose circumstances are beyond their control. Unlike young people who are unemployed but still have degrees or skills that they need to enhance; the NEETs youths are unemployed for reasons that they often have little or no initiative to fix themselves. These are people who do not have the means to enhance their employability, and thus need the government to step in and help them to, at the very least, be on par with their graduate or matriculant counterparts. This is precisely why an argument is made that the NEETs situation is worse, and should be addressed differently.

Yes, fighting unemployment should be a shared responsibility, but on the supply side, as things stand now, the NEETs are unable to do anything that can help them enhance their opportunities, except to available themselves to any initiative that can be started by either one of the other stakeholders (government, business or NGOs). Indeed, how can an individual who dropped out of school (because they could not afford to go to school) then be able to enhance his/her employability? Unless the government creates strategies that can also be accessed by millions of young people—who genuinely have no other hope of entering the labour market except through strategies that take into account their unique constraints; and thus, afford them the opportunities to develop their skills and to be accommodated by employers. This recommendation does not excuse young people from their responsibility to

do what they can do, but it acknowledges that there is very little they can do. Fort his reason, the government has to come up with ways to integrate young people into the labour market in a sustainable way. That, in my opinion, will begin or concurrently occur by addressing some of the factors that first led to young people being classified under the NEETs category (not in employment, school or training), and then addressing the those issues accordingly. Doing this proves to be no small feat, but disaggregating the NEETs category from other youth groups will, at best, lead to creating the much-needed strategies that are suitable to address youth unemployment differently from other groups. This is what the results of the study boil down to: a call for special treatment of the NEETs category, seeing as their situation is not only unique, but it is also worse off than it is for other youth cohorts.

Notwithstanding these recommendations, the thesis cautions that even though there is a pressing need for tailor-made strategies, instead of overarching, one-size-fits-all approaches; it should be emphasised that these strategies should not only be about enhancing the employability of young people (even though that is also important). But policymakers should strike a good balance between strategies that enhance young people's employability, and those that boost demand and the creation of jobs. Otherwise, only focussing on lack of skills (as the major determinant of unemployment) will further contribute to the conundrum that already exists, whereby young people are unemployed because they lack skills. Whereas, on the other hand, even if they obtained skills, that would still not guarantee them employment. This is the dilemma millions of young people find themselves in. This further proves that supply-side strategies on their own can never be able to combat unemployment; neither will strategies that focus on the demand-side alone ever be sufficient. There is a need for multi-pronged strategies that will address all factors that contribute to unemployment, especially the factors that concern the key players (supply and demand side). There is even a greater need for multi-pronged strategies that will focus solely on eradicating youth unemployment, among the NEETs, since it has escalated to a crisis level that is worse than it is for other cohorts. Indeed, pointing fingers at young people will not do much to abate unemployment. We do not need any more studies proving that young people bear the brunt of unemployment because they lack skills, without also acknowledging that many factors constitute as barriers against young peoples' ability to enhance their employability. Among other barriers, it should be recognised that the system fails young people in many ways (i.e., poor education system). In some instances, young people are purported to have skills and qualifications that are not marketable in the labour market.

This begs the question: where do these people get these qualifications from? Tertiary institutions (at the government's watch) offer all kinds of skills and qualifications, some of which no employer would consider anyone for. What is worse, is that most young people enroll in these institutions with student loans, only to obtain skills and qualifications they cannot be employed for; meanwhile, the student debt keeps increasing with each year they spend unemployed. This is the reality for many young people in the country, who either do not have skills or education because they cannot afford it, or others who have put themselves in student loans only to acquire skills that employers do not necessarily require. Considering that this is the reality of many young people, makes it rather unfair (and almost futile) to ascribe unemployment to young people themselves. Instead, what is needed is a radical shift from the blame game towards reviving ways that can encouraging cooperative effort from all relevant stakeholders, in order to find ways to integrate young people into the labour market. That should be the main agendas. As far as the issue of skills is concerned, young people need to be educated about the skills and qualifications that are employable so that they can use the information to make informed decisions. The issue of young people acquiring skills that employers do not need can be curtailed by getting employers, tertiary institutions, and the government to constantly hold discussions wherein they provide regular updates—that can reach everyone—about what skills people need to be acquiring to make it in the labour market. This will definitely not solve unemployment overnight, because there are many other factors that contribute to unemployment; but it is, at least, one way that can adress skills mismatch as one major determinant of unemployment. Doing this is also better than just constantly attributing unemployment to lack of skills (as many studies and reports do), but not doing nothing about it. Instead, we need to focus energy on assisting young people to enhance their employability, while also encouraging employers to consider young people for employment.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A- DEPARTMENTAL RESEARCH SUPPORT LETTER

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RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

06 August 2019

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This letter serves to confirm that Ms Maoshadi Keletso Amanda Gabobegwe, student number: 613G5591 is a student in our Department. As part of her PhD degree, Ms Gabobegwe is required to conduct interviews for her research. The research process is a vital component of our teaching programme and we would appreciate any assistance that you could give to enable her to meet her commitments in this regard. Please note that the data collected will be used for research purposes only.

Many thanks.

Yours sincerely

Professor Gilton Klerck
Supervisor

g.klerck@ru.ac.za

Appendix B-ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

RHODES UNIVERSITY
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Human Ethics subcommittee
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NHREC Registration no. REC-241114-045

23 September 2019

Keletso GABOBEGWE

Review Reference: 2019-0682-920

Email: g13G5591@campus.ru.ac.za

Dear Keletso GABOBEGWE

Re: Youth un/employment in South Africa

Principal Investigator: Prof Gilton Klerck

Collaborators: Ms. Maoshadi Gabobegwe

This letter confirms that the above research proposal has been reviewed and **APPROVED** by the Rhodes University Ethical Standards Committee (RUESC) – Human Ethics (HE) sub-committee.

Approval has been granted for 1 year. An annual progress report will be required in order to renew approval for an additional period. You will receive an email notifying when the annual report is due.

Please ensure that the ethical standards committee is notified should any substantive change(s) be made, for whatever reason, during the research process. This includes changes in investigators. Please also ensure that a brief report is submitted to the ethics committee on completion of the research. The purpose of this report is to indicate whether the research was conducted successfully, if any aspects could not be completed, or if any problems arose that the ethical standards committee should be aware of. If a thesis or dissertation arising from this research is submitted to the library's electronic theses and dissertations (ETD) repository, please notify the committee of the date of submission and/or any reference or cataloging number allocated. Sincerely

Prof Joanna Dames

Chair: Human Ethics sub-committee, RUESC- HE

Appendix C-PERMISSION LETTER

RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

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RE: Request for permission to conduct research

I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study at your firm. I am currently enrolled as an Industrial and Economic Sociology PhD student at Rhodes University. I am in the process of writing my Phd Thesis which is entitled: Demand-side Factors and the Employment of Young People: A case study of the attitudes and experiences of employers in selected private-sector firms in Johannesburg

The purpose of the study is to weigh in on the issue of youth un/employment and the process of Job creation as one of the ways to curtail it. The proposed research aims to investigate the issue of youth un/employment in SA by exploring the attitudes and experiences of employers where it concerns the employment of young people. It does this by focusing on whether and how employers design their recruitment and selection practices to prioritise the youth. This focus on recruitment and selection is informed by the integral role these processes play in determining which people are considered for employment and are eventually employed. These processes also serve as a tool that situates employees to specific jobs in the organisation. Recruitment and selection practices are the fulcrum of the functioning of any firm, as they set out, using the specific methods, which jobs need to be occupied and by whom. Thus, exploring recruitment and selection will help understand whether or not employers prioritize the youth while also revealing the types of jobs the youth tend to occupy when employed.

To fulfil this investigation, the study needs employers from private sector firms who can voluntarily share their experiences of their recruitment strategies and practices and how they are designed to accommodate the youth. As well as the factors that may inform the decision to employ the youth and the challenges that employers face when they do employ the youth. If approval is granted, questions will only be limited to these subject matters, and the interviews themselves will not be any longer than 30minutes. The results will be pooled solely for the thesis project and individual contributions to the study will remain absolutely confidential and anonymous. No costs will be incurred by either your organisations or the individual participants

While the thesis is essentially for the fulfilment of the requirements of a PhD degree. I do aim and hope that the final thesis will contribute towards the body of literature concerning youth un/employment especially. As well as understanding the employers' actual experiences in daily practice as well as the perspective that employers have about job creation for the youth. Furthermore, numerous studies on the subject of 'job creation' agree that as important as the role of employers is, it is under-researched and under-theorised. This study seeks to contribute towards filling this purported gap.

Your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated. There is an attached consent form that you can sign upon approval of access. You may contact me at my email address: g13g5591@campus.ru.ac.za. For any concerns that you may have about the study.

Sincerely

Keletso Gabobegwe (Researcher)
PhD candidate
Department of Sociology
Rhodes University
g13g5591@campus.ru.ac.za

Ethics coordinator: Siyanda Manqele
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Appendix D-CONSENT FORM

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Participant Consent form (Interviews)

Name of researcher:

Brief description of the research topic:

Declaration

1. I confirm that the purpose of the research and the nature of my participation have been explained to me verbally and writing;
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. However, I commit myself to full participation unless some unusual circumstances occur, or I have concerns about my participation which I did not originally anticipate;
3. I understand that data collected during the study, will be used by the researcher and that my personal details gathered during this research, especially my name or identity, will be kept private;
4. I agree to be interviewed and to allow audio recording and transcription to be made of the interview;
5. The researcher has informed me that the recording and interview transcript will be erased once the report is written.

Signature of participant:

Signature of the researcher:

Date:

Appendix E- EMPLOYERS INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Interview Script

Below is a list of semi-structured questions which are categorized in segments. These segments are purposed to elicit diverse information about employers' recruitment strategies concerning the recruitment of jobseekers in general and specific to the youth. Therefore, the first segment is about the respondents themselves, the second segment seeks background information about the respective (participating) organisations. The third and fourth segments are concerned with information about the recruitment strategies adopted by the respective organisations pertaining to jobseekers in general and particularly for the youth. The final segment seeks information about the employer's recommendations/views on how youth unemployment can be curbed or how youth employment can be promoted.

ABOUT THE RESPONDENT/EMPLOYER/REPRESENTATIVE

1. Do you want your name to be known? If yes answer 2 if NO skip 2
2. Name.....
3. Title.....
4. Home Language.....
5. Sex.....
6. What is your position in your organization? (HR manager/HR director/Head of HR department, General manager/Director/Managing director, other).
7. How would you describe your position and role in the firm? What do you do?
8. How long have you worked for this organisation?
9. How long have you been working in the job title mentioned above? / How long have you been in this role?

ABOUT THE ORGANISATIONS

1. What is the mission and aim of the company/organization?
2. What types of services are rendered and to whom are these directed?/ What is the main activity of your company?
3. How long have you been rendering these services? How long has the company existed?
4. What are the company's values?
5. What characteristics do you look for in employees in order to represent those values?
6. Who do you consider your top competitor, and why?
7. What are the biggest opportunities facing the company right now?

8. What are the biggest challenges facing the company right now?

COMPOSITION OF THE ORGANISATION

9. Would you classify your company as a big/small organisation?
10. Roughly, how many people work in this organisations?
11. Can you give me a breakdown of the workers, i.e. Demographics (male/female; white/black; youth/adults; disabled). Can you give the estimation (percentage) of the representivity of these cohorts?
12. What is the percentage of both part-time and full-time workers?
13. In your estimation, what is the overall percentage of the youth currently employed in your organisation? Part time and permanent?
14. Of the people working in the organisation, what is the approximate percentage of employees (both full-time and part-time) who have a university degree?
15. What is the lowest and highest qualification possessed in the organisation?

NEEDS OF THE ORGANISATION

1. What are the occupations that you recruit for, recently?
2. What are the skills and experience the company values the most. What are the most sought after qualifications?
3. What are the minimum requirements for the most recently filled or vacant occupations?
4. In what areas do you perceive there to be a gap in personnel in this company? If the company had unlimited resources for creating new positions, in exactly what areas would those positions be created?
5. What are the current priorities/issues/concerns facing the firm? Do these affect the filling of vacant positions?

GENERAL RECRUITMENT & SELECTION CHANNELS

1. Can you describe the recruitment strategies that the organization uses? How are vacancies usually filled? What methods do you use? What are your typical recruitment channels?
2. Which channels would you say are the most effective or used?
3. How does the labour market influence the way you go about employing people and advertising for staff?
4. How often do you recruit? i.e Annually?
5. Have you had work placements in the last 10 years?

6. Have any employers been made permanent in the last 10 years?
7. Does the company usually recruit and/or promote internally/externally/both. Which one has been mostly successful?
8. Have you experienced difficulties filling posts?
9. What are the greatest challenges you face in filling your vacancies? What are the usual/recurring challenges?
10. Do you have training programmes for recruited employees? Please describe them.
11. What necessitates recruitment, when is it usually the favourable time to employ?
12. Do you offer volunteering programmes?
13. Are they usually filled? Who fills them (adults/ youth)?
14. Have you had any difficulties to recruit the right people for any given job?
15. Have you had to modify or alter your recruitment methods to accommodate certain candidates? Provide a scenario.
16. What would you say are the factors (internally or externally) influencing recruitment?

RECRUTMENT AND SELECTION STRATEGIES CONCERNING THE YOUTH

1. Do you have youthful employees?
2. Are there any recruitment instruments/programmes specifically targeting the youth?
3. Can you describe it/them?
4. For how long have they been ongoing in your organization?
5. How do you ensure the youth are targeted/ how are these facilitated and managed?
6. Please describe any types of jobs that are provided to the youth?
7. How are these jobs advertised to potential candidates?
8. What are the skills that you specifically target from the youth?
9. How has it benefitted the company to recruit the youth?
10. Would you say there are negative outcomes these strategies have produced?

Awareness of government subsidies and financial incentives (if not mentioned from the above questions)

11. Has the government policies influenced the recruitment of the youth?
12. Do you know about the Employment Tax Incentive (ETI) also known as the Wage subsidy and the Youth Employment Services (YES) programmes?
13. Have you subscribed to either one of the abovementioned programmes?
14. If not, is there any reason why you do not subscribe to it/them?

15. Have you recruited the youth (15-25) specifically in the past 10 years to date?
16. Do you have walk-ins of youth seeking employment?
17. Do you ever get youth applying for any vacant jobs, are there any specific reasons why they were considered or not considered?
18. Do you get financial incentives for recruiting the youth specifically?
19. Are there any employees that have been recruited through any financial incentives?
20. What would you say are the disadvantages with financial incentives?
21. What would you say are the advantages with financial incentives?
22. What (skills, qualifications, qualities, attributes, and characteristics) are being most recruited pertaining to the youth?
23. What are your views about the employment of the youth?
24. What are your thoughts about employing young people who are disabled or who have health conditions? (Mental health condition – Physical health condition or disability)?
25. What would you say the biggest challenges when employing disabled people?

DEVELOPING AND PLANNING

1. Do you have standard procedures for recruiting and selecting candidates for any job?
2. What do/does it compromise of?
3. Do they help to better match jobs and suitable candidates?
4. How were the recruitment strategies/programmes mentioned developed?
5. Have any specific policies influenced or guided the development of any specific recruitment strategies?
6. What challenges have you encountered in developing recruitment strategies that target the youth or adults?
7. Can you discuss specific ‘success stories” that have led to long-term job creation for youth that have come about from any of the programmes/ recruitment strategies in the last 10 years?
8. What do you consider as having been challenges or difficulties in any programmes focused on youth over the past 5 years?
9. Are there any incentives that you receive that encourage you to recruit the youth?
10. From experience or perception what would you say are the main reasons you would recruit the youth?

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

1. What do you think are the ways job creation can improve?
2. What is your advice to the youth who are looking to enter the labour market or? looking to start their own businesses? Do you feel it is the role of Government to help organisations employ the youth?
3. What do you think is the most effective way for Government to help your firm to employ disabled people?
4. What do you think are the skills the youth has to have in order to be marketable in the labour market.
5. What do you think are other ways youth unemployment can be curbed?

Appendix F- CONTACT INFORMATION SHEET

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