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Perceptions of learnerships and internships as tools for skills development of youths in the Sedibeng District Municipality, Gauteng

by

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DECLARATION

I certify that the mini-dissertation hereby submitted by me for the degree Master of Arts in Public Management and Governance at the University of Johannesburg is my own, independent work, and that it has not been submitted by me for a degree at another university.

Lebogang Johanna Mohlamme

ABSTRACT

This study focused on the perceptions of learnerships and internships as tools for skills development of youths in the Sedibeng District Municipality (SDM) in the Gauteng province. The main aim of this study was to analyse the role of internships and learnerships in the SDM as tools for skills development of youths and to assess whether the goals of these intended programmes are perceived to be met by the direct stakeholders involved. To make this determination, this study focused on how internship and learnership programmes were perceived by stakeholders, including participants in the programmes and municipal officials who acted as supervisors in these programmes. This study utilised a qualitative research design in order to analyse data gathered from existing knowledge on the subject, while qualitative interviews were conducted with respondents to establish the utility of internships and learnerships in promoting skills development in the SDM.

The study found that internships and learnerships could be used as tools to promote skills among unemployed youths. However, the study also found that internship and learnership programmes could be used more effectively by widening the length, breadth, and scope of the programmes by introducing focused workshops and detailed mentoring, and extending the programmes to deserving youths. Moreover, the private sector could also increase the utility of internship and learnership programmes by investing financial and human capital resources in them.

Key words: Learnerships; internships; skills development; youths; Sedibeng District Municipality.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
AFET	Adult Further Education and Training
ANC	African National Congress
AsgiSA	Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa
CV	Curriculum vitae
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme
ETDP	Education, Training, and Development Practitioners [SETA]
Fasset	Finance and Accounting Services Sector Education and Training Authority
FET	Further Education and Training
GCIS	Government Communication and Information Services
GDS	Growth and Development Summit
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
GET	General Education and Training
GIYDS	Gauteng Integrated Youth Development Strategy
ICT	Information and communications technology
IDP	Integrated Development Programme
IIP	International Internship Program
NARYSEC	National Rural Youth Service Corps
NDP	National Development Plan
Nedlac	National Economic Development and Labour Council
NPC	National Planning Commission
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSA	National Skills Authority
NSDS	National Skills Development Strategy
NYDA	National Youth Development Agency
NYS	National Youth Service

OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
QLFS	Quarterly Labour Force Survey
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SARPN	Southern African Regional Poverty Network
SARS	South African Revenue Service
SASSETA	Safety and Security Sector Education and Training Authority
SBU	Shanduka Black Umbrellas
SDA	Skills Development Act
SDM	Sedibeng District Municipality
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SMME	Small, medium, and micro enterprise
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
TDA	Tshepiso Development Association
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WACE	World Association of Cooperative Education
WIL	Work Integrated Learning
YAC	Youth Advisory Centre

CHAPTER ONE
GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND SCIENTIFIC AND
METHODOLOGICAL ORIENTATION

1.1   Introduction

The post-apartheid South African government of 1994 has achieved significant progress in overcoming the skills development challenges inherited from its predecessor. To address the lack of skills and the burgeoning level of unemployment in the country, the post-apartheid government introduced internship and learnership programmes to capacitate the youth with the skills required to be meaningfully employed.

The internship and learnership programmes were designed to provide students of Further Education and Training (FET) colleges, as well as universities and universities of technology, the opportunity to supplement their academic qualifications through structured workplace exposure and specified training in various occupations such as those in the fields of hospitality and engineering, as well as certain medical professions. Internships and learnerships have become recognised programmes that form part of skills development initiatives in South Africa. The primary purpose of internships and learnerships is to offer practical work experience in a particular occupation to individuals who lack practical experience. Youth unemployment, if left unattended, could prove to be a major stumbling block to South Africa's democracy. Recent statistics on youth unemployment, as published by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) in its Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) for 2019, paint a worrying picture of youth (15-34 years old) unemployment. The statistics indicate that youth unemployment currently stands at 63.4%, with the majority of the unemployed being from the black population group. Moreover, the country recently completed its sixth democratic national and provincial elections, with political parties seeking seats in national and provincial legislatures on the campaigning ticket of creating jobs, among other promises. Popular political commentary points to the common theme that if youth unemployment is left unabated, it could prove to be a threat to the country's stability and future growth prospects.

Internships and learnerships were therefore introduced to provide participants with skills that would enhance their capacity to be employed. They provide participants an opportunity to gain industry knowledge that they would not necessarily be able to obtain elsewhere. The institutions that offer internships and learnerships ought to provide participants with experience and knowledge of the working field, but most importantly they should provide participants with skills in the areas that they studied during their tertiary years (Magongo and Motimele 2011:65-70).

According to Magongo and Motimele (2011:70-72), internships and learnerships also assist in the following ways:

- Giving back to the community, which entails helping students to familiarise themselves with the workforce, thereby increasing the chances of more students being employed.
- Supporting students, whereby internships and learnerships allow students to gain experience and learn about their field of study, to enhance their skills and chances of employability.
- Providing professional skill development, where interns and those participating in learnerships are focused on tasks that improve their problem-solving skills to enable them to better communicate with clients, and with project management.

This mini-dissertation focused on internships and learnerships as established government programmes that are used as tools aimed at enhancing the skills development of the youth in the Sedibeng District Municipality (SDM) in the Gauteng province. Consequently, this mini-dissertation investigated the role that internships and learnerships play in promoting skills development in the SDM. Furthermore, it analysed the implementation of these programmes through mentoring and incubation in skills development programmes developed in the SDM.

1.2 Background, rationale and problem statement

The SDM constitutes the second largest municipality in terms of land mass (4 173 km^2) in the Gauteng province. Sedibeng has a population of 957 528 people – the fourth largest in the province – and comprises the Emfuleni, Lesedi, and Midvaal local municipalities. It includes the historic townships of Evaton, Sebokeng, Boipatong, Bophelong, Sharpeville, and Ratanda, which have a rich political history and heritage (SDM 2018). The predominant sectors in Sedibeng are manufacturing and fabricating metals and chemicals. The youth of the district constitutes 47% of the municipality, with over 32% of the youth being unemployed (SDM 2018). Given the large percentage of youth unemployment, this mini-dissertation has undertaken to identify the role of internships and learnerships in promoting skills development among the youth in the SDM. The map in Figure 1.1 indicates the geographical layout of the SDM.

Figure 1.1: Geographical location of the SDM

Source: (SDM 2011)

The South African Skills Development Act (SDA) (No. 97 of 1998) was promulgated by the South African government to address the skills development challenge across the nation. Most institutions use the SDA as a framework that enables them to devise and implement national, sector, and workplace strategies in order to improve the skills of the South African workforce. The objectives of the SDA are aimed at integrating those strategies encompassed in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act (No. 67 of 2008) to ensure that there is a concrete plan of action that ensures the effectiveness of these skills development programmes.

Important programmes enshrined in the SDA are the learnership and internship programmes. It is important to distinguish between learnerships and internships. Learnerships are supervised and structured learning programmes that combine theoretical learning and practical, workplace learning of a specified nature and duration. It leads to a formal qualification, while internships on the other hand provide for a supervised and structured workplace experience programme that provides practical, on-the-job training and learning of a specified nature and duration, and does not lead to a formal qualification. These programmes focus on a process whereby tertiary students are provided with opportunities to work in the vocational fields they have studied. It is a work-based route to a qualification, workplace education, and training programme comprising both structured practical workplace (on-the-job) experience and structured theoretical training (Mummenthey and Du Preez 2010:3).

The goals of internships and learnerships are to allow the participant to acquire the experience to work in a specific field, to make contacts with professionals in the field, to strengthen their curricula vitae (CVs), and to "jump-start" the participants' full-time job search as employers often hire their interns for full-time employment after graduation. Moreover, internships aim to fast-track high-level skills, provide unemployed graduates with needed work experience, and empower graduates with practical knowledge levelling with qualifications (John Hopkins University 2009:3).

Furthermore, the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) was formed in 2009 with the main aim of closing the gaps in the implementation of youth development programmes, and thereby assisting the government's efforts to reduce youth

unemployment. The initiatives of the SDA have been used by a number of youth development institutions to provide and improve the skills required by the youth. Consequently, the following problem statement was developed:

1.2.1 Problem statement

The problem that was investigated is that it is unclear whether internships and learnerships are perceived by municipal employers and the learners themselves to be effective in achieving the goals that they are supposed to achieve in the SDM.

1.2.2   Research problem and research questions

The following guiding primary research question forms the core of this mini-dissertation:

How effective are learnership and internship programmes for skills development in the SDM?

1.2.2.1 Secondary research questions

According to Creswell (2009:176), in a qualitative study, inquirers state research questions that assume two forms, namely a central question (as stated above) and associated sub-questions, as stated below:

- What are the theoretical and conceptual factors that underpin learnerships and internships in South Africa?
- What legislative frameworks support skills development in South Africa?
- Do internships and learnerships provide adequate workplace skills for the parties involved?
- What are the nature and practical application of skills development in order to promote learnerships and internships among learners in the SDM?
- Do mentoring and incubation play a critical role in the effectiveness of internships and learnerships in the SDM?

1.2.2.2 *Research objectives*

In order to provide a conceptual and contextual clarification of the above primary and secondary research questions, the following research objectives were formulated for the purposes of this study:

- To explore the theoretical and conceptual factors that underpin learnerships and internships in South Africa.
- To identify the legislative frameworks that impact on learnerships and internships in South Africa.
- To identify whether learnerships and internships provide adequate workplace skills for the parties involved.
- To explore the nature and practical application of skills development in order to promote learnerships and internships among learners in the SDM.
- To assess the nature of the practical application of the workplace skills acquired through internships and learnerships in relation to the management of the skills development institutions and learners.
- To analyse the role and effectiveness of mentoring and incubation in the implementation of internships and learnerships.

1.3   Scientific and methodological approaches to the study

This section presents the rationale behind the selection of the research methodology and design of this study. The main objective of an academic activity is to engage in constructing knowledge (Auriacombe and Holtzhausen 2014:1). Research is based on rigorous methodological inquiry, scientific knowledge treats knowledge claims as provisional, and it is inherently evidence based in nature (Auriacombe and Holtzhausen 2014:11). Replication and reproducibility of research findings are central to the creation and testing of theories and their acceptance by scientific communities (Berg 2001:7).

1.3.1 Qualitative versus quantitative approaches

The distinction between quantitative and qualitative data in social research is essentially the distinction between numerical and non-numerical data (Babbie 2010:23). This study is interpretive and thus qualitative in nature. Qualitative researchers seek to understand the context of the research participants (Creswell 2009:4). This is done through visiting the context and gathering information personally to understand the meaning that individuals or groups ascribe to social and human problems (Creswell 2009:15). According to Flick (2014:11), qualitative research is of specific relevance to the study of societal relations and when little is known about the phenomena under study. Furthermore, qualitative research is useful when there is a need to sensitise concepts for exploring and understanding the phenomena under study (Flick 2014:11). According to Creswell (2009:15), qualitative research is largely inductive. The inquirer generates meaning from the data collected in the field (Creswell 2009:15).

1.3.2 Data-collection methods

Data can be collected through qualitative data-gathering techniques (fieldwork, documentary analysis, interviews, and historical comparative analysis) and quantitative data-gathering techniques (experiments and surveys) (Neuman 2014:46). This study is qualitative in nature and adopted interviews and documentary analysis to gather data.

Qualitative research allows a researcher to know individuals personally and to understand their point of view, while quantitative research allows a researcher to gain an overall perspective of how issues really are. Qualitative research methods also describe and outline the path that a researcher should take, which questions the researcher should ask, and which factors play a role in the outcome of the level of skills development (Brynard and Hanekom 2006:36).

1.3.2.1 Interviews

Interviews were conducted with selected youths who were participants of internships and learnerships in skills development institutions in the SDM.

1.3.2.2 *Sampling*

This study adopted a purposive (judgmental) sampling technique. It is a type of non-probability sampling in which the units to be observed are selected on the basis of the researcher's judgment about which ones will be the most useful or representative (Babbie 2010:193). According to Neuman (2014:273), this technique is used in exploratory research or in field research. Purposive sampling uses the judgment of an expert in selecting cases, or it selects cases with a specific purpose in mind. It is inappropriate if the goal is to have a representative sample or to pick the "average" or the "typical" case (Neuman 2014:273-274).

The sample interviewed for this study consisted of 15 youths, who were selected randomly, and three officials. Since this study is located within the qualitative research paradigm, qualitative sampling in the form of the non-probability purposive sampling technique was applied. The individuals chosen to be interviewed were those who had graduated from internship and learnership programmes, those entering internship and learnership programmes, a disabled youth, those in the late stages of being identified as youths in the programmes, and three officials (see Table 1.1). A total of 18 respondents residing in the SDM were therefore interviewed.

Table 1.1: Sampling summary

Interview category	Number interviewed
Youths who completed internship and learnership programmes	6
Youths entering internship and learnership programmes	2
Disabled youths in internship and learnership programmes	1
"Senior" youths in learnership and internship programmes	6
Officials involved in learnership and internship programmes	3
Total	**18**

1.4   Literature overview

Skills development is considered a significant instrument for socio-economic transformation and development in South Africa. Following the first democratic elections of 1994, the national government invested heavily in initiatives aimed at transforming the training and education system. Mummenthey (2010:4-5) maintains, however, that low

skills levels among the previously disadvantaged youths (aged 15-34) persist, which threatens the government's vision of creating "a better life for all."

Throughout the apartheid era, workplace industry training was held in reserve for the favoured white population, predominately the youth. Employee training only benefited 20% to 30% of the formal workforce, with the quality thereof being questionable, as it was predominantly informal, short, part time, in-house, and with a narrow skills focus. Furthermore, limited incentives were provided to firms to encourage them to train workers, therefore organisations did not feel compelled to initiate and implement training programmes (Mummenthey 2010:5).

The consequences of the apartheid education and training system were summarised by the African National Congress (ANC) in its *Policy Framework for Education and Training*, which laid the foundation for the development of the subsequent post-1994 education and training policies. The framework categorised the 1994 education and training system as encompassing the following characteristics:

- It was disaggregated along ethnic and racial lines.
- Vast disparities and inequities existed between the availability of education and training to white citizens as compared to the black population, who had limited or no access to opportunities for furthering their capabilities.
- There was a lack of control within the system (ANC 1994:1).

This resulted in the restriction and limitation of human potential in South Africa, with devastating impacts on and repercussions for social and economic development.

In 1998, the government realised that South Africans were not equipped with the necessary skills for achieving economic growth and sustainable advancement, as well as social development. It is in this context that the SDA and the Skills Development Levies Act (SDLA) (No. 9 of 1999) were promulgated in 1998 and 1999 respectively. These acts authorised the Minister of Labour to develop a National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS), on the advice of the National Skills Authority (NSA).

In 2009, the South African government committed to a "joined-up", outcomes-based philosophy to streamline service delivery. Twelve outcomes were identified, of which Outcome 5 focused heavily on "a skilled and capable workforce to support an inclusive growth path" (Powell and Reddy 2015:vi), with this outcome being committed to by the Minister of Higher Education and Training. Furthermore, this outcome had a strong commitment to skills planning (Powell and Reddy 2015: vii). Consequently, a Skills Planning Unit, located within the Department of Labour, was introduced in terms of the SDA, with the purpose to research and analyse the labour market to determine the skills development needs of South Africa as a whole, including each sector of the economy and the organs of state. The Skills Planning Unit aims to inform the NSDS and sector skills development plans, and to provide information on skills needed to the Minister of Labour, the NSA, the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), education and training providers, and the organs of state (Grobler et al. 2006:387-388). Such functions have been crucial to determining the level of skills in the country, as well as to determining the shortage of skills that exists and what more is needed (Learning Cape 2011).

The NSDS was launched by the Minister of Labour on the advice of the NSA in February 2001, with the intent to fundamentally transform education and training in South Africa by improving both the quality of training to support increased competitiveness of the industry and the quality of life of South African citizens (Department of Higher Education and Training [DHET] 2010a:22).

The objectives of the NSDS were recorded by the Department of Labour as the following:

- Developing a culture that promotes quality lifelong learning;
- Promoting skills development in the formal economy to improve productivity and development;
- Inspiring and supporting initiatives for skills development in small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs);
- Improving skills development for more productive employment and social development; and
- Facilitating new entrants into the job market (DHET 2010b:22).

These objectives are very important in providing graduates with the necessary skills to make them employable.

Given this brief overview, the skills challenge in South Africa, if left unaddressed, poses a risk to the country's future stability and wellbeing. Internships and learnerships play a pivotal role in capacitating the youth through on-the-job training, experiential learning, and vocational training so that they can become meaningfully employed.

1.5   Definition of terms

The following terms are used throughout this mini-dissertation:

1.5.1   Learnerships

A learnership is defined by John Hopkins University (2009:22) as a work-based learning programme that eventually leads to a nationally recognised qualification that is directly linked to specific occupations such as accountants, motor mechanics, and healthcare workers. Learnerships are therefore a combination of structured learning components that include practical work experience acquired while being employed in a company, government department, or small business. Furthermore, learnerships are defined as "period of workplace based learning culminating in an occupational qualification or part qualification" (DHET 2018:16).

Participants in learnerships must attend classes at a college or training centre to complete their classroom-based learning and they must also complete on-the-job training in the workplace.

1.5.2   Internships

Internships are structured differently than learnerships in the sense that the goal of an internship is to allow the participant to find out what it is like to work in a specific field, to make contact with professionals in that field, to strengthen their CVs, and to jump-start the participants' full-time job search. Internships also aim to fast-track high-level skills and empower the graduate with practical knowledge levelling with qualifications (John

Hopkins University 2009:3). In South Africa however, the Skills Development Act (1998) points out that internships do not necessarily require a legal requirement that leads to a formal qualification.

SETAs utilise the concept of internships to offer needed work experience to unemployed graduates with practical knowledge commensurate with their qualifications.

1.5.3   An intern

An intern is a student or trainee who works, sometimes without pay, in order to gain work experience or to satisfy the requirements of a qualification (*Oxford Dictionary* 2019).

Interns are individuals who qualify to enter training after screening and intense interviewing. Internships assist in assessing the readiness and willingness of an intern to work hard in order to achieve the intended goal of skills development. The screening process allows the stakeholders, as well as the participants, to analyse the participants' readiness to enter the workforce and ensures that the participant understands what is expected of him/her throughout the duration of the internship.

1.5.4   Incubation

Incubation is a process where candidates are developed and supported until they are economically sustainable – a period expected to take no more than three years. Incubation plays a vital role in ensuring that the candidate has sufficient stability to handle work-related pressures on his/her own and allows the candidate to think critically about any decision he/she might have to face once he/she is stable.

It is of vital importance that a candidate finishes his/her incubation period as it is initiated in steps that are critical in learning.

1.5.5   Mentoring

A mentor is someone who teaches or gives help and advice to a less-experienced and often younger person. Mentoring is a process where an individual obliges him-/herself to provide hands-on training to an individual who has limited skills in a certain career.

Mentoring can be complex should the individual choose not be fully committed, or if the participant chooses not to trust his/her mentor (Zimmerman et al. 2013).

1.6 Significance of the study

This particular study has contributed to an improved understanding of the role of internships and learnerships in promoting youth employment in the Sedibeng District Municipality. Given the extraordinarily high levels of unemployment, especially that of the youth in South Africa, internships and learnerships could afford unemployed youth the opportunity to increase their chances of building skills and increasing their chances of employability. The study has pointed out that although internships and learnerships exists, youth access to them may has proven to be problematic, with the duration of these initiatives being questionable.

1.7 Proposed structure of the mini-dissertation

This mini-dissertation is structured as follows:

Chapter One of this mini-dissertation provided an introduction of the topic, the rationale for the study, the research method, the sampling technique, a brief overview of the literature, as well as definitions used frequently throughout the thesis.

Chapter Two provides an overview of the literature consulted to support this study. Furthermore, a conceptual clarification to supplement the discussion is undertaken. This chapter also includes a theoretical framework to underpin the study.

Chapter Three highlights the policies that affect the governance of learnership and internship programmes. The chapter also highlights how these policies affect individuals in the workplace.

Chapter Four concentrates on the nature of learnership and internship programmes to develop graduate skills. It also concentrates on how these programmes use training as a tool for youth development and job creation.

Chapter Five presents and analyses the research findings, which lay the foundation for the recommendations and conclusions in Chapter Six.

Chapter Six provides the conclusion, synthesis, and recommendations of the study.

1.8   Ethical considerations

According to Neuman (2014:151), researchers must never coerce respondents to participate in their research. Researchers should therefore take ethics into consideration by enlightening the key informants about the research objectives. The consent of the key informants to participate voluntarily in this research was sought (Neuman 2014:151). The study seeks to report the findings accurately and honestly, to be transparent, and not deceive the respondents in any way. The results of this research will be used for academic purposes only.

The researcher does not work for the SDM, nor is the researcher involved in any of the institutions that formed part of this study. This study complied with the Ethical and Research Code of the University of Johannesburg. Participants were asked for their written consent to participate in the research and were assured that their personal information and responses would be kept confidential.
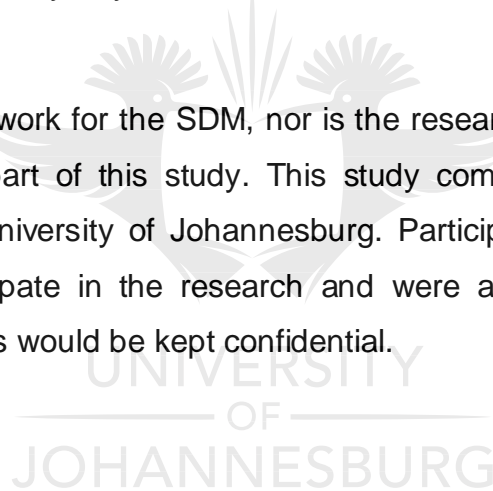
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the literature on youth unemployment, as well as an overview of the salient theories as the philosophical underpinning of this study. In addition, the chapter outlines the role of internships and learnerships in curbing youth unemployment in the SDM. The main research question posed in Chapter One will be supported by the literature and the theoretical foundation to find solutions to the pressing issue of youth unemployment and the role of internships and learnerships in addressing youth unemployment in the SDM. In order to further understand the phenomenon of youth unemployment and skills development, the social exclusion theory and the general theory of unemployment will be discussed. An understanding of these theories will assist in better comprehending the variables that have an impact on youth unemployment, internships, and learnerships in the SDM.

2.2 Theoretical foundations that underpin skills development

Youth unemployment, as mentioned before, is not endemic to South Africa. The figures of youth unemployment over the last five years in South Africa, however, indicate very concerning trends, where unemployment rates are double that of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. The social exclusion theory and the general theory of unemployment are used to support this research.

2.2.1 The social exclusion theory

Social exclusion describes the process of inequality among groups in society, and it is linked to poverty at various levels. Social exclusion has a negative impact on the individuals experiencing it, and on society (Toye and Infanti 2004 in Mungule 2016:9). Social exclusion involves "being shut out from any of the social, economic, political and cultural systems which determine the social integration of a person in society" (Walker and Walker 1997:8 in Mungule 2016:9). According to Ward (2009 in Mungule 2016:9),

social exclusion manifests itself in different forms of poverty, which may include lack of information, unemployment, poor housing, lack of freedom and power, lack of peace and safety, family breakdown, and lack of education. Social exclusion is clearly a multidimensional process that combines various forms of exclusion, and is a form of inequality in both material and power relations in society. According to Guildford (2000 in Mungule 2016:9), social exclusion can be caused by social issues in society, such as poor education opportunities or unemployment, and it can manifest as either active or passive exclusion. Sen (2000 in Mangule 2016:9) argues that both passive and active exclusion in society are routes to "capability failure and poverty that certain people experience." Furthermore, Sen (2000 in Mungule 2016:9) states that the social exclusion theory is helpful in building an inclusive society because it provides a better understanding of the diverse phenomena of deprivation and poverty, with a particular focus on relational obstacles to social inclusion, and offers policy implications of that understanding.

In this study, the social exclusion theory helps to understand the nature of youth unemployment and the role that internships and learnerships can play in promoting cohesive social order.

2.2.2 Theories of unemployment

Peroz and Rosca (2007) discuss youth unemployment based on exploring three forms of unemployment, namely frictional, cyclical, and structural unemployment. According to Peroz and Rosca (2007:14), frictional unemployment "arises from the normal turnover of people in the labour market." One of the sources of this turnover is the constant changing of people's economic activities; for example, "young people leave the school and join the labour force, old people retire and leave it, and some people leave it temporarily, often to raise children, and then rejoin it" (Parkin and King 1995 in Peroz and Rosca 2007:15). The generous social benefits provided by the state influence the period of time that people take to find a job. Respectively, the rate of frictional unemployment increases and the average job search time is longer.

Cyclical unemployment occurs due to an economic decline that affects the majority of the labour force irrespective of their qualifications, skills, and personal preferences (Parkin

and King 1995 in Peroz and Rosca 2007:15). Cyclical unemployment is premised on the economic conditions that prevail within a country; for example, an economic upturn results in more jobs created and an economic downturn results in jobs being shed. The cyclically unemployed are those whose job opportunities rise and fall with the general situation in the economy, with them alternating between employment and unemployment (Mendes 1990 in Peroz and Rosca 2007:15).

Structural unemployment, on the other hand, is where many jobs are available in the labour market in a particular region, but the labour force is not competitive enough to get those jobs; for example, when the labour market does not have the requisite skills. The labour market demands might require more specific and qualified knowledge and skills that do not characterise all job seekers. According to Parkin and King (1995 in Peroz and Rosca 2007:15), structural unemployment "arises when the number of jobs available in a particular region or industry falls." It can occur because of constant technological change, such as automation or the Fourth Industrial Revolution, artificial intelligence, etc. Mendes (1990 in Peroz and Rosca 2007:15) mentions that the structurally unemployed often lack skills and education, and have little or no work experience to attain and maintain a stable position in the job market, even during economic growth.

The exposition of unemployment theories helps to understand the structural nature of unemployment in South Africa, especially among the youth. The global economic downturn and the poor education system in South Africa, which result in a lack of skills among the youth, are contributing factors to high levels of employability among the youth – the data of which are provided in Chapters One and Two of this mini-dissertation.

The social exclusion and unemployment theories help one to understand the challenges of unemployment among South Africa's youth.

2.3 Overview of the skills challenge in South Africa

Since the dawn of democracy in 1994, South Africa has made significant improvements in overcoming the skills challenges inherited from the apartheid era. Despite the progress made, low levels of skills, especially among the youth, still remain one of the country's greatest concerns (Mummenthey 2010:9).

According to Stats SA (2018), youth unemployment in South Africa has grown to 32.4%, which amounts to 3.3 million out of 10.3 million youths between the ages of 15 and 24 years who are unemployed (see Figure 2.1). The concern is that employment in South Africa between 1994 and 2018 has been inadequate to reduce unemployment. Furthermore, the biggest challenge in the reduction of unemployment remains the lack of skills. In his 2019 State of the Nation Address, President Cyril Ramaphosa indicates solutions to youth unemployment by referencing the creation of "14 rapid youth incubators", "a youth employment service", and "the absorption of youth into productive economic activity and further work opportunities" (Ramaphosa 2019). These pronouncements are a clear indication that the government views youth unemployment as a threat to the country's future.
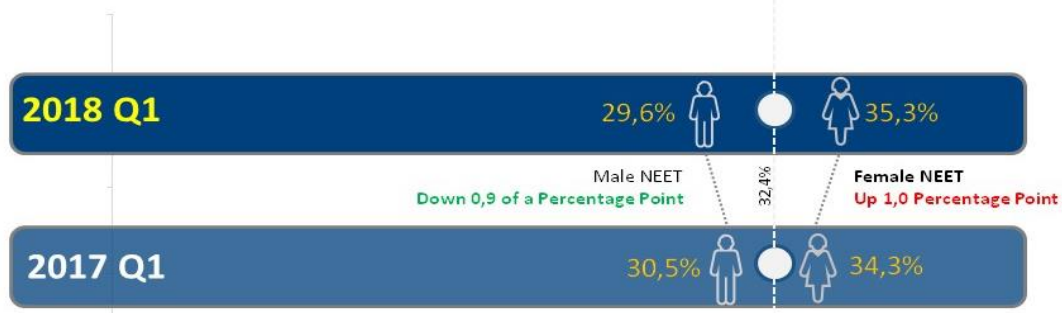
Figure 2.1: Youth unemployment 2018
Source: (Stats SA 2018)

The National Development Plan (NDP): Vision 2030 developed a plan of action to address youth unemployment by setting goals to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality, growing the economy by an average of 5.4%, and reducing the unemployment rate to 6% by 2030 (National Planning Commission [NPC] 2012:296-297). Given the skills deficit, realising the vision of the NDP is a challenge for the government of the day.

The major contributors to high levels of unemployment, as outlined in the NDP, are the poor quality of education and the level of training that are given to those in need of it. The NDP concluded that an improvement of the quality of education throughout the education system would be the cornerstone of any successful government intervention (NPC 2012:133).

Youth unemployment is a global phenomenon. However, in some regions the levels of youth unemployment remain at alarming levels; South Africa being a case in point. Altman (2007:7) notes the following reasons why youth unemployment is rising:

- People are retrenched should a business fail to afford them in times of economic downturns.
- Some youths lack job search capabilities and networks that are relevant to the labour market.
- The lack of mobility and resources to look for a job leads to youths staying at home or close to home where jobs may not necessarily be available.
- There may be a measurement problem, given that young people may be in and out of studying, or studying and working. The most marginalised individuals might not be studying, working, or have any intentions of studying (Altman 2007:7).

Altman (2007:7) further notes that the argument of concentrating on youths relates to what he calls the "creation of a new generation of the long-term unemployed." Simply put, the longer one stays unemployed or underemployed, the harder it is to reverse the effects of the consequences of being unemployed in the long term.

Lewis (2006:31-33) states that the unemployment challenge can be addressed by the government in all spheres by focusing on the following:

- **Skills development within General Education and Training (GET)**

GET covers the period from Grade R to Grade 9. The purpose of GET should be to provide a solid foundation for lifelong learning and vocational skills development. GET is the first exit point in the NQF where a transition from general learning to the choice of specialising is made, and it aims to provide opportunities for higher-quality learning programmes in relevant knowledge and fields and to support the retention of learners in learning programmes for purposes of skill-based learning. Lewis (2006:31-32) highlights that GET must produce learners who are flexible, who are easily trainable, and who can adapt rapidly when new information becomes available.

- **Skills development within the FET and university band**

This band, according to Lewis (2006:30), may be considered as a site for specialisation, and one that plays one of the greatest roles in ensuring that youths remain in school so that their phase of skills development can continue. Lewis (2006:30) emphasises that "what countries officially term as basic education may no longer be sufficient for employment and further training is generally needed, even for entry into the informal labour market."

The skills development band therefore serves as a structure that focuses not only on the career path within certain sectors, but also more critically on employment skills.

- **Skills development within higher education institutions**

Higher education is generally implemented through universities and universities of technology. The difference between these two higher education institutions is that universities of technology are associated more with workplace-based education. Lewis (2006:33) mentions that this "transfer of skills can be at the expense of higher-order skills that are coupled with knowledge, construction and understanding and critical problem-solving abilities." The systemic nature of learners transitioning from the basic education system to the higher education system remains an area of contestation.

- **Skills development at Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) and Adult Further Education and Training (AFET) level**

The main aim of this level is to promote skills formation for second-chance learners to build their skills in alignment of what the economy requires.

As discussed by Lewis (2006), it is evident that skills development is a major problem in South Africa. Daniels (2007:1) emphasises that this is an enormous issue that encapsulates many specific components, and at the core of it lies the fact that the demand for skills exceeds the supply for it. The skills development pandemic can be either the absolute scarcity of these skills or the relative scarcity thereof. Daniels (2007) notes that scarcity of skills refers to suitably skilled people who are not available, for example in emerging occupations such as biochemistry or biotechnology – in other words, a lack of workers with specific skills; while relative scarcity refers to a situation where skilled individuals exist, but they do not meet employment criteria (Daniels 2007:2).

Daniels (2007) further explains the notion of critical skills that are needed in South Africa. He notes that there are critical skills such as those that are used in problem solving and particular skills that are needed in the general work field that are required for performance within that specific occupation that are underdeveloped (Daniels 2007:2).

Skills shortages are not, however, limited to scarce or critical skills, but is a term that comprises even the most advanced qualifications, which are often required to get a job.

2.4 The role of learnerships and internships in skills development

The following sub-sections identify the role played by learnerships and internships in skills development.

2.4.1 Learnerships

Learnerships were introduced in South Africa in 2001 as a government intervention to address the national skills shortage. It is regulated by the Education, Training, and Development Practitioners (ETDP) SETA.

Learnerships can be viewed as a paraprofessional and vocational education and training programme where the learner is not only trained but is also provided with a platform to experience how one relates to the corporate world. In essence, a learnership can be characterised as a work-based learning route to obtaining a qualification that is combined with education and training, as well as the theory and work experience.

Learnerships form part of the key elements of NSDS II. Objective 4 of NSDS II aims to assist designated groups, including new entrants, to participate in accredited work, integrated learning, and work-based programmes to acquire critical skills to enter the labour market and self-employment and aims to ensure the provision of skills to unemployed or unskilled individuals.

2.4.2   Benefits of learnerships

Implementing learnerships is beneficial due to the fact that it helps in the production of a better-skilled workforce. Skilled learners can contribute to the economic growth and the development of the country. Learnerships provide individuals with the opportunity to improve their existing skills through learnerships and furthermore help individuals to develop additional skills, both practically and theoretically. Through learnerships, unemployed youths are able to obtain a nationally recognised qualification. Learnerships also help increase the pool of skilled employees who can be retained at the respective institution after the learnership. This increase in the number of learners has a positive effect on institutions because a better-skilled and qualified workforce is made available and productivity is increased due to higher-skilled workers' work experience (Finance and Accounting Services Sector Education and Training Authority [Fasset] 2004:5).

2.4.3   Implementation of learnerships

The design of the implementation of learnerships, as illustrated by Figure 2.2, allows the employer to properly handle the stages of a learnership, allowing for the effective implementation of the programme. The end results of a learnership should be that learners are properly trained, and that the skills they acquired are adequate enough to

ensure that they are employable. For the purposes of Figure 2.2, the education sector will be used to explain the implementation process of a learnership.
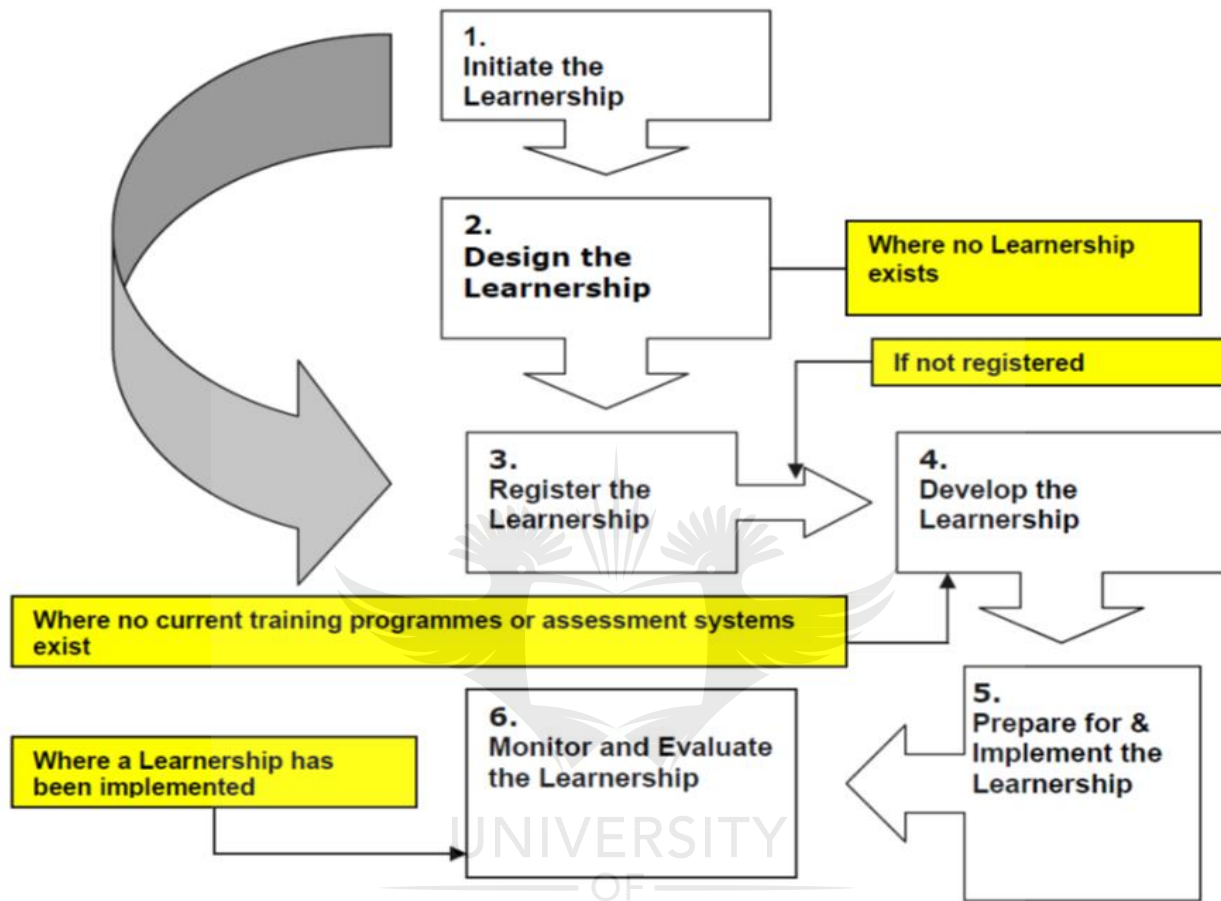
Figure 2.2: Implementation of learnerships
Source: (Fasset 2014)

The initiation of a learnership (Step 1) involves the identification of a learner and the kind of training that is needed in a specific sector, such as education. Step 1 is critical as it identifies the type of training that the learner needs, and how much effort must be made to ensure that the learner has sufficient training to qualify as an educator. Step 2 involves designing a learnership. A learnership should be designed in such a way that it meets the needs of the learner in order to attain the specific skills. This step identifies existing learnerships related to education should they exist, and formulates new learnerships should they not exist. This step is crucial as the duplication of learnerships is avoided at this stage. Should no similar learnership exist, the proposed learnership needs to be

registered (Step 3) so that it is legitimised in the eyes of the state. Once the learnership has been registered, Step 4 can commence, which involves developing the learnership (Fasset 2004).

As previously stated, learnerships are government initiatives to help curb youth unemployment. The development of a learnership must be on par with skills development strategies and must be manageable by both the learner and the employer. This step is also useful in areas where current training and assessment systems do not exist. This step allows the employer to attain a learner to meet the needs of the education sector and for the learner to gain the best training opportunities (Fasset 2004).

The preparation and implementation stage of a learnership (Stage 5) concludes the process of introducing a learnership to the education sector. It is during this stage that the learner and employer get the opportunity to work together. The success of this stage depends on the interaction between the learner and the employer. The preparation of the learnership involves identifying the learners' expectation and the learnership outcomes (Fasset 2004). The constant monitoring and evaluation of the learnership ensure that the quality of the learnership is never compromised.

The implementation of learnerships is highlighted by Cassiem (2012:2), who stresses the importance of ensuring that the long-term goals of a learnership should be maintained to ensure that the results are beneficial for both the learner and the employer. Cassiem (2012:2) also warns that the focus of the learnership should not only be on enhancing the skills of a learner through training, but that the learnership should provide skills that are also essential to the economy.

2.5   Classification of internships

Internships are mechanisms used to assist individuals to gain work experience before being employed on a full-time basis. Internships are meant to enable the transfer of learning and knowledge by providing the participants an opportunity to apply what they have learned in theory and in the classroom in the corporate world (ETDP SETA 2013:35).

Internships are supervised off-campus working and learning experiences. The classifications or types of internships have the ability to establish positive contact with prospective employers who are the key to building professional networks for students. Internships are also described as work-based learning programmes as they offer or require work where practice is required. The types of internships are summarised in the following sub-sections.

2.5.1 Cooperative education

Cooperative education (co-op) is seen as a three-way partnership between an intern, the employer, and a college or university. Co-ops allow students to integrate their work experiences into their academic studies for credits upon fulfilment. The participating interns are placed in jobs that relate to their major module. For example, if the intern is studying dentistry, the intern would be required to get a part-time job at a dentist's office.

2.5.2 Field experience

Fieldwork requires interns to develop their skills through observations, mapping, recording, and interpreting data. This kind of research has been cited as one of the best methods to put the theory that one learns in the classroom into practice. Fieldwork experiences combine education and supervision such as lectures and note-taking with independent research such as recording data and drawing conclusions from recorded data (Department of Hospitality Management 2018).

2.5.3 Practicum

This form of internship offers interns the opportunity to apply their academic experiences to real-world projects. An example of a practicum is when a group of Master of Business Administration students are assigned to a semester-long project that is sponsored by a consulting firm. Common practicum sites include hospitals (Fekede and File 2009:108).

2.5.4 Service learning

Service learning allows interns to work in an organised service within a community. Services include working at secondary schools or community service programmes such as homeless shelters. Service learning gives learners greater autonomy and control over their learning when they select a need to be met and design and deliver the services to meet these needs. Service learning also relates to the interns' lives and helps interns to apply their learning to real-life situations. Service learning helps interns to engage in challenging tasks, and they measure their own ability to impact others and themselves (Billig 2011:3).

2.5.5 Externship

This form of internship is characterised by its short-term duration. The intern spends a period of time observing and working with professionals in his/her career field of choice. The intern is given the opportunity to investigate the career field without making any long-term commitments. An example of an externship would be a pre-medical student shadowing a medical doctor in an emergency room (Smith 2013).

2.5.6 Apprenticeship

Apprenticeships vary in length between one and five years. An apprenticeship offers practical as well as in-school training. The apprentice is paid and the salary increases as the apprentice gains more experience (Hansen 2006).

2.6 Benefits of internships

The benefits of internships are described by Fasset (2004:21) as follows:

- They assist interns to bridge the gap between the academic learning process and the practical reality. Internships provide students with numerous perks; for example, they gain experience, develop skills, make connections, strengthen their résumés, learn about a field, and assess their interest and abilities.

- Offering a paid internship is particularly beneficial, because it enables economically disadvantaged youths to participate. Students who have to help fund their own schooling will need a job. Providing an internship allows that job to facilitate a positive future.

- Internships are closely supervised.

- Internships highlight the importance of the relevant practical experiences that should be offered to the student. A new employee makes a solid impression in the interview, but then just does not fit with the team or the company's way of doing things. Because of this, hiring someone as an intern is the most effective way to evaluate their potential as a full-time employee. When one evaluates candidates through a semester or summer internship, one will make fewer mistakes when it comes to full-time staffing; one will avoid the pitfall of training a new recruit, only to find out that they are not a fit for the organisation; or that the entry-level employee does not like the field. Starting an internship programme lets companies benefit from added manpower, while more accurately assessing potential candidates.

- Internships also benefit the employer as the employer has an opportunity to get to know the intern and establish the employability of the intern in the business. An internship programme is a year-round recruiting tool. Implementing an internship programme means that companies have an ongoing pipeline of future full-time employees.

For many, the process of recruiting and hiring is a drain on company resources. A solution, according to Fasset (2004:6), is to "appeal to tomorrow's staff members when they're looking for internships, and all you have to do is choose the best of the bunch when it comes time to hire. Moreover, college campuses are viral societies. This means if your organization impresses one class of interns, word will quickly spread. Soon you'll find the most sought-after student talent is interested in working with you."

2.7   The objectives of internships

Unlike learnerships, internships do not lead to a formal qualification; however, a formal qualification is needed for most internships. It is a work-based experience programme and includes a testimonial letter that indicates the work areas the intern was exposed to.

An internship makes use of the classroom's abstract theories and learned examples by placing the student in a real-life work situation. The payoff of an unpaid internship experience is that it adds to an individual's credentials as professional experience. The following objectives are noted by the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA 2006:7):

- "To resolve the general shortage of qualified and skilled people in the workforce by encouraging students to equip themselves with the necessary practical experiences." Many youths encounter instances where they have gained theoretical experience, but they lack the practical experience that comes with it. In order to curb the skills shortage, the youth needs practical experience that correlates to theoretical experience.

- "To assist in meeting the strategic staffing needs of the public service by providing practical and accelerated work experience programmes that expose the interns to a specific job." The kind of work that an intern applies for should expose the intern to practical experience in the workforce. The experience will then increase productivity as more workers who are skilled will be employed.

- "To provide unemployed graduates with valuable work experience and to enhance their employability, especially those who are tertiary graduates." In this instance, internships address youth unemployment, and provide those who have tertiary education with work experience and the opportunity to enhance their skills in the public sector.

- "To provide the intern with the opportunity to gain some practical experiences and assist students who are required to do an internship in order to attain credits for a course." Internships contribute to accelerated service delivery by the government through the improved introduction of skilled personnel in the public sector and contribute to the life-long learning of the participant.

- "To improve equitable access to the public sector employment for rural and marginalised groups."
- "To increase awareness among students for job and career opportunities in the private sector."

2.8 International experiences with learnerships and internships

This sub-section deals with international experience relating to learnerships and internships.

The role of employment-creation programmes in reducing youth unemployment is by now widely recognised. The experience of many developing countries seems to indicate, however, that in recent years the rate of youth employment growth has been inadequate in terms of the growth of the labour force and that the amount of employment generated as a result of output growth is declining (cf. Devereux and Solomon 2006).

Given the challenges in stimulating youth employment, many countries have attempted to address the issue with, among others, interventions such as promoting economic growth, regulations to stimulate economic growth, and building skills among the unemployed. The following sub-sections provide some examples of the interventions adopted by different countries.

2.8.1 Indonesia

A good international example of learnerships and internships can be traced to the Delivery Programme in Indonesia, which was part of the Department of Livestock Services, which was implemented to develop and test a range of community-based services to provide effective, efficient, and sustainable livestock services. These learnerships, titled Community Animal Health Worker services, have increased the range of services available to farmers. The development of responsibilities by these workers allows the government to focus its limited resources on public services such as quality control, enforcing regulations, disease surveillance, livestock movement control, hygiene, and research (Devereux and Solomon 2006).

2.8.2 Argentina

The Labour Emergency Programme in Argentina started in 2001. It provides temporary employment and vocational training to the unemployed, through projects that either create employment or affect employment creation. It contains a sub-programme for community development, which aims to create productive employment for vulnerable women, especially heads of households. Activities specifically include those that are not traditionally performed by women, such as bricklaying, building, and carpentry (cf. Devereux and Solomon 2006).

2.8.3 The University of Wisconsin-Madison International Internship Program (IIP)

The IIP is a hub for developmental global talent and plays a central role in the internationalisation of the university. It aspires to become a recognised leader in the preparation of the next generation of globally competitive citizens. The IIP serves the needs of undergraduate students and the wider university community through collaborative efforts to establish and maintain value-added relationships with key partners, international organisations, and alumni. These values drive the daily work of the IIP and also allow it to accomplish the long-term goals of the programme (University of Wisconsin-Madison 2019).

These values include the following:

- Providing international experiences that are an integral part of the learning experience in an increasingly globalised society;
- Students within the programme are provided with the opportunity to intern abroad during their undergraduate academic career; and
- The IIP aims to create unique opportunities that build upon relationships in a particular context.

One of the key priorities of the IIP is to create a talent pool that serves the needs of the state and thereby allows employers to find students with global skills such as cross-cultural communication skills (University of Wisconsin-Madison 2019).

2.8.4　The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

The UNDP helps countries to simultaneously reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development, which lead to transformational change to bring about real improvements in the lives of people. The UNDP promotes an integrated approach to achieve sustainable development that tackles the issues connected to poverty and sustainability, while enhancing knowledge, skills, and production.

One of the spheres that the UNDP is focusing on is internship programmes that are designed to complement development-orientated studies with practical experience in various aspects of multilateral technical cooperation, while still complementing other international studies. Recent records indicate that this internship programme has created two million work opportunities for two million participants in 98 countries over a period of three years (UNDP 2017).

2.8.5　Sub-Saharan Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa has the world's highest youth population growth rate and the highest share of youths in the working age population (Zimmerman et al. 2013). There is an urgent need for pro-employment economic and social policies to stimulate and build structural change (Zimmerman et al. 2013). The informal economy is a structural feature of sub-Saharan countries where "economies employ up to 90% of the working age population in low-income countries" (Zimmerman et al. 2013). Due to its pervasiveness, the informal sector must be part of any policy that addresses youth employment. Low labour productivity and earnings in self-employment and the informal economy are limitations to sustained poverty reduction.

With the policy recommendations and lessons learned, Zimmerman et al. (2013) indicate the following interventions to strengthen youth employment:

- Comprehensive youth employment strategies;
- Economic growth;
- Entrepreneurship promotion;
- Labour market information;

- Regulation;
- Identifying knowledge gaps;
- Public works programmes; and
- Skills development (Zimmerman et al. 2013).

In terms of skills to support youth employment, Zimmerman et al. (2013) suggest that skills development can be fast-tracked by addressing shortages in general education and training and in vocational education and training programmes. Furthermore, it is important to improve literacy and numeracy levels among the youth, providing educational access to secondary education (especially for the disadvantaged), and building the self-esteem of unemployed youths through mentoring programmes, of which there is little evidence.

Moreover, skills can be built by using technology such as information and communications technology (ICT) and mobile phone technology to allow the youth to access post-school training and education. Zimmerman et al. (2013) also indicate that the youth in sub-Saharan Africa could benefit from skills development policies in agricultural and non-agricultural informal employment through local training committees.

In addition, governments need to organise the recognition and certification of skills acquired in non-formal learning, and integrate non-formal schemes in their national skills development strategies. Finally, regulations should be introduced for traditional apprenticeships in order to set limits to the number of years of training, as well as daily and weekly working hours (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] 2015; Zimmerman et al. 2013).

The international experience indicates that youth unemployment and skills development can be used to drive economic growth. However, it is important for governments to invest in a regulatory framework to promote economic growth and to improve skills among the youth. The following sections deal with the locus of the study, namely the SDM and the challenge of youth unemployment.

2.9　　Overview of the Sedibeng District Municipality (SDM)

The SDM covers the entire southern part of the Gauteng province and consists of three local municipalities, namely the Emfuleni, Midvaal, and Lesedi local municipalities. While the Midvaal Local Municipality occupies almost half of the area of the SDM, over 80% of the population lives in the Emfuleni Local Municipality. The SDM is an integral part of the Gauteng province, which accounts for 33% of the national gross domestic product. The SDM is one of the five most important centres of high-value mass production and manufacturing in South Africa (SDM 2014a:37-38).

The predominant economic sector in the district is the manufacturing of fabricated metals and chemicals. In the metal sector, the ArcelorMittal steel plant, the Cape Gate Davsteel wire and steel plant, and Samancor's ferromanganese plant are the three main large baseline plants in the district, while DCD-Dorbyl Heavy Engineering is the biggest manufacturer of engineered products in Southern Africa (SDM 2014a:39).

According to the Adcorp Employment Index Report for August 2011, uncertainty prevails regarding the economic conditions in the country. According to the report, figures for mining and manufacturing indicate a slowdown in production, which results in job losses. The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) is one of the interventions that Gauteng is pursuing through the SDM to alleviate the pressures of unemployment (Adcorp Analytics 2011:3). The value of the EPWP in curtailing unemployment in the SDM cannot, however, be ascertained in the short term.

The SDM has faced a serious challenge regarding decreasing the number of unemployed youths, as indicated by Figure 2.3. The Emfuleni Local Municipality had the highest youth unemployment rate across the Gauteng province in 2011.
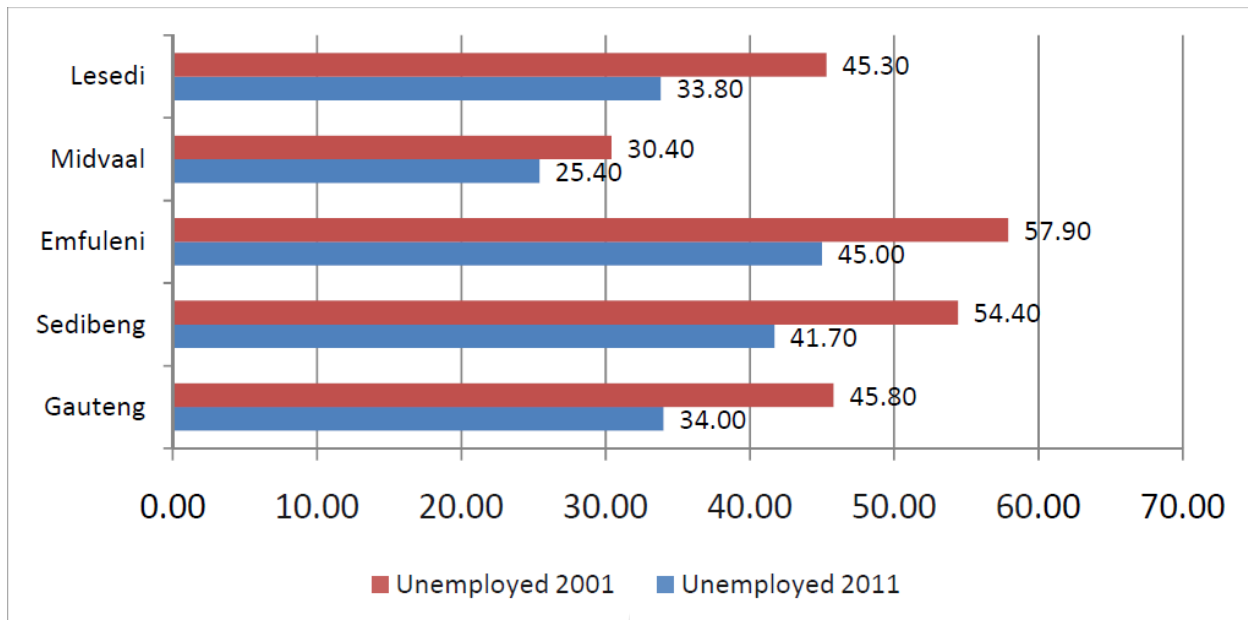
Figure 2.3: Sedibeng and Gauteng province youth unemployment between 2001 and 2011
Source: (Stats SA 2012)

2.9.1 Strategies implemented by the SDM

The following sub-sections discuss the strategies implemented by the SDM to address youth unemployment.

2.9.1.1 *Youth Development Policy*

The Youth Development Policy has been developed to guide processes and programmes for youth development. Youth Advisory Centres (YACs) were established in partnership with the Umsobomvu Youth Fund to provide unemployed youth information on scholarships, learnerships and career advice (Government Communication and Information Services [GCIS] 2009). The centres are located at strategic points in the Emfuleni and Lesedi local municipalities in an effort to facilitate youth development. In 2009, a total of 24 956 young people were assisted through these centres, where services that include support and guidance on job preparation, job hunting, business support, career guidance, entrepreneurship workshops, learnerships, computer use, and Internet access are provided. The centres are instrumental in providing valuable information and linking young people with various agencies. In 2009, 7 235 young people were assisted

in job hunting, and of these, 258 were successful in job placement, while 368 gained learnership and internship placements with various companies and government departments.

The SDM recognises the need to establish such a youth centre in the area of Midvaal and Evaton. Consultative processes have begun between the district and local municipalities of Midvaal (SDM 2011:3).

The YACs have the following mandate:

- To create an environment that supports the continued development and learning of the youth;
- To promote youth participation in democratic processes, community and civic decision making, and development at all levels;
- The recognition of youth development as an important mandate; and
- Responsiveness to the needs, aspirations, and challenges of the youth in a realistic and participatory manner (GCIS 2009).

2.9.1.2 *Thusong Service Centre*

The Thusong Service Centre (formerly known as Multi-Purpose Community Centres) programme of the government was initiated in 1999 as one of the primary vehicles for the implementation of development communication and information and to integrate government services into primarily rural communities. This was done to address historical, social, and economic factors that limited access to information, services, and participation by citizens, as they had to travel long distances to access these services.

For purposes of skills development, the Thusong Service Centre programme focuses on education and skills development and on ensuring that ABET programmes are beneficial, as well as to liaise with the government regarding youth programmes (Thusong Service Centre n.d.).

2.9.1.3 *Tshepiso Development Association (TDA)*

The TDA, situated in a township in the Emfuleni Local Municipality, was established in an effort to respond to the needs of the community. With regard to the youth, the TDA facilitates the introduction of learnership programmes through different SETAs, in partnership with different companies operating in the district (SDM 2011:14).

2.10   Conclusion

The implementation of internships and learnerships encompasses all those activities by public and/or the private sector that are directed at achieving the goals and objectives outlined in policies. These activities include identifying a municipality that could benefit from the introduction of learnerships and internships and ascertaining the impact it will have in the long run (Cloete, Wissink and De Coning 2006:195).

When internships and learnerships are implemented, implementing bodies such as municipalities should consider their interest groups and the skills that need to be enhanced. They should also consider accountability as a factor that influences the level at which participants' skills are enhanced. Municipal managers should keep in mind during the selection process that they should be wary of unrealistic expectations when it comes to the labour market. These unrealistic expectations include training a large number of participants at the same time (Van der Waldt 2004:24-26).

Internships and learnerships are supposed to provide participants with skills that will enhance their capabilities to be employed. They should give participants the opportunity to gain industry knowledge that they would not be able to obtain anywhere else. They should provide the participants with experience in and knowledge of the working field, but most importantly they should give participants skills in the areas that they studied during their tertiary years (Magongo and Motimele 2011:65-70).

CHAPTER THREE
LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORKS THAT SUPPORT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN SOUTH AFRICA

3.1   Introduction

This chapter focuses on the legislative frameworks that impact on internships and learnerships as part of skills development programmes in South Africa. Furthermore, this chapter sets out to explore the provisions made for internships and learnerships as part of skills development in the relevant legislation. This chapter also aims to investigate a number of policies and acts that have been developed over the past decade to provide for the implementation of skills development in the public sector. These policies and regulations invariably influence the public sector's skills development requirements. This chapter therefore addresses the legislative and policy frameworks that are currently in place within the public sector in South Africa. Among these legislative frameworks are the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), the NQF, and SETAs.

3.2   An overview of the legislation that impacts on learnerships and internships

A comprehensive and effective legislative framework for skills development programmes is vital for the achievement of the goals that promote skills development through learnerships and internships. The implementation of a legal framework for skills development encompasses all those activities by the public and/or private sector that are directed towards achieving the goals and objectives outlined within a framework. These activities could include identifying a municipality that would benefit more from the introduction of learnerships and internships, and measuring the impact that accrues in the medium to long term in promoting skills development (Cloete et al. 2006:195).

3.3   The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (No. 108 of 1996)

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (hereafter referred to as the Constitution) was implemented to counter the injustices of the apartheid era, and to usher in a new democratic order in South Africa. The Constitution was, and still is, hailed as one of the

most progressive in the world. For the purpose of this research, aspects pertaining to especially Chapter 2 of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights (section 29), is important to consider.

The role that education plays is fundamental in uplifting people and assisting them to move out of poverty, to empower communities, and to promote human rights and democracy. Section 29(1) in Chapter 2 of the Constitution states:

1) Everyone has the right –
   a) to a basic education, including adult basic education; and
   b) to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible.

In an effort to understand the provision of the right to basic education, the Preamble to the Constitution must be used as a guideline, for it gives purpose and meaning to the Constitution. The Preamble states that the Constitution aims to "heal the division of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental rights [and] improve the quality of life for all citizens and free the potential of each person."

In defining the importance of the right to education, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which recognises the right of everyone to free education, states that this right should encompass the following elements:

- **Availability:** Educational institutions should be available to all learners and should include the provision of buildings, teaching material, computer and Internet facilities, as well as sanitation facilities for both genders.
- **Accessibility:** Education should be affordable, and in safe physical reach, and must be granted to all those who wish to be educated on a non-discriminative basis.
- **Acceptability:** Acceptability refers to the appropriateness and relevance and quality of the education offered.
- **Adaptability:** The adaptability of education requires it to be flexible in such a manner that it can adapt to societal changes (see also The Constitution 1996; Mtwesi 2013:2).

3.4 The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act (No. 58 of 1995)

Higher education in South Africa developed alongside the new dispensation post 1994. The previous higher education system consisted of 21 public universities and 15 technikons. The rationalisation of higher education resulted in the establishment of universities, universities of technology (previously known as technikons), and comprehensive universities, which was an outcome of merged institutions (Asmal 2002:8).

The SAQA Act was established to govern the education system. Its establishment provided for the development of, and to effectively implement, the NQF. The NQF is based on the following principles:

- To create an integrated national framework for learning achievement;
- To facilitate access to, and mobility and progression within, education, training, and career paths;
- To enhance the quality of education and training; and
- To initiate the acceleration of redressing past unfair discriminations in education, training, and employment opportunities, which would thereby contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the nation (Perna and Thomas 2006:89).

Although these objectives proved to be beneficial, the changes in the South African education system meant that the qualifications framework had to be revised in order to complement the changes to the education system.

According to the World Association of Cooperative Education (WACE 2012:5), South Africa had an NQF Level 8 structure, until the NQF Level 10 Higher Education Framework was gazetted in 2007. This new framework revised the existing qualifications framework and necessitated the re-evaluation and redesign of the original framework.

According to WACE (2012:5), this NQF Level 10 Higher Education Framework introduced the term "Work Integrated Learning" (WIL) to the DHET, and urged institutions to place students in WIL programmes. This placement also consisted of careful enrolment and

placement procedures that gave the participants a place where they could gain experience in a chosen specialty.

3.5   The Skills Development Act (SDA) (No. 97 of 1998)

The SDA of 1998 introduced new institutions and programmes designed to increase skills development. This legislation has two overriding priorities, namely to address the need to increase skills in order to improve the productivity and competitiveness of the industry, business, commerce, and services, and to address challenges for social development and eradication of poverty. The overall aim of the SDA is to ensure that the skills of South African citizens are improved. To ensure that this aim is achieved, the SDA also:

- introduced new guidelines, a set of rules, and structures that aim to determine and implement strategies that are aligned to workplace skills development;
- ensured that training and development programmes excel in such a manner that nationally recognised qualifications are gained;
- introduced learnerships that lead to recognised qualifications; and
- established the NSA and SETAs (Perna and Thomas 2006:88).

The introduction of the SDA led to the conception of SETAs, which are the agents of implementing skills development programmes such as internships. SETAs utilise the concept of internships to fast-track high-level skills, to offer needed work experience to unemployed youths, and to empower youths with practical knowledge commensurate with their qualifications.

3.6   The Skills Development Levies Act (SDLA) (No. 9 of 1999)

One of the reasons for poor skills development in South Africa can be blamed on a lack of funds (Perna and Thomas 2009:89). It is for this reason that the SDLA of 1999 was introduced. Its role was to introduce a levy payment system to be used to fund skills development programmes.

The SDLA is divided into the following three sections:

- Section 1 deals with the provision for the administration, imposition, and recovery of the levy.
- Section 2 deals with the collection of the funds by SETAs.
- Section 3 constitutes general provisions and penalties.

The SDLA required that a levy be paid by employers, from which they can claim a portion for training. This levy is payable by an employer who is registered with the South African Revenue Service (SARS).

It is noted in the SDLA that the Safety and Security Sector Education and Training Authority (SASSETA) needs to pay grants to employers in order to meet the criteria of the skills development programmes.

3.7 The Growth and Development Summit (GDS) aimed at developing structures for skills development

To maintain the national strategy of the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (AsgiSA) and the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) plan, a national GDS was organised by the government in 2003, where the government proposed that all district and metropolitan municipalities hold GDSs in their areas of jurisdiction. The government had identified districts and municipalities as important sites that could be used to build some sort of relation and understanding of the kind of potential that exists across the country (Southern African Regional Poverty Network [SARPN] 2003:1).

The summit then proposed a guiding document with the purpose of developing a path to implement the skills development programmes for the district and metropolitan municipalities that would enable them to build a relationship with relevant parties, such as the government and community sectors, in such a way that these relationships would contribute to the implementation of skills development programmes.

The basic principles of the GDS guidelines include:

- implementing objectives set by the government that aim for the growth of the economy;
- to accelerate growth and to reduce unemployment and poverty, especially in areas that have shown potential growth and development; and
- the increase of collaborative action between the government and relative social partners across all spheres of government with the aim of forging a common vision that promotes an increase in economic growth and job creation and establishing a community that is focused on people-centred development (SARPN 2003:1).

With the GDS guidelines set in place, a GDS was held on 7 June 2003. The constituencies in the National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac) engaged in dialogue with the aim of addressing the challenges that were facing the South African population. The challenges included, among others, unemployment and poverty. As discussions progressed at the summit, it was agreed that a vision for growth and development should be developed and adopted. This vision should include a set of priorities that would be identified for joint action with the community and government that would ensure that the programme of action to address the challenges would be properly implemented.

The vision would also ensure that all stakeholders committed themselves to the effective implementation of the structures that promote growth and job creation.

It is noted in the document (SARPN 2003:5) that SETAs are encouraged to support the training of participants by giving them time to participate and complete the relevant and targeted training programmes. Participants are then evaluated and given records of their training and provided with a reference to assist them in attaining employment.

Training programmes include, but are not limited to:

- basic literacy;
- social entrepreneurship;
- industrial relations;
- project-specific skills; and
- project management (SARPN 2003:18).

The summit resolved the matter of developing skills and creating economic opportunities. The summit noted the injustices of the apartheid era towards communities – more so towards women, youths, and individuals with disabilities – and in an effort to rectify this, the summit agreed on a method that accelerated equity, ensuring that there is an increase of employment in the formal economy, that individuals are literate and develop skills by focusing on skills development, strengthening SETAs, and promoting learnerships (SARPN 2003:18-26).

3.8   National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS)

NSDS I was implemented by the Minister of Labour on the advice of the NSA in February 2001, with the intent to fundamentally transform education and training in South Africa by improving both the quality of training to support the increased competitiveness of the industry and the quality of life for South African citizens (DHET 2010a:22).

The objectives of NSDS I were as follows:

- Developing a culture that promotes quality lifelong learning;
- Promoting skills development in the formal economy to improve productivity and development;
- Inspiring and supporting initiatives for skills development in SMMEs;
- Improving skills development for more productive employment and social development; and
- Facilitating new entrants into the job market (DHET 2010b:22).

NSDS II aims to address the structural problems that were inherited from the past. It also intends to transform the South African labour market from one that has a low skills base to one that is characterised by an increase of skills and commitment to lifelong learning (Perna and Thomas 2006:87).

The key aspects of the thinking behind NSDS III, as discussed by the Insurance Sector Education and Training Authority (INSETA 2008), are as follows:

- The legal goals for skills development;
- A shift from top-down to "interactive" skills planning;
- A new "performance" orientation across the state; and
- Other themes.

The core content of NSDS III is as follows:

- Goals and success indicators;
- INSETA strategic programmes to achieve the above; and
- Funding levers (INSETA 2008:10).

3.9   Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs)

SETAs are governed by the guidelines of the SDA and the SDLA, and are key implementation agencies for establishing and ensuring that quality is maintained in workplace-based training and learning. SETAs are also responsible for overseeing the training and skills development in specific national economic sectors. SETAs play a role in evaluating workplace skills plans and the development of such plans, as well as registering learnerships and managing and administering the grants received through the skills development levy (Akoojee, Gewer and McGrath 2006:111).

SETAs were established to manage the countless skills development needs, and each SETA coordinates development for its particular sector.

3.9.1   Functions of SETAs

According to the SDA, a SETA must:

   a.   develop a sector skills plan within the framework of the NSDS;

   b.   implement its sector skills plan by:

      i.   establishing learnerships;

     ii.   approving workplace skills plans;

    iii.   allocating grants in the prescribed manner to employers, education and training providers, and workers; and

    iv.   monitoring education and training in the sector.

   c.   promote learnerships by:

      i.   identifying workplaces for practical work experience;

     ii.   supporting the development of learning materials;

    iii.   improving the facilitation of learning; and

    iv.   assisting in the conclusion of learnership agreements.

SETAs utilise the concept of internships and learnerships to fast-track skills, to offer work experience to unemployed youths, and to empower young job seekers with practical knowledge commensurate with their qualifications.

3.10   National Youth Policy

The National Youth Policy was developed by the NYDA in consultation with various stakeholders within South Africa. Enshrined within the policy are guidelines for education and for skills development interventions in South Africa. The different interventions within the policy are discussed in the following sub-sections (NYDA 2011:27-29).

3.10.1 Intervention 1

Schools must provide learners with knowledge and skills that make them employable. When national curricula are reviewed, policymakers must ensure that the learning modules include practical components that will assist learners with skills development

from an early age. The review must include technical subjects and ongoing programmes for training educators (NYDA 2011:27-29).

3.10.2 Intervention 2

Intervention 2 ensures that all young people complete high school by achieving a National Senior Certificate or equivalent qualification through providing national matriculation rewriting facilities and making extra classes available to those who need them. An extra-points system that awards points to learners and allows them to enter the workplace or further their skills in the relevant institutions needs to be introduced (NYDA 2011:27-29).

3.10.3 Intervention 3

Intervention 3 provides youths who have attained their National Senior Certificate with an opportunity to further their education and compete in the labour market through supporting a national programme that targets youths and re-integrates them into FET colleges so that they can acquire vocational training. This can be achieved through revising the ABET programme to accommodate youths and through increasing learnership opportunities in the public and private sectors (NYDA 2011:27-29).

3.10.4 Intervention 4

In order to increase the youth's prospects of learning, bursary opportunities and the National Student Financial Aid Scheme must be increased and programmes of funding that are beyond government jurisdiction (private sector) must be encouraged (NYDA 2011:27-29).

3.10.5 Intervention 5

The aim of the last intervention involves assisting young people who are in the transition to adulthood by promoting a larger spectrum of learning pathways and making available to them potential developmental avenues. This can be attained through providing young people with potential exit points out of the school system and then gradually introducing systems that will ultimately shift them into undergraduate education (NYDA 2011:27-29).

Figure 3.1 indicates the policy interventions that were introduced in South Africa from the early 1990s to 2016. The policies were introduced to support youth employment; additionally, the policies indicated the government's commitment to challenge youth unemployment head-on. Despite the large number of policies introduced, unemployment, especially among the youth, has grown steadily. The global economic downturn, the lack of skills among the youth, and systemic challenges in the education system are some of the reasons for the high levels of unemployment among the youth.

EARLY 1990s	1994–1995	1996–2003	2004–2007	2008–2016
Policy debates on overcoming apartheid legacies	Reconstruction and development	Focus on macroeconomic instability	First and second economy; War on Poverty	Overcoming triple threat of unemployment, poverty and inequality
Discussion Document on Economic Policy; Ready to Govern; RDP	RDP White Paper	GEAR	AsgiSA, JIPSA	National Growth Path, National Development Plan
	Special Poverty Relief Allocation	Jobs Summit	Growth and Development Summit	
				Employment Tax Incentive
				Jobs Fund
Special employment creation programmes	National Public Works Programme, Working for Water		EPWP	
			National Youth Service Policy Framework	Kh Ri Gude, Masupatsela, NARYSEC
National Training Strategy	South African Qualifications Authority Act	National Skills Act, Skills Development Act	Department of Higher Education and Training; Department of Basic Education	Green and white papers on post-school education and training
Education Renewal Strategy and Curriculum Model for South Africa	White Paper on Education and Training	Further Education and Training Act	Revised National Curriculum Statement	Curriculum Assessment and Policy Statement
	South African Schools Act, National Education Policy Act	Outcomes-based education/Curriculum 2005		National Skills Accord, Basic Education Accord, Youth Employment Accord
	Labour Relations Act (LRA)	Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA), Employment Equity Act	Employment Services of South Africa	Amendments to BCEA, LRA, EE; Public Employment Services Act
		BEE Commission Report	B-BBEE Act	B-BBEE Amendment Act
National Youth Development Forum		Umsobomvu Youth Fund		National Youth Development Agency
		National Youth Commission		
Small Business Development Corporation	White Paper on a National Strategy for the Development and Promotion of Small Business in South Africa	Nstika Enterprise Promotion Agency, Khula Enterprise Finance	Small Enterprise Development Agency; Small Enterprise Finance Agency	Department of Small Business Development; Youth Enterprise Development Strategy

Figure 3.1: Policies that support youth unemployment (1990s to 2016)
Source: (De Lannoy et al. 2018)

3.11 Conclusion

A skilled workforce is essential for the growth of the South African economy. The need to continuously improve the skills of the workforce is evident in the policy and legal frameworks. Furthermore, they provide a clear set of priorities that the government and organisations can use to unite under a shared vision and goal. Despite the wide-ranging policy and legal frameworks introduced from the early 1990s onwards, youth unemployment remains problematic. This leads to debates among academics and political commentators about whether economic growth drives job creation among the youth. A perusal of the policy and legal frameworks indicates that none of the policies introduced has been successful in creating jobs and in reducing the number of people seeking jobs in the economy.

Chapter Four discusses selected cases introduced by the SDM and the Gauteng Provincial Government to promote skills development among the youth.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CASE OF SKILLS DEVELOPMENT: AN OVERVIEW OF LEARNERSHIPS AND INTERNSHIPS IN CURBING YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE SDM

4.1 General introduction

The SDM, like most previously disadvantaged areas in South Africa, has high levels of youth unemployment, as attested to in the previous chapters. Effectively comprehending the role of internships and learnerships in skills development has been a challenge for both policymakers and researchers. Given this challenge, it was decided that case study research could prove helpful in understanding the role of internships and learnerships in improving skills development, and consequently addressing youth unemployment in the SDM. The cases analysed in this chapter assist in understanding the gaps in knowledge that exist in comprehending the role that learnerships and internships play in alleviating unemployment and increasing skills development. Furthermore, it assisted the researcher in gaining deeper insight into the challenges at hand. Given that the field of knowledge, with respect to internships and learnerships, is limited, case studies help researchers to gain a better insight into the problem that must be unravelled. Case studies are seen as important to expanding explanations. According to Yin (1994 in Babbie and Mouton 2014:283), case studies are a "specific kind of pattern-building, where the idea is to generate explanations about a case." Case studies are contemporary tools to understand real-life contexts.

This chapter concentrates on how internship and learnership programmes are used as training and development tools to address skills development as a strategy to effectively reduce youth unemployment in the SDM in the Gauteng province. Finally, this chapter introduces the role of mentorship in promoting skills development.

4.2 Rationale for the use of a case study approach

Case studies allow researchers to determine the holistic characteristic of life events while investigating empirical events. In general, case studies are empirical enquiries that investigate a contemporary phenomenon within real-life contexts in which multiple

sources of evidence are used. Case studies take the principal subject and use selected examples of a social entity within its normal context (Schell 1992:2). Schell (1992:2) furthermore differentiates between two types of case studies, namely descriptive and exploratory case studies.

4.2.1 Descriptive case studies

Descriptive case studies are seen as typical or selective because they focus on a particular issue or aspect of behaviour with the aim of gaining more knowledge and refining it with the aim of gaining a better understanding of certain phenomena. This type of case study leads to questions of "how" and "why" certain behaviours produce an outcome (Schell 1992:4-5).

4.2.2 Exploratory case studies

A more rigorous application of an exploratory case study attempts to isolate selected social factors within a real-life context in order to provide a test for existing explanations. The researcher seeks to assess evidence of a previous conclusion by examining the most favourable illustrations of a particular issue (Schell 1992:4-5).

4.3 An analysis of case studies to support this study

Case studies provide an engaging and rich exploration of a problem at hand and place the problem within a real-world setting. This mini-dissertation used nuances of the descriptive case study approach. The following case studies proved useful in supporting the implementation of internships and learnerships in addressing youth unemployment.

4.3.1 Shanduka Black Umbrellas (SBU)

SBU is a non-profit enterprise development incubation organisation that partners with the private and public sector, as well as civil society, to address the low level of skills in the development of entrepreneurship. This initiative ensures that there is a transfer of skills and knowledge from mentors to mentees, and it also allows businesses to grow and meet their business objectives. This development incubation partnered with the Shanduka

Foundation (now the Cyril Ramaphosa Foundation) and has proven itself as a catalyst for development. It has successfully rooted itself in collaboration with various stakeholders with the aim of achieving economic and social change, and it works through a platform of cooperation with civil society and the private and public sectors so that the correct resources and skills development measures are in place to support development at all levels.

Current incubator programmes are in operation in the Gauteng, North West, and Limpopo provinces. The incubation process runs for a maximum duration of 39 months, which includes a three-month pre-incubation period. Once participants have completed their incubation training, they are labelled as "successful graduates" (SBU 2011:1).

In South Africa, incubation is a recent phenomenon and is still evolving. Incubation systems have been identified as ways of nurturing interns and learners and linking them to more established workplaces. Incubation has been seen to be effective in skills development and is initiated through certain steps, which are discussed in the following sub-sections.

4.3.1.1 Pre-incubation

During this phase, the participants attend numerous workshops that help them to perform thorough introspection of their skills, strengths, and weaknesses, and to assess their ability to work in an environment where pressure and their personal growth and public sector achievements need to be achieved and controlled to the maximum level (SBU 2011:1).

4.3.1.2 Full incubation

Once the participants have successfully completed the first stage, they are prepared for full incubation. This phase is divided into two sub-segments, namely the resident incubation phase, where the participants focus on the theory of the particular career choice; and the virtual incubation phase, where the focus is on participants who already

have exposure to the working environment, and where they are monitored and evaluated and placed at the appropriate level in a work environment (SBU 2011:1).

4.3.1.3   Full incubation: Initial phase

Upon the completion of either resident or virtual incubation, the participant enters a three-month intensive programme that ensures that the participant is deemed fit to be employed. The participant now has a thorough understanding of the terms and conditions and measurable deliverables in terms of the chosen profession (SBU 2011:1).

4.3.1.4   Full incubation and graduate feeder

After successful completion of the incubation phase, the candidates are at a stage where they have gained sufficient training through practical experience, which ultimately allows them to be professionals in their career of choice. Through the graduate feeder, ongoing activities are provided to them that assist with further development and growth (SBU 2011:1).

4.3.1.5   Full incubation and graduate phase

Once members reach this phase, they are eligible for graduation. This is the final phase of incubation. The candidates are now granted the opportunity to exercise their skills and training in the workplace (SBU 2011:2-8).

SBU works through a platform of cooperation between civil society, the private sector, and the government so that the correct resources, skills development, mentoring, and access to markets are in place to support development at all levels. Participants are afforded opportunities, expertise, office infrastructure, and resources (SBU 2011).

4.4   The Gauteng Integrated Youth Development Strategy (GIYDS)

The Gauteng Provincial Government adopted the GIYDS for the strategic period 2010 to 2014 in May 2010 in an effort to advance youth development in Gauteng. The GIYDS has four strategic focus objectives, namely:

- youth development advocacy;
- youth labour market and employment strategy;
- youth-friendly government services; and
- youth citizenship rights and responsibilities (Gauteng Provincial Government 2010).

The current outline of the planned programmes is noted in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Planned programmes for the youth

Programmes	Targeted young people
1. Learnerships	3 000
2. Internships	1 000
3. Skills programmes (artisanships, FET colleges, and general skills)	1 470
4. Unemployed youth database	3 000 young people to benefit from recruitment and placement

Source: (Gauteng Provincial Government 2010)

In the 2011/2012 State of the Province address, the premier identified the following townships within Gauteng as roll-out sites for this initiative:

- Munsieville;
- Kagiso;
- Katlehong;
- Thokoza; and
- Sharpeville.

These townships initiatives are popularly known as *Qoqa Abolovva* ("gather the non-workers") and are aimed at providing a range of interventions to grow informal businesses in the township and to enhance businesses' ability to create decent work and increase economic activity.

Target groups for this initiative are:

- youth-owned businesses (18- to 35-year-olds);
- unemployed youths in townships;
- SMMEs in townships; and
- unemployed graduates (Gauteng Provincial Government 2010).

The initiative is underpinned by the following objectives:

- The facilitation of economic participation in the mainstream economy by youths in townships;
- The facilitation of job creation; and
- The development and regeneration of townships through enhancing economic activity (Gauteng Provincial Government 2010).

4.5 Youth Advisory Centres (YACs)

YACs were established in the Lesedi, Emfuleni, and Midvaal local municipalities. There are currently three centres that function as reflected in Table 4.2 and that provide a wide range of services.

Table 4.2: Number of youths supported by YACs and services provided

Services	Amount (2012/2013)	Amount (2013/2014)
CV writing and entrepreneurship	1 424	2 633
Basic computer training and Internet access	3 841	1 921
Life skills and basic computer literacy	1 330	1 893
Career advice and outreach	4 327	3 724

Source: (Adapted from SDM 2016:28)

In addition to the services accessed through the YACs, the Youth Unit facilitates and supports a number of youth programmes in collaboration with the NYDA and the Gauteng City Regional Academy. The services are indicated in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Description of services offered by YACs

Description of services	Amount (2012/2013)	Amount (2013/2014)
Rural youth programme: Assists rural youths with skills development in FET colleges and community development	203 young people have attended non-military training. 38 welders are undergoing Level-4 training in Vanderbijlpark.	29 welders completed their Level-4 course. 253 National Rural Youth Service Corps (NARYSEC) members were verified for placement through various FET organisations to complete courses.
Youth cooperatives	15 youth cooperatives were recommended for the Borotho Project supported by the Office of the Premier.	20 youth-owned cooperatives attended an accredited course on business management and pricing.
Skills training and employment	2 529 young people were trained in financial management.	7 local learners have been absorbed by the provincial Department of Health after completion of their learnerships. 23 contracts were renewed for learnerships.

Source: (Adapted from SDM 2016:28)

A number of campaigns and workshops have been conducted in an effort to create awareness of youth development programmes and capacity building, which include, among others:

- entrepreneurship awareness workshops with the NYDA;
- financial management workshops with Absa Life Empowerment;
- Proud to Serve campaign, to encourage the spirit of patriotism among the youth;
- 135 learners were placed in the National Youth Service (NYS) learnership; and
- 130 were placed in General Administration learnerships with the Department of Health (SDM 2016:29).

4.6 National Youth Service (NYS)

The NYS is a division of the EPWP and was initiated in April 2017 in an effort to engage young unemployed people of South Africa. The NYS promotes youth participation in building an environment that assists young people to gain work-related skills.

NYS training is divided into two components, namely theoretical training and six-month on-site training. The participant can move out of the programme through employment by a government department, a contractor, a private company, or through placement in an SMME.

The programme aims to eradicate poverty and to provide an income through temporary employment offered to the unemployed to carry out socially useful activities. The EPWP aims to achieve this goal by providing participants the opportunity of training and thereby allowing them to gain work experience that will enhance the participants' ability to earn a living in the future.

The following projects are supported by the EPWP to address youth unemployment and the building of infrastructure:

- School cleaning and renovations;
- Community gardens; and
- Fencing of national roads.

Training also forms a central objective of the EPWP. Training is noted as the central component of the EPWP that ensures that the participants obtain relevant and marketable skills and provides those who have never worked with valuable exposure to employment (SARPN 2003:4-14).

4.7   G-Cube

G-Cube is a private e-learning consulting organisation whose primary focus is improving human or social performance. Its services include organisational and youth development. Its youth development programmes include learnerships, youth development, and accredited peer education. One example of its projects is the Learner Support Agency. The Learner Support Agency empowers unemployed youths through upskilling them with a qualification and the experience of working with young people.

The Learner Support Agency is implemented in the following phases:

- The initial phase accredits the participant to facilitate peer education.
- The secondary phase enrols the participant in a learnership (G-Cube SA n.d.).

The Learner Support Agency provides unemployed youths with the opportunity to counsel high school learners in issues of life skills and peer education club building, and assists with school-based youth focus groups.

4.8   Implementation of internships and learnerships through mentoring

Mentoring is defined as a process where a more experienced member of a particular workplace is given the responsibility to monitor the activities of participants in a systematic and developmental manner. Additionally, mentors provide leadership and guidance to mentees on a whole range of work-related issues (Pop 2009:22).

Mentoring involves a relationship between a mentor and a mentee, where a level of trust and understanding is developed by finding mutual ground. Clutterbuck (2004:89-92) identifies the objectives of mentoring as follows:

- Introducing the mentee to particular functions in the chosen career that might help the mentee to understand and may open the mentees' eyes to other opportunities that exist in the field after certain developmental phases have been completed.
- Helping the mentee to focus and do a step-by-step breakdown of the achievements and existing goals that are seemingly impossible or are far-fetched. Helping mentees focus on this allows them to enter into a self-developmental and career-orientated pathway that is much easier for them to handle; ultimately leading to much greater achievements.
- Helping the mentee to critically consider how to be noticed in the workplace where it matters the most.
- Helping mentees establish networks in the chosen field that will be beneficial to them in the future. These networks will also enable the mentees to be more effective in organisations.

- Helping mentees to thoroughly think about how to apply in practice what they have learned in theory.
- Helping mentees to gain a better understanding of their career choice (Clutterbuck 2004:89-92).

The literature identifies two types of mentoring, namely informal mentoring and formal mentoring.

4.8.1 Informal mentoring

Informal mentoring relationships develop spontaneously and are not managed or specifically recognised as a mentoring relationship within a larger organisation. A mentor reaches out to a mentee (or vice versa) and a relationship develops, which benefits the mentee's professional development.

Due to the spontaneous development, these relationships depend somewhat more on the individuals having things in common and feeling comfortable with one another from the beginning. The relationship may develop from a specific need by the mentee around a task or situation for guidance, support, or advice. The relationship is most likely initiated by the mentee as he/she seeks support for a specific task.

This type of relationship might also develop when an established professional needs an early-career professional to complete certain tasks within an office or project setting (Presidential Task Force 2006:8-10).

4.8.2 Formal mentoring

Formal mentoring relationships develop within organisational structures that are specifically designed to facilitate the creation and maintenance of such relationships.

Formal mentoring has the following characteristics that could directly influence its effectiveness:

- Programme objectives;
- Selection of participants;

- Matching of mentors and mentees;

- Training of mentors and mentees;

- Guidelines for frequency of meeting; and

- A goal-setting process.

Programme objectives may vary from socialising newcomers into an organisation to the intense career development of a target population (e.g. high-potential people, women, and ethnic minorities). These objectives affect the scope of the mentoring and will help drive goal-setting and training objectives. Formal mentoring programmes are generally more effective when mentors voluntarily participate and are intrinsically motivated to help mentees.

Formal programmes vary widely in their methods to match mentors and mentees, and in their preparation of individuals to engage in mentoring. Programmes that solicit important matching criteria from both parties are more likely to initiate successful mentorships (Presidential Task Force 2006:9-10).

Matching criteria may include professional interests, demographics, geographical location, human interest factors (e.g. hobbies and lifestyles), personality, values, and learning orientation. Orientation or training programmes for mentors and mentees can help both parties establish a psychological contract for the relationship. Training objectives can include clear communication of expectations of the relationship, goal-setting procedures, conflict-resolution skills, and the general structure of the mentoring programme. Furthermore, these programmes often suggest guidelines for the frequency of meetings, which are related to more frequent meetings and more mentoring. Typical guidelines suggest one or two meetings per month and specify the mentee as the responsible party to initiate these meetings. Finally, a goal-setting process provides structure to the relationship. Good goals are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time bound (Presidential Task Force 2006:9-10).

4.9   Conclusion

Internships and learnerships have the ability to curb youth unemployment. Typical internships provide interns with the most effective channel to the workforce, while learnerships provide students with the opportunity to add credits to their formal education. Both learnerships and internships have a unique manner of assisting in the reduction of youth unemployment. Internships are part of a model that has a unique vision of educational success in which standardised tests, subject-based courses, and textbook learning are eschewed and replaced with authentic competency- and performance-based elements and measures of education (Research Starters 2008:4).

Mentorship and incubation form an integral part of the successful implementation of internships and learnerships. Mentoring and incubation ensure that learners and interns work closely with their mentors and trainers, which in turn can prove beneficial for both learners and interns in sharing and building experience. Despite the investment in youth employment projects, the levels of youth unemployment remain alarmingly high. Internships, learnerships, investment by both the public and private sectors, and mentoring programmes have been introduced, as was indicated in this chapter; however, the challenge remains. The next chapter discusses the results of the interviews in order to add rich information to answer the overarching research question that was posed in Chapter One.

CHAPTER FIVE
RESEARCH METHODS, DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

5.1   Introduction

In the preceding chapters, the key purpose of internships and learnerships in curbing youth unemployment was provided. In addition, selected case studies relating to internships, learnerships, and mentoring were provided and discussed. This chapter provides a brief overview of the research and data-collection methods adopted for this mini-dissertation. Secondly, data analysis and findings are discussed. Finally, in providing an answer to the primary and secondary research questions outlined in Chapter One, the perceptions of the respondents as gleaned from individual and telephonic interviews, which were used as the research instruments, are presented.

Research is a search for knowledge. Kothari (2004:27) defines research as an art of scientific investigation, and as a careful inquiry specifically through the search for new knowledge. The term "research design" can thus be defined as a detailed plan of action that aims to guide research. The methods used in this research aimed to analyse the role of internships and learnerships in the SDM as a tool for skills development of youths and to assess whether the goals of the intended programmes are actually perceived to be met by the direct stakeholders involved. Furthermore, the study attempted to answer the following questions:

- How effective are internships and learnerships perceived to be by municipal employers and learners/participants?
- Do internships and learnerships provide adequate workplace skills in the opinion of the municipality?
- What are the nature and practical application of the skills that are developed in the internships and learnerships according to the municipal employers and learners involved?

The objectives of the research were:

- To explore the theoretical and conceptual factors that underpin learnerships and internships in South Africa.
- To identify the legislative frameworks that impact on learnerships and internships in South Africa.
- To identify whether learnerships and internships provide adequate workplace skills for the parties involved.
- To explore the nature and practical application of skills development in order to promote learnerships and internships among learners in the SDM.
- To assess the nature of the practical application of the workplace skills acquired through internships and learnerships in relation to the management of the skills development institutions and learners.
- To analyse the role and effectiveness of mentoring and incubation in the implementation of internships and learnerships.

5.2 Research philosophy

According to Collins and Hussey (2003:55), research philosophy is primarily divided into two forms, namely the positivistic paradigm and the phenomenological paradigm, as indicated in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Positivistic and phenomenological paradigm

Positivistic paradigm	Phenomenological paradigm
Produces quantitative data	Produces qualitative data
Concerned with testing a hypothesis	Generates theories
Uses larger samples	Uses much smaller samples
Has high reliability	Has low reliability
Produces low validity	Produces high validity
The data are highly specific and precise	The data are rich and subjective
Generalises from the sample to the population	Generalises from one setting to another
Location is artificial	Location is natural

Source: (Collins and Hussey 2003:55)

Collins and Hussey (2003:55) maintain that the use of these approaches simultaneously is not possible as these approaches hold opposing worldviews. It is, however, possible to

use quantitative and qualitative designs for data collection in an attempt to reconcile the two approaches. In reconciling the two, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007) explain the two research approaches that can be used, as indicated in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Deductive and inductive approach

Deductive approach	Inductive approach
Involves itself with moving from theory to data.	Aims to gain a closer understanding of the research context.
Group is quantitative.	The collection is qualitative.
The application is controlled to ensure the validity of data.	It is a more flexible structure in order to permit changes as research progresses.
Concerns itself with the need to clarify casual relationships between variables.	It is a realisation that research is part of a research process.
Highly structured approach.	Less concerned with the need to generalise.
Researcher is independent.	
Includes the necessity of selecting a sample of sufficient size in order to generate a conclusion.	Aims at achieving and understanding why humans attach meaning to events.
Involves scientific theories	

Source: (Saunders et al. 2007)

5.3   Research methods

This section explains the critical aspects that underpin the qualitative research design selected for this mini-dissertation. The reason for adopting the exploratory research method and the rationale for the selection of the descriptive approach are provided. This section also presents the rationale behind the selection of the research methodology and design of this study. The main objective of an academic activity is to engage in constructing knowledge (Auriacombe and Holtzhausen 2014:1). Research is based on rigorous methodological inquiry, scientific knowledge treats knowledge claims as provisional, and it is inherently evidence based in nature (Auriacombe and Holtzhausen 2014:11). The replication and reproducibility of research findings are central to the creation and testing of theories and their acceptance by scientific communities (Berg 2001:7).

5.3.1 Qualitative and quantitative research design

According to Creswell (2014:12), "research designs are types of enquiry within qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method approaches that provide specific direction for procedures in a research design." An overview of the research designs is captured in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: Alternative research designs

Quantitative	Qualitative	Mixed methods
• Experimental designs • Non-experimental designs such as surveys	• Narrative research • Phenomenology • Grounded theory • Ethnography • Case study	• Convergent • Explanatory sequential • Exploratory sequential • Transformative, embedded, or multiphase

Source: (Creswell 2014:12)

The differences between qualitative and quantitative methods are a methodological matter as the choice between them should be based on their ability to answer the research question. The differences between the two are in the major research areas, which include the analytical objective, the types of questions that are posed, the types of data-collection methods that are employed, the types of data that are used, and the degree of flexibility in the design study. Besides the quantitative and qualitative approaches, the mixed-methods approach is seen as the third type of approach, which includes aspects of both the quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Hale and Astolfi (2011:205) describe the qualitative design as a system that seeks to build a holistic and narrative understanding of the social world. Such a study will provide an in-depth understanding of how internships and learnerships are awarded, how they plan to enhance the skills of the youth, and how the skills acquired during these programmes make the youth more employable.

The use of both quantitative and qualitative designs is supportive of triangulation. Qualitative research allows the researcher to know the individuals and their points of views personally, while quantitative research allows the researcher to gain an overall perspective on the issue at hand and how the individual is affected by it. Qualitative research methods also describe and outline the path that a researcher should take, which

questions the researcher should ask, and which factors play a role in the outcome of the level of skills development (Brynard and Hanekom 2006:36).

5.3.2   Triangulation

For purposes of this research, triangulation was used as a strategy for increasing the validity of the research findings. Yeasmin and Rahman (2012:156) define triangulation as a process of verification that is the combination of two or more theories, data sources, methods, or investigators in one study of a single phenomenon to converge on a single construct, and can be employed in both quantitative (validation) and qualitative (inquiry) studies.

Although triangulation is seen as useful because of its ability to allow the researcher to be more confident of the results and because it minimises the inadequacies of a single-source research, Yeasmin and Rahman (2012:156) warn that should the research not have a clear focus, i.e. theoretical underpinning, triangulation will not produce a satisfactory outcome. Therefore, triangulation is not an end in itself and it should not be used as a tool to fine-tune research designs and outcomes.

5.4   Data collection

For purposes of this research, the questions presented to the participants were structured with the aim of supporting the research questions. The questions in the questionnaire were explained to the participants prior to them completing the questionnaire, with the aim of ensuring that every question was understood clearly by the participants. The questionnaire was divided into categories, which, when combined, provided the researcher with clear answers.

The questionnaire was divided into the following categories:

- **Section A:** This section contained questions that determined the participants' age, how long they had been part of the programmes, the nature of the programmes (whether it was an internship or learnership), the role they played in the workplace,

and whether they had been in a similar programme before. The overall questions in this section were deemed biographical.

- **Section B:** This section required individuals to select between three choices (yes, no, or maybe) to a series of questions that aimed to determine their level of understanding of the programme in which they participated. A total of 15 questions were posed in this section.

- **Section C:** This was the most crucial part of the questionnaire. Questions in this section aimed to answer the research questions and to reach the objectives highlighted at the beginning of the mini-dissertation. The questions in this section were in-depth, and they contained follow-up questions to answers previously given. The questions aimed to provide an understanding of the participants' role in the programmes and whether they perceived their role to be beneficial in enhancing their skills. These questions sought answers to the participants' perceptions of learnerships and internships.

Interviews were conducted in the areas where the participants worked as most of them were comfortable in these areas. Telephonic interviews were conducted with participants in positions of authority due to the fact that they were engaged during office hours. The line of questioning was the same as that of the face-to-face interviews.

The following is a description of the interviews that were conducted:

- Only one individual was interviewed who had a physical disability, namely a woman who was a bilateral leg amputee. The nature of the questions allowed the researcher to determine how disability friendly the nature of the programmes was and whether the programmes catered for the workplace needs of persons with disabilities.

- Two participants between the ages of 20 and 23 were interviewed. These participants were relatively new to the programmes as they had just completed their studies.

- Six participants between the ages of 24 and 26 were interviewed. The participants had graduated and were looking for permanent employment.

- Six participants who were in their 30s (senior youths) were interviewed. These participants, according to the definition of youth, bordered on what may be called "being an adult."

- Only three officials were interviewed for the purpose of this mini-dissertation. Interviews occurred telephonically due to their busy work schedules.

A total of 18 interviews were thus conducted. The participants of the programmes were informed of the nature of this study, which was for academic purposes. The participants were reassured that the information they provided would be used strictly for research purposes. They were also reassured of their confidentiality as the majority preferred to remain anonymous.

5.5   Sampling and population size

A sample method involves taking a representative selection of a population and using data collected from the population as research information. Cochran (1953:5) maintains that using the correct sampling method provides the researcher with the ability to reduce research costs, conduct research more effectively, have greater flexibility, and to provide greater accuracy. Teddlie and Yu (2007:77) explain the concept of mixed-methods sampling as involving the selection of units or cases for a research study using both probability and purposive sampling strategies.

5.5.1   Probability sampling

Probability sampling is a cluster of multiple probability techniques, including random sampling, which occurs when each sample unit in a clearly defined population has the ability to be included in the sample size; stratified sampling, which occurs when the researcher divides the population into sub-groups and then selects units from the sub-groups; and cluster sampling, which is when the sampling unit is not an individual but a group that is formed naturally in a population such as neighbourhoods (Teddlie and Yu 2007:78-79).

There are three basic types of probability sampling, according to Teddlie and Yu (2007:79-80):

- **Random sampling:** This is noted as the most well-known of all sampling strategies, whereby a random sample of one of each unit (e.g. gender, age) in the population is selected. Methods of selection include drawing numbers from a box or using a computer to generate a sample.
- **Stratified sampling:** This sampling technique occurs when a researcher requires a more diverse sub-group in the sample.
- **Cluster sampling:** This technique is useful when a researcher wants to generate a more efficient probability sample in terms of monetary and/or time resources.

5.5.2   Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling is explained as a technique that involves selecting certain units or cases based on a purpose rather than randomly. The main focus of a purposive sample is to produce a sample that can logically be assumed to be representative of the population. This is often accomplished by applying expert knowledge of the population to select in a non-random manner a sample of elements that represents a cross-section of the population. Purposive sampling relates to the researcher making a deliberate choice of participants whom he/she wishes to interview based on the qualities that the participant possesses. Etikan, Musa and Alkassim (2015) explain it as follows: "It is a non-random technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of participants. Simply put, the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience."

In this instance, the researcher chose the groups of participants as indicated in Table 1.1 in Chapter One to provide information and insight to add rich information to the main research question posed.

5.6 Interview procedure and sample

The participants were consulted and consent was provided by them and their superiors (where necessary). All interviews were performed in areas where the participants felt comfortable. In all cases, the participants chose to be interviewed at their workplace or training facility. The telephonic interviews with the three managers were conducted while they were at work, where they had made time to participate in the telephonic interviews.

5.7 Data analysis

The essence of strong data analysis depends on how well the interviewer can interpret the information he/she had gathered. According to Walliman (2011:66-67), data recording includes levels of abstraction that assist the researcher/interviewer to sift through the primary data they have collected. Walliman (2011:68) categorises the levels in the following manner:

- **Theory:** Theory refers to a statement that makes a claim regarding a certain phenomenon. The theories can range from very complex, large-scale claims that are developed through academic research to a question that seeks understanding regarding how the world operates. The theory that underpins this mini-dissertation is the social exclusion theory and the general theory of unemployment, as related to internship and learnership, and how effective they are in skills development to address youth unemployment (see Chapter Two).
- **Concepts:** Concepts are terms used to explain a particular phenomenon. Walliman (2011) notes that concepts should be clearly defined and understood in the same way by all participants. Concepts embedded in the questions to the participants were explained in detail to assure that the participants understood what was asked of them. The researcher was mindful not to influence the participants in any way.
- **Indicators:** Indicators, which are observable and measurable, allow a researcher to prove that a certain phenomenon, such as youth unemployment, exists. Indicators are mostly used in scientific and technical subjects and are in all cases very well defined and accepted.

- **Variables:** Variables are used as a measuring tool for indicators. They are most appropriate in quantitative research methods that seek a large number of participants in a sample.

- **Values:** Values used refer to units of measurements. Three-point scales are normally used, particularly when searching for answers in data collection. In this mini-dissertation, values were used in Section B of the questionnaire. Participants were requested to choose between three answers (yes, no, or maybe). The answers provided allowed the researcher a glimpse of how much knowledge the participants possessed regarding the programmes at hand.

5.8   Presentation of data

The questions that were put forward to the participants sought to address the following broad categories:

How effective are internships and learnerships perceived to be by municipal employers and learners/participants?

This question aimed to verify what other scholarly articles have concluded about the effectiveness of internships and learnerships. It assisted the researcher to test the effectiveness of the programmes within the chosen sample in the community.

Do internships and learnerships provide adequate workplace skills as per the SDM's interpretation?

This question aimed to ascertain whether the training that is provided by the municipality is adequate to promote skills development for meaningful employment.

What are the nature and practical application of the skills that are developed in internship and learnership programmes by the stakeholders interviewed?

The application of the skills and the development thereof include the implementation of mentorship within the workplace and the use of incubation hubs to train the participants and allow them to implement the skills that they have already acquired. This question assisted the researcher to test whether or not mentorship plays a positive role in the

implementation of the programmes and whether or not incubation hubs can be used successfully as a catalyst for implementing internships and learnerships.

As mentioned previously, the questionnaire schedule contained a series of questions. Section A consisted of general questions of a demographic and biographic nature. The results are presented in Figures 5.1 and 5.2.
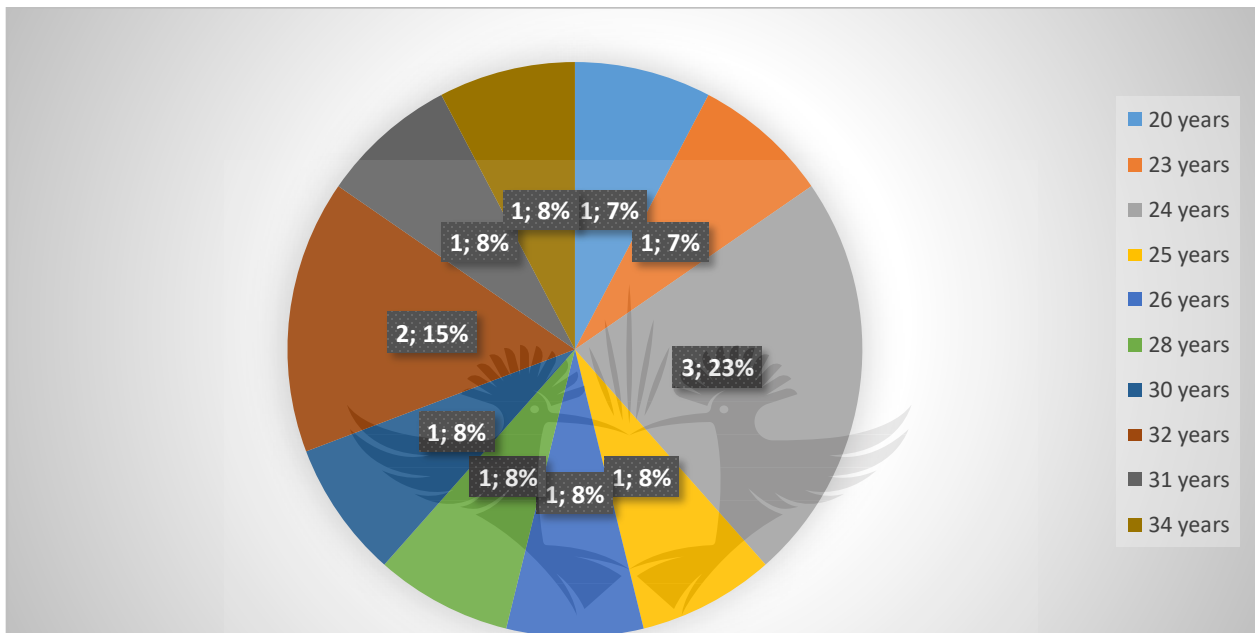
Figure 5.1: Age differentials among participants

Source: (Author)
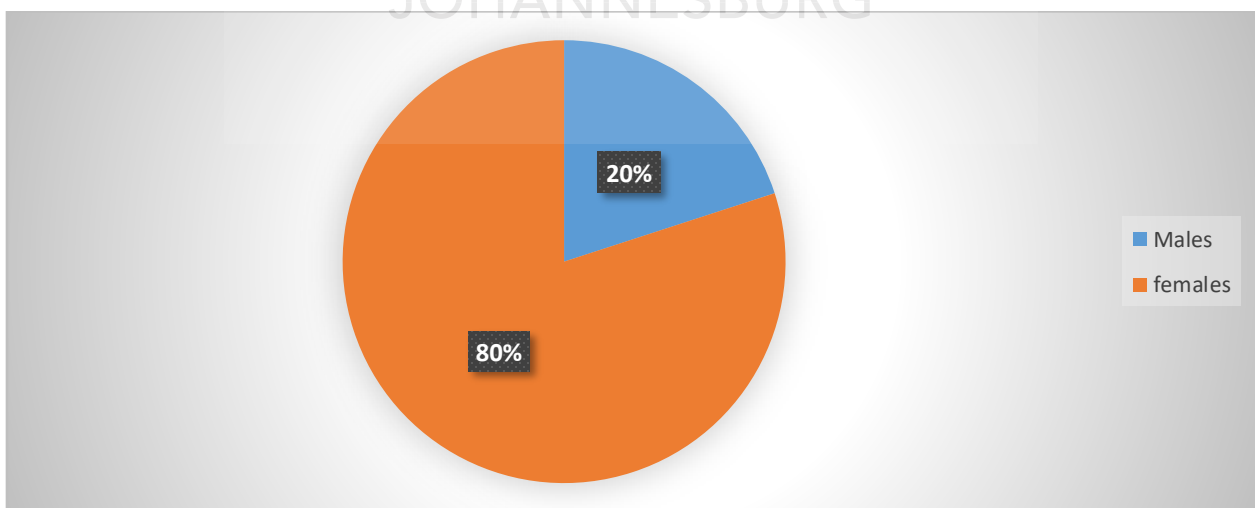
Figure 5.2: Gender breakdown of participants

Source: (Author)

It is evident from Figures 5.1 and 5.2 that mainly females were available for the interviews, with the majority of the individuals who participated in internships and learnerships being females between the ages of 20 and 27, and 29 and 35. One female participant was disabled. It must be noted that disabled participants in learnerships and internships can only be accommodated if the employer has facilities for people with disabilities.

The placement of the participants depended on where they lived. Most of the participants were placed closer to their homes, as the stipend they received (the general stipend for learnerships and internships average between R3 000 and R4 000 per month) does not fully cater for placement outside the wards in which they live. The participants expressed a great deal of dissatisfaction on this issue as many of them used whatever little they received as a stipend to support their families. The majority of them have become breadwinners because of the stipend.

All the participants were issued with contracts prior to their placements, which stated the terms and conditions of their training, as well as what was required of them during that period. The participants were awarded an opportunity to be interviewed within their respective training places. Section B of the questionnaire clustered the interview questions into positive and negative aspects of the programmes. The aspects that were documented are discussed in the following sub-sections.

5.8.1 Positive aspects: Participant feedback regarding programmes

In this section, the positive feedback of the participants in learnership and internship programmes are provided.

5.8.1.1 *Work experience*

The participants were requested to state if they had been in such a programme prior to the current placement, of which six of the 15 responded positively. The participants who responded positively stated that the programmes in which they were previously enrolled (either an internship or learnership) granted them a greater opportunity to explore their chosen field in greater detail. They were given the same opportunities and general

conditions of work as permanent employees. Although their employment was contractual, their level of work was expected to be the same as that of permanent employees.

(a)   Training and orientation

The participants of internships and learnerships were trained prior to and during their placement within programmes. The training includes basic computer skills, first aid training, data capturing, clerical duties, and bookkeeping. The training was needs based and considered extensive. The participants who enrolled for learnerships as data capturers noted how they were given case studies that required them to differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate methods of data capturing. They were then assigned a permanent employee who would mentor them for four weeks.

The participants who were enrolled as interns within the financial department of an institution were firstly requested to enrol in an accounting course where the outcomes of the course determined their placement in the financial department.

Supervisors were requested to enrol all participants in courses based on the needs of the institution. The participants were offered certificates of participation after completing all external courses; the in-house training did not provide them with any certification. The awarding of certificates allowed the participants to enhance their CVs and equipped them with additional skills. Although training was offered in some form or another, the participants noted that they still required further training. The current training methods were deemed insufficient for their needs. They also noted that training opportunities at a national level were very scarce and tended to be limited to certain fields of expertise.

Orientation to the workplace only took place once during their contractual term. This process introduced them to the workplace "atmosphere" and to their fellow workers. An assessment was then performed by the supervisor to ensure that the participants were familiar with their placement. They were also assessed on how well they interacted with their fellow workers during the period of orientation.

(b)   Structured supervision

The participants were supervised and assessed, firstly, on the manner in which they conducted themselves in the workplace. This assessment was based on understanding the vision and mission of the institution in order to promote what the institution aspired for related to the work ethic of employees. The participants noted the satisfactory manner in which they were supervised. The supervisors guided the participants through phases of public interaction so as to avoid confrontation that could arise.

(c)   Assessment

The structured supervision was closely linked to assessment practices. The participants noted that assessments were threefold, as follows:

- The learner is assessed by the supervisor.
- The supervisor is assessed by the learner. This assessment is based on the behaviour of the supervisor towards the participant.
- The supervisor is assessed by individuals of different portfolios to ensure that the participant is trained successfully.

(d)   Application of skills acquired

Some participants indicated that they could not apply all the skills they had acquired. The male participants showed interest in applying for additional courses while still in the programmes. They expressed a need to be given more in-house training that focused on their specific skill set.

The female participants commented on the successful application of their skill sets in the workplace. The participants provided the researcher with ways in which they applied the skills acquired during the programmes. It became evident that they were given the opportunity to become professionals in their workplace. The reasons for the female participants using their skill sets much more meaningfully than males are not within the scope of this mini-dissertation. This "gender slant" could be a topic for further research.

(e)   Rotation of responsibilities

The researcher was made aware of a system where a rotation of responsibilities was practised. The system allows members within the same programme to interchange responsibilities. Four females aged between 23 and 24 were employed as clerks in their institutions. Their roles included filing results, preparing institutional minutes, typing agendas, answering the telephone, setting appointments, managing the diaries of various departments, and managing the switchboard system. The interns had acquired diplomas in office administration and were passionate about the roles assigned to them.

The system of rotation allowed each intern to be assigned a specific role for the duration of two weeks; once this term ended, the responsibility shifted to another intern. The participants noted that this system was most beneficial to their training because it subjected them to different tasks and developed greater skills within them. They also noted that peer-to-peer assessments were conducted during the commencement of different rounds of rotation.

(f)   Duration of the programme

The contractual duration is 12 months. The contract can, however, be extended for another 12 months (or more) on request of the employer. The participants who had their contracts extended noted that the assessments played a vital role in the extension of their contracts. It was noted from the three females whose contracts were extended that their supervisors requested an extension due to their outstanding performance. Factors such as willingness to work extra hours, their availability for skills development workshops, and their participation during meetings played a significant role in the extension of their contracts.

(g)   Employee debriefing

The participants were given the opportunity to express themselves during employee wellness meetings. They attended workshops on conflict resolution, financial management, and peer-to-peer behaviour. These workshops extended further than their usual workshops, as they were specifically designed for the permanent staff.

(h)   Workplace accommodation of participants with physical disabilities

Only one participant fitted this category. The participant was a female amputee. Disabled employees are awarded the same opportunities as all other interns. However, the major challenge for them is interaction with the community. Based as an intern in stocktaking, with a degree in procurement, the physical challenges of employees with disabilities being accommodated in the workplace proved a challenge to this participant.

5.9   Mentorship

The participants were requested to answer questions regarding mentorship and whether they were familiar with the concept. All the participants expressed their understanding of the concept, and the following information was gathered.

5.9.1   The availability of a mentor

The participants defined a mentor as "an individual who journeys with them during their term of employment" and "an individual who would often guide them and provide them with advice when necessitated." The interns provided further examples of when mentors were availed to them.

It was evident that the need for mentors was greater than the availability thereof. The participants enrolled in learnerships concurred with what was recorded by the interns. The practical application of internships and learnerships through mentoring was not made evident by the participants. Although they were driven to succeed and to enhance their skills, the lack of guidance from an experienced individual proved to be detrimental.

The implementation guidelines published in the National Youth Policy (NYDA 2012:20-22) advocate for, and advise institutions on, establishing youth-related employment opportunities. YACs, as noted in earlier chapters of this mini-dissertation, are supposed to provide support with developmental matters and assist these institutions to take full responsibility for the development of the youth. The integration of young people with a mentor was supposed to be a government response to provide the youth with guidance on matters of career progression.

5.9.2   Knowledge of mentors

The participants were requested to answer a question that affirmed their knowledge of their programme mentors. Nine of the participants responded by affirming that they were introduced to an individual who was referred to as a mentor; however, the mentor was not always available when the need arose. They affirmed that when help was needed in the absence of the mentor, they resorted to seeking assistance from permanent workers. The concern of one mentor sharing his/her expertise with multiple interns/learners was also a point for concern.

5.10   Incubation method of implementing internships and learnerships

The participants expressed a lack of knowledge regarding incubation as a method of implementing internships and learnerships. The researcher explained what incubation entailed. The viewpoints of the participants are stated in the following sub-sections.

5.10.1   Male perspective

Three of the male participants expressed that this method would be more beneficial if it were implemented from early on in the basic education system. They expressed the need for "young boys" to learn from a very young age about business ethics and entrepreneurship. They noted the increase in crime and drug abuse primarily among young boys within their neighbourhoods and noted that this could be curbed if young boys were introduced to an incubation project while they were still in school. Having incubation programmes within the local community would extend the internship and learnership programmes, and encourage the branching out of YACs.

5.10.2   Female perspective

The female participants raised concerns regarding the concept. Four of the female participants noted that it would be much more useful for individuals who were more inclined to further their studies beyond their national certificate, while seven of the remaining females shared the same sentiments as the male participants.

Incubation projects need to be discussed in further detail among the unemployed youth as the understanding of the concept proved to be limited.

5.11 Internships and learnerships as perceived by appointed officials

The officials who were interviewed in the SDM included the supervisors of interns and learners. The officials were requested to answer questions regarding the programmes and how the programmes were implemented in their departments. They were then requested to rate the participants' attitude towards the programmes, their peer-to-peer behaviour, their punctuality (specifically in terms of workshops), and the participants' application of skills that they had acquired during the internship/learnership. The appointed officials (who acted as supervisors) rated the participation on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent. Additionally, they distinguished their responses along gender. This is depicted in Figure 5.3.
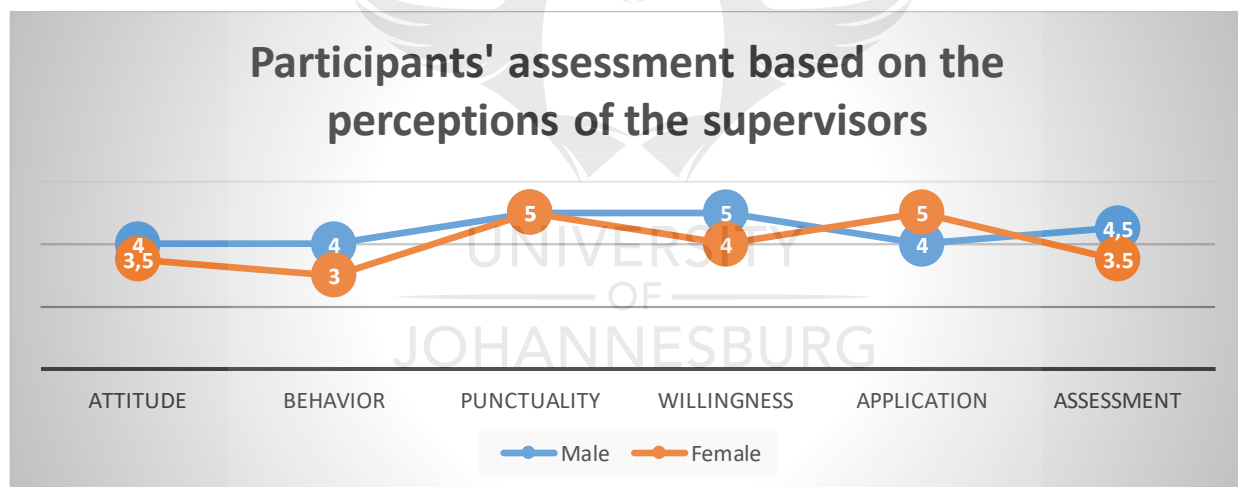
Figure 5.3: Supervisor perceptions of participants in internship and learnership programmes in the SDM

Source: (Author)

5.11.1 The participants' attitude towards the programmes

The supervisors noted that the attitude of the males towards the programmes was more positive than that of the females. The motivation levels to work were different. The supervisors noted that an "inferiority complex" existed, where female participants did not

consider themselves on the same level as the male participants, irrespective of the fact that all participants were awarded the same opportunities depending on the nature of their job descriptions. The officials' scores for attitude between male and female participants differentiated by 0.5, which is deemed insignificant.

5.11.2 Peer-to-peer behaviour

Of concern among the officials (supervisors) was the conflict that existed between male and female participants in the programmes. Internal conflict resulted through programmes that the interns/learners were allocated to, the lack of trust among participants, and the need for them to be awarded extended training opportunities. The supervisors noted that the amount of time spent on resolving conflict could be used more effectively in developing skills through training programmes.

5.11.3 Punctuality in terms of on-site workshops

The supervisors expressed their satisfaction with the punctuality of the participants, especially in terms of punctual workshop attendance. Additionally, the participants were always on time at their work stations.

5.11.4 The participants' application of skills

The supervisors noted that the application of skills by female participants tended to be higher than that of the males, as they believed that they had "to prove a point." Additionally, the female participants felt the need to express their skills more explicitly in order to be recognised. The supervisors had observed healthy competition between some of the participants placed within their departments. They noted that participants' application of skills after workshops increased, which points to the fact that workshops helped to facilitate their experiences.

5.11.5 Peer-to-peer assessment

The officials who acted as supervisors noted that the participants were reluctant to assess one another; the participants tended to delay their assessment submissions. However,

when assessments were submitted, the supervisors noted that the participants rated one another without bias.

5.12   Conclusion

The questions posed searched for clarity, understanding, and knowledge from the participants regarding the programmes they were enrolled in. The participants, in their responses, indicated that the programmes in which they were involved improved their personal growth and gave them the opportunity to interact with professionals within their chosen field.

The responses of the officials as supervisors were also of interest. The supervisors based their responses on the observation of the interns and learners on gender lines (this was unintentional). The overall view of the supervisors of the interns/learners towards the programmes was positive. The area of concern rested on the intrapersonal relationships between interns/learners, which was partially based on the notion that the contractual period could be extended.

The supervisors also revealed that the attitude of the participants towards the programmes was a factor that determined the success or downfall of the participants. They noted that the more positive the participants, the more likely they were to enhance their skill set, which made them more vibrant in the workplace.

Chapter Six provides the synthesis, conclusion, and recommendations of this study.

CHAPTER SIX
SYNTHESIS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1   Introduction

The overarching question that was investigated in this mini-dissertation was: "How effective are learnership and internship programmes for skills development in the SDM?"

The focus of Chapter Six is on the conclusion of the research objectives presented in Chapter One. Chapter Six presents a synthesis of the study in the form of a summary of the research objectives. This chapter commences with an outline of the research problem as discussed in Chapter One. It progresses to draw conclusions based on the literature review on the role and effectiveness of learnership and internship programmes in promoting skills development in the SDM. Furthermore, this chapter presents a summary of the findings based on the interviews conducted with stakeholders, as presented in Chapter Five. Chapter Six presents conclusions based on the entire study.

In Chapter One, the main research question to explore the merit of the stated research problem was declared as: **"How effective are learnership and internship programmes for skills development in the SDM?"**

From the background to the research problem provided in Chapter One, it emerged that poorly skilled youths cannot participate in the economic activity of the country. The levels of unemployment are at a staggering, unprecedented level, mostly among the youth – with the SDM being no exception. Youth unemployment in the SDM, in terms of its narrow definition, stood at 32% in 2018 (Stats SA 2018). Moreover, the legislation that was passed to address youth unemployment nationally and provincially proved ineffective in curbing youth unemployment (Mummenthey and Du Preez 2010:3).

The goals of internships and learnerships are to allow participants to acquire experience to work in a specific field, to make contacts with professionals in the field, to strengthen their CVs, and to jump-start the participants' full-time job search as employers often hire interns for full-time employment after graduation. Moreover, internships aim to fast-track high-level skills, offer unemployed graduates with needed work experience, and empower

graduates with practical knowledge levelling with qualifications (John Hopkins University 2009:3). Although learnerships and internships play a meaningful role in building capacity among the unemployed youth in the SDM, the sheer numbers in terms of unemployed youths make the utility of these programmes questionable. To answer the main research question stated above, Chapter Six discusses how the research objectives explored in this mini-dissertation were reached.

6.2   Synthesis of the research objectives

Primary and secondary data sources were used to gather information to address the research objectives posed in Chapter One. In the following sections, the findings of each of the six research objectives are summarised.

6.2.1   Research Objective 1: To explore the theoretical and conceptual factors that underpin learnerships and internships in South Africa

This objective established the theoretical and conceptual foundation of the factors that underpin learnerships and internships in the SDM. It provided the context for understanding the concepts of learnerships and internships for the purposes of this mini-dissertation. It also focused on two theories, namely the social exclusion theory and the general theory of unemployment, as the philosophical underpinning of this mini-dissertation.

Social exclusion can manifest, for example, through poor education opportunities or unemployment, and it can exist as either active or passive exclusion. It can be argued that social exclusion, in the form of employment opportunities, can be a "ticking time bomb" for the regional stability of the SDM and the country in general. Learnerships and internships play a crucial role in assisting unemployed youths to gain practical experience and readiness for the workplace; however, the absorptive capacity of these programmes, especially in accommodating the number of unemployed in the SDM (32% as at 2018), is an area of concern.

This objective was also juxtaposed against the international experience around youth unemployment, and a perusal of the literature noted that youth unemployment was a phenomenon not unique to South Africa. It must be noted, however, that the statistics of youth unemployment in South Africa are alarmingly high. The Indonesian and Argentinian experience indicated that temporary employment programmes and additional vocational training in these countries helped curb the levels of youth unemployment. In sub-Saharan Africa, youth programmes include aspects related to building self-esteem and ICT skills among those who are unemployed.

6.2.2 Research Objective 2: To identify the legislative frameworks that impact on learnerships and internships in South Africa

South Africa is seen as a country that has a wide range of legislation that supports unemployed citizens in general and the youth in particular. Section 29(1) in Chapter 2 of the Constitution indicates that "everyone has the right to basic education, including adult basic education", and the state has the responsibility to provide FET wherever possible.

The SDA led to the establishment of SETAs, which, in turn, develop and manage internship programmes. Moreover, the National Youth Policy of 2011 was created to build workplace skills.

Despite the wide-ranging legislative/policy frameworks to support employment creation, youth unemployment still persists. It is evident that policies alone will not solve youth unemployment. Future research will have to focus on the impact of socio-economic factors as drivers of economic growth and job creation.

6.2.3 Research Objective 3: To identify whether learnerships and internships provide adequate workplace skills for the parties involved

The participants (unemployed youths) of internships and learnerships provided extensive responses to this objective. The participants acknowledged the methods that were used in the programmes. It was evident, however, that the need for further (extended) training of youths is an aspect that is in great demand.

The participants noted that internships and learnerships were successful in promoting skills development; however, the success is limited. The programmes do not provide sufficient training, and they allow participants to gain exposure to the workforce but they do not sufficiently prepare the participants prior to placement. The participants noted that they would appreciate departmental training and workshops as such training and workshops would provide them with certificates of participation and attendance. They noted that the programmes enhanced their CVs and thus granted them the opportunity to search for better employment opportunities.

6.2.4 Research Objective 4: To explore the nature and practical application of skills development in order to promote learnerships and internships among learners in the SDM

Case studies served as a practical example of how programmes were implemented, the challenges experienced, and the successes and failures; but most of all, they served as a reference point of a particular programme. A selection of cases was considered (see Chapter Four) to add value to this study, for example the SBU. The SBU serves through a platform of cooperation between civil society, the private sector, and the government to develop and mentor participants, to allow them to access markets, etc. The beneficiaries are afforded opportunities, expertise, office infrastructure, and resources to hone their skills in readiness for the workplace.

YACs that were established in the SDM are a great source of assistance to the unemployed youth who require guidance. Municipalities can consider increasing the number of centres within the municipal areas as the need for such centres is widespread. The link between the youth and YACs depends on the strength of the municipality, as resources are needed to drive such a process. The challenge for the SDM is planning for funding YACs through its IDP, given the other overarching priorities of service delivery.

6.2.5 Research Objective 5: To assess the nature of the practical application of the workplace skills acquired through internships and learnerships in relation to the management of the skills development institutions and learners

In order to assess the practical application of skills, the assessment by supervisors was deemed important. The assessment by the participants' supervisors in the programmes was premised on five categories, namely participants' attitude towards the programmes, peer-to-peer behaviour, punctuality in terms of on-site programmes, participants' application of skills, and peer-to-peer assessment.

It was noted that the interventions of the programmes were seen as more beneficial by females in the programmes. The male participants' attitude to internships and learnerships was more positive.

It was noted that the supervisors (municipal officials) found the internship/learnership programmes to be beneficial to both themselves and the participants. It benefitted the supervisors as they could build capacity among a possible future pipeline of employees, and the participants found the programmes beneficial as they offered them practical exposure to skills that they would not ordinarily have had, had they not been part of the programmes.

6.2.6 Research Objective 6: To analyse the role and effectiveness of mentoring and incubation in the implementation of internships and learnerships

Incubation is still a new phenomenon within the context of internships and learnerships as it is synonymously known for its use in the field of entrepreneurship. The participants' views on incubation differed. Some noted that skills development is a task that should commence from early childhood. They noted that skills development should be a crucial part of any child's growth – which the international experience also alluded to (see Chapter Two). It is interesting to note that the participants were not divided into groups based on gender; rather, they were asked the questions individually – and the responses were unintentionally captured as male and female responses. The male participants

believed that should incubation programmes be implemented more vigorously across the SDM, the rate of crime could significantly decrease due to the fact that the "boy child" would be focused on extensive training. The introduction of incubators as an implementation tool for internships and learnerships would have a greater impact if (according to the participants) it is implemented during the onset of youth.

It was surprising to note that the role of mentoring was not taken seriously within the programmes. One would expect that mentoring a young person would be a priority of these programmes as mentorship is a guidance strategy. The participants expressed their dissatisfaction that mentors were not available during the most crucial times of assessment. The other area of concern was that mentors were given too many interns/learners to mentor. This unhealthy ratio led to the mentoring exercise being futile for large parts of the programmes.

6.3   Recommendations

The role of skills development programmes ought to enhance the skills of the participants in these programmes. However, the enhancement of skills needs to be accompanied by training interventions to inform possible beneficiaries of the validity of these programmes.

The following recommendations are made:

6.3.1   Offering courses that cater for individuals with disabilities

As noted previously, only one individual was interviewed who had a physical disability. One might conclude that internships and learnerships in the SDM cater for able-bodied participants. It is recommended that disabled applicants be encouraged to apply for programmes, and that institutions accommodate people with disabilities.

6.3.2   Expanding the YACs

Incubation programmes need to be introduced through the YACs. In most cases, youths visit these centres in an effort to seek assistance regarding their career and life choices.

The establishment of an incubation system within the YACs will allow the YACs to expand to become skills development centres.

6.3.3 Providing mentorship for unemployed youth

Mentorships play meaningful role in building capacity amongst the youth in learnerships and internships. The need for a larger numbers of mentors, with the relevant competencies, who could avail themselves more readily would be invaluable to learnerships and internships.

6.4   Conclusion

Chapter Six discussed how the research objectives were reached. Moreover, Chapter Six presented a synthesis of the six research objectives by including a summary of the views of the respondents as gleaned from the individual interviews. In addition, a summary of the data collected was provided to validate the perceptions of the respondents. Based on the findings presented in the preceding chapters, the following conclusions can be made:

Learnerships and internships, if implemented and managed systematically, could play a crucial role in supporting the skills challenge that hampers South African society. This study focused on the SDM, where interviews were held with 15 participants in internship/learnership programmes and three municipal officials who acted as supervisors to the interns/learners. Although the participants found these programmes helpful, there are areas of concern around internship and learnership programmes in that these programmes do not have the absorptive capacity that they ought to have. The participants in these programmes believed that the training was inadequate and they requested more workshops and practical interventions to supplement the training. Also of note was the role of mentors in the programmes; the need for mentors to be available on a much more regular basis, and in greater numbers, was emphasised.

Given the recent QLFS published by Stats SA (2019), unemployment is concentrated the highest among the youth (15-34 years), accounting for 63.4% of the unemployed. Consequently, the role that internships and learnerships can play in alleviating youth unemployment could prove to be an intervention to impart much-needed practical skills

to graduates and school leavers to enable them to become employable. Not only do governmental organs like the SDM have a pivotal role to play in imparting skills, but private organisations can also act as a catalyst for job creation through incubation programmes; a good example was the SBU that was initiated by the Ramaphosa Foundation. Conventional wisdom states that the private sector must act as a driver for youth employment; however, the public sector must adopt investor-friendly policies to attract foreign direct investment, thereby alleviating youth unemployment.

This mini-dissertation will add value to understanding the opportunities and challenges to youth unemployment by recommending the introduction of well-planned internship/learnership programmes to help with this national crisis that hampers South Africa's fledgling democracy.

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