



Cape Peninsula
University of Technology

**EMPLOYABILITY OF YOUTH FOCUS PROJECT LEVEL 1 GRADUATES WITHIN
THE WHOLESALE AND RETAIL SECTOR, WESTERN CAPE**

by

ESTHER NYAPOKOTO

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Supervisor: Dr Liiza Gie

District Six, Cape Town

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ABSTRACT

The realisation of the potential of South African youth is essential for their well-being as well as for the country, hence the urgent need to afford them the necessary opportunities to broaden their horizons and explore entrepreneurship opportunities. South Africa has been grappling with a surge in the number of youth entering the labour market, combined with the reality that the unemployment rate is one of the highest in developing countries. Youth unemployment prohibits the younger generation from gaining an opportunity to sustain themselves and, thereby contribute meaningfully to the development of a nation. The Youth Focus Project (YFP) is a unique Western Cape Provincial (WC) learnership programme that was introduced by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) in partnership with the Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (W&R SETA) and Public Technical and Vocational Education Training Colleges (TVETs) to address the problem of 'at-risk learners'. Through this project youth were given a second chance to study further with the aim of finding a job, thus, substituting a life that is very likely destined for poverty and crime, for a better and fulfilling one. It is on this premise that this research study aimed to determine the extent to which the YFP learnership programme had empowered its Level 1 graduates with the requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes to obtain employment in the wholesale and retail (W&R) sector.

The researcher used an interpretive phenomenological approach wherein a descriptive case study was adopted in order to study the phenomenon of YFP L1 graduates' employability. A mixed method research approach was deemed appropriate for this study. Purposive sampling was chosen, and a self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from a sample of 60 YFP L1 graduates from the 2015, 2016 and 2018 cohorts. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 27 and thematic analysis were the strategies used to analyse and interpret respectively the quantitative and qualitative data collected through the questionnaire.

The research findings revealed that a significant number of the YFP L1 graduates were unemployed because they were still studying owing to their decision to continue developing their skills. Furthermore, the research revealed that there was generally a lack of jobs available within the labour market, a situation that was compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic. The researcher recommended improvements to the YFP L1 curriculum whereby there should be an appropriate combination of theoretical subjects and practical skills to enhance the graduates' employability within the W&R sector. Youth skills development directly correlates with the SA National Skills Development strategy; hence, it is imperative that the programmes offered significantly help in the eradication of both unemployment and poverty within South Africa.

The study suggests that YFP L1 curriculum improvements that respond to the industry demands may assist SA youth in acquiring the requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable them to find employment within the W&R sector. In addition, the findings suggest that better planning by policy makers may be vital in directing public funds towards effective youth skills development programmes.

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DEDICATION

To my one and only sister, Sheila Nyapokoto – you gave me the strength to carry on, you told me to believe in myself, you held my hand and advised me never to give up. I wish you were here to witness this moment. May you continue to rest in peace.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
GETC	General Education and Training Certificate
NEET	Not In Education, Employment or Training
NGP	The New Growth Path
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSA	National Skills Authority
NYDA	National Youth Development Agency
QCTO	Quality Council of Trades and Occupations
SA	South Africa
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Science
TVETs	Technical Vocational Education and Training Colleges
WC	Western Cape Province
WCED	Western Cape Education Department
WCYDS	Western Cape Youth Development Strategy
W&R	Wholesale and Retail
YFP	Youth Focus Project

GLOSSARY

TERM	DESCRIPTION
Employability	Employability refers to individuals' capabilities of obtaining and keeping employment for the benefit of themselves and the society (Yorke, 2004 as cited in University of Edinburgh, 2016).
Youth Development Programme	A youth development programme provides opportunities and support to the youth for the betterment of both the youth and the community (National Youth Development Agency, 2014:7).
Youth Focus Project	In the context of this study, a YFP is a bridging programme (equivalent to Grade 9) which could lead to further study at a Technical Vocational Education and Training College (TVETs) or a work preparation programme for 'multiple repeaters or over-age learners in Grade 9 who wish to follow a vocational education programme (Youth Focus Project Information Guide, 2016:2).

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

It is essential to realise the potential of South Africa's youth, not only for their well-being but also for the country as a whole; hence the urgent need to afford them the opportunities necessary to broaden their horizons through various skills development programmes (National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), 2017:11; Western Cape Youth Development Strategy (WCYDS), 2013:43-55). 31.4% of youth aged 15-25 years in South Africa during the first quarter of 2018 were 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEETS) while the percentage of unemployed youth rose to 63.5% during the same period (Statistics South Africa, 2018). This situation paints a disturbing picture for South Africa (SA) as a nation because the future of any country lies with its youth. Policies, such as the Green and White Papers on Post School Education and Training (South Africa, Department of Higher Education and Training, 2012; 2014), The New Growth Path of South Africa (South African Government, 2010b), and the National Skills Development Strategy 3 (South Africa, Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013), Youth Focus Project Information Session Guide (2016:3), among many others were initiated countrywide to help SA's youth.

In an endeavour to curb the scourge of NEETs, the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) partnered with the Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (W&R SETA) and the Public Technical Vocational Education and Training Colleges (TVETs) to establish the Youth Focus Project (YFP) (Maphoshe & Sipengane, 2016:14). The YFP is a unique Western Cape Provincial (WC) learnership programme that was initiated to address the problem of at-risk learners, resulting in a number of Grade 9 multiple repeaters and over-age learners benefitting from the project (Papier, 2016:1). These youth were supported to study further in order to find employment, thus substituting a life destined for crime and poverty, for a life of education and employment opportunities (Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015:54-56; Papier, 2016:1; W&R SETA, 2018).

The YFP learnership programme is pegged at National Qualifications Framework Level 1 (NQF L1) and the title of the qualification is General Education and Training Certificate (GETC): Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) with specialisation in W&R. The YFP curriculum comprises fundamental and core subjects as well as additional elective unit standards that make up the 120 credits required for a national certificate. On the successful completion of L1, students can either obtain employment within the W&R sector or continue their education

through a course of their choice at Level 2 (L2) at a TVET College, provided they meet the minimum entry requirements.

The main objective of this study was to determine the extent to which the YFP had empowered its L1 graduates, who previously were considered to be at risk students, either to obtain employment in the W&R sector, to progress their learning to the next level; or, in the worse case scenario, they were unemployed. In addition it sought to ascertain the need for improvement within the YFP curriculum. The study used a mixed method approach in order to objectively study the above social phenomenon and to gain in-depth data. The study's total population comprised of all the learners who had enrolled for the YFP learnership programme for the years 2015, 2016 and 2018. Initially, the researcher had wanted to include the 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 cohort, but after trying to contact the graduates, the researcher could only make contact with students who had enrolled in 2015, 2016 and 2018. The sample comprised only those learners who had completed L1 of the YFP learnership programme.

1.2 Background to the research problem

Unemployment amongst the youth is a global concern. Gontkovikova, Mihalcova and Pruzinsky (2015:1681) report that the youth unemployment rate reached 23.4% in the European Union countries in 2013. Germany reached an unemployment rate of 7.9%, Greece had 58.3% and Spain 55.5%. The African Centre for Economic Transformation (2016) and Trading Economics (2016) report that an estimated 50% of graduates were jobless, with Ghana reaching a high of 48%, Cameroon 64%, Algeria 29.9%, Nigeria 24% and, across the Limpopo, a staggering 90% of Zimbabwean graduates are roaming the streets aimlessly (Langa, 2016). Research by Russell, Simmons and Thompson (2011:477-499) has shown that the employability of young people is linked to broader socio-economic factors and reported that participants of the United Kingdom Entry 2 Employment programme generally had only obtained work within low-skill areas or, worse, were still unemployed. Lotko, Razgale and Vilka (2016:2240-2259) argue that the employability of young people is a complex issue because of different expectations between employers and young people. Despite the global unemployment statistics, there are many youth programmes that are being run, even though the employability of young people who have attended these courses is questionable. In light of this fact, it is imperative that all youth development programmes help to eradicate unemployment and poverty, both amongst the world's youth and society as a whole. Research on the employability of YFP L1 graduates helped shed some light on the contribution of skills development programmes towards the reduction of youth unemployment.

Research by Popescu and Mocanu (2018) has shown that apprenticeship programmes have a low but positive impact upon the employability of at-risk youth. As early as 2004, Smith

(2004:51-53) expressed the opinion that employers were willing to hire insufficiently prepared young people. This fact suggests that youth intervention programmes can indeed be the answer to youth unemployment despite the lack of practical work experience among the youth.

Gontkovikova, Mihalcova and Pruzinsky (2015:1682) concur that with the right education and training, the youth are better prepared to enter the labour market. Therefore, investing in a college education helps in building the youth's skills and preparing them for high-skilled jobs. The South African Young Water Professionals National Committee (SAYWPNC) (2016), furthermore, is of the opinion that young people need to have the right type of training, skills, attitude and motivation in order to obtain employment within the water sector. Such factors cut across all socio-economic sectors, hence, the importance of effective work-related training for the youth so that they can become employable.

The National Youth Policy 2009-2014 defines youth development as any programme that provides opportunities and support to the youth so as to improve the lives of both the youth and society at large (NYDA, 2014:7 & 8). Such development implies that the youth will become self-sufficient and, thereby, play a pivotal role in the fight against unemployment. Youth development programmes are designed to address the manpower, economic and development needs of SA. In keeping with the latter requirements, this study sought to determine how many YFP L1 graduates obtained employment in the W&R sector, given the challenge of youth unemployment in SA.

A number of projects aimed at the youth have been implemented throughout SA and these initiatives include the Umsobomvu Youth Fund, EOH extensive learnership programme, Love Life's Ground Breakers programme, National Youth Service (NYS), Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator, Ikamva Youth, Chrysalis Academy, among many others. The aims of these programmes include skills acquisition, work-readiness, empowering the youth to steer away from crime, drugs and gangsterism, issues that are so prevalent in the WC and eradication of unemployment and poverty among South Africa's youth (Hartley, 2007:15-16; Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015:56). Project Khulisa is helping to grow the SA economy through job creation in priority sectors of the economy, namely agro-processing, tourism and oil and gas services (Western Cape Provincial Strategic Plan, 2015:21). This development supports the notion that youth programmes 'help mend the broken and nurture new hope'. Nevertheless, the issue arises as to whether or not youth graduating from such programmes are ready for the job market.

Hirsch (2017:12) points out that ensuring the employability of young people calls for a guided curriculum that includes soft skills, professional development for facilitators so that they can include job skills in their teaching, as well as fostering relationships with the future employers.

In support of this claim, Munyoro and Mutula (2016:9-11) mention that there are sufficient employable skills already embedded in the Zimbabwean Library and Information Science (LIS) curriculum because other skills can be acquired within the workplace, even though some LIS graduates may face problems finding employment. In this context, the researcher felt it was important to ascertain in which areas, if any, the YFP L1 curriculum needs to be improved. This study included questions to determine whether the YFP curriculum/learnership equipped young people with the skills needed within the workplace.

In the opinion of Hastings, Tsoi-A-Fatt and Harries (2010:15), employers do not only look at academic mastery but rather, they are in need of individuals with literacy, teamwork, and leadership skills, plus critical thinking ability and a commitment to social and civic responsibilities. A review of the YFP curriculum indicated that most of these skills were embedded in the syllabus; however, a question arose as to whether or not the YFP curriculum contained enough relevant material to make its L1 graduates employable and, even if it did, whether YFP learners sufficiently understood what they were taught so that they could transfer this knowledge into the workplace. Tymon (2013:841-856) believes that a prerequisite for effective performance outcomes lies within the motivation and commitment of learners. The implication of this opinion is that, since the YFP learners are in a second-chance learning programme, it can be assumed that they are both motivated and committed to making a success of their lives.

Jali-Khaile (2014:8) holds the view that potential employees ought to be equipped with the right skills and attitudes “from the word go” because a significant number of young people lack the skills needed to excel in the workplace. This low skills level among the unemployed youth has resulted in their experiencing a sense of hopelessness and becoming frustrated and angry, hence the urgent need to address these problems (Meyer, 2013:18-19). Gijbels, Raemdonck and Verveeken (2010:240) have emphasized the importance of the informal learning that students acquire within the workplace since this knowledge increases their ability to perform their tasks effectively. Statistics South Africa (2015) and SAOGA (2016) report that SA is characterised by an excess of untrained labour and a shortage of trained labour. The YFP, to a small extent, may help to alleviate this problem within the WC because its purpose is to prepare its learners for the labour market, thereby helping to reduce the current pool of unskilled labour by supplying skilled youth capable of working within the W&R sector. It is also important to note that the YFP participants come from disadvantaged groups, thus, securing employment not only has a positive impact upon their lives but also on those of their families and the entire community.

It is, questionable, however, whether all existing youth development programmes help young people to acquire the knowledge, skills and attributes necessary for securing employment. Hence, the importance of implementing different youth development strategies that will curb the current youth unemployment rate.

1.3 Problem statement

Learnerships are established to develop participants' knowledge and skills and, thus, increase their work readiness, as alluded to in the Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998 (South Africa, 1998). In their comprehensive studies regarding the effectiveness of learnership programmes, in promoting skills development, both Fester (2006:8) and Mbonambi (2009:4) noted that there were still debates amongst academics, commerce and industry regarding how well learnerships 'fit' into the South African labour market scene. Furthermore, other researchers (Gijbels, Raemdonck & Verveeken, 2010:240; Tymon, 2013:841-856) noted that there is a mismatch between the knowledge and skills currently taught in higher institutes of learning and those the labour market needs. This discrepancy results in graduates lacking the expertise required to be productive within both the labour market and the country's economy. Interestingly, Zuma (2017:64) and Mok and Qian (2018) state that labour demands within the economy influences youth employment despite the level of knowledge, skills and competencies of graduates. This claim suggests that labour's law of demand and supply greatly influences the employment rate at a particular point in time. To this end, Powell, Reddy and Juan (2016:309) suggest the implementation of an inclusive socio-economic skills planning approach that matches skills development with the labour market's demands.

The skills development issue has been on the National Youth Development Agency's (NYDA) agenda for some time – a fact which is evidenced by the numerous youth programmes that have been initiated within SA. The importance of skills and training provision being driven by industry demands is prioritised in the National Skills Development Strategy III (South Africa, 2011:15-17; NSDA III, 2014:4) that aimed to address the problems of inadequate skills levels and poor work-readiness among the youth, as well as critical skills shortages in general. It is the aim of the WCED to fast-track multiple-grade repeaters, currently obstructing the progress of more able learners within the school system, onto a career path (WCED, 2016); however, these 'at-risk' learners' readiness for the world of work is questionable. In keeping with the latter problem, the focus of this research was to determine to what extent the knowledge, skills and attributes taught within the YFP are transferable to the W&R labour market. Since its inception in 2014, the YFP has not been evaluated nor have its graduates been tracked, thus, it is unclear how many of its L1 graduates gained employment, progressed to L2 studies or are still unemployed. This gap in YFP data makes it difficult to assess whether curriculum

improvements are required in order for L1 graduates to meet the W&R sector's labour market demands.

1.4 Aim of the research

This study aimed to determine the extent to which the YFP had empowered its L1 graduates, who were previously considered 'at-risk learners', with the required knowledge, skills and attributes to obtain employment in the W&R sector.

1.5 Research objectives

The research objectives of this study were grouped into two sections: main research objective and sub-research objectives.

1.5.1 Main objective

To investigate the employability of YFP L1 graduates in the W&R sector.

1.5.2 Research sub-objectives

In order to address the main objective, the following sub-objectives were considered:

- To determine the number of YFP L1 graduates employed in the W&R sector.
- To identify how many of YFP L1 graduates progressed with their studies to L2.
- To identify how many of YFP L1 graduates remain unemployed.
- To ascertain the areas for improvement within the YFP L1 curriculum.

1.6 Research questions

The research questions investigated in this study were grouped into two sections: main research question and sub-research questions.

1.6.1 Main Question

Are the YFP L1 graduates employable within the W&R sector?

1.6.2 Research sub-questions

To be able to obtain answers to the main research question, the following subordinated questions were formulated.

- To what extent have YFP L1 graduates found employment in the W&R sector?
- How many YFP L1 graduates have progressed with their studies to L2?
- How many YFP L1 graduates are still unemployed?
- What areas of the YFP L1 curriculum need improvement?

The YFP L1 programme (knowledge, skills and attributes) is the independent variable within this study because the researcher is interested in how this intervention affects the L1 graduates' employability (the dependent variable).

1.7 Research methodology

The purpose of this section is to discuss methodology for this research study, that investigates the employability of YFP L1 graduates, by detailing the research design, sampling procedures, data collection techniques, data analysis approach, limitations of the study, together with its validity, reliability and ethical considerations.

1.7.1 Research paradigm

The interpretive or phenomenological approach to social science was applied in this research study in order to explore the phenomenon of the YFP L1 graduates' employability within the W&R sector.

1.7.2 Research design

A descriptive case study was used in order to describe the phenomenon of the YFP L1 graduates' employability within the W&R sector, to ascertain their progression to L2 studies, and to make any necessary improvements to the L1 curriculum.

1.7.3 Research method

A mixed method research approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2014:64), was applied because it afforded the acquisition of both structured and in-depth data to determine the phenomenon of the employability/unemployability of YFP L1 graduates in the W&R sector.

1.7.4 Research population

The target population of the research study was all YFP L1 graduates for the academic years 2015, 2016 and 2018 at a selected TVET College in the Western Cape, SA. The total number of the target population for the three-year period was one hundred and eighty (180).

1.7.5 Research sampling

A sample is a portion of the population (De Vos et al., 2014:224), and for this study, a sample size of sixty (60) L1 graduates was selected, irrespective of their gender, race or background characteristics, using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling was chosen because it enabled the researcher to include those participants who exhibited all the elements of the population that were suitable for the purposes of this study (De Vos et al., 2014: 232).

1.7.6 Data collection instrument

A standardised self-administered questionnaire was used as the data collection instrument. A questionnaire was the preferred instrument because the items were designed to obtain facts

on the employability of YFP L1 graduates, (Welman & Kruger, 2002). A 4-point Likert scale was used to rate the participants' responses, with the categories of responses ranging from 1- Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Agree and 4-Strongly Agree. The questionnaire comprised two sections, one to collect biographical data and the second for collecting data on the employability of YFP L1 graduates. The questionnaire's statements were divided into three categories extracted from the literature review, namely:

- Youth employment – employment status of the YFP L1 graduates in the W&R sector; and, if unemployed, probe the reasons thereof.
- Further skills development – progression of studies to L2 or any additional skills development initiatives.
- YFP– L1 curriculum's facilitation of knowledge, skills and attributes provides sufficient preparation for employment, and improvements needed to the YFP L1 curriculum.

Each of the above categories consisted of statements upon which members of the target research sample were requested to express an opinion (quantitative data), linked with probing questions to obtain in-depth information upon the research topic (qualitative data).

Reliability refers to consistency across different researchers and different projects while validity entails addressing whether the instrument is an effective tool for measuring the trait it is required to assess (de Bruin, 2010:1; Terre Blanche, Durreheim & Painter, 2006:147-152). The reliability of results is of utmost importance in research, thus, in this study the Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha was calculated during data analysis. Content validity was ensured by structuring the questionnaire's statements in such a way that they afforded answers to the research questions and enabled the accurate interpretation of this information.

1.7.7 Data collection procedure

To ensure effectiveness and high return rate, the researcher distributed the questionnaires directly to the research sample group. As the researcher was an employee of the selected TVET, permission was obtained to organise a reunion for YFP L1 graduates from the years 2014 to 2017 during which the self-administered questionnaires were to be distributed on 7 and 8 April 2020. These dates, however, fell during the SA Covid-19 pandemic level 5 lockdown period, thus, the researcher had to cancel the re-union and postpone data collection to November 2020. Unfortunately, the researcher could only locate YFP L1 graduates for the years 2015, 2016 and 2018. During data gathering, the researcher was available to answer any questions and to ensure that all the questionnaires were returned timeously.

1.7.8 Data analysis

The researcher numbered the questionnaires and the participants' responses were coded and transferred to the Statistical Programme for the Social Sciences (SPSS) excel spreadsheet. Descriptive statistics were presented in graph and table format. Thereafter, inferential statistics was applied to ascertain the employability of YFP L1 graduates, to identify how many of these graduates had progressed with their learning and how to improve the YFP curriculum. Applying inferential statistics enhances researchers' ability to draw inferences on the population, elements or units under investigation (Gray, 2004:335).

1.7.9 Ethical consideration

Adherence to research ethics is vital, therefore, researchers should uphold moral standards and assess the risks and benefits related to the research project. Kruger, Ndebele and Horn (2014: 57) confirm that obtaining the permission of potential study subjects is of utmost importance.

To uphold research ethics, the researcher initially obtained written permission from the selected TVET college to contact the specified YFP L1 graduates and distribute the questionnaire. Secondly, prior to circulating the questionnaire, the researcher disseminated the participants' informed consent forms that notified the research sample group that: their participation was voluntary, they may withdraw at any time without experiencing negative consequences, their identities would remain anonymous, and their responses would be treated confidentially and used only for research purposes. Consequently, personal details or any identifying characteristics of participants were not revealed in this study. Once completed, the questionnaires were locked in a safe situated within the participating TVET college for safekeeping, thus guaranteeing confidentiality of the research findings.

Lastly, in order to obtain ethical clearance for this study, the researcher submitted the research proposal, questionnaire and letter of permission from the participating TVET college to the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Business and Management Sciences (FBMS) at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT).

1.8 Demarcation of the research

The research study confined itself to the YFP L1 graduates at one selected TVET college in the Western Cape, SA, even though the project was being implemented at six TVET colleges throughout this province. The study, as mentioned previously, focused on the employability of the YFP L1 graduates for the years 2015, 2016 and 2018.

1.9 Rationale and significance of the study

Education can be a means by which individuals improve their prospects for a more productive and personally satisfying life. Hence, investing in education and training reaps meaningful progress in all aspects of South Africa's development.

It is expected that this research will contribute to the existing body of knowledge relating to youth development within SA through learnerships for 'at-risk' learners. The study will offer theoretically grounded suggestions for the improvement of the YFP L1 curriculum in order to promote L1 graduates' employability within the W&R sector, as well as preparing them to progress their learning to L2. TVETs have a crucial role to play in the provision of knowledge and skills throughout SA. Youth skills development directly speaks to the South African National Skills Development Strategy, hence there is an urgent need for implementing such programmes that will help to eradicate youth unemployment and poverty within SA. In addition, it is essential to ensure better planning by policy makers, a process that may be vital in directing public funds towards effective youth skills development programmes.

1.10 Chapter layout

The document included the following chapters.

Chapter 1 introduced the research study by explaining its aims, objectives and research questions. It discussed the background to youth employability/unemployability and specifically focused on the employability of YFP L1 graduates which is the main focus of this study.

Chapter 2 reviewed existing research literature on youth programmes and youth employability in order to provide a theoretical foundation for the study. Issues affecting youth development programmes were explained with specific reference to youth in 'second-chance' programmes.

Chapter 3 covered the research approach adopted for the study. The data collection techniques that were used and the data analysis process were both discussed.

Chapter 4 presented, discussed and interpreted the findings of the study on the employability of the YFP L1 graduates within the W&R sector.

Chapter 5 aligned the findings to the objectives of the study as stated in Chapter 1. Furthermore, recommendations, strengths and limitations of the study were explained in order to pave way for future research needs. This final chapter discussed the conclusions emanating from the findings of the study. Specific attention was paid to the YFP post-learning outcomes and whether any of YFP L1 graduates had progressed their learning to the next level (L2) or if the graduates had attained employment within the W&R sector or were currently unemployed.

1.11 Summary

Training, as mentioned previously in this report, is one of the major strategies for empowering youth with requisite skills for entering the labour market. The Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998 (South Africa, 1998) reiterates the importance of learnerships in improving the skills development and work readiness of the youth of SA.

This study aimed to investigate how the YFP had empowered the 'at-risk' learners with knowledge, skills and attributes necessary for attaining employment within the W&R sector. The main objective of this research was to establish how many of these graduates actually had found employment in the W&R sector given the deplorable youth unemployment statistics in SA. Definitions of related concepts used in the study were provided. A review of relevant literature provided a basis for understanding the principles underpinning global youth programmes and how these initiatives can be adapted to meet the requirements of the YFP post-learning outcomes. This study employed the mixed methods research approach and purposive sampling, together with a self-administered questionnaire to enable the research to better understand the phenomenon of YFP L1 graduates' employability/unemployability within the W&R sector in the WC. Ethical considerations and the significance and limitations of the study also were highlighted. The scope of the research study was confined to the YFP L1 graduates for the years 2015, 2016 and 2018 from one selected TVET College in the WC province of SA.

CHAPTER 2

EMPLOYABILITY OF YOUTH

2.1 Introduction

The literature review posits global concerns about the employability of young people and sets out various examples of youth development focus programmes. The South African scenario is contextualised with supporting legislation for youth development before focusing on the specific Youth Focus Project (YFP) in the Western Cape. A basis for understanding youth skills programmes and how these can be adapted to curb youth unemployment in South Africa is provided.

2.2 Conceptualisation of youth

Youth denotes a period of life in-between childhood and adulthood which comprises of elements such as their history, hopes and dreams, societal norms and traditions which all shape an individual's personal life (Henze in Schafer 2015; United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 2020a). There are many universally accepted definitions of youth, however the United Nations (UN) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) define youth as individuals between 15 and 24 years, while the South African National Youth Policy (SANYP) defines youth as any person between the ages of 14 and 35 years (Roberts, 2015:7).

Young people's life trajectories are determined by how well they navigate adolescence, given the barriers that they face. Some youth come from disadvantaged backgrounds whereby it is a struggle for them to access the job market despite their genuine efforts. Employment satisfies economic, personal, psychological and/or social dimensions. The economic dimension simply means that people work to earn a living, the psychological dimension provides people with a sense of self-worth while the social aspect determines the communal status of an individual such as their neighbourhood, schools or social clubs. The majority of SA's youth understand the importance of having a stable job because it paves the way for the fulfilment of the above-mentioned dimensions. Research conducted by Carvalho (2015:29) indicates that challenges such as troubled family relationships, impoverished households, unreliable income stream and having dropped-out of school among many others, contribute to a difficult first transition to work for the youth. The UNFPA calls for the empowerment of youth through education (UNFPA, 2020b) as the future of any nation lies in the hands of its youth. Given that the YFP Level 1 graduates come from disadvantaged backgrounds, it is important, therefore, to establish whether the learnership programme empowered them to obtain work that will improve their living standards.

Donald Super Life & Development Stages by Age

0-14	15-24	25-44	45-64	65+
Growth Development of self-concept, move from "play" to work mindset	Exploration Develop realistic "self-concept", experiment with roles & identify vocation	Establishment Find niche and field which aligns and advance within field	Maintenance Preserve gains, explore things outside of work, navigate plateaus	Decline Characteristics: Reduced output, prepare for retirement

Figure 2.1 Career Phases

(Gie, 2021:5; Career Research, 2021)

Figure 2.1 above illustrates the career phases of human beings whereby an individual acquires a work mindset during the growth phase. The primary school curriculum aids children to form an indirect understanding of the job market as they strive to excel in school and acquire competent work habits and attitudes (Gie, 2021:4-5 & Career Research, 2021). During the exploration stage, the lives of young adults are shaped by their choice of subjects at high school, their abilities and interest, their parents' careers and aspirations for their children, financial resources as well as the availability of job opportunities in the labour market. Career research (2021) and Gie (2021) further point out that the establishment stage (25-44 years) ensures stability within the chosen career and promotional prospects based upon one's job performance, attitude, responsibilities and co-worker relationships while the maintenance stage (45-64 years) involves continuous learning and development. Finally, the decline phase (65+) prepares an individual for retirement, thus, gradually disengaging from occupational activities.

This research study seeks to determine the employability of the YFP L1 graduates in the W&R sector, so it fits in perfectly with the exploration stage of the career phases. This second stage aptly describes the experiences of YFP L1 graduates because the majority of them are between the ages of 16 – 24 years, and, having successfully completed TVET Level 1, are either seeking jobs within the W&R sector, have obtained employment in this sector or have progressed to Level 2 studies. It is against this background that this research aims to determine how many YFP L1 graduates obtained employment in the W&R sector and how many have continued with their studies. For those who already employed, their interests and attitudes will determine how long they remain in the W&R sector as they consider whether employment in this field constitutes their occupation of choice. Skills development will also continue at the various workplaces to keep abreast with the changing work environment, hence the importance of continual training and development to upskill the SA youth.

2.3 Employability of young people across the globe

Unemployment amongst the youth is a concern all over the world. Extensive research has investigated youth unemployment. Oesingmann (2017:52-53) explains that it is a fundamental social problem because prolonged spells of unemployment deprive the younger generation of an opportunity to sustain themselves and contribute meaningfully to the nation's development, thus, resulting in poverty that endures to old age. In view of such a challenge, this research aims to determine the extent to which the YFP has empowered its Level 1 graduates, who were formerly considered to be at risk, with the necessary knowledge, skills and attributes to obtain employment in the W&R sector.

2.3.1 Youth unemployment in America

America also experiences youth unemployment. Its economy suffered as a result of the corona virus pandemic and the unemployment rate in July 2020 was 10.2% compared to the normal rate of between 3.5% and 4.5% (Amadeo, 2020). The 18.5% unemployed youth in July was the highest level recorded since 2010 (US Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2020) which suggests that youth unemployment is a global problem. However, the American economy is much stronger than most other economies, thus, the youth unemployment statistics depicted in Table 2.1 below indicate that only 18.6% of youth were unemployed in America during the second quarter (Q2) of 2020.

Table 2.1 Youth unemployment rate: America

Country	Last	Previous	Reference
Canada	24.2 %	27.5%	Jul 2020
United States	18.6 %	20.7%	Jul 2020
Jamaica	18 %	17.3%	Dec 2019
El Salvador	14.4 %	14.2%	Dec 2017

(Trading Economics: 2020)

Eradicating youth unemployment is one of the most important priorities of governments worldwide since the young generation is the most vulnerable. Ways of eradicating youth unemployment include the formation of partnerships between colleges and industry as evidenced by the Oregon University's Sustainable Cities initiative, as well as collaboration between students and companies such as Modern Technology Council and General Assembly. Such alliances equip students with the relevant skills necessary for employment (Fileunemployment.org., 2020). Furthermore, youth unemployment can be reduced by ensuring that students are exposed to the labour market through programmes such

as job shadowing, internships and apprenticeships, hence, the importance of a curriculum that responds to the labour market (Fileunemployment.org., (2020).

America offers different youth programmes in order to curb the problems affecting young people. A study by Fernandes-Alcantara (2017:2) explains that the purpose of the American Federal youth employment and job training programme, together with such initiatives as Project U-Turn, Work Ready Philadelphia and Hartford's Our Piece of the Pie, is to provide at-risk youth with on-the-job training, employment, educational and social services. These training interventions help to re-engage dropouts and enhance the youth's employment and career prospects (Hastings et al., 2010:4). Gijbels et al. (2010:240) emphasize the importance of informal learning in the workplace since this helps with the acquisition of the required skills; while Tymon (2013:841-856) believes that a prerequisite for effective outcomes where performance is concerned rests within the commitment of learners. In addition, Hastings et al. (2010:15) state that employers do not only look at academic mastery but rather evidence of dedicated, responsible and highly literate individuals.

2.3.2 European Union (EU) youth unemployment

September 2020 statistics on youth unemployment within the European Union (EU) depicts a disturbing situation with close to 3 million jobless youth under the age of 25 years, which represents an increase of 259 000 in comparison to September 2019 (Eurostat, 2020). This increase may have been triggered partly by the corona virus outbreak which has ravaged many global economies.

According to Oesingmann (2017:52-53) European strategies to reduce youth unemployment include the Europe 2020 Strategy and the Youth Guarantee (YG). The United Kingdom Department of Finance (2020) and Bangordt and Torres (2010: 136-170) further explain that the Europe 2020 Strategy entails transforming the EU into a flourishing, sustainable and inclusive economy with high employment levels and poverty eradication to ensure a dignified life for all. The Europe 2020 strategy initiatives, such as Youth on the Move, that offers skills training and jobs as a means of fighting poverty, are evidence of the importance of empowering individuals through skills development so that labour demands can be met.

The YG represents a commitment by EU member states to address the youth Not-in-Employment, Education or Training (NEETs) challenge by providing education, training and employment to individuals below 25 years of age within a period of four months of leaving formal education or becoming unemployed (Bussi, 2014; Pique, Vea & Strecker, 2016:684-704; The European Commission, 2019a). The YG's early intervention programme has managed to build requisite skills among the NEETs through apprenticeship and traineeship

initiatives and this programme has decreased the number of unemployed youths. As of February 2019, youth unemployment in the EU has decreased from 24% in 2013 to 14.6% in 2019. In addition, there has been a drop in the number of NEETs from 13.2% in 2012 to 10.3% in the third quarter of 2018 (The European Commission, 2019b). Such figures attest to the positive effects of the YG programme upon the lives of millions of European youth.

Research by Russell, Simmons and Thompson (2011:477-499) has shown that the employability of young people is linked to broader social and economic factors and, generally, participants of the United Kingdom Entry 2 Employment programme find only low-skilled work or remain unemployed. Lotko, Razgale and Vilka (2016:2240-2259) argue that employability of young people is a complex issue because of different expectations between employers and young people. In order to foster employability among at-risk youth, Lifshitz, (2017) points out the importance of an integrative way that includes the cultural needs of the project participants. Culture gives young people a sense of belonging which may result in the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attributes that will help them during their search for work. Oesingmann (2017:52-53) adds that adverse economic conditions and a high proportion of temporary contracts for youth fuels their unemployment and, subsequent, poverty. This finding suggests that labour laws tend to favour permanent contracts, thus, side-lining youth since many are only temporarily engaged. There is need to revise the employment protection legislation to protect youth being employed on a contractual basis.

In Turkey, researchers such as Borkan, Unluhisarcikli, Ayse and Hande (2015) report that the Catch-Up Education (CEP) programme helps to secure education for over-aged pupils and dropouts. However, while this practice helps at-risk learners complete their high school curriculum, issues can still arise regarding such learners' readiness for college and/or work.

Research by Popescu and Mocanu (2018) has shown that at-risk youth who attend apprenticeship programmes have a better chance of obtaining employment. As early as 2004, Smith (2004: 51-53) expressed the view that employers were willing to hire insufficiently prepared young people. This claim suggests that despite young people's lack of work experience, youth intervention programmes can increase their chances of obtaining employment. Gontkovikova et al. (2015:1682) concur that with the right education and training, the youth are better prepared to enter the labour market. Yusuf, Lategan and Ayinde (2014:1-2) likewise affirm that youth training programmes help to curb social and economic deprivation by providing the requisite employability skills. Therefore, investing in college education helps prepare the youth for highly skilled jobs.

2.3.3 Australian youth unemployment

Australia has also suffered as a result of the corona virus pandemic as evidenced by the high level of youth unemployment between April and July 2020 depicted in Figure 2.2 below. Lack of employment among young people has cost the Australian economy almost 800 million lost hours of work which equates to \$16 billion in lost Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as well as approximately \$7 billion per year spent on mental health issues, due to loss of hope and self-esteem (Youth Action, 2020:2). Being jobless creates many problems, especially for the younger generation, and if not solved, may result in an increase in social ills. Hence, interventions aimed at addressing the problems currently facing young people are extremely necessary.

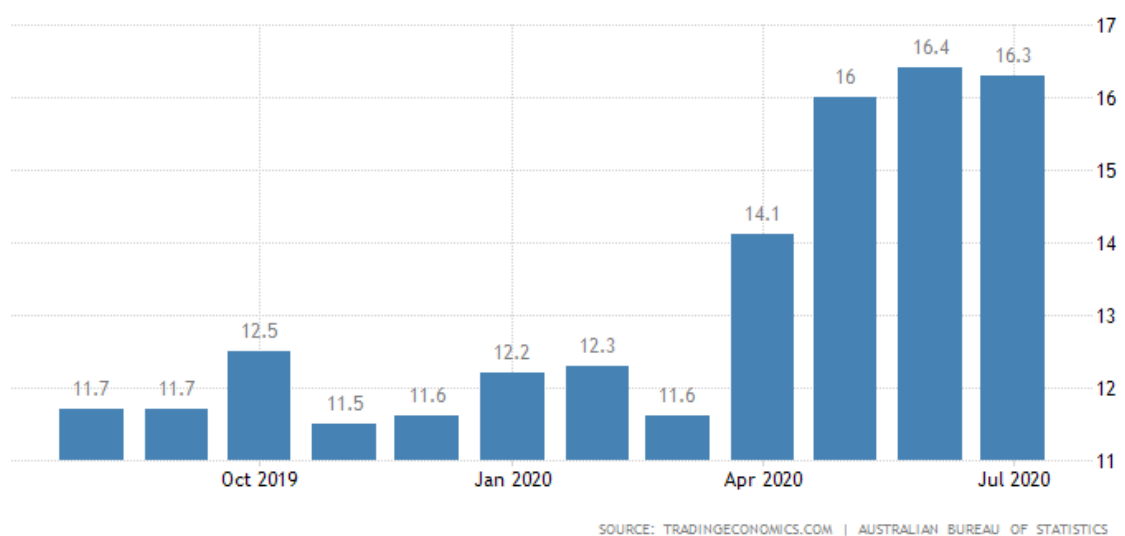


Figure 2.2: Australian youth unemployment rate

(Trading Economics, 2020: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2020)

Research by McDonald, Grant-Smith, Moore & Marston (2020:447-464) has shown a misalignment between education and employment policies and the economic and social challenges that make it difficult for job seekers to enter the labour market. Carvalho (2015:29) further explains that the situation is especially dire for youth from disadvantaged backgrounds because they lack the benefit of a close supportive network, adequate access to education and finance and a stable household unit and often experience discrimination, all of which impact negatively on their early career prospects. An Australian non-profit making organisation implemented a project named “Sticking Together” which assists vulnerable youth by pairing them with coaches who help them to set and achieve their goals in terms of employment and a career path (MacLennan, 2020).

2.3.4 Asian youth unemployment

Nortajuddin (2020) reports that Asian youth were already facing a tough labour market even before the onset of the corona virus. Chakthranont, Cruzeiro Costa and Norstokka (2019) found that technological advancement has taken over the Asian labour market because computers are replacing blue-collar jobs and this situation calls for the intensive training and mentorship of young jobseekers, as well as funding opportunities, coupled with conducive labour market policies, that encourage the young generation to become entrepreneurs.

The Asian youth unemployment scenario peaked in April 2020 due to the corona virus pandemic. AsiaNews (2020) reports that the youth were the most affected group since many of them work in W&R, hospitality and services sectors which were hard hit by the pandemic. In major cities such as Hong Kong there has been a steady increase in the number of unemployed youths between February 2020 and July 2020 (see Figure 2.3 below).

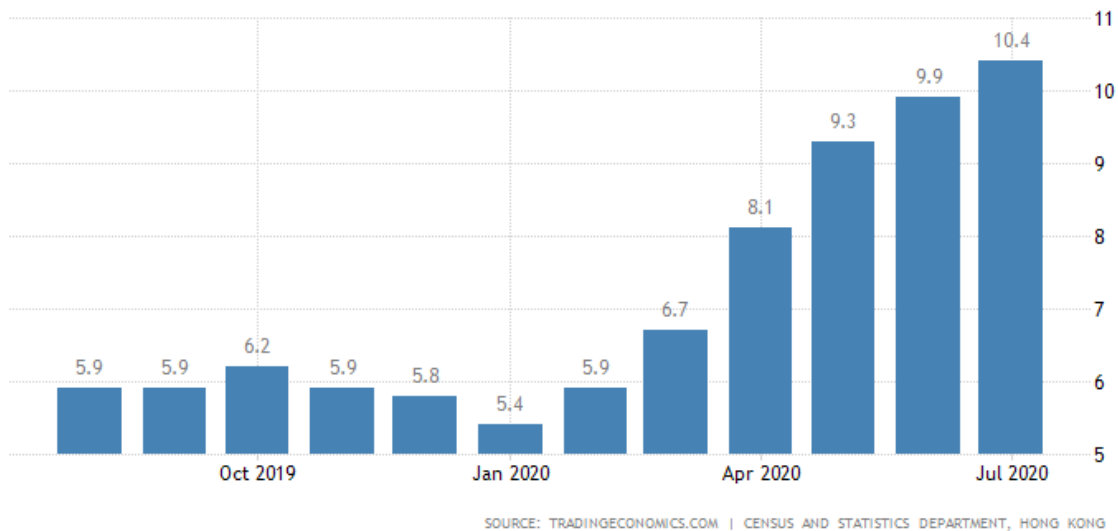


Figure 2.3: Hong Kong youth unemployment rate

(Trading Economics: 2020; Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong: 2020)

2.3.5 Youth unemployment in Africa

Youth unemployment is one of the greatest challenges facing the African continent and seriously reduces Africa's chance of economic growth, hence, the urgent need for Africa nations to prioritise youth employment initiatives. As depicted in Table 2.2 below, Rwanda has the least number of unemployed youths, while SA heads the list with a record 59% unemployed youth during Q1: 2020.

Table 2.2: Youth unemployment rate: Africa

Country	Last	Previous	Reference
South Africa	59 %	58.1 %	Mar. 2020
Angola	50.8 %	57.8 %	Jun. 2020
Namibia	46.1 %	43.4 %	Dec .2018
Nigeria	36.5 %	38 %	Sep. 2018
Morocco	33.4 %	26.8 %	Jun 2020
Algeria	26.9 %	29.1 %	Apr. 2019
Cape Verde	24.9 %	27.8 %	Dec. 2019
Rwanda	17.3 %	19.6 %	Feb. 2020

(Trading Economics, 2020)

The 21st century presents Africa with many challenges, the uppermost of which is youth unemployment (Fox and Gandhi, 2021:6). Future employment prospects for young Africans are gloomy because more and more youth are entering the job market, yet the rate of formal job creation is slow (Rankin, Roberts & Schoer, 2014). This scenario results from the fact that while post school education and training institutions are producing thousands of graduates, there is no space to absorb these graduates within the formal labour environment. As a result, some dissatisfied African youth are migrating to Europe in search of better job opportunities, others are resorting to crime while still others are being used as instruments of politico-religious violence (Afeti, 2018: xi).

Employment remains a major concern throughout Africa, therefore, job creation is crucial for economic growth (Trade Law Centre, 2019). Youth unemployment may be also compounded by the African economic situation because many countries are struggling economically. The Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region comprise underdeveloped countries, compared to the East African regions that have been developing rapidly. However, economic growth declined due to the many job losses resulting from the corona virus pandemic and the locust invasion (African Review, 2020).

It was reported by the African Development Bank (2019a:20-21) that the West African region's economic outlook varies from one nation to the other but the informal agricultural and services sectors are mainly dominant. Youth unemployment is high which often results in young people joining radical militant groups, such as the Boko Haram, or risking their lives crossing the Sahara Desert to escape poverty and destitution. The youth in Central Africa also face the same dilemma of unemployment due to high levels of inequality among citizens of the different countries in the region (African Development Bank (2019b:15). In order to help the youth escape the shackles of poverty in both West and Central Africa, the African Development Bank

(2019c:21) emphasises the need for regional integration, strengthening of the rule of law in fragile states, acceleration of economic diversification and structural transformation. Such policies will boost the economy of the region. thereby, curbing high unemployment among the most vulnerable group, the youth.

Pharatlhathe and Byiers, 2019:5 have shown in a recent study that the Southern African region has high levels of youth unemployment despite having one of the best literate rates in Africa and this fact clearly indicates the misalignment between the skills acquired by the graduates and the skills required by the employers. The Southern African Development Community (SADC), founded in 1992, is an organisation of 16 southern African countries whose aim is to promote regional integration, eradicate poverty through economic development and ensure peace and security (Gie, 2021:34; SADC, 2021). Sustained economic growth and development enables people in the region to have better living standards and employment opportunities, however, Arndt and Roberts (2018:297-314) caution that if SADC member states continue to pursue national agendas, narrowly conceived national policies constitute a hindrance to the development of regional industries. This practice often occurs when SADC members try to protect their domestic industries from regional competition, hence the importance of implementing across-the-board policies that are conducive for cross-border trade and regional integration.

In a bid to help the vulnerable youth, SADC enacted the Youth Employment Promotion Policy Framework (YEPPF) in 2016 which aims to improve youth employment opportunities by enhancing their entrepreneurship capabilities, obtaining 'buy-in' from the private sector to spearhead youth skills development, encouraging youth labour migration among many other developments. Furthermore, Pharatlhathe and Byiers (2019:9) suggest the harmonisation of educational qualifications within the region to ease labour mobility, promoting SADC industrialisation and encouraging the youth to voice their concerns and map the way forward.

The youth unemployment crisis in Africa calls for urgent interventions in order to mitigate all forms of instability. Education and training programmes, such as learnerships, may help reduce youth unemployment. The TVETs in Africa are meant to spearhead development in all spheres of life through skills development. TVETs and community colleges that respond to the dictates of the labour market are a necessity so as to enable individuals to maintain enhanced and just livelihood experiences (McGrath, Ramsarup, Zeelen, Wedekind, Allais, Lotz-Sisitka, Monk, Openjuru & Russon, 2019). Afeti (2018: xv-xvii), however, warns that unless African economic policies address the demand side for TVET skills, employment opportunities for youth will not be realised. TVETs prepare youth for both formal and informal employment;

however, African governments still need to create economic environments that are favourable to employment creation so as to absorb the TVETs' graduates.

In Africa, youth programmes have been introduced to help solve some of the problems facing the youth. The Capacity Strengthening Initiative Kibera (CSI-Kibera) offers training and conditional grants to Kenyan youth and community groups as well as conducting follow-ups, (Odhiambo, 2014). Ghana, Mauritius and Zambia created youth empowerment programmes that encourage vocational education and job creation (Ighobor, 2017). With the right education and the requisite skills, youth may find it less challenging to obtain employment. In support of this perception, The Buy Zimbabwe Employability Programme is placing the youth in jobs and creating entrepreneurs with the drive to hire employees (Zwinoira, 2016). Yusuf, Lategan and Ayinde (2014:1-2) provide evidence that the proper training of youth results in their acquisition of knowledge, skills and attributes that help to eradicate the unemployment and poverty that is so rife among the youth of Nigeria. Such initiatives help to curb youth unemployment, even though it is doubtful that these efforts are sufficient in the face of the high number of jobless youth across Africa.

Ryan (2006:58) asserts that youth enterprise development is the answer to reducing poverty among young people across Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the South Pacific because such a process aids the creation of income among young people. In addition, Simmons (2006:105) emphasises that lifelong learning, especially for at-risk learners, helps to ensure the acquisition of skills and competencies relevant to the job market and, as a result, the school- to- work-transition will become easier for the young people, thereby, increasing the employability of youth. In support of this claim, Munyoro and Mutula (2016:9-11) mention that the employability skills already embedded in the Zimbabwean Library and Information Science (LIS) curriculum suffice, since other skills can be acquired on the job, even though some LIS graduates may face problems acquiring employment. In this context, it is important to ascertain the YFP Level 1 curriculum areas for improvements. Consequently, this study will include questions to determine whether the YFP curriculum adequately prepares youth for the job market.

2.3.6 Youth unemployment in SA

SA experiences the same high level of youth unemployment whereby the youth aged 15-34 years constitute 43.2% of people unemployed during the first quarter of 2020, while the unemployment rate for the youth aged 15-24 years accounted for 59% during the same period (Matangira, 2020; Stats SA: 2020; Trading Economics:2020). These figures attest to the inability of SA's economy to provide work for all its labour force, even when the economy is doing well, thus, as Roberts (2015:10) argues, eradicating youth unemployment depends upon the jobs available on the labour market, as well as the nature of the available jobs. Structural

unemployment is difficult to address in SA, especially now that the situation is compounded by the corona virus pandemic which continues to cause havoc among many global economies. The unemployment rate among the youth continues to increase. Since the dawn of democracy in 1994, the socio-economic situation has not been favourable for most of SA Black youth, mainly as a result of their poor educational levels. In the labour market, there is an increase in demand for skilled labour and a decrease for unskilled labour (Cloete, 2015:513-525).

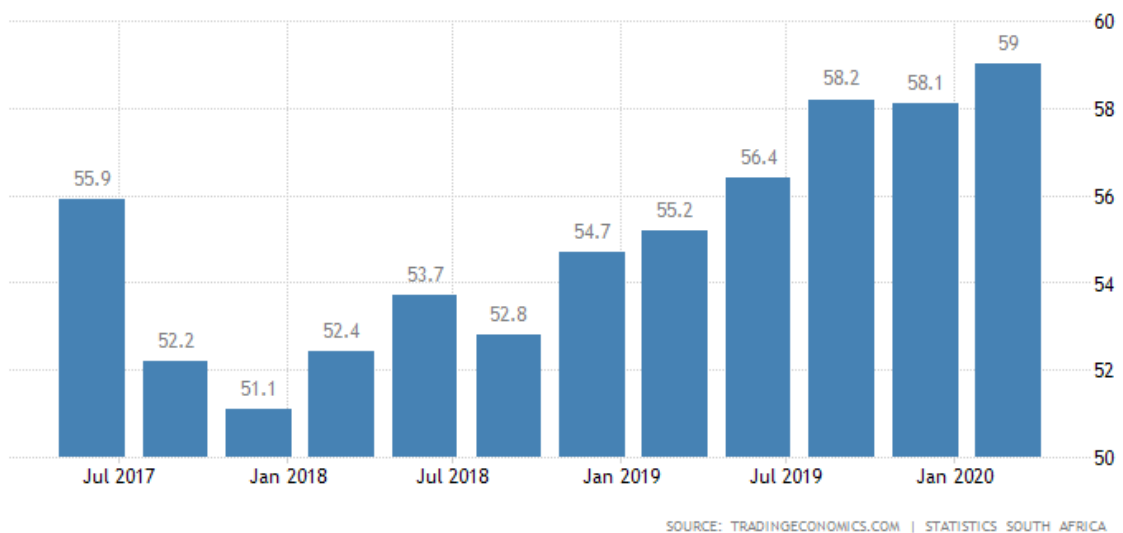


Figure: 2.4: SA youth unemployment rate
(Trading Economics: 2020; Statistics South Africa: 2020)

Although youth with a tertiary qualification are more likely to obtain employment (Kgomotso, 2020) than those without but this is not always the case because statistics indicate a 10.2% rate of unemployment among artisan graduates during the first quarter of 2018 (Chauke, 2018:15). Despite this level of unemployment among artisans, the labour market absorption rates are highest among youth with a post matric qualification (Graham & Mlatsheni; 2015:51-52); therefore, the researcher surmises that education is the key that unlocks the door to economic freedom, hence the need for skills development among the SA youth. Lack of skills, coupled with no work experience, may discourage youth from seeking employment, thus, resulting in their ultimately becoming NEETs. Around 34.1% of the youth below 24 years were NEETs during Q1: 2020 which accounts for an increase of 0.8% as compared to Q1:2019.

Approximately 3,5 million (34,1%) out of 10,3 million young people aged 15-24 years were not in employment, education or training (NEET). The overall NEET rate increased by 0,8 of a percentage point in Q1:2020 compared to Q1:2019.

NEET (15-24 years) by gender

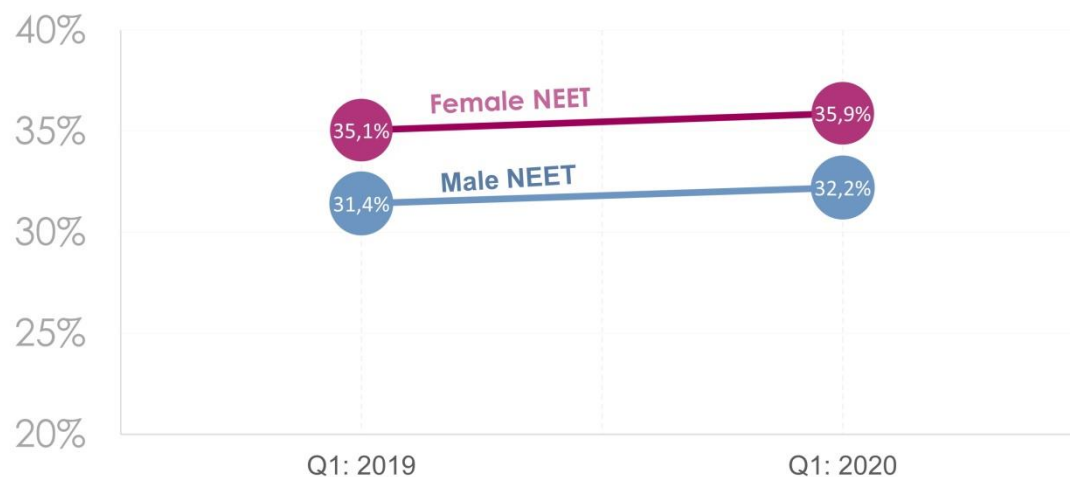


Figure 2.5: NEET rate during Q1:2019 and Q1:2020

(StatsSA, 2020)

SA has been grappling with a surge in the number of youths entering the labour market and the reality that the unemployment rate is one of the highest amongst the developing countries. The main reason for this problem is a huge supply of low skilled individuals compared with a high demand from employers for more skilled workers. Youth are the hardest hit by this situation because they either do not possess any skills or have skills that do not meet the labour market demands (Draft: Human Resources Development Strategy for South Africa 2009-2030, 2008a:11; Meyer, 2013:18; Modise, 2020; Rankin, Roberts & Schoer, 2014). Labour Minister, Mr Thembelani Thulas Nxesi, posits that high youth unemployment stems from the structural nature of the SA economy whereby the demand for highly skilled labour stands in contrast to the reality of the majority of SA's youth who enter the labour force with a minimum or lack of skills (Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015:52). Other factors include low economic growth levels, socio-economic challenges, rapid changes in the labour market. high poverty levels among Black communities that may result in school dropouts, limited skills acquisition and insufficient preparation for entry into the world of work (BusinessTech, 2020). The Minister of Labour further claims that the corona virus pandemic has increased the youth unemployment rate. Given this situation, it is, therefore imperative to establish whether the YFP was able to impart the relevant skills to the graduates so that they could become productive members of society and help in building the SA national economy.

To counteract the high level of youth unemployment in SA, Allias, (2010:16) stressed the importance of a demand-driven education system in which education prepared young people to enter the job market. Regrettably, however, Statistics South Africa (2015) and the South African Oil & Gas Alliance (SAOGA) (2016) report that SA continues to be characterised by general labourers as compared to skilled labour. Some progress, however, has been made in the training of artisans whereby a significant number of newly qualified artisans found employment (Advertorial, 2018:17). The SA government has put in place labour activation programmes through the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF), youth bursary schemes, registration of work seekers and employment opportunities, as well as matching, counselling and placement services offered at the various labour centres across SA (BusinessTech, 2020). The youth are the most vulnerable in the SA labour market hence the importance of advising them to utilise some of the above government interventions in order for them to become economically empowered.

The imbalance between labour supply and demand in SA calls for the implementation of a comprehensive human resources development strategy. The Human Resources Development Strategy for SA (HRDS-SA) (nd: 5) contends that unemployment and poverty is linked to the unequal distribution of productive assets in SA. This situation is embedded in SA's history during which time there have been huge disparities between the wealthy and the poor. Thus, it is critically important to ascertain how many YFP Level 1 graduates obtained employment in the W&R sector.

Youth employability exists at the heart of youth development, espoused by the right to adult basic education as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of SA. The youth should be afforded equal education, training and employment opportunities (Zuma, 2016:53). The Further Education and Training (FET) Act 98 of 1998 paved the way for the establishment of the TVETs in SA in 2002 as a result of the merger of 152 former technical colleges to form 50 TVETs across the nine provinces of SA, with a restructured curriculum that reflected the principles of the new democratic dispensation (Terblanche & Bitzer, 2018:105).

The YFP project is a learnership programme pitched at NQF Level 1. It is a joint initiative between the WCED and the W&R SETA that gives at-risk learners an opportunity to continue with lifelong learning at TVETs in order to assist them to find employment in the W&R sector. The YFP is a second-chance programme whose aim is to provide occupational courses for Grade 9 learners who are likely to withdraw from school. Despite the positive intentions of such youth programmes, the work readiness of the project participants is questionable, hence the need to determine the graduates' progression with their studies as well as their success in obtaining employment in the W&R sector.

Most of the YFP Level 1 graduates are new entrants into the labour market which means that they are probably inexperienced. Conversely, a survey released by Pay Scale reports that almost 90% of college graduates believe that they are ready for employment field, however, the majority of their employers reiterate their lack of skills (False Bay College News, 2018). Questions arise as to whether the YFP training intervention was able to cover the skills gap. It is necessary, therefore, to ascertain which areas of the YFP Level 1 curriculum need improvement – a matter which is one of the objectives of this study. Afeti (2018: xvii) is of the opinion that the skills needs of at-risk learners are best addressed by private sector informal and non-formal training providers because these courses offer flexibility in terms of admission requirements, training delivery, teaching methodology and language of instruction. This method enables out-of-school youth and early school leavers to understand what is being taught and, thus, they will have a better chance of acquiring the requisite skills for the world of work.

The South African Young Water Professionals National Committee (SAYWPNC) (2016) is furthermore of the opinion that young people ought to have the right type of training, skills, attitude, motivation in order to obtain employment within the water sector. Such factors cut across all economic social sectors, hence, the importance of proper training for the youth so that they can become employable.

Hennis and De Vries (2017), in addition, note the importance of intrinsic motivation to learn and advocate for learners' self-discovery while learning because this method induces an interest in learning. The implication of this recommendation is applicable to the YFP learners who are participating in a second-chance programme, and, thus, need to be committed and motivated if they are to make a success of their lives. This fact is articulated in the reAct project of 2010 whose aim is to re-activate disengaged at-risk youth in different educational contexts. Lack of skills and/or a low skills levels among the youth has resulted in their feeling frustrated, hopeless and angry, hence the urgent need to address the problems bedevilling the youth (Meyer, 2013:18-19).

Jali-Khaile (2015:8) holds the view that labour ought to be equipped with the right skills and attitudes from the word go as the majority of young people lack the employability skills needed to excel in the workplace. Research conducted by (Afeti 2018: xi) indicates that higher education institutions in Africa are 'churning-out' between 10–12 million poorly skilled youth into the labour market annually. Likewise WCYDS (2013:33) reiterates the need to coordinate support across all stakeholders in the education spectrum such as the TVETs, the WCED higher education institutions and all the social development departments. Partnerships among

all relevant post-school education stakeholders might help the TVETs' graduates obtain the requisite work-related skills. The former Higher Education and Training Minister, Dr Naledi Pandor, stressed the need to develop and strengthen partnerships between the private sector, civil society, students and different government departments in order to equip youth with appropriate skills so that they can be absorbed into different industries (Advertorial, 2018:17).

Despite the current lack of work-related skills among the youth, research indicates that there is a serious intent to address this gap in SA as evidenced by the collaboration between SETAs and the TVETs. TVETs such as Ekurhuleni West and Ekurhuleni East, have already introduced programmes that respond to aviation related employment because of their proximity to OR Tambo International Airport. The National Skills Fund (NSF) is playing a pivotal role in funding the critical trades and occupations as evidenced by the Operation Phakisa projects whereby the NSF provided R150 million to 26 colleges to create centres of specialisation (Chauke, 2018:14). The Adopt-a-TVET college initiative by the Human Resources Development Council (HRDC) of SA (Advertorial, 2018:16) is already paving the way for such centres of specialisation within TVETs through which SA youth are obtaining skills in critical and scarce fields, thus, enabling them to actively participate and contribute meaningfully towards society and the economy. TVET Newsflash (2020) reports that the 'I-Work' project, which developed out of the partnership between the DHET and the British Council, aims to bring together employers and TVETs' graduates in order to improve employment opportunities for the SA youth. This coordination of stakeholders needs to be properly implemented, monitored and evaluated in order to help the youth grow into a productive adulthood.

The UN recognised that the lack of youth employment is a global problem, as is evidenced by its occurrence in countries such as America, European Union, Australia, Asia, Africa and SA. However, as mentioned previously, these nations' environmental, political, economic, social and technological discrepancies, further divides the developed and developing countries, perpetuating the unequal platform for international competition (Gie, 2021: 28). It was on this premise that the UN launched seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) to create a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all" (UN SDG). The relevant SDGs for this research study are SDG 4: Quality Education and SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth that will contribute towards SDG 1: No poverty. Quality education provides employment opportunities, thus, leading to productive and dignified lives for people and the eradication of poverty.

2.4 Youth development in focus

The South African National Youth Policy 2009-2014 defines youth development as a programme which provides opportunities and support for the youth in order to improve the lives

of both young people and society at large. The policy aims to develop the youth by enabling access to education, health, civic and economic participation (NYDA, 2014:7-8). This implies that the youth will become self-sufficient; thereby helping in the fight against unemployment. Youth development programmes are designed to address the labour, economic and development needs of SA. In keeping with the latter, this study seeks to determine how many YFP Level 1 graduates obtained employment in the W&R sector, given the challenge of youth unemployment in SA.

A number of projects aimed at the youth have been implemented in SA and include the Umsobomvu Youth Fund, EOH extensive learnership programme, Love Life's Ground Breakers' programme, National Youth Service (NYS), Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator, Ikamva Youth and the Chrysalis Academy, among many others. The aims of these programmes include skills acquisition, work readiness and encouraging the youth to refrain from negative social behaviour, all of which help to eradicate the hardships associated with poverty and joblessness among SA youth (Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015:56; Hartley, 2007:15-16). Project Khulisa is helping to grow the SA economy through job creation in such priority sectors of the economy as agro-processing, tourism and oil and gas services (Western Cape Provincial Strategic Plan, 2015:21). This approach supports the notion that youth programmes assist young people to adopt a new lifestyle. It is evident that the above listed programmes are providing at-risk youth with a second chance so that they can lead a meaningful and productive life. Nevertheless, the question still arises as to whether the youth who participate in such programmes are ready for the job market on completion of these courses.

Ikusasa Lami (My Future) handbook is another government initiative to help the TVETs' students prepare for the world of work. However, Afeti (2018: xv) cautions that a TVET course is no guarantee for the provision of jobs or eradication of poverty but rather an environment that stimulates growth will help create additional jobs. Furthermore, Zuma (2017: 69) reiterates the need to research the extent of employment creation resulting through learnerships. Such research will shed more light on whether skills development programmes are helping in eradicating unemployment among SA youth.

YFP are appropriate for preparing learners for the employment field, thereby, turning the pool of unskilled labour into skilled labour. It is evident from the details provided in the above paragraphs that youth development programmes assist young people to improve and develop their skills in order to obtain employment. The YFP participants come from disadvantaged groups, so acquiring a job might lead to a life of dignity for the youth, the family and the community at large. Currently, it is necessary to implement different youth development

strategies in order to curb the youth unemployment rate and to assist them to become employable and escape poverty.

Despite the global unemployment statistics, as indicated above, there are many youth programmes being run, even though the employability of young people is questionable. In light of the above, it is imperative that these programmes actually help to alleviate unemployment and poverty amongst the youth. Research on the employability of YFP L1 graduates will highlight the contribution of skills development programmes towards the reduction of youth unemployment.

2.5 South African legislation and strategies supporting youth development

In order to consider the youth skills development programmes as one of the strategies for equipping youth with requisite skills to obtain employment, this section looks at the SA legislation underpinning youth development.

2.5.1 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No.108 of 1996)

In its preamble, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996) clearly articulates its aim of improving the well-being of all citizens and emancipating each person. One of the values enshrined in the constitution entails upholding human dignity and the protection of human rights and freedom. The right to education is prioritised in the constitution because it provides all South Africans with a fair start in life thereby increasing their chances of employment. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) contends that SA has made progress in ensuring access to education for all despite the many obstacles faced by children born into poverty. These challenges often result in a large number of learners dropping-out of school after Grade 9 (UNICEF, 2020). The YFP helps to absorb these individuals, thereby improving the work opportunities for the SA youth. This research study aims to investigate the employability of YFP L1 graduates in the W&R sector.

Section 29 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996) stresses the need to ensure access to adult basic education for all South Africans. SA is ranked 143rd out of 148 countries in terms of education, hence the emphasis on education and training (NSDA III, 2014: 4) to equip the youth with the appropriate knowledge and skills in order to avoid unemployment and the resultant financial deprivation.

2.5.2 Skills Development Act (SDA) (Act No. 97 of 1998)

The SDA aims to provide a system that brings together labour, education and training so as to develop the skills of South African employees (South Africa, 1998). Labour entails the SETAs and the NSA, while education and training encompass public and private institutions and the

NQF. Section 5 of the SDA (South Africa, 1998) stipulates that the NSA liaise with the different SETAs, as well as the Quality Council of Trades and Occupations (QCTO). Collaboration between these bodies fulfils the goals of the National Skills Development Policy, the National Skills Development Strategy and the occupational standards and qualifications. SETAs develop their respective sector skills plans through various learning programmes and may establish learnerships. The YFP is one such learnership programme and it falls under the auspices of the W&RSETA. This research study intends to ascertain whether the YFP was able to impart knowledge, skills and attitudes to the SA at-risk youth so that they become employable or progress to the next educational level.

- **The role of Sector Education Training Authorities (SETAs)**

There are 21 SETAs across the different economic sectors that aim to promote and facilitate skills development to meet the broader growth needs of SA's economy. SETAs' responsibilities include the development and implementation of sectors' skills plans, promoting learnerships through overseeing the development of learning materials, certification of service providers and assessors, collection and disbursement of grants, among many others (SAstudy, 2020; Zuma, 2016:73). On completion of the YFP L1 learnership programme, the graduates may obtain a job in the W&R sector or progress to the next level at any TVET college, on condition that minimum entry requirements are met. It is, thus, important to establish how many YFP L1 graduates found employment within the W&R sector in jobs such as cashiers, till-packers, stock room clerks, order-pickers, help-desk operators and forklift drivers, among many others. The findings of such an investigation might help in determining whether learnerships help to reduce youth unemployment in SA.

- **Learnerships**

Section 16 of the SDA (No. 97 of 1998) defines a learnership as an agreement entered into between a learner, an employer and a skills development provider. Hattingh (2007:63) cited in Zuma (2017:63) correctly states that a learnership is structured, combines both theory and practical work for a particular period of time that results in a qualification registered by South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and related to an occupation registered with the Department of Labour. Learnerships help in building skills among the youth of SA. The YFP is one of the learnership programmes implemented by the WCED.

Chauke (2018:15) reiterates that learnerships assist in addressing past inequalities and increases learners' work readiness, thereby improving the learners' chances of obtaining employment. The design of a learnership programme facilitates YFP L1 graduates' entry into the workplace because it provides both theoretical and practical components and, hence, enables employers to hire skilled and reasonably experienced workers who may not need any

supervision (W&R SETA, 2020). The YFP is a learnership opportunity given to WC youth to help them acquire practical skills that will enable them obtain employment in the W&R sector. If young people are productive, this behaviour may ameliorate their living standards (De Louw, 2009: 56). These improved living standards deter youth from engaging in anti-social actions. Despite the large volume of learnership students between 44 000 and 55 000 annually – youth unemployment still remains a challenge for SA. Statistics show that for all the learners who enrolled in a learnership programme while unemployed, only 43% with low skills qualifications (NQF L1-3) found employment as compared to 76% engaged in NQF L4 programmes or 64% engaged in high skills level courses (NQF L5-8) (De Louw, 2009:56; Rankin, Roberts & Schoer, 2014). This scenario depicts a failure by learnership programmes to curb the rate of youth unemployment in SA because youth who have completed learnership programmes still lack the competences required in the labour market (Rankin, Roberts & Schoer, 2014). In light of the above statistics, it is important, therefore, to establish whether the YFP Level 1 graduates were able to obtain employment because, as indicated above, only 43% of learners enrolled in NQF Level 1-3 programmes were absorbed by the labour market.

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

The Skills Development Levies Act (No. 9 of 1999) (RSA, 1999a) is the national levy whereby employers pay one percent of their payroll expenditure towards skills development. The levy payments are facilitated through the South African Revenue Authority (SARS) and the respective SETAs.

In consideration of the above-mentioned legislation, it is vital to emphasize that this study will concentrate on the YFP learnership programme pitched at NQF Level 1 that is funded by the W&R SETA and the WCED, in which to date more than 2 000 students have benefitted from the programme (Papier, 2016:2). A learnership helps in alleviating youth unemployment because it equips the learners with both theoretical and practical knowledge as alluded to by the SDA (No. 97 of 1998; W&R SETA, 2020) however, Afeti (2018:xvii) argues that learnerships do not provide the learners with the much needed practical experience due to the lack of collaboration between the government and the private sector and, as a result, the majority of learnership graduates enter the workplace with insufficient skills and practical experience, a fact which reduces their employment opportunities. Statistics on youth unemployment during Q1:2020 accounted for 43.2% of those between 15-34 years, 59% of those aged between 15-24 years (StatsSA, 2020). Unemployed graduates in the 15-24 age group during Q1:2020 reached 33.1%, hence, the need to investigate whether the YFP is contributing to the eradication of unemployment among the SA youth in the WC.

Learners who come from disadvantaged backgrounds benefit from learnerships because they afford them the opportunity to access skills development programmes. The YFP Level 1 graduates attended classes at different TVET campuses scattered around the Cape Flats belt and the location of these campuses makes it easy for the learners to attend a college and acquire a qualification that has the potential to improve their lifestyle. SAQA (2012:1) states that learnerships address the past imbalances in respect of providing equal educational opportunities, skills acquisition and job opportunities. Moreover, learnerships enable graduates to obtain nationally recognised qualifications relevant to a specific sector while earning an allowance for the duration of the learnership.

The Skills Development Levies Act (No. 9 of 1999) (RSA, 1999a) is a vehicle that drives the funding of skills development initiatives through partnerships between the public and private sectors and quality assures all processes within the education and training system. The aim of this Act is to finance competence development within the workplace, and, thus, employers are obligated to give part of their income to the NSF. Compliant employers can claim skills grants annually, provided appropriate skills training is provided for their employees. Categories of employers exempt from skills levy include the public service employers, employers whose payroll does not exceed half a million rands, religious and charitable organisations who are not taxed from the Tax Act (No. 32 of 1944) and the national and provincial entities who receive 90% of their income from parliament. As part of this research inquiry, in addition to establishing whether the YFP learnership opportunity given to the young people of the WC helped them acquire the practical job skills necessary to obtain employment in the W&R sector, it is vital to ascertain whether the employed graduates were sent for some form of training by their employers in order to enhance their knowledge and skills.

2.5.4 National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (Act No. 67 of 2008)

The National Qualifications Framework (No. 67 of 2008) (South Africa, 2008b) regulates, recognises, develops, classifies and structures new and existing qualifications. It is divided into the Higher Education (HE), the General and Further Education and Training (GFET) and the Trades and Occupations frameworks.

Sub Framework		NQF level	Qualification types
General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub Framework (GFETQSF)	Occupational Qualifications Sub Framework (OQSF)	1	Grade 9
		2	Grade 10/ National (vocational) Certificates level 2/ Occupational Certificates
		3	Grade 11/ National (vocational) Certificates level 3/ Occupational Certificates
		4	Grade 12/ National (vocational) Certificates level 4/ Occupational Certificates
Higher Education Qualification Sub Framework (HEQSF)		5	Higher Certificate/ Advanced National (vocational) Certificates/ Occupational Certificates
		6	Diploma/ Advanced Certificate/ Occupational Certificates
		7	Degree/ Advanced Diploma/ Post-graduate Certificate
		8	Honours/Post-Graduate Diploma
		9	Masters
		10	Doctorate

Figure 2.6: The structure of the NQF

(Skills Portal: 2020; Wholesale & Retail NQF 1 Student Book, 2012:47)

The objectives of the NQF include the creation of standardised educational outcomes, correcting unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities, mobility and progression within and across occupations and adhering to international qualifications standards (Allias, 2010:16; Moore, 2019). The qualifications framework facilitates employers' understanding of prospective employees' competencies and allows 'drop-outs' a chance to restart their education by progressing to NQF level 2 and above, provided they meet the minimum entry requirements. Currently there are ten NQF levels. The YFP is pitched at NQF Level 1 which is equivalent to Grade 9, hence, it falls within the GFET framework. Despite the noble aim of the NQF, Allias, (2010: iii) raises questions about the monitoring and evaluation of the qualifications in respect of employees' competencies on the job. In a study conducted by Terblanche & Bitzer (2018:109), it was noted that the DoE welcomed the establishment of the TVETs as these were seen as institutions that will necessitate curriculum changes within tertiary education so as to meet industry demands. Within the occupational band, the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) was established to spearhead reforms to the TVETs curricula which were deemed outdated, so that it responds to the labour market demands. The relevant curricula will enable the TVETs' graduates to obtain employment in their respective fields thereby flattening the youth unemployment curve.

2.5.5 National Youth Development Agency Act (NYDA) (No. 54 of 2008)

The National Youth Development Agency Act (NYDA) (No. 54 of 2008) (South Africa, 2008c) plays a pivotal role in youth development in respect of all industries in SA. The NYDA prioritises

education and skills development for youth, together with their economic, health and social well-being so that youth can lead productive lives. In order to address a myriad of problems facing the youth of SA, the NYDA initiated an integrated youth development structure regardless of the doubts from some sectors concerning the effectiveness of such an agency (Mabe, 2014). Zuma (2017:56) expressed the same sentiments about the ineffectiveness of the NYDA and asserted that too much political interference negates the success of the agency and that the NYDA focuses mainly on entrepreneurship at the expense of other pressing issues affecting the youth. In Matshediso (2018:22-24)'s view, the NYDA has been able to achieve its aims since entrepreneurship enables youth to create jobs for themselves as the formal labour market cannot accommodate all the unemployed youth. To this end, the NYDA grant programme has been assisting a minimum of 450 youths annually across SA to start businesses in all sectors of the economy. Such grants help liberate the youth from the effects poverty and, thus, provides an opportunity for a better future. While the YFP aims to enable at-risk youth to gain employment within the W&R sector, entrepreneurship/self-employment can be another route through which youth can achieve sustainable livelihoods.

2.5.6 National Development Plan (NDP) 2011-2030

According to WCED (2016) and Zarenda (2013:3), the NDP outlines how South Africans can eliminate deprivation and reduce disparities by 2030 because it encompasses the Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP) and the NGP within the National Planning Framework. Some previous economic policies failed to address SA's economic problems (Zuma, 2017:59) and the painful reality of policies that fail to reach their objectives is conveyed by the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Programme (GEAR) and the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (ASGISA). In order to address the failures of these three policies, the NGP Framework 2010 came into being on 23 November 2010 and aims to create five million jobs over a decade in various sectors of the economy (Zarenda, 2013:1). However, Meyer (2013:21) warns that since the NGP depends upon government interventions, rather than the state of the economy, it may not be possible to achieve this goal. Eradication of poverty is only achievable if there are employment opportunities within the economy; however, the current employment statistics portray a disturbing perspective for SA.

The NDP aims to ensure a reasonable standard of living for all South Africans as guaranteed by the constitution, a situation that entails access to benefits such as decent housing, water and sanitation, quality education and capacity building, quality health, employment, safety and security (StatsSA, 2019). The seventeen SDGs set in 2015 by the UN aim to achieve a viable future for all by the year 2030, with its underlying pillars being economic, social and environmental (Bali Swain & Yang-Wallentin, 2020:96-106). The goals are a universal call to

eradicate poverty, protect the earth and achieve success. The SDGs are aligned to the NDP as illustrated in Table 2.3 below while the progress and challenges so far encountered in respect of SDG 4 and SDG 8 are depicted in Tables 2.4 & 2.5, respectively. Despite SA's triple challenge of poverty, inequality and unemployment, (StatsSA, 2019) reports that meaningful headway has been made to realise a "better life for all".

Table 2.3 Alignment: NDP and SDGs

NDP	SDGs
Chapter 11: Social protection	Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere in the world. Goal 2: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for people of all ages.
Chapter 9: Improving education, training and innovation	Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all people.
Chapter 10: Promoting health	Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for people of all ages.
Chapter 3: Economy and employment	Goal 8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all people.
Chapter 6: An integrated and inclusive rural economy	Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

(Statistics South Africa, 2019)

The relevant SDGs for this research study are SDG 4: Quality Education and SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth that will contribute towards SDG 1: No poverty. Access to basic education for all is protected by the constitution of SA and the NDP acknowledges the importance of quality post-school education among the youth. Chapter 9 of the NDP prioritises industry-relevant vocational training because this instruction leads to youth employment, thereby eradicating poverty and its accompanying social ills. This point is illustrated by SDG 4's target which is to boost the number of youth with relevant technical and vocational skills by the year 2030.

Questions arise, however, in respect of the relevance of some of the vocational programmes offered in higher institutions of learning. SDG 8 can only be realised if there is a match between what is taught in such establishments and what skills the various industries want. High unemployment rate among the youth (Voluntary National Review, 2019), as mentioned

previously, is a cause for concern globally and measures ought to be taken to curb this disturbing situation. In relation to the above problem, this research study intends to determine whether the YFP L1 graduates were equipped with the relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes to help them obtain employment in the W&R sector.

Table 2.4: SDG 4: Quality Education

Progress	Challenges
Expanded access	Top Grades participation rates low.
More state funding	High Drop-out rate relating to children living with disabilities
Improved literacy levels	Low Internet access
Improved physical conditions of learning for children	
Access to drinkable water	
Rate of ECD learning high	
Approximately 95% of youth aged 16-18 completed Grade 7	
Under 90% of youth aged 19-21 completed Grade 9	
Under 51% of youth aged 19-21 completed Grade 12	

(Statistics South Africa, 2019)

Table 2.5: SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth

Progress	Challenges
Jobs are being created, but insufficient to dent high unemployment rate. 16,291 million in employment in Jan-Mar 2019, compared to 15,675 million in Jan-Mar 2016	Unemployment remains high – 27.6% Q1 2019. 6,201 million unemployed in Jan-Mar 2019, compared to 5,723 million in Jan-Mar 2016.
Gross fixed capital formation to GDP (Investment) has averaged 19% over the past 3 years	SA economy is deindustrialising, with share of manufacturing in GDP declining from about 19,3% in 1994 to about 12% in 2017 & 2018
The Government has legislated a minimum wage	
Social floor	
Domestic workers protection	

(Statistics South Africa, 2019)

2.5.7 Human Resources Development Strategy-South Africa (HRDS-SA) 2010-2030

Human resources development is the mainstay of the National Development Plan because it aids the nation in delivering the skills and knowledge required to bring about prosperity to SA (Human Resources Development Strategy for South Africa (HRDS-SA), (nd:5). The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No.108 of 1996) emphasises the importance

of respecting and protecting everyone’s dignity and this directly correlates with the Human Resources Development (HRD) Strategy for SA. According to the Draft: Human Resources Development Strategy for SA (HRDS-SA) 2009-2030 (2008a:11); HRDS-SA (nd:5-7); the HRDS-SA aims to improve the human development index, to bridge the disparities between the wealthy and the poor and to facilitate investment in the economy. In order to achieve the above goals, four HRD strategic objectives have been formulated and these are depicted in Figure 2.7 below.

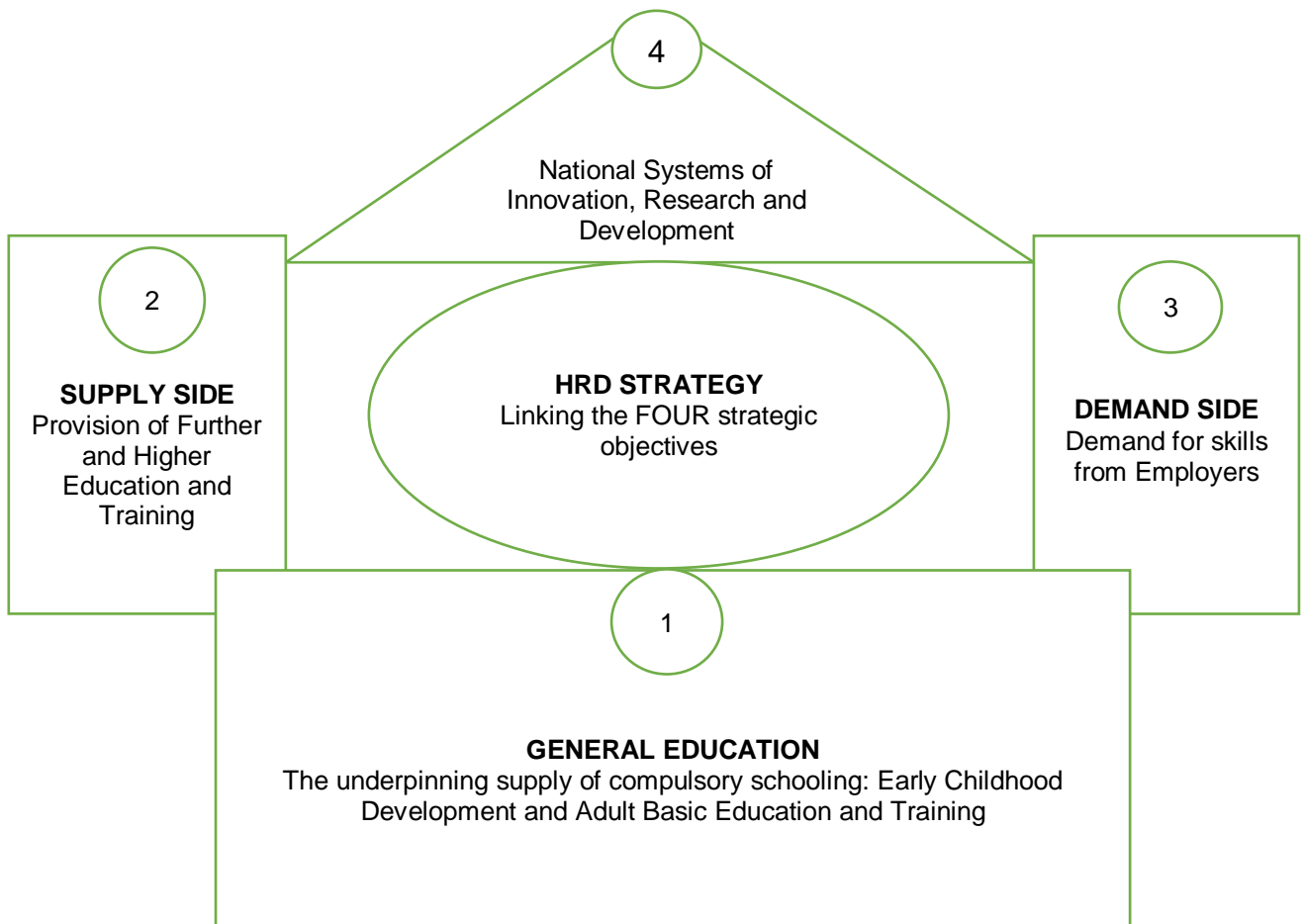


Figure 2.7: Summary of the HRD strategy

(Human Resources Development Strategy for South Africa (HRDS-SA) (HRDS-SA, nd:12).

The first strategic objective of the HRDS-SA seeks to enhance progress through the provision of basic education for all people as protected by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996). The YFP is one such programme catering for the educational needs of at-risk learners through which the WC youth are given a second chance at education. An education system that addresses the needs of a nation enables individuals to obtain employment, thereby paving the way for the protection and fulfilment of other human rights (Arendse, 2017:101-102; Mtwesi, 2013). To this end, this research study aims to investigate the employability of YFP Level 1 graduates within the W&R sector.

The second strategic objective aims to improve the supply of scarce skills in order to meet SA's labour demands. The TVETs and universities play an important role in ensuring that graduates possess the essential knowledge and skills to improve the growth of the country in areas such as the engineering fields, whereby the NDP forecasts that every year the post school education and training institutions should produce 30 000 qualified artisans (Mail & Guardian Advertorial Supplement, 2019). In turn, youth unemployment will be addressed and human dignity restored through freedom from hunger and poverty.

Increasing employer participation in life-long learning is the third strategic objective of the HRDS-SA. This goal brings together labour, private and government-funded education and training, capacity building and social development initiatives. Learnership programmes are implemented for high level skills in response to the dictates of the labour market, workplace skills plans are prepared and executed accordingly. SETAs accredit the occupationally directed programmes under the auspices of the QCTO (Mail & Guardian Advertorial Supplement, 2019). The YFP is a learnership programme which culminated from the partnership between the W&R SETA, WCED and the TVETs; however, this research study will determine whether this programme was able to produce graduates who respond to the demands of the labour market.

The last of the HRDS-SA's strategic objectives involve increasing job creation through industrial policies, research, innovation and development. Scientific knowledge is critical in solving societal problems. Educational institutions conduct research in an attempt to increase the quality of life for SA's people. Human resources are the driving force behind national development hence the importance of a credible HRDS-SA (Draft: HRDS-SA 2009-2030, 2008a:11). Research on the employability of YFP Level 1 graduates within the W&R sector will expose whether the training intervention is helping to increase the quality of SA lives.

2.5.8 National Skills Development Strategy III (NSDS III)

The driving force behind the NSDS III is to equip SA's labour force with the necessary skills for the labour market. The NSDS aims to overcome challenges such as: inadequate skills levels, poor work-readiness among the youth, critical skills shortages, excessive concentration on NQF Level 1-3 learnerships without articulating to higher skills levels, as well as an absence of skills programmes that meet the demands of the various industries (NSDS, 2016:19). The YFP targets first time job-entrants; hence, it falls under the ambit of the NSDS. Since the YFP is pitched at NQF Level 1, it is possible that the graduates lack employability skills. The need to ascertain the employability of the YFP Level 1 graduates, thus, becomes the basis for this study.

2.5.9 Western Cape Youth Development Strategy (WCYDS) (2013)

The Western Cape Youth Development Strategy (WCYDS) (2013) was developed out of the need to afford everyone a chance to lead a dignified life despite their circumstances at birth. The Western Cape Provincial Strategic Plan 2014-2019 (2015:30) reports that a significant majority of children in the WC lack numeracy and literacy skills and, hence, struggle to progress with their studies or obtain employment. Furthermore, the strategic plan shows that the majority of youth are multiple-grade repeaters and/or drop-outs and, hence, may subsequently engage in a destructive cycle of gangsterism, violence or drugs. As a result of the difficult circumstances in which the WC youth live, they ought to be given a chance to reach their full potential (WCYDS, 2013:4). In order to achieve this goal, the WCYDS introduced five pillars of opportunity (WCYDS, 2013:6 & 7) and this study will explore the education and training, economic and reconnection opportunity pillars because these form the central point of the research.

The education and training pillar aims to educate and prepare the youth for the world of work through such programmes as structured after-school activities, school retention interventions, academic support courses and skills development and intermediation. The YFP, Earn to Learn and Learning Buddies are examples of school retention interventions designed to prevent learners dropping-out of school. As mentioned previously, the YFP provides the education and training pillar which helps the youth acquire the relevant skills necessary for obtaining employment in the W&R sector, thereby enabling them to partake in the economy and reducing youth joblessness in SA.

The economic and reconnection pillar provides the youth with an opportunity for accessing the job market. Through various partnerships between the private and the public sectors the new labour entrants gain access to work opportunities via internships and job shadowing. In addition, young entrepreneurs are provided with financial assistance to start and grow their own businesses. This process may ease at-risk youth's passage to successful adulthood by turning them into economically contributing members of society. The YFP provides economic and reconnection pillars because its graduates enter the labour market through job shadowing and work integrated learning, thereby ensuring a smooth transition into employment. The practical component of a learnership provides exposure into the world of work through which the graduates gain experience and able to earn a living and contribute to the economy. Some YFP graduates may start their own businesses and, thus, help to reduce youth unemployment.

2.5.10 Further Education and Training Colleges Act (FETC) (No. 16 of 2006)

The Further Education and Training (FET) Act 98 of 1998 necessitated the establishment of fifty TVETs within the nine provinces in SA in 2002. TVETs are instrumental in addressing the

nation's skills needs by offering such programmes as the National Certificate Vocational (NCV), the National Accredited Technical Education Diploma (NATED) as well as occupationally directed programmes (TVET Newsflash, 2020). The FETC Act enables the YFP graduates to progress with their studies at any FET/TVET college in SA. This process commensurate with the NQF objectives of flexibility and advancement for all.

The variety of programmes offered by the TVETs enables SA to meet its skills gap, thereby, contributing to the growth of the nation. The South African government has always assisted the youth to acquire skills through different skills development interventions. To this end, Baloyi (2016:57) reports that the Department of Tourism, together with the private sector, introduced the Tourism Buddies leadership programme in Gauteng Province through which 450 learners have acquired skills and competencies in the tourism sector. Furthermore, several of the graduates found employment with international hospitality institutions; thereby contributing to job creation through capacity building and fulfilling the aims of the South African National Skills Development Agency. This particular learnership programme has enabled young people to receive a second chance at employment, thereby, assisting in curbing youth unemployment within SA. The YFP, in common with the Tourism Buddies programme, is a joint initiative between different stakeholders, that aims to train and develop the SA youth so that they can obtain employment within the W&R sector. This study, as mentioned previously, will investigate the employability of the YFP L1 graduates within the W&R sector.

2.6 Youth Focus Project in the Western Cape Province

Education is the key that unlocks doors to a productive and satisfying life (WCED, 2016). Despite all the calls for the youth of SA to attain an educational qualification, a significant majority of learners continue to drop-out of high school without doing so. Almost half of the enrolled learners in SA schools leave without attaining a matric certificate, and, alarmingly, the coloured community in WC has the highest number of dropouts under the age of 17 (WCYDS, 2013:21). Rather than letting these youth roam the streets aimlessly, the YFP offers young people an opportunity to receive training in scarce skills.

Youth leaving school without completing Grade 12 often face enormous difficulties in finding employment and, if they do, their remuneration is far less than that of more knowledgeable and skilled employees (Branson, 2018:2). This fact is a sad reality for the majority of SA's youth who cannot complete their formal education. However, the YFP affords such vulnerable youth a second chance at education so that they can contribute meaningfully to society and lead a dignified life. This research study, as indicated throughout this report, aims to investigate the learning trajectories of the YFP L1 graduates and their progression at the TVETs, as well as their employability/unemployability within the W&R sector.

The YFP (as stated above) is a joint initiative between the WCED, the W&R SETA and the TVETs, (Maphoshe & Sipengane, 2016:14). The SA TVET College Times (2015:4) reiterates the need to link education and the employment market in order to address the socio-economic problems facing many disadvantaged communities within SA. Furthermore, Maphoshe and Sipengane (2016:14) maintain these partnerships between TVETs and the labour market are vital because they help the nation to realise the outcomes of the NSDS.

A study by Papier (2016:3) reaffirms that the YFP is a second-chance learning opportunity for young South Africans. However, Papier, Needham, McBride & Branson (2018:17) raise questions about whether or not all at-risk youth are taking advantage of the available FET opportunities. According to statistics, 7 million youth completed at least Grade 9 between 2011 and 2016. In 2016, 36% of these were still in school, 46% had matriculated and the remaining 18% were potential students for FET establishments, of whom only 11% enrolled at TVETs or ABETs. As such the number of NEETs continues to grow.

The Western Cape Youth Development Strategy (WCYDS, 2013:43-55) maintains that the Provincial Government of the Western Cape (PGWC), the WCED and various other stakeholders are working to ensure the success of youth development programmes in the WC. Various groups are seeking to improve both the South African government's and labour organisations' commitment to the funding, involvement, monitoring and evaluation of such initiative. (Mahlo & Taole, 2008.n.p; Manpower Group, 2012:19; Ndo Dzivhuluwani, 2012:i). More than 2000 Grade 9 multiple-repeaters and over-age learners have benefitted from the YFP (Papier, 2016:1). However, the question still remains as to whether the project's participants were equipped with the requisite skills for obtaining a job. The alignment of education and labour market related training is of paramount importance, hence the need to ascertain if the YFP L1 curriculum requires broadening in this respect.

The curriculum is the nucleus of graduates' employability and, as such; it should be at the heart of all educational practices. As far back as 1993, Toombs and Tierney (1993:175-195) stated that the designing of a curriculum needs the input of experts from various fields to ensure that it addresses the needs of society as well as the students. Saunders and Zuzel (2010: 1-15) supports this view by stating that the needs of employers as well as the skills of students play an important role in informing the curriculum and the delivery of its modules. Institutions of higher learning, consequently, are presenting learning programmes in which employability skills are embedded in the curricula, but employers are still questioning the work readiness of graduates. It is the purpose of this research study, therefore, to find out whether the YFP L1 curriculum has produced work-ready graduates.

The improvement of a curriculum entails defining existing problems and formulating solutions to these. In the W&R sector, general skills such as time management and teamwork should be taught to students studying W&R courses since employers consider these attributes when hiring employees. Thus, the graduates with these basic skills, though not experienced in other W&R issues, at least will be equipped to perform effectively within a W&R environment. In a study conducted by Du Preez and Simmonds (2014:1-14) it was noted that a curriculum must be context specific in order to facilitate graduates' employability. In SA, a curriculum that addresses the social, economic, political, psycho-social issues affecting the younger generation will suffice. It is of paramount importance that the YFP L1 curriculum caters for at-risk learners' needs because this group of students were likely to have left high school without obtaining a recognized educational qualification before enrolling for the learnership programme.

In the context of this study, a YFP is a bridging programme (equivalent to Grade 9) which could lead to further studies at a TVET college, or a work-preparation programme, for multiple-repeaters and/or over-age learners in WC public schools (YFP Information Session Guide, 2016:2). The overarching goal of the YFP is to give its students (mainly multiple-repeaters and over-aged learners) a second chance at education through a TVET Grade 9 course. The minimum requirements for participation in the YFP are as follows:

Participants must:

- be aged 17 turning 18 years upon enrolment,
- Live in the project area,
- Have failed Grade 9 multiple times,
- Be attending a public high school and studying Grade 9 or 10,
- Be at-risk of dropping out of high school.

The YFP learnership programme is offered over 12 months. The curriculum consists of fundamental, core and elective modules. The electives include a workplace component; however, learners conduct workplace-based simulation exercises on the TVETs' campuses. The purpose of such a practice is to bring the workplace into the classroom in order for learners to experience the 'real-work' environment. The modules covered are as follows:

- (a) Communication Literacy – this module assists students to communicate effectively within different communication settings. Basic skills such as compiling a curriculum vitae (CV), preparing a job application and taking minutes at a meeting, are unknown to many YFP students, hence the importance of the communication literacy module because it familiarises these learners with the appropriate use of text fonts, formats and conventions. The W&R sector involves daily interactions with customers either

face-to-face, via a telephone, using a fax machine or sending an email, hence the need for knowledge of the appropriate use of verbal and non-verbal communication codes in order to maintain and attract more customers.

- (b) **Mathematical Literacy** – a basic knowledge of mathematics is vital in any business. This module helps learners do calculations to solve pragmatic and conceptual problems by collecting, displaying and critically analysing the data in order to draw conclusions and make predictions. YFP L1 graduates will have an added advantage when employed within the W&R sector because they may be able to engage in market research in respect of their company's products or services and make recommendations beneficial for the organisation.
- (c) **Life Orientation** – this module will assist the YFP L1 graduates to make informed choices on how to maintain a healthy lifestyle, acquire knowledge on how to maintain positive relationships, as well as how to manage their time and finances. It introduces learners to the world of work in which the range of issues tackled includes work opportunities in both the formal and informal sectors, discovering one's talents and skills, the availability of training programmes at various institutions in SA, ethical behaviour and the various pieces of legislation that safeguard the rights of both employees and employers.
- (d) **W&R studies** – this is the core module, and it aids graduates in the performance of their daily duties because it clearly explains the various W&R practices, as well as the roles and functions of role players operating within this sector. It covers concepts such as understanding the nature of the W&R sector in SA, self-development, the importance of customer services and understanding entrepreneurship. It clearly outlines the various career paths within the W&R sector. Students are aware that upon their successful completion of the programme, opportunities are available for entry level positions within the W&R sector, such as order clerks, receiving clerks, sales assistants, helpdesk operators, cashiers, shelf packers and drivers of delivery vehicles, amongst many other jobs.
- (e) **Electives**, which comprise of Basic Business Calculations, Budgeting, Healthy Living, Banking and Basic Computer Skills.
- **Basic Business Calculations** – this elective helps graduates to master basic financial literacy concepts, such as profit and loss, so that they can contribute meaningfully to the control of expenses and generation of profit within their

organisation. It is of paramount importance for all W&R employees to be knowledgeable regarding all the financial aspects of a business.

- Budgeting – YFP students are introduced to constructing and managing a personal budget and this knowledge empowers them to manage their own finances responsibly.
- Healthy Living – this module assists YFP students to identify and describe basic health related needs within the community, thereby, assisting community members to enhance their standard of living. The YFP L1 students engage in different community projects as a way of supporting the community – for example during the course of the year, some graduates visited different Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres to help with the physical education of the young children, others volunteered to prepare food at orphanages and old people’s homes, while some graduates went back to their former schools to perform some spring cleaning. Such community engagements will help the YFP graduates to always be ready to give back to the community.
- Banking – the YFP L1 students are introduced to personal banking and its associated costs and management styles. Visits to various banking institutions are undertaken to enable students to acquire first-hand information. Financial literacy empowers YFP students and future graduates to manage their finances responsibly.
- Basic Computer Skills – the module helps YFP graduates to operate a computer when employed within a W&R outlet. In today’s technological driven world, almost every business captures data via a computer. Most industries, including the W&R industry, is offering its products and services online, hence, the importance of knowing basic computer concepts. The acquisition of computer skills may help the YFP L1 graduates obtain employment in the W&R industry. Graduates will be able to operate a store computer within the boundaries of organisational policy and procedures and also the W&R applications relevant to their job functions.

The TVETs advertise the availability of training opportunities in local communities in September of each year. In addition, the TVET College representatives visit public schools in the greater Cape Flats area to disseminate information about the YFP learnership programme.

Parents and prospective project participants are invited to the TVET college's YFP Open Day. The Programme for Adult College Education (PACE) placement tests and interviews are held in late November or early December of the same year and selection follows in early January of the following year. Registration and orientation for successful candidates is completed by the end of January and classes commence at the beginning of February and continue until December of each year. On successful completion of the course, project participants can study further, i.e., Level 2, at any TVET college in the WC or obtain employment in the W&R sector. The empowerment of the YFP participants through knowledge and skills acquisition is relevant to this study because it lays down the foundation for determining the employability of YFP L1 graduates within the W&R sector.

In a study conducted by Fibre Processing & Manufacturing Sector Education Training Authority (2014), it was noted that when the WC Clothing and Textile Service Centre (Clotex) learnership programme started, the students experienced a myriad of problems, including but not limited to, alcohol abuse by parents, lack of discipline and motivation, teenage pregnancies, literacy and numeracy challenges, forgetfulness and absenteeism. These problems were unrelated to the learnership, however, they still cast doubt upon the ability of learnerships to improve the skills and work readiness of their participants. Research conducted by Papier (2016:1) interestingly posited that, although the YFP learners originally were ignorant of the world of work, they managed to overcome their initial problems, such as disciplinary issues, and successfully developed their academic skills, confidence and sense of responsibility (WCED NEWS: 2015). Based upon the above comments, it can be inferred that positive youth development interventions have the potential to eradicate unemployment and poverty among the youth. However, it is unclear whether the YFP L1 graduates acquired the necessary employability skills to enable them to live an economically productive life.

As has been stated many times during this research report, the YFP can be beneficial to those learners who are susceptible to withdrawing from school due to poor academic performance because it offers them new hope of attaining knowledge and skills (WCED, 2012; 2016). In this light, Papier (2016:2) states that the YFP has achieved its goal of providing a second chance to Grade 9 multiple-repeaters and over-age learners residing in the WC. It is in this context that this research study aims to determine whether the YFP L1 graduates were equipped with the requisite knowledge, skills and attributes necessary for entering the W&R labour market or continuing their studies at L2. This investigation also entails determining whether areas of the YFP L1 curriculum need improvement.

2.7 Curriculum development and renewal

Owing to the fact that, since its inception in 2014, the YFP has not been evaluated nor has its graduates been tracked, it is unclear how many L1 graduates have gained employment, progressed to L2 studies, or are still unemployed. This gap in YFP data constrains the curriculum improvements required to meet the W&R sector labour market demands. Moreover, because the economic era of the 21st century is positioned within the information era (1955-2030) with technological advances driving automation and computerisation in the office environment (digitisation) and manufacturing (Industry 4.0) (Gie, 2021: 16), curriculum renewal is vital to ensure that the YFP adequately prepares L1 graduates for the modern W&R workplace. It should be noted that there are different models of curriculum design as is illustrated below, ranging from the traditional to modern with each model offering a unique view for consideration.

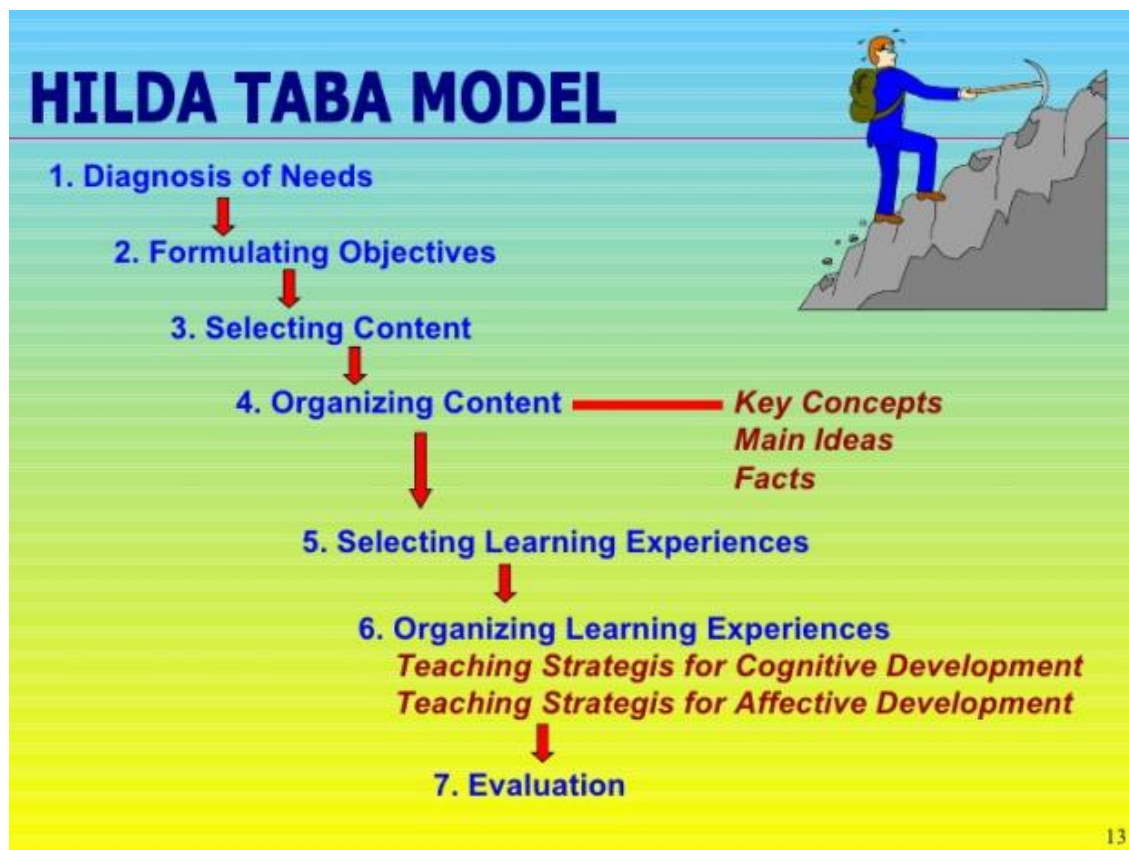


Figure 2.8: Hilda Taba Curriculum Design Model

(slideshare.net: Adopted from West Bengal State University, 2020b; Nor Hazwani Shuib 2017a)

The Taba model is a teacher-centred approach that emphasises the need for teachers to drive curriculum decisions because they are better positioned to diagnose the needs of the students (Portillo, Look, Mott, Breslow, Kieser & Gallimore, 2020:2). This model upholds the value of educators in so far as curriculum design is concerned, implying that there is need to consider input from the YFP facilitators regarding curriculum renewal. This approach was adopted by

the researcher who was employed at the locus of the study as a facilitator within the YFP for the years 2014 to 2019.

Figure 1: The Tyler Model of Curriculum Development

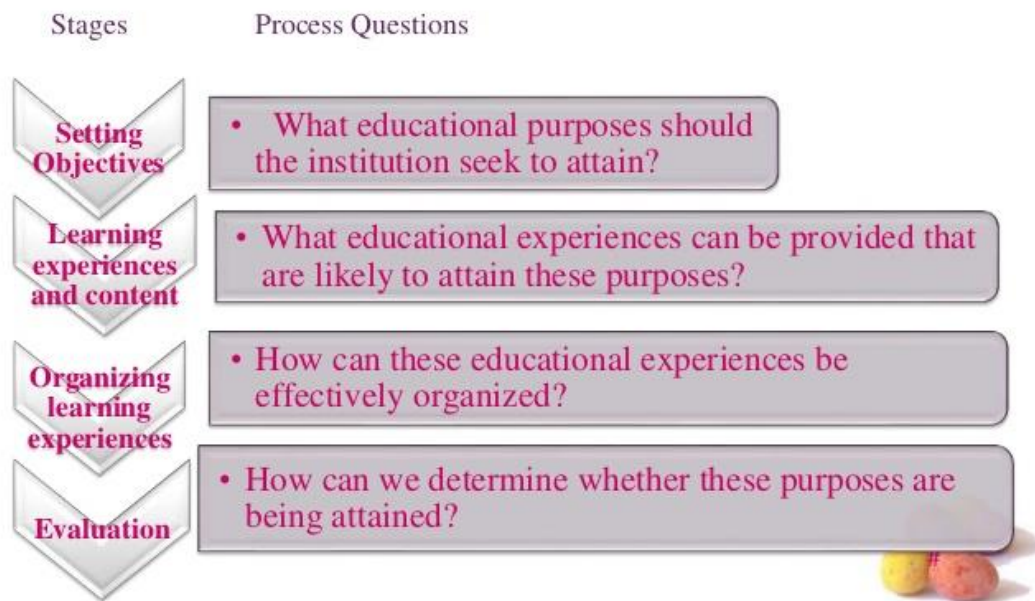


Figure 2.9: The Taylor Model of Curriculum Development

(slideshare.net: Adopted from West Bengal State University, 2020b; Nor Hazwani Shuib 2017a)

The Tyler model places special focus on the planning phase. The model proposes that educational objectives derived from the society, the learners and the subject matter experts act as the basis for the selection, organisation and evaluation of the learning outcomes (Lunenburg, 2011:2-3). YFP learners were already at risk before enrolling for the learnership programme, hence the importance of prioritising their needs when developing a curriculum. This approach will ensure that the objectives are derived from the learners, the facilitators and society at large. The views of previous YFP learners were captured in the collected data because the target population for this research study comprised YFP L1 graduates from the selected TVET College in the Western Cape, SA, for the academic years of 2015, 2016 and 2018.

The Saylor, Alexander, and Lewis Model

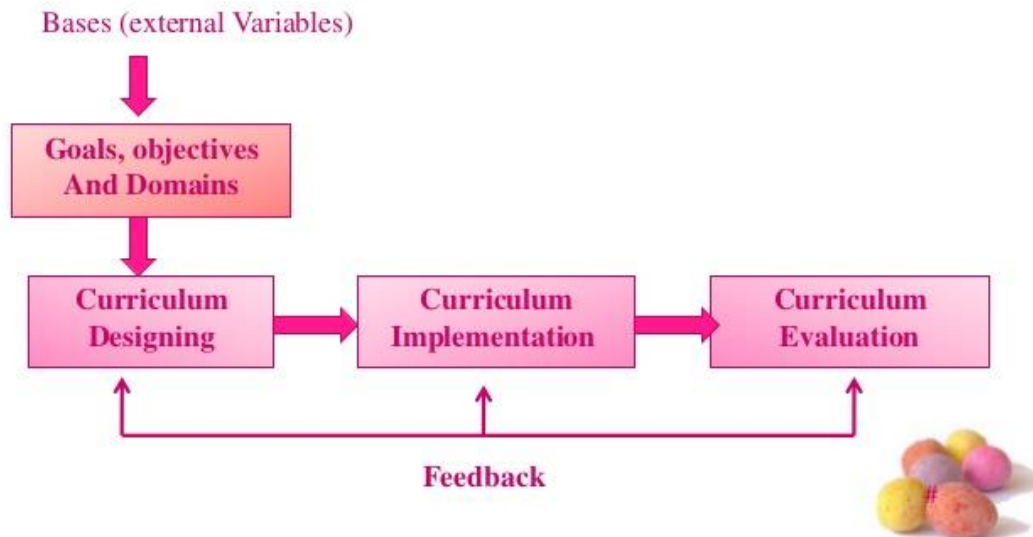


Figure 2.10: The Saylor, Alexander and Lewis Model

(Slideshare.net: Adopted from University of Johannesburg, 2021)

Educational goals and objectives classified into four domains, namely personal development, social fitness, sustained learning skills and specialisation, inform the Saylor, Alexander and Lewis model. The domains denote circumstances under which many learning experiences take place and these form the basis for designing the curriculum. As mentioned in section 2.6, the YFP includes fundamental modules for Communication Literacy (social fitness) and Mathematical Literacy (sustained learning skills), core modules for Life Orientation (personal development), W&R (specialisation), with electives for Basic Business Calculations (sustained learning skills), Budgeting (social fitness), Healthy Living (personal development), Banking (social fitness), and Basic Computers (sustained learning skills). The research findings will elucidate which of the above modules require further development or renewal.

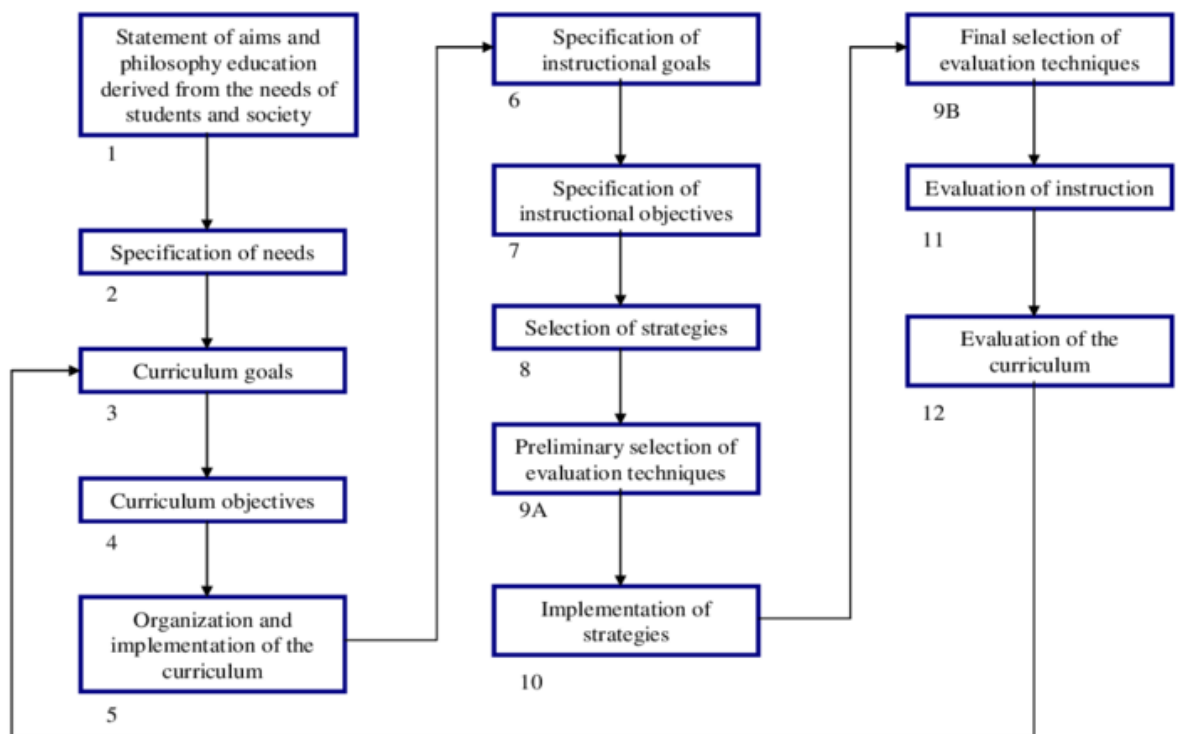


Figure 2.11: Twelve components of Oliva Model of Curriculum Development

(Doud, Ahmad & Johari, 2012:222)

Unlike Taba, Oliva believes students should also participate in curriculum development. The Oliva model encompasses a comprehensive step-by-step process of designing a curriculum. Similar to the Tylor model, previous YFP learners' views were captured in the collected data because they formed the target population for this research study.

The South African Department of Education (DoE) (1997) declared that "the curriculum is at the heart of the education and training system [thus] it is imperative that the curriculum be restructured to reflect the values and principles of our new democratic society" (Terblanche & Bitzer, 2018:105). The values and principles are enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of SA which gives all citizens the right to basic education and training, including ABET. In order to realise this goal, all stakeholders ought to collaborate to build a curriculum that addresses the context specific needs of SA so that TVETs' graduates can easily be absorbed into the labour market. Such needs entail both social and economic issues affecting the youth. As part of this inquiry, it will be essential to show the YFP curriculum areas that require improvement in order to enable youth to become employable in the W&R sector.

Albashiry, Voogt and Pieters (2015: 1137-1152) state that developing countries have failed to align vocational curricula with the requirements of the job market, hence the need to regularly re-examine and improve the syllabus to ensure the applicability of vocational programmes within the ever-changing workplace environment. This notion is supported by Hirsch (2017:12) who asserts that the employability of young people calls for a guided curriculum that includes soft skills, professional development for facilitators so that they can include job skills in their teaching, as well as fostering relationships with the future employers. In her address at the Third Human Resources Development Council (HRDC) of SA Summit in May 2018, the former Higher Education and Training Minister, Dr Naledi Pandor, re-iterated the urgent need for transformation of the TVET curriculum to incorporate entrepreneurship so as to help SA grow (Advertorial, 2018:16-17). Small and medium businesses help in curbing youth unemployment which is extremely high in SA.

It has been reported by Buthelezi (2018:364-383) that curricular reforms in TVETs in SA do not match the student type and that lecturers are struggling to adapt to these changes, hence, SA's skills development goals are not being achieved. This situation is further compounded if the quality of lecturing is weak which can lead to a lack of the proper skills transference necessary for the students to advance a high NQF level or attain employment. In a study conducted by Karmel and Woods (2008:6), it was noted that the TVETs are reputable for the provision of second chances to individuals; however, the majority of these learners leave the TVET sector without any qualification. This situation is a result of poor foundation in the earlier educational grades, hence the high drop-out rate and low through-put levels at TVETs (Mahlo & Taole, 2008: n.p). Skills development initiatives ought to enable all SA citizens to lead a dignified and productive life and, thus, benefit the nation as a whole. In their study, Terblanche and Bitzer (2018:105) suggest the need for curriculum changes in TVETs that respond to the dictates of the labour environment, hence the need for competent leadership within the TVET sector that can spearhead the curriculum reforms.

This study, as mentioned earlier, will include questions to determine whether the YFP adequately prepares youth for the job market. A review of the YFP curriculum indicates that most of the skills required for graduates to adequately perform in the workplace are embedded in the syllabus; however, the question arises as to whether the YFP learners understand what they are taught so that they can transfer the skills they acquire into the workplace. Table 2.6 below depicts the current unit standards that comprise the YFP qualification.

Table 2.6: The YFP Level 1 Learnership Qualification Curriculum

This Qualification consists of Fundamental, Core and Elective Unit Standards. A minimum of 120 credits must be achieved for the awarding of the Qualification.

The Fundamental Component consists of:

Language, Literacy and Communication (LLC):

- ID 119635; Engage in a range of speaking/signing and listening interactions for a variety of purposes; 6 credits.
- ID 119631; Explore and use a variety of strategies to learn; 5 credits.
- ID 119640; Read/view and respond to a range of text types; 6 credits.
- ID 119636; Write/Sign for a variety of different purposes; 6 credits.

Total = 23 credits.

And

Mathematical Literacy (ML):

- ID 119373; Describe and represent objects in terms of shape, space and measurement; 5 credits.
- ID 119364; Evaluate and solve data handling and probability problems within given contexts; 5 credits.
- ID 119362; Work with numbers, operations with numbers and relationships between numbers; 4 credits.
- ID 7450; Work with measurement in a variety of contexts; 2 credits.

Total = 16 credits.

Core Component:

The Core consists of Life Orientation Unit Standards totalling 32 credits which are all compulsory.

Life Orientation:

- ID 14656; Demonstrate an understanding of sexuality and sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS; 5 credits.
- ID 14659; Demonstrate an understanding of factors that contribute towards healthy living; 4 credits.
- ID 14664; Demonstrate knowledge of diversity within different relationships in the South African society; 3 credits.
- ID 14669; Demonstrate an understanding of how to participate effectively in the workplace; 3 credits.
- ID 14661; Demonstrate knowledge of self in order to understand one's identity and role within the immediate community and South African society; 3 credits.
- ID 15092; Plan and manage personal finances; 5 credits.
- ID 113966; Identify security, safety and environmental risks in the local environment; 6 credits.
- ID 15091; Plan to manage one's time; 3 credits.

Total = 32 credits.

Elective Component:

Wholesale and Retail:

ID Number; Unit Standard Title; Credits:

- ID 259939; Describe Wholesale and Retail in South Africa; 4 credits.
- ID 259937; Identify career opportunities in the Wholesale and Retail sector; 8 credits.
- ID 259938; Identify the importance of customer service in Wholesale and Retail environment; 5 credits.
- ID 117900; Plan self-development; 10 credits.
- ID 10007; Identify, analyse and select business opportunities; 3 credits.
- ID 10008; Write and present a simple business plan; 7 credits.

Total = 37 credits.

The YFP learnership programme is an ABET unit standard-based curricula whereby an accredited service provider can design, teach and/or assess a training course which is then checked and validated against the educational outcomes by a quality assurer. As such, there are as many curricula as there are providers and each has its own interpretation of the unit standards. A minimum of 120 credits are required for the W&R SETA qualification and these are organised into fundamental, core and elective categories. Juta & Company published the guides for all the modules in 2012 for the TVET college understudy and the curriculum covers the unit standards, the specific outcomes, the assessment criteria and the unit standard credits. The published guides were initially used without any changes by the TVETs running the YFP learnership programme. Over the course of years, however, some of the TVETs decided to streamline the curricula to suit the type of learners enrolling for the YFP programme. The streamlined curricula were then sent to the W&R SETA for approval. However, not all the TVETs offering the YFP learnership programme have been following the same curricula.

In keeping with the objectives of this research study, the renewal of the YFP curriculum is necessary in order to ensure it continues to meet the intended outcome of the graduates' employability within the W&R SETA with possible further studies. Therefore, Figure 2.12 below illustrates the curriculum renewal process that the researcher considered and answered in Table 2.7 below.

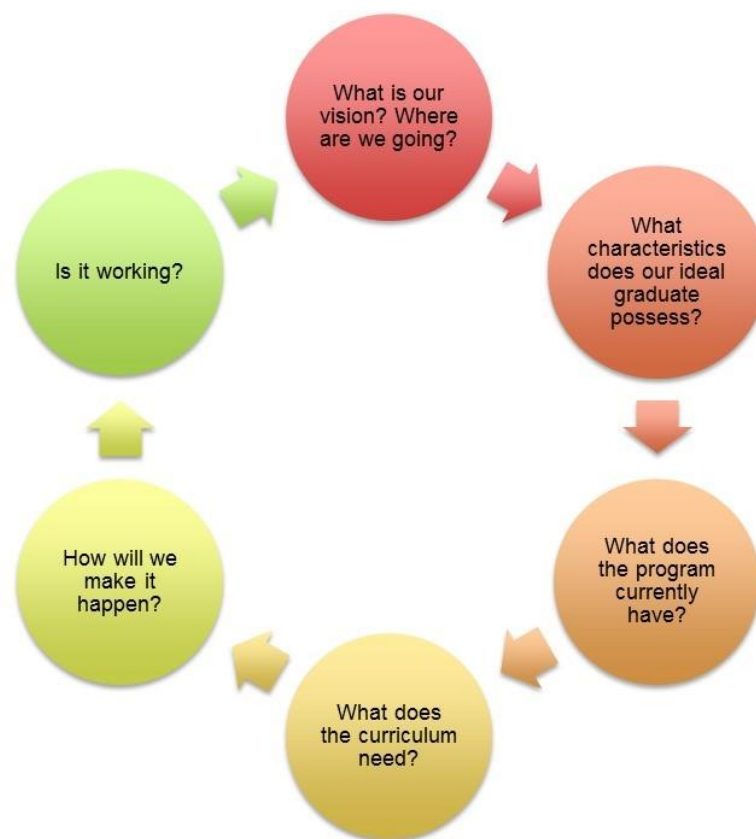


Figure 2.12: Curriculum renewal process

(University of Saskatchewan, University of Calgary & University of Guelph)

The above curriculum renewal process was applied by the researcher to provide possible answers for the YFP in below table.

Table 2.7: YFP curriculum renewal process

<p>What is the YFP vision? Where is the YFP going?</p>	<p>The YFP was started in order to afford the WC at-risk learners an opportunity to obtain lifelong learning through vocational education. The vision of the YFP is premised on the desire to curb youth unemployment as well as to deter youth from engaging in social ills. It is the desire of the WC Provincial Government, the WCED, the W&R SETA and the TVETs to help the vulnerable youth of SA, given the high rate of youth unemployment. How this vision can be realised becomes the basis for the renewal or the designing of the learnership programme.</p>
<p>What characteristics does a YFP L1 graduate possess?</p>	<p>The YFP is an ABET programme with specialisation in W&R. An ideal YFP graduate ought to be able to successfully operate in a fast-paced wholesale or retail outlet, hence, the importance of a curriculum which comprises modules that speak to the W&R environment. There is need to determine the key concepts in that field and ensure that these are embedded in the curriculum. Hence, the YFP graduates will find it less challenging to obtain employment in the W&R sector.</p>
<p>What does the YFP learnership programme currently comprise?</p>	<p>The programme is unit standard based and comprises fundamental, core, core elective and additional unit standards to make up the 120 credits required for a full qualification. The additional unit standards have both a theoretical and a practical component. The practical component is conducted within the TVETs' W&R simulator. There is need to determine whether the practical component performed within the simulator is sufficient to equip the YFP graduates with the relevant knowledge, skills and competencies to become employable within the W&R sector. This requirement calls for a curriculum map that clarifies how the YFP learnership is currently delivered and determines the best way to proceed with the development of the curriculum.</p>
<p>What does the YFP curriculum need?</p>	<p>At this stage, it is important to return to the vision and the curriculum map and to ensure that identified benefits and disadvantages are taken into consideration before modifying the YFP curriculum.</p>
<p>How will we make it happen?</p>	<p>If it is deemed necessary, identified stakeholders of the YFP programme will take a lead in the modification of the curriculum. It is advisable that experts in the various fields are involved in adapting certain curricular elements and/or adopting new ones. W&R industry experts play a pivotal role at this stage of curriculum development because they are better positioned to offer advice on the way forward so that the YFP graduates gain the relevant skills needed in the industry.</p>

Is it working?	After modifying the curriculum, it is important to devise an assessment strategy. This plan entails the measurement of the outcomes in order to determine whether the implemented changes are working.
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(Author's own construction)

The YFP curriculum renewal needs will be derived from the research data and findings presented in Chapter 4, thus, contributing to the aim of this study that, as mentioned previously, is to determine the extent to which the YFP empowered its L1 graduates with the required knowledge, skills and attributes to obtain employment in the W&R sector.

2.8 Summary

This chapter has demonstrated that SA's youth come from diverse backgrounds which have a bearing on whether they achieve their goals. The socio-economic adversities faced by the youth, such as impoverished households and troubled families, may hinder some youth from realising their dreams and may affect their general attitudes towards life. The YFP L1 graduates are no exception because they are products of previously/currently disadvantaged groups.

Youth unemployment is a problem globally and research has shown that unemployment in SA is largely structural. In order to solve the problem of youth joblessness, many governments have implemented various policies that address the labour, economic and developmental needs of the younger generation. In SA, access to basic education and training programmes, including adult basic education, is a constitutional right and, thus, it can be concluded that training opportunities exist for the WC youth. The legislative review highlighted that youth skills development learnerships can help eradicate youth unemployment if properly implemented and monitored, hence the need to study the employability of the YFP L1 graduates in the W&R sector.

Curriculum development is the nucleus of graduates' employability, thus, all relevant stakeholders must play a pivotal role in the designing of learning material. There are various models of curriculum development which can be adapted to guide the designing of the YFP curriculum. Research has shown that there is inconsistency between the knowledge and skills taught in higher educational institutions and TVETs and those that industry needs, hence, the importance of designing a curriculum that is fit for purpose.

This research study will shed more light on whether the YFP learnership programme was able to impart knowledge, skills and attitudes to assist the youth to obtain jobs in the W&R sector or progress further with their studies.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This study sets out to investigate the employability of YFP L1 graduates. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the methodology applied during for this research study by detailing the research paradigm, design and method as well as the research population, sampling, data collection instrument and procedure, data analysis and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research paradigm

The interpretive or phenomenological approach to social science was applied in this research study in order to explore the phenomenon of the YFP L1 graduates' employability in the W&R sector. The use of this research paradigm enabled the researcher to focus on describing commonalities (Creswell, 2013:76) amongst YFP L1 graduates in respect of their employability within the W&R sector, as well as their possible articulation to the next level of study. The study, as mentioned previously, investigated whether there was transfer of knowledge, skills and attributes from the YFP L1 course that enabled its graduates to find employment in the W&R industry, how many of these graduates actually obtained employment in the W&R sector and how many graduates articulated to the next level of study (L2).

3.3 Research design

A descriptive case study was used in order to describe the phenomenon of the YFP L1 graduates' employability in the W&R sector, to ascertain their progression to L2 studies, and to make improvements to the L1 curriculum

A case study design was utilised to systematically study and describe the phenomenon of at-risk youth's employability. A descriptive case study was chosen because of the need to expand and generalise on the theoretical propositions of how youth training interventions help in eradicating unemployment by investigating the YFP learnership programme. The YFP is a unique WC learnership programme that was initiated to address the problem of at-risk learners, resulting in a number of Grade 9 multiple repeaters and over-age learners benefitting from the project (Papier, 2016:1). As mentioned above, the YFP learnership programme is pegged at NQF L1 and the title of the qualification is GETC: ABET with specialisation in W&R. The YFP curriculum comprises fundamental, core and elective unit standards that total 120 credits for a national certificate. The TVET selected for this research study ran a pilot YFP in 2013 before introducing the learnership programme in 2014. The selected TVET is among the WC TVETs who agreed to run the YFP programme in order to deal with the problem of at-risk learners in the WC. From its inception in 2014 until 2020, the YFP learnership programme for the specific

TVET has not been accurately evaluated nor have its graduates been tracked, thus, it is unclear how many L1 graduates gained employment in the W&R sector, progressed to L2 studies or are still unemployed. The YFP cohort of 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 were initially chosen since moderation of the graduates' portfolios was completed, however, after trying to contact the graduates, the researcher only made contact with graduates from the 2015, 2016 and 2018 cohort.

A descriptive case study design enables an in-depth study of a group of individuals and in this case study these individuals are the YFP L1 graduates of the years 2015, 2016 and 2018. The sample was considered ideal for this research project based upon the fact that these individuals were the products of the YFP L1 curriculum, hence, they were able to explain their limitations in the labour market.

3.4 Research method

A mixed method research approach combining quantitative and qualitative data was applied because it provided both structured and in-depth data to determine the phenomenon of the employability of YFP L1 graduates in the W&R sector (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delpont, 2014:64). Ivankova, Creswell & Plano Clark (2007:261) in De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delpont, (2014:434-435) defined mixed method research as an approach in which both numeric and textual information is collected, analysed and mixed in a single study to find answers to the research questions. Many authors (Bergman, 2008; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Hanson, Creswell & Plano Clark, Petska & Creswell, 2005; Johnson & Onweuegbuzie, 2004; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009 in De Vos et al., 2014:435-436) are of the opinion that mixed method research provides the following scientific value:

- Enables the researcher to address both confirmatory and exploratory questions and, hence verify and generate theory in the study.
- Combining quantitative and qualitative research provides strengths that offset the weaknesses of either method.
- Mixed methods research provides more comprehensive evidence for studying a research problem.
- Assists in expanding a researcher's knowledge of both methods of research.
- Encourages different views and perspectives.
- Enables the use of multiple paradigms which cut across both quantitative and qualitative methods.
- Being more practical in nature; it eliminates bias, thereby upholding the quality and validity criteria.

The utilisation of a mixed method approach helped to answer research questions that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods could answer independently. Quantitative research produced quantifiable data that could be statistically analysed since the questionnaires contained mainly closed-ended statements. The main objective, as mentioned previously, was to investigate the employability of YFP L1 graduates in the W&R sector and entailed determining the exact number of both those who were employed and unemployed thereby addressing the research questions. Such information would provide insights into how best at-risk learners can be assisted to become employable. However, the data obtained from the closed-ended statements placed a limit on possible answers to the questions identified by the researcher, hence, the justification for also using the qualitative method.

Qualitative research produces non-numeric data that attempts to make sense of a phenomenon. The questionnaire consisted of a few open-ended questions in order to obtain more in-depth data about the respondents' personal experiences and views and these questions are typical of qualitative research. The researcher aimed to find out to what extent the YFP L1 graduates have found employment in the W&R sector, how many of them had progressed to L2 of their studies, as well as to ascertain the YFP L1 curriculum areas that needed improvement. This latter information was obtained when the chosen sample explained why they were still unemployed after completing the learnership programme. The YFP L1 graduates of the years 2015, 2016 and 2018 are a specific unit of population, which is one of the criteria for qualitative research.

The level of youth unemployment is high in SA, thus, the researcher used mixed methods research to explore the phenomenon of YFP L1 graduates' employability through skills development. The researcher was able to collect the two types of data concurrently, thereby ensuring that the study is conclusive and comprehensive.

3.5 Research population

The population entails the entire set of unit from which the researcher selects the research subjects (De Vos et al., 2014:223). The original target population for this study was three-hundred and sixty-one (361) for the four consecutive years from 2014 to 2017. However, as previously mentioned, the YFP L1 graduates for years 2014 and 2017 were removed because the researcher could not locate the chosen sample. The target population of this study, thus, was all YFP L1 graduates for the academic years 2015, 2016 and 2018 at a selected TVET college in the WC, SA. The total number of this target population is one hundred and eighty (180), details of which are provided in Table 3.1 below.

3.6 Research sampling

A sample is a portion of the population (De Vos et al., 2014:224) and, for this study, a sample size of 60 was selected using purposive sampling, irrespective of the graduates' gender, race or background characteristics. Details of the final sample size for this study are provided in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 Population and Sample size of respondents

YFP Cohort	Population	Number of respondents selected
2015	90	20
2016	90	20
2018	90	20
Totals	180	60

(Author's own construction)

Purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, was chosen because it enabled the researcher to include those participants who exhibited all the elements of the population that was suitable for the purpose of this study (De Vos et al., 2014: 232). The participants chosen for this study were only those individuals who had successfully completed the YFP L1 learnership programme. The strength of the sampling method was that the YFP L1 graduates of the three chosen years would be able to give reliable information which will help to achieve the research objectives by explaining the reasons why they were either employed or unemployed. Moreover, the researcher selected the sample based on her experience and knowledge of the group since she was an employee of the TVET college involved in the research from 2014 to 2019. However, it must be noted that a small sample size reduces the power of the study and increases the margin of error.

3.7 Data collection instrument

A standardised self-administered questionnaire was used as the data collection instrument. A questionnaire was the preferred instrument because the items it contained were designed to obtain facts on the employability of YFP L1 graduates (Welman & Kruger, 2001). A 4-point Likert scale was used with response categories ranging from 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Agree, and 4-Strongly Agree to rate the participants' responses. The questionnaire had two sections, one to collect biographical data and the second for collecting data relating to the employability of YFP L1 graduates. The questionnaire statements were divided into three categories extracted from the above literature review namely:

- Youth employment – employment status of the YFP L1 graduates in the W&R sector; if unemployed, probe reasons.

- Further Skills development – progression of graduates' studies to L2 or any additional skills development initiatives.
- Youth Focus Project curriculum – whether L1 knowledge, skills and attributes are sufficient preparation for employment, and improvement to the YFP L1 curriculum is needed.

Each category consisted of statements about which the target research sample expressed an opinion (quantitative data), linked with probing questions to obtain in-depth information (qualitative data). Quantitative results were obtained through a questionnaire with biographical information and 26 Likert type statements to disclose the findings pertinent to this study. 13 open-ended questions were asked in the questionnaire and interpreted through the interrelationships between the following themes: (1) youth employability; (2) skills development and (3) the YFP L1 curriculum. The question and its purpose were stated first. Each respondent's answers and the frequency of their responses are displayed in text boxes and the themes and subthemes appear vertically. Quantitative data formed the primary data set while qualitative data played a secondary role and was meaningfully embedded within the quantitative results via theme identification with a narrative on themes. Quantitative and qualitative data were analysed and interpreted to obtain answers to the research questions.

Reliability refers to consistency across different researchers and different projects while validity entails addressing whether the instrument is an accurate measure of the trait it is seeking to assess (de Bruin, 2010:1; Terre Blanche, Durreheim & Painter, 2006:147-152). The reliability of research results is extremely important, thus, this study calculated the Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha during data analysis. According to many researchers (De Vos et al., 2013: 177; Goforth, 2015; Le Roux, 2003:111) Cronbach's Alpha assesses the reliability of a rating, and the range is from zero to one, whereby the closer the score is to 0.9, the higher the reliability, while values from 0.7 to 0.8 are satisfactory. The researcher coded the questionnaire results onto an excel spreadsheet and sent this document to the CPUT statisticians who assisted in calculating Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient using the SPSS 27. For validity, the questionnaire was structured in such a way that it addressed the research questions and ensured that the results could be interpreted accurately, thus creating content validity which matched the research objectives.

3.8 Data collection procedure

To ensure effectiveness and a high return rate, the researcher distributed the questionnaires directly to the research sample group. The fact that the researcher is a former employee of the selected TVET, permission was obtained to organise a reunion for YFP L1 graduates from the

years 2014 to 2017 upon the campus, during which the self-administered questionnaires were to be distributed. Unfortunately, the reunion dates approved by the TVET were the 7 and 9 April 2020, both of which fell during SA's Covid-19 pandemic lockdown level 5. This situation delayed the data collection process because the researcher had to wait for SA's lockdown process to be reduced to level 2 or 1 before being able to approach the sample group. The researcher, therefore, only managed to collect data from 20 November to 20 December 2020. The researcher collected the required data from the selected 2015, 2016 and 2018 YFP graduates by visiting their homes or workplaces or meeting them at public places, such as police stations, TVETs and restaurants. The researcher was available to answer any questions from the graduates via email, WhatsApp, as well as face to face, thus, ensuring the completed questionnaires were returned without delay. A total of 60 questionnaires were distributed but only 36 were returned. Out of these, 29 were hard copies, while 7 were electronic copies which the researcher subsequently printed.

The 60% response rate was as a result, firstly, because the researcher was still recovering from Covid-19 related complications which made the participants reluctant to participate, and, secondly, because most of the participants resided in neighbourhoods that were considered to be very dangerous, hence, making it difficult for the researcher to visit the participants and, lastly, some members of the research sample lacked the requisite resources needed to complete the questionnaire, namely smart phones, data and/or computers with the requisite applications. The researcher once again attempted to contact the remaining sample participants between January and February 2021 when the lockdown restrictions were eased but to no avail.

3.9 Data analysis

The researcher numbered the hard copies of the questionnaires from 1 to 36 and the participants' responses were directly entered and captured on an Excel spreadsheet first before transforming the raw data into useful information. Further checking of the data was undertaken before analysis to check for any errors or omissions. The Excel spreadsheet was then sent to the CPUT statisticians to assist the researcher with statistical analysis.

The SPSS 27 was used to convert the gathered quantitative data from the questionnaires into descriptive statistics. The frequency tables were copied and pasted into Excel to be converted in graphs and table format. Extensive use was made of Excel to capture and analyse the data. The Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was calculated using the SPSS 27. Thereafter, inferential statistics was applied by conducting a Chi-Square test. This test shows the relationship between 2 or more categorical variables and tests statistically significant differences between the expected and the observed frequencies and produces an output in the form of a 'p-value' which is a measure of the probability of the observed relationship having arisen by chance

(Nahm, 2017). The p-value indicates whether test results are significant and the cut-off level for determining statistical significance is set at 0.05 (Rubin, 2012). If the p-value of the study is >0.05 , the observed relationship is not statistically significant, whereas if the p-value is <0.05 , it is deemed statistically significant (Utts & Heckard, 2006). A reported p-value of 0.000 indicates a result that is highly significant (Rubin, 2012); meaning that the results were highly unlikely to have occurred by chance and such a result is reported as $p<0.001$. In this investigation, participants responded to 26 closed-ended statements of the questionnaire. They indicated if they strongly disagreed, disagreed, agreed or strongly agreed to each question. Chi-square test was used to compare frequencies. There were varying numbers of responses for each group under each variable and these were presented. The Chi-square test showed if the differences in the number of responses between groups were significant or not.

The Chi-Square test was used to test for significant differences in the frequencies observed between groups. Where the p-value was < 0.05 the difference was deemed significant between the themes obtained from the questionnaire linked to the research questions. Applying inferential statistics enhances researchers' ability to draw inferences on the population, elements or units under investigation (Gray, 2004:335).

For the open-ended questions, the researcher organised the data by entering the responses to each question onto an Excel spreadsheet. Responses were read repeatably to identify and emphasize repeated words and sentences and these then were turned into narratives of the themes.

An embedded mixed-research analysis was adopted as illustrated in Figure 3.1 below. This approach was deemed appropriate because the qualitative data played a secondary role to that of the quantitative data, hence, it was meaningful to embed the qualitative data within the primary data set. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected, analysed and interpreted concurrently.

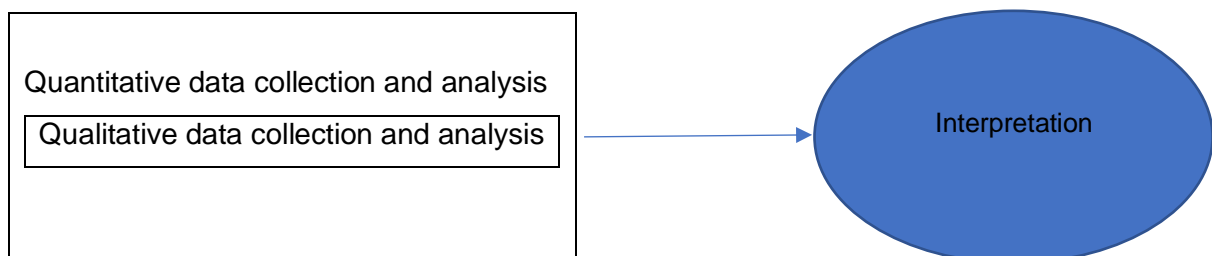


Figure 3.1 Embedded mixed research
(DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz (2017))

3.10. Ethical consideration

Adherence to research ethics is vital to any study, therefore, researchers must uphold moral standards and assess the risks and benefits related to the specific research study. Kruger, Ndebele and Horn (2014:57) state that it is essential to get the permission of potential study subjects.

To uphold research ethics, the researcher firstly obtained written permission from the selected TVET college to contact the YFP L1 graduates, host the reunion and distribute the questionnaire. Secondly, the researcher distributed the participant's informed consent form before the questionnaire, informed the research sample group that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time without experiencing negative consequences, their responses would remain anonymous and be treated confidentially for research purposes only. Personal details or any identifying characteristics of participants, thus, were not revealed in this study.

Lastly, in order to obtain ethical clearance for this study, the researcher submitted the research proposal, questionnaire and letter of permission from the selected TVET college to the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Business and Management Sciences (FBMS) at CPUT and, subsequently, received approval to conduct this research study.

3.11. Summary

Chapter Three illustrated the research plan and its execution. It commenced with the outline of the purpose of the study namely: to investigate the employability of YFP L1 graduates in the W&R sector, to ascertain their progression to L2 studies, and to make improvements to the L1 curriculum if necessary. An interpretive phenomenological approach was adopted, and a descriptive case study was utilised to systematically study and describe the phenomenon of at-risk youth's employability within the W&R sector. An embedded mixed method design was used in which a qualitative data set provided a supportive role to the quantitative set, through the use of a questionnaire with both closed- and open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions produced quantifiable data that was statistically analysed while the open-ended ones provided in-depth data regarding the respondents' personal experiences and views on youth employability.

The research population comprised the YFP L1 graduates of the years 2015, 2016 and 2018 and purposive sampling was used to select a sample size of 60 participants to whom questionnaires were administered and a 60% response rate was achieved.

Descriptive statistics was used to summarise the data, while inferential statistics was utilised to interpret the research findings. Reliability was established through the calculation of the

Cronbach Alpha Coefficient and further statistical analysis was conducted through the Chi-Square test.

Chapter Four will present the results and findings obtained from the completed questionnaires.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

Chapter Three above presented an overview of the research approach adopted to investigate the employability of the YFP L1 graduates within the W&R sector.

This chapter commences with the alignment of research data to the research aim and data collection instrument for assimilation before it describes how the collected data is interpreted, analysed and discussed, according to the mixed methods embedded approach. Since the quantitative data formed the primary data set, the descriptive statistics were presented through the use of bar charts, pie charts and frequency tables, with the Cronbach Alpha coefficient being used as the reliability test and chi-square tests for inferential statistics being conducted to draw inferences. The qualitative data played a secondary role and was meaningfully embedded within the quantitative results via theme identification with a narrative on themes. The discussion of results was structured around the main findings, based upon the three themes which informed the design of the questionnaire namely: youth employability, skills development and the YFP curriculum.

4.2 Alignment of research data

The aim of this research study as formulated in Chapter One is extracted as follows:

- To determine the extent to which the Youth Focus Project (YFP) had empowered its L1 graduates, who were considered at-risk, with the required knowledge, skills and attributes to obtain employment in the W&R sector.

The YFP L1 programme (knowledge, skills and attributes) is the independent variable because the researcher is interested in how it affects the graduates' employability (the dependent variable). The study's last sub-research objective is to ascertain the YFP L1 curriculum areas that need improvement in order to enhance the graduates employability. It is vital to position the questionnaire's open- and closed-ended statements/questions so that they will allow the filtering of statements and answers to fit into presentations in the tables, charts and themes. Table 4.1 explains how the questionnaire relates to the research questions, with the goal of providing answers to the latter within the themes.

Table 4.1: Assimilation of research questions with questionnaire and themes

Research question	Questionnaire Open-ended item	Questionnaire Closed-ended item	Theme
To what extent have YFP L1 graduates found employment in the W&R sector?	1a. There are employment opportunities upon completing L1 of the YFP learnership programme. 1b. I obtained employment in the W&R sector after completing L1 of the YFP learnership programme. 1c. I obtained employment in a different sector after completing L1 of the YFP learnership programme. 1d. I am self- employed.	What is your current job position? What is your current job position? If so, what business do you own?	YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY
How many YFP L1 graduates are still unemployed?	1e. I am currently unemployed.	Why do you think you are unemployed after completing the YFP L1 learnership programme?	
How many YFP L1 graduates progressed with their studies to L2?	2f. I progressed to the next level (L2) of the YFP learnership programme at this TVET college. 2g. I progressed to L2 in a different programme at the TVET college. 2h. I progressed to L2 in a different programme at another TVET college. 2i. I did not study further at any TVET college. 2j. I continued my skills development at my present workplace.	What programme are you currently enrolled for? What programme are you currently enrolled for? List the training programmes that you attended.	SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

<p>What are the YFP L1 curriculum areas for improvement?</p>	<p>Language, Literacy and Communication 3k. I can communicate effectively within different communication situations. 3l. I can use verbal and non-verbal communication codes effectively in appropriate situations. 3m. I found the Communication Literacy module useful.</p> <p>Mathematical Literacy 3n. I can use numbers appropriately in everyday life situations. 3o. I can identify data in everyday life situations. 3p. I found the Mathematical Literacy module useful.</p> <p>Life Orientation 3q. I can make informed choices to maintain a healthy lifestyle. 3r. I have acquired knowledge to maintain positive relationships. 3s. I found the Life Orientation module useful.</p> <p>Wholesale and Retail 3t. I am able to use the knowledge that I gained from the W&R module. 3u. I am familiar with and can use W&R terminology within context. 3v. I am able to use the skills that I acquired from the W&R module. 3w. I found the W&R module useful. 3x. I benefitted from the YFP L1 programme that the TVET college offers. 3y. I would encourage other at-risk learners to enrol for the YFP learnership programme. 3z. The YFP L1 training adequately prepared me to work in the W&R sector.</p>	<p>If not, explain why you did not find the Communication Literacy module useful.</p> <p>If not, explain why you did not find the Mathematical Literacy module useful.</p> <p>If not, explain why you did not find the Life Orientation module useful.</p> <p>If not, explain why you did not find it useful.</p> <p>3aa. What skills should be added to the YFP L1 programme to improve graduates' employability? 3bb. What subjects should be added to improve the YFP L1 programme?</p>	
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The next section of this chapter presents quantitative responses from the 36 completed questionnaires. Initially, the participants' biographical information is presented in the form of frequency tables, followed by responses to the 26 Likert type statements.

4.3 Quantitative results

Quantitative results were obtained through a questionnaire with biographical information and 26 Likert type statements to disclose the findings pertinent to this study. It is imperative to elucidate that the questionnaire statements were divided into three categories extracted from the literature review namely: youth employability, skills development and the YFP curriculum and that these remained as the three themes for the results' discussion. As mentioned in Chapter Three, there was a 60% response rate owing to the Covid-19 pandemic challenges.

4.3.1 Biographical Information

The biographical information of respondents focuses upon gender, population group, age, highest educational qualification, all of which are presented in the four frequency tables below.

(a) Gender

Table 4.2: Gender of the respondents

Valid	Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Male	18	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Female	18	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	36	100.0	100.0	

Out of the 60 disseminated questionnaires, 36 were completed by the target research participants. The respondents comprised an equal number of males 18 (50%) and females 18 (50%) as illustrated in Table 4.2 above.

(b) Population group

Table 4.3: Population Group

Valid	Population Group	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Black	16	44.4	44.4	44.4
	Coloured	20	55.6	55.6	100.0
	Total	36	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.3 above shows that from the respondents represented in the study, the majority group was Coloured (55.6%), followed by Black African (44.4%) while no one represented the Indian, Asian or White groups.

(c) Age range

Table 4.4 Age range

Valid	Age group	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	19-21 years	19	52.8	52.8	52.8
	22-25 years	17	47.2	47.2	100
	Total	36	100.0	100.0	

The majority of the study respondents were aged between 19-21 years (52.8%) followed by those aged between 22-25 years (47.2%). There were no respondents for the categories '18 years and below' or '25 years and above'.

(d) Level of education

Table 4.5: Highest level of education

Valid	Highest level of Qualification	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Grade 9	21	58.3	58.3	58.3
	Grade 10	13	36.1	36.1	94.4
	Grade 11	1	2.8	2.8	97.2
	Grade 12	1	2.8	2.8	100.0
	Total	36	100.0	100.0	

The results indicate that 58.3% of the study respondents had Grade 9, followed by 36.1% with Grade 10, then 2.8% each for Grades 11 and 12. It should be noted that the respondents were only those who passed the YFP L1, hence, everyone had an NQF L1 certificate.

4.3.2 Youth Employability

The first theme namely: Youth Employability, reflected two of the research sub-questions of this study. It pertained all the information gathered from respondents regarding the extent to which the YFP L1 graduates have found employment in the W&R sector and to identify how many of YFP L1 graduates remain unemployed.

Item 1a: There are employment opportunities upon completing Level 1 of the YFP learnership programme.

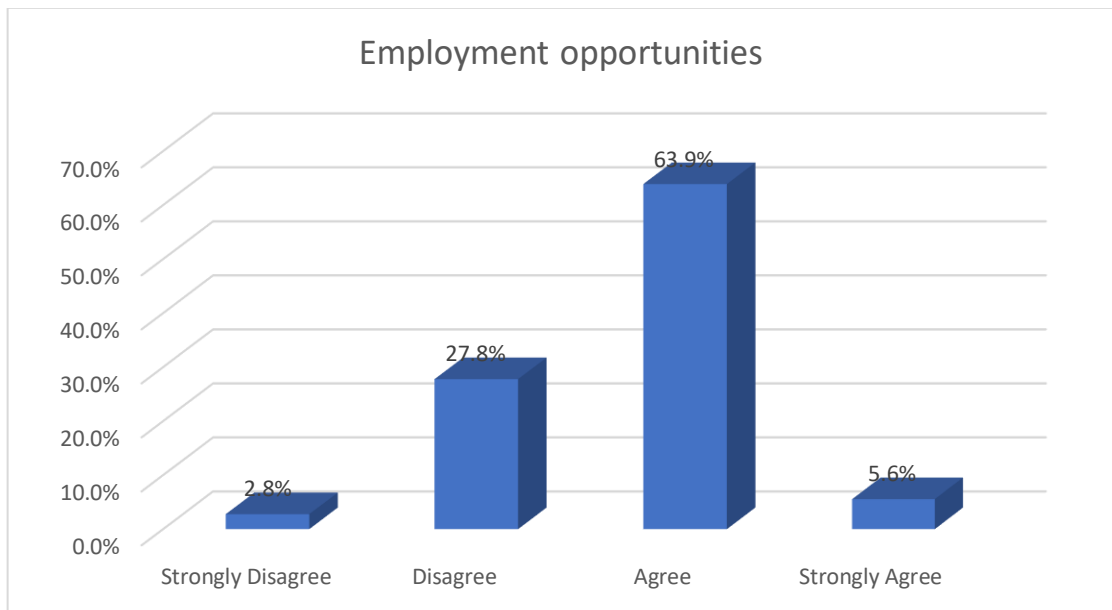


Figure 4.1: Employment opportunities

69.5% of the respondents stated that there are employment opportunities after completing Level 1 of the YFP learnership programme.

Item 1b: I obtained employment in the W&R sector after completing Level 1 of the YFP learnership programme.

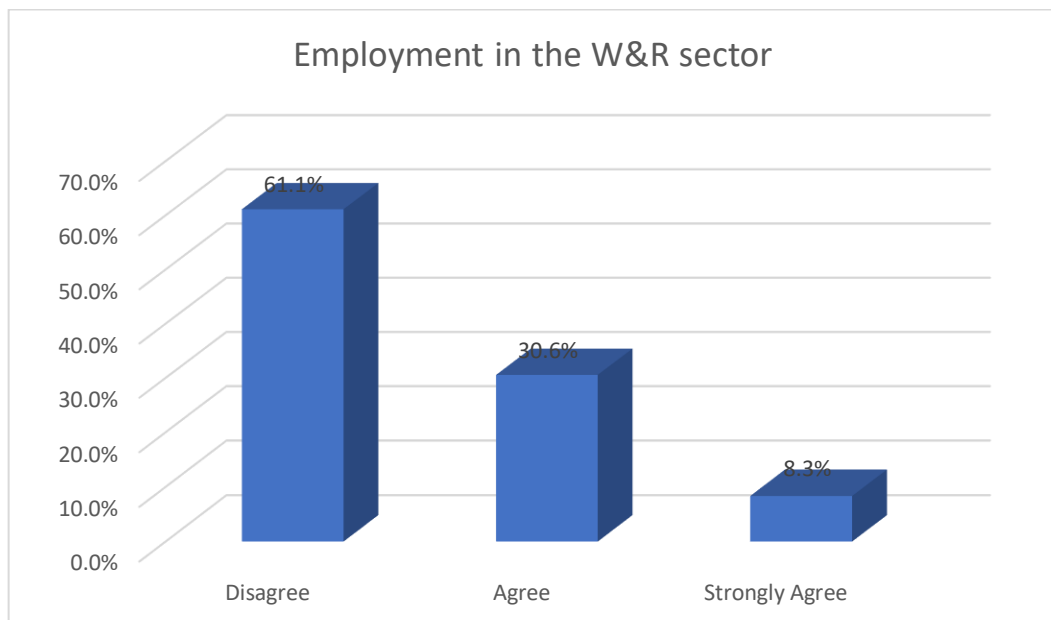


Figure 4.2: Employed within the W&R sector

38.9% of respondents stated that they obtained employment within the W&R sector after completing L1 of the YFP learnership programme compared to 61.1% who said they were not employed within the W&R sector.

Item 1c: I obtained employment within a different sector after completing Level 1 of the YFP learnership programme.

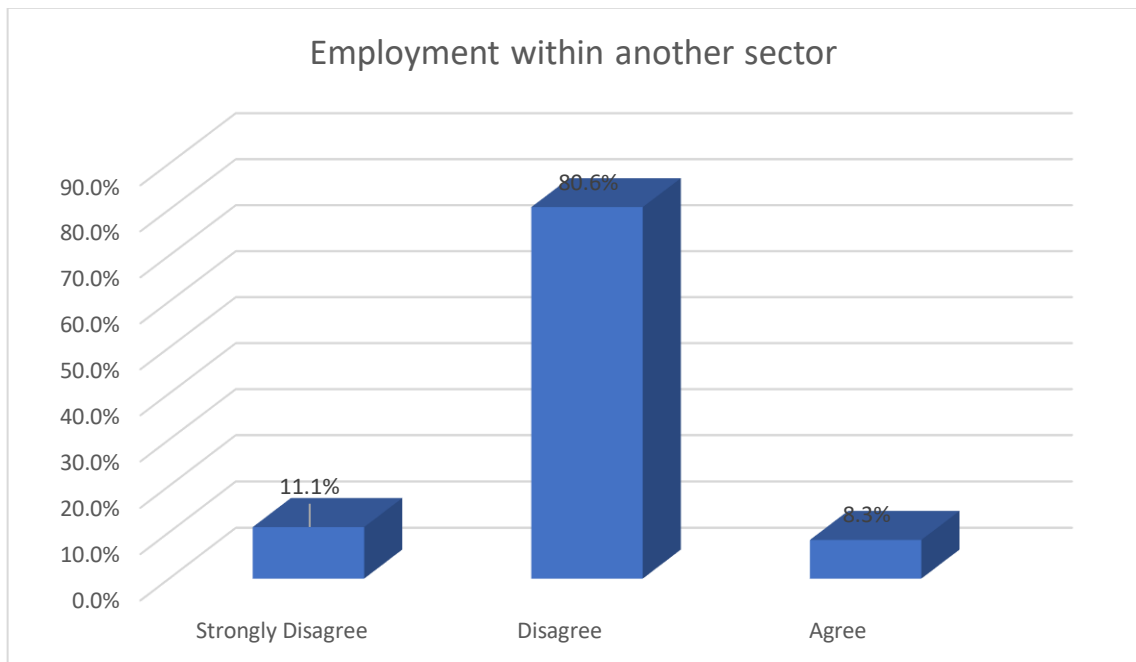


Figure 4.3: Employed within another sector

8.3% of respondents reported that they obtained employment within a different sector after completing L1 of the YFP learnership programme while 91.7% had not found employment within a different sector.

Item 1d: I am self-employed.

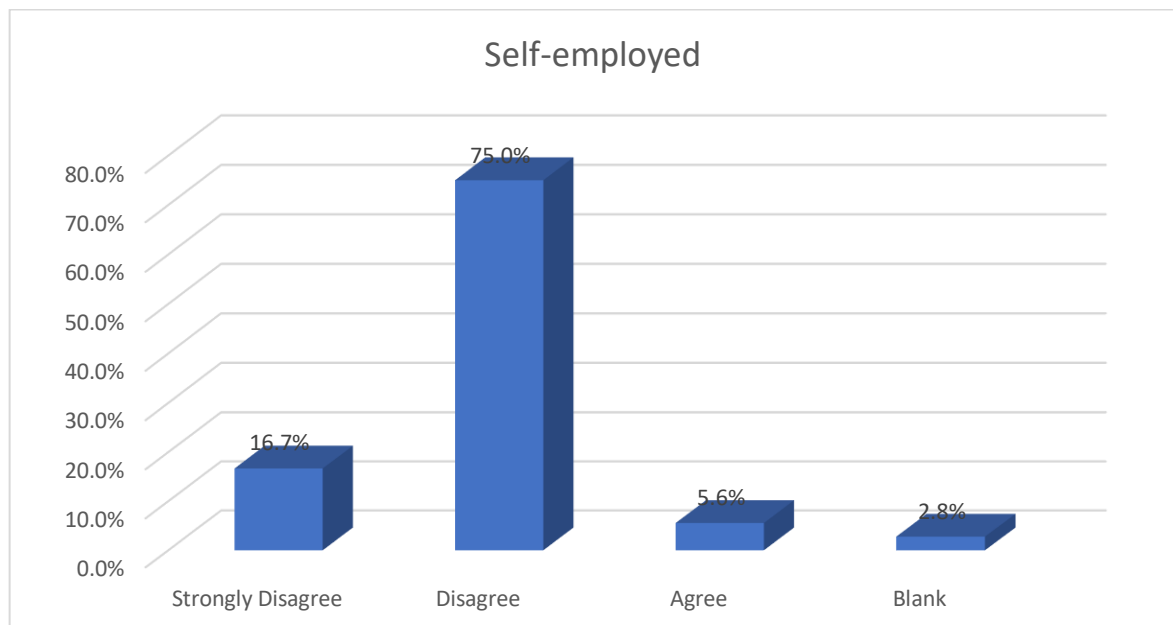


Figure 4.4: Self employed

5.6% of respondents stated that they were self-employed compared to 91.7% who were not and 2.8% abstained from responding to this statement.

Item 1e: I am currently unemployed.

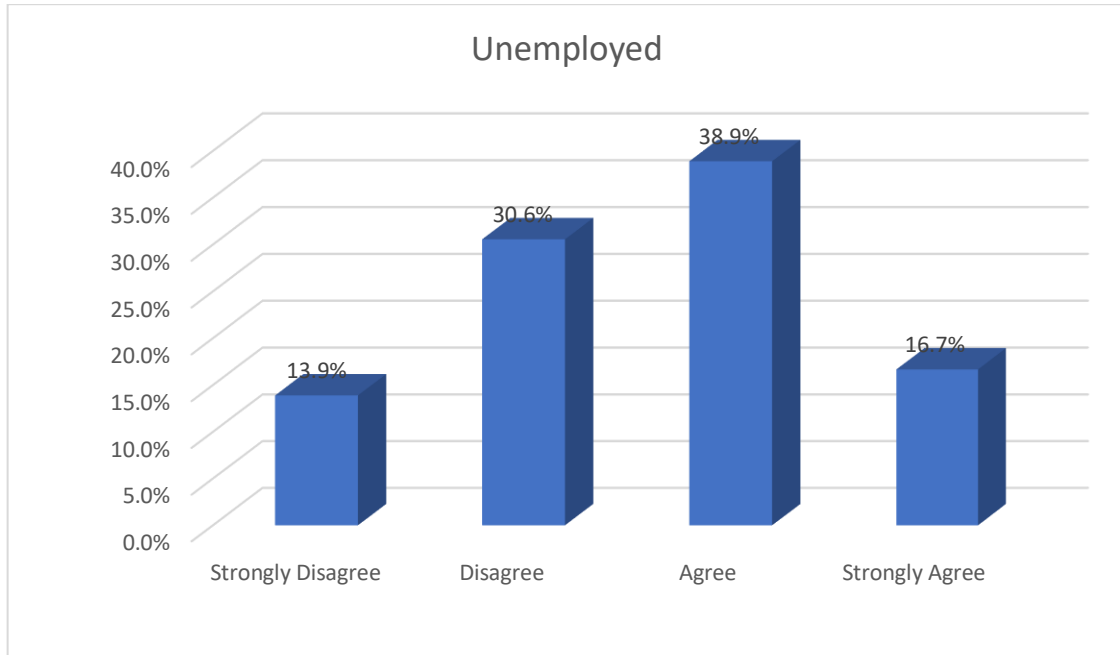


Figure 4.5: Unemployed

55.6% of respondents stated that they were currently unemployed, while 44.5% were employed.

The Cronbach Alpha's coefficients for all the items serving as a measure of the Youth Employability category of the questionnaire are as follows:

- - 0.405 for raw variables; and
- - 0.017 for standardised variables.

These values are negative due to a negative average covariance among the five items; therefore, these results are unreliable. However, these items indicated some statistical significance in relation to the variables that will be discussed in a later section.

4.3.3 Skills Development

As mentioned previously, a number of youth development programmes have been rolled out in SA which aim to empower the at-risk youth through skills acquisition, preparing the youth for the world of work and the eradication of poverty among many other goals.

This section presents all the information acquired from respondents relating to how many of YFP L1 graduates progressed with their studies to L2.

Item 2f: I progressed to the next level (Level 2) of the YFP learnership programme at this TVET college.

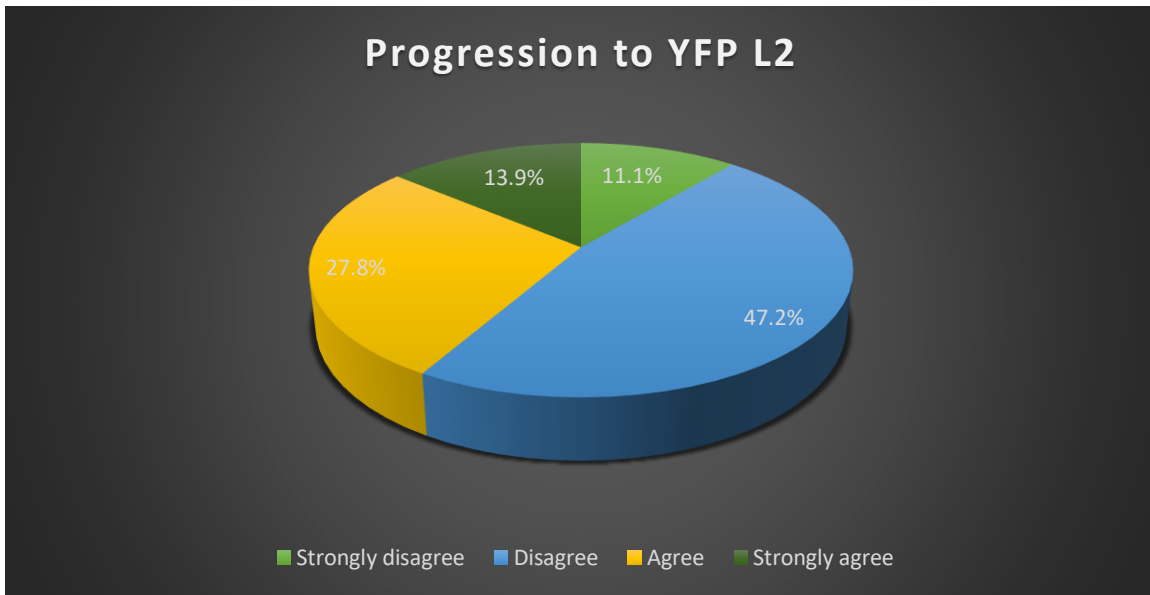


Figure 4.6: Progression to YFP (L2) at the same TVET.

58.3% of respondents reported that they did not progress to L2 of the YFP learnership programme, compared to the 41.7% who did progress to L2.

Item 2g: I progressed to the next level within a different programme at the same TVET college

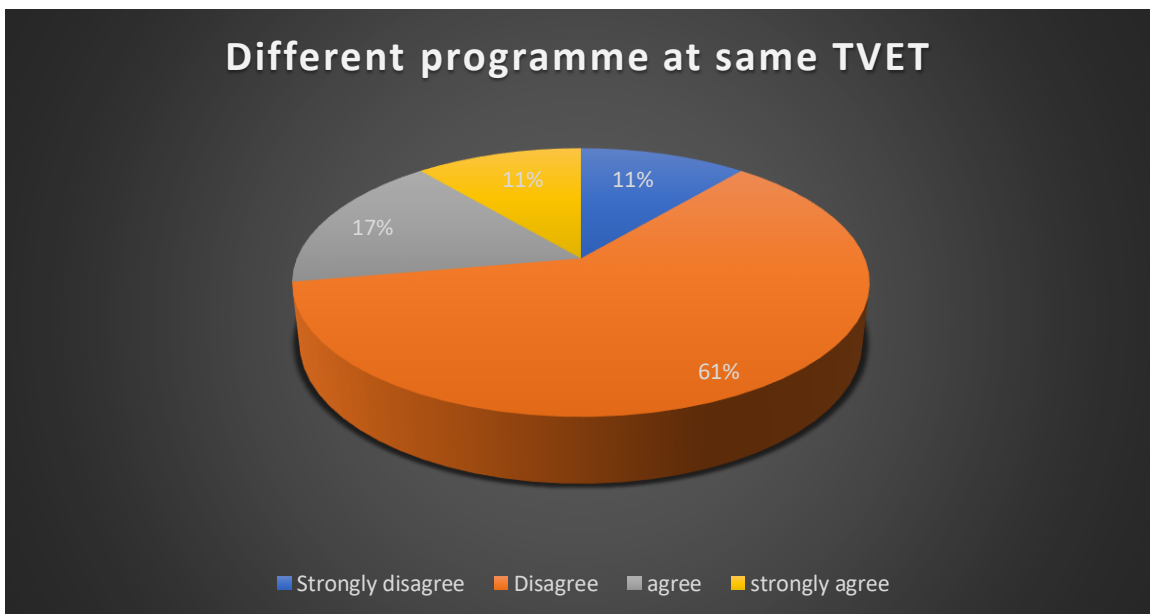


Figure 4.7: Progression to a different programme at the same TVET college

72% of respondents did not progress to L2 within a different programme at the TVET college, while 28% continued their skills development within a different programme.

Item 2h: I progressed to Level 2 within a different programme at another TVET college.

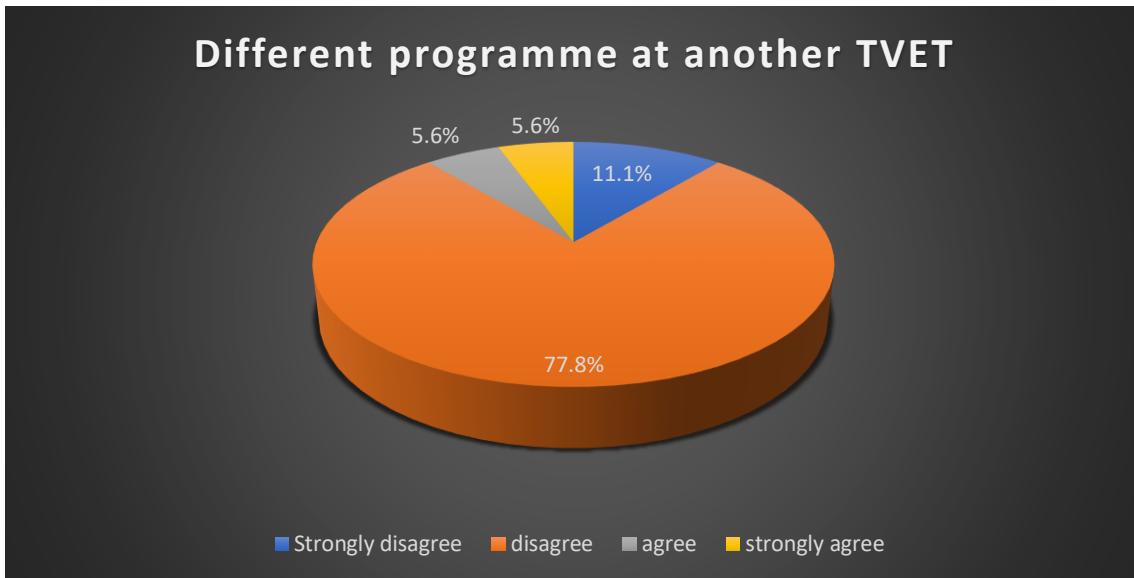


Figure 4.8: Progression to a different programme at another TVET.

11.2% of respondents progressed to L2 within a different programme at another TVET college.

Item 2i: I did not study further at any TVET college.

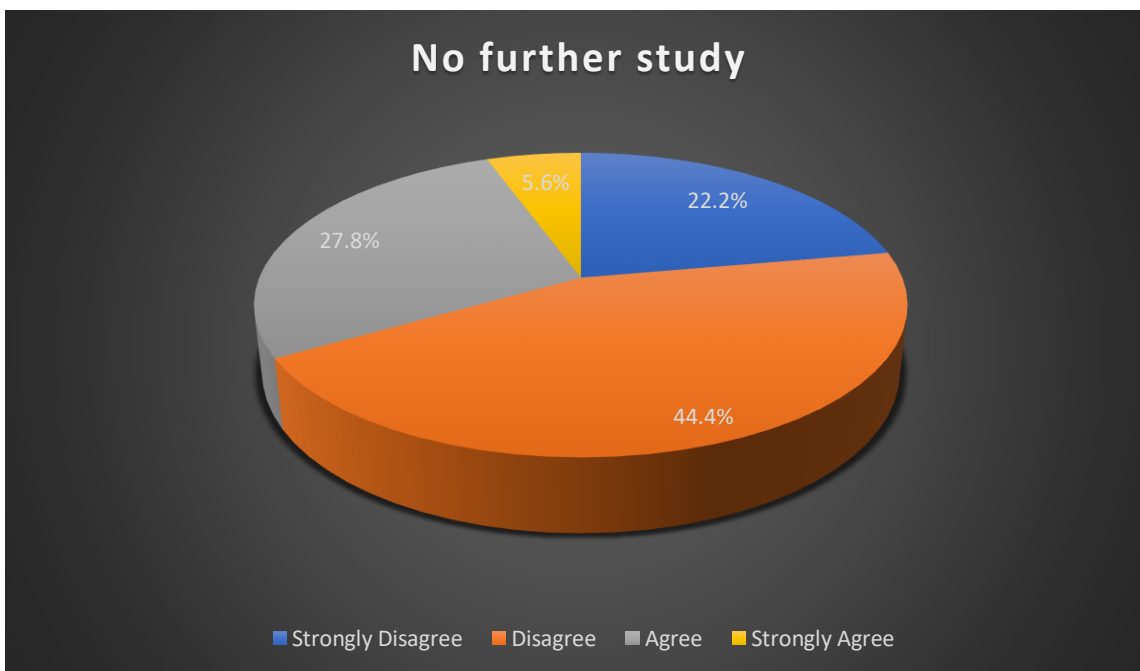


Figure 4.9: No further study

33.4% of respondents did not study further at any TVET college, while 66.6% furthered their studies.

Item 2j: I continued my skills development at my present workplace.

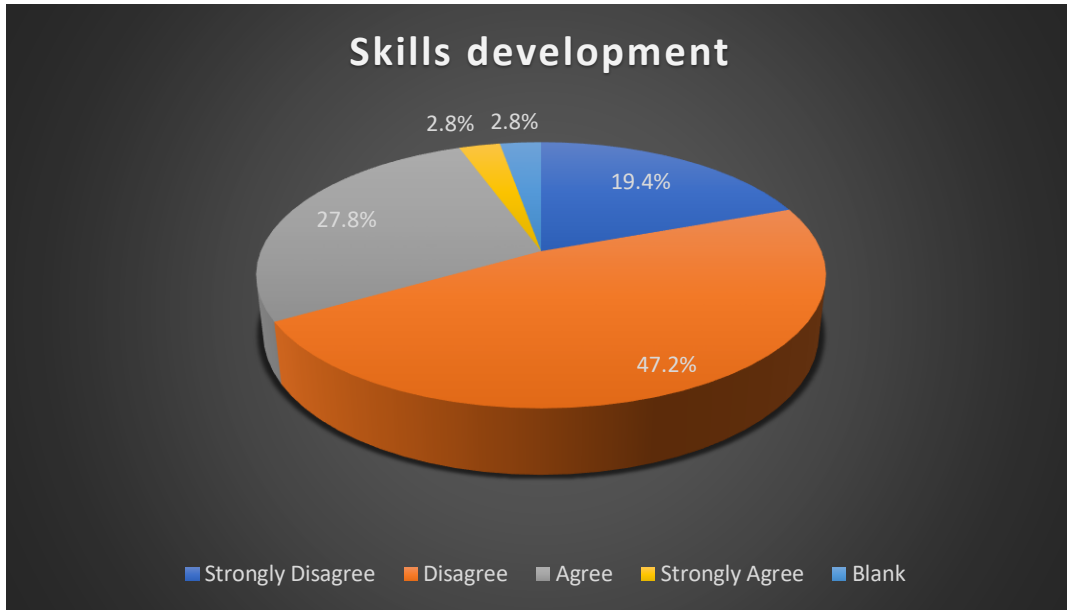


Figure 4.10: Skills development

30.6% of respondents continued their skills development at their present workplace, compared to 66.6% who did not while 3 respondents abstained from answering.

The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for all 5 items serving as a measure of the Skills Development category of the questionnaire are:

- - 0.431 for raw variables; and
- - 0.377 standardised variables.

These values were negative due to a negative average covariance among items, therefore, the results are unreliable. However, these items indicated some statistical significance in relation to the variables.

4.3.4 Youth Focus Project Curriculum

Since its inception in 2014, the YFP has not been evaluated nor has its graduates been tracked, thus, it is unclear how many L1 graduates gained employment, or progressed to L2 studies, or are still unemployed. This gap in YFP data constrains the curriculum improvements required to meet the W&R sector's current labour market demands.

To ascertain the YFP L1 curriculum areas for improvement, the information gathered from respondents is detailed below.

4.3.4.1 Language, Literacy and Communication

Item 3k: I can communicate effectively within different communication situations.

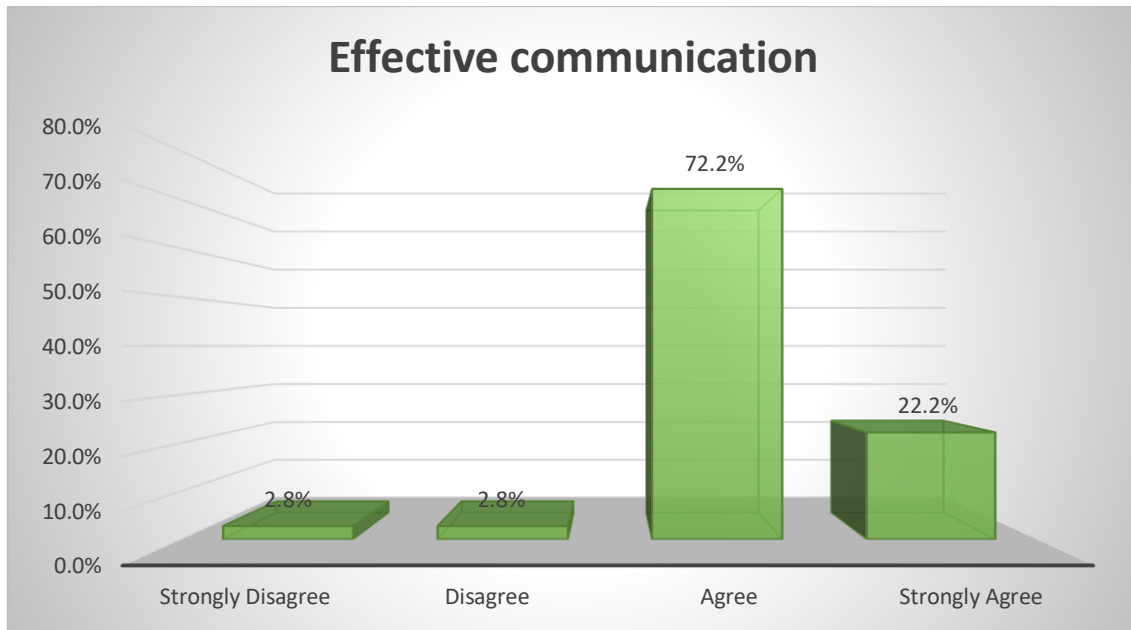


Figure 4.11: Effective communication

94.4% of respondents stated that they could communicate effectively within different communication situations while 5.6% said they could not.

Item 3l: I can use verbal and non-verbal communication codes effectively in appropriate situations.

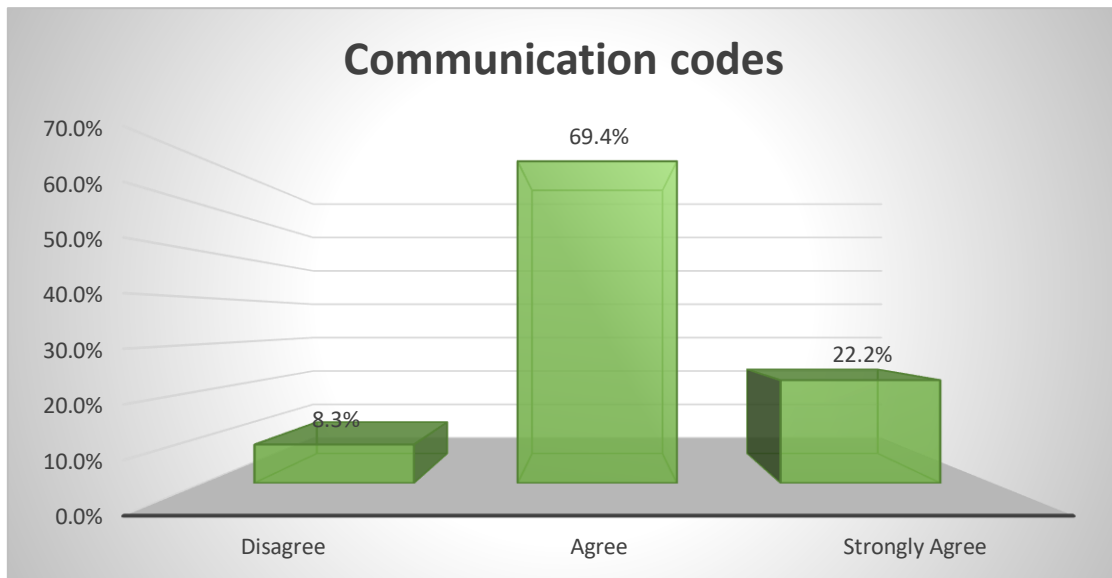


Figure 4.12: Use of communication codes

91.6% of respondents reported that they could use verbal and non-verbal communication codes effectively in appropriate situations compared to 8.3% who said they could not.

Item 3m: I found the Communication Literacy module useful.

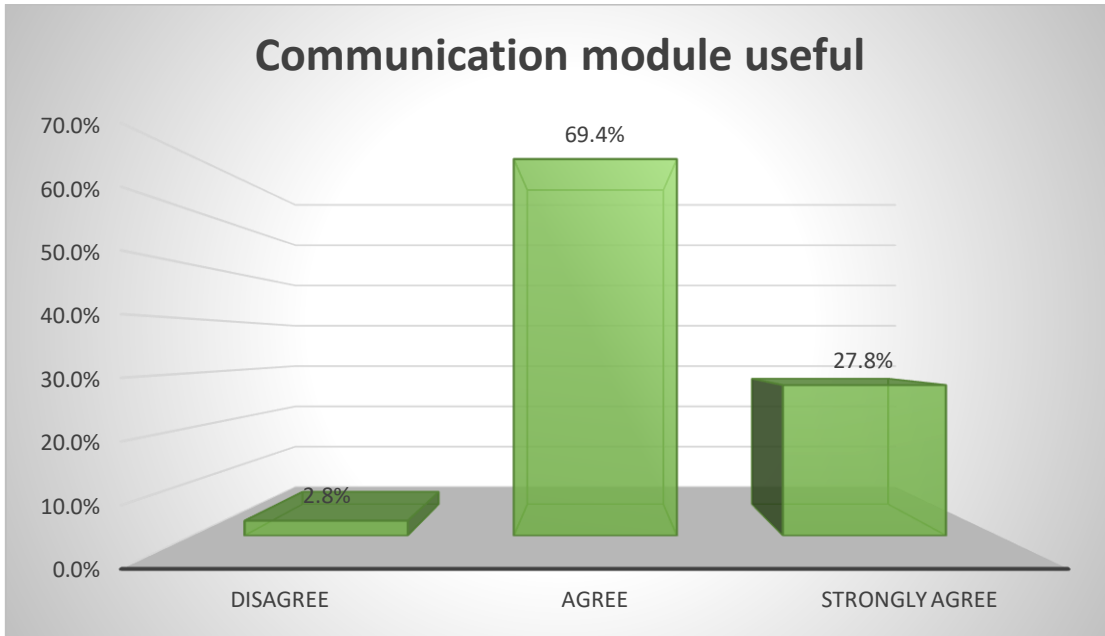


Figure 4.13: Communication module useful

97.2% of respondents found the communication module useful while 2.8% did not find it beneficial.

4.3.4.2 Mathematical Literacy

Item 3n: I can use numbers appropriately in everyday life situations.

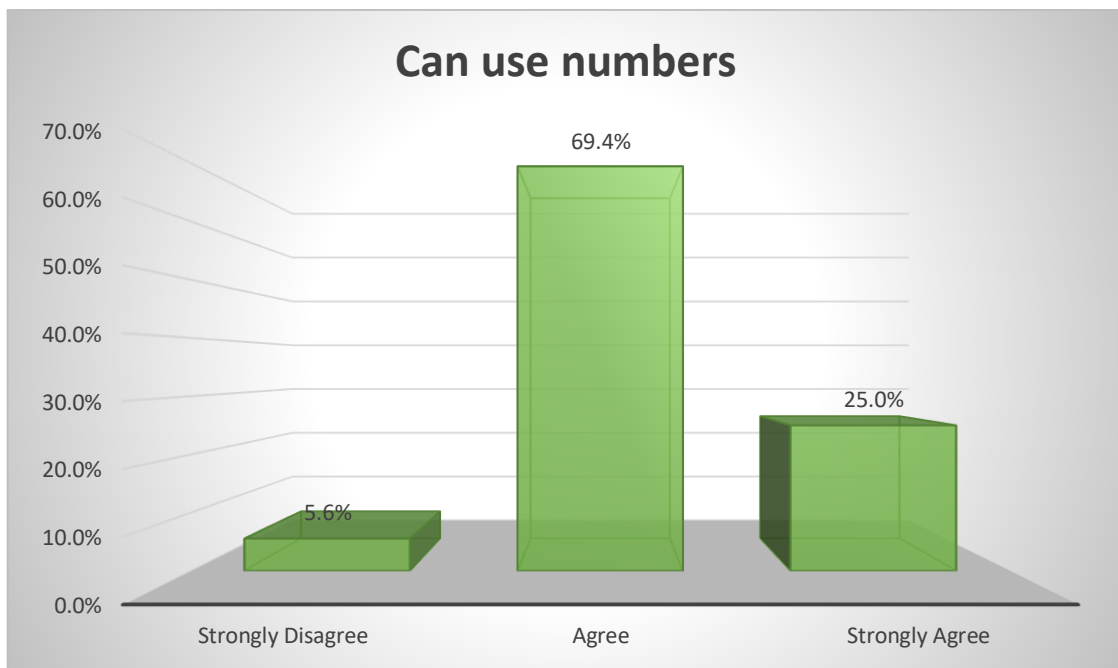


Figure 4.14: Can use numbers

94.4% of respondents stated that they could use numbers appropriately in everyday life situations while 5.6% said they could not.

Item 3o: I can identify data in everyday life situations.

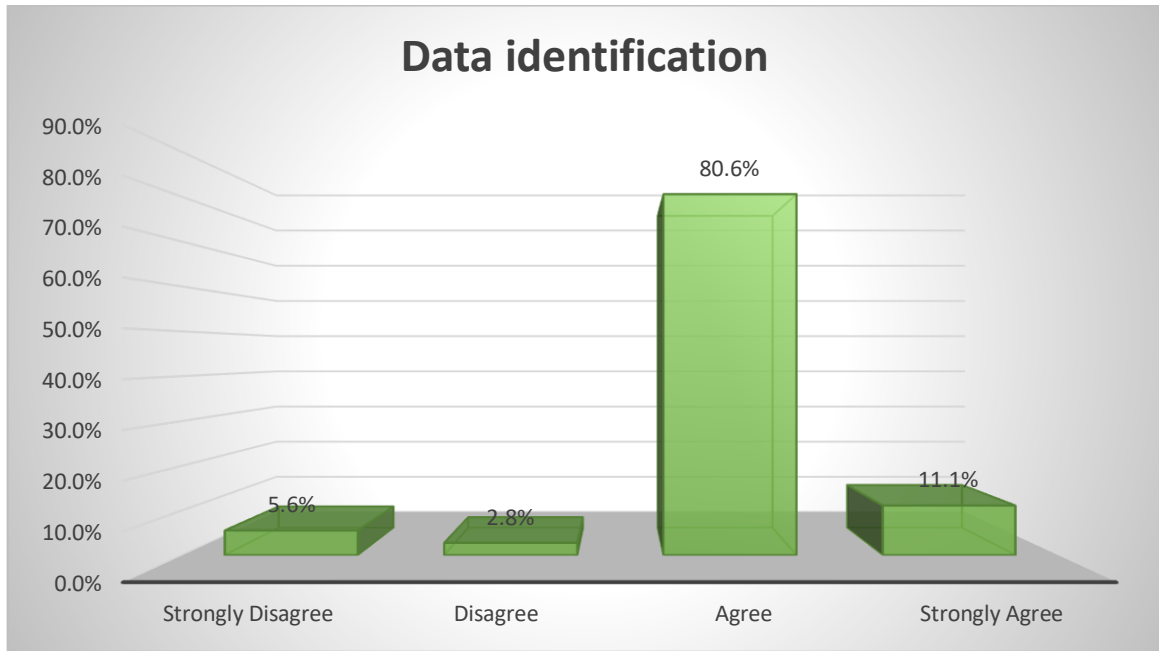


Figure 4.15: Data identification

91.7% of respondents reported that they could identify data in everyday life situations compared to 8.4% who said they could not.

Item 3p: I found the Mathematical Literacy module useful.

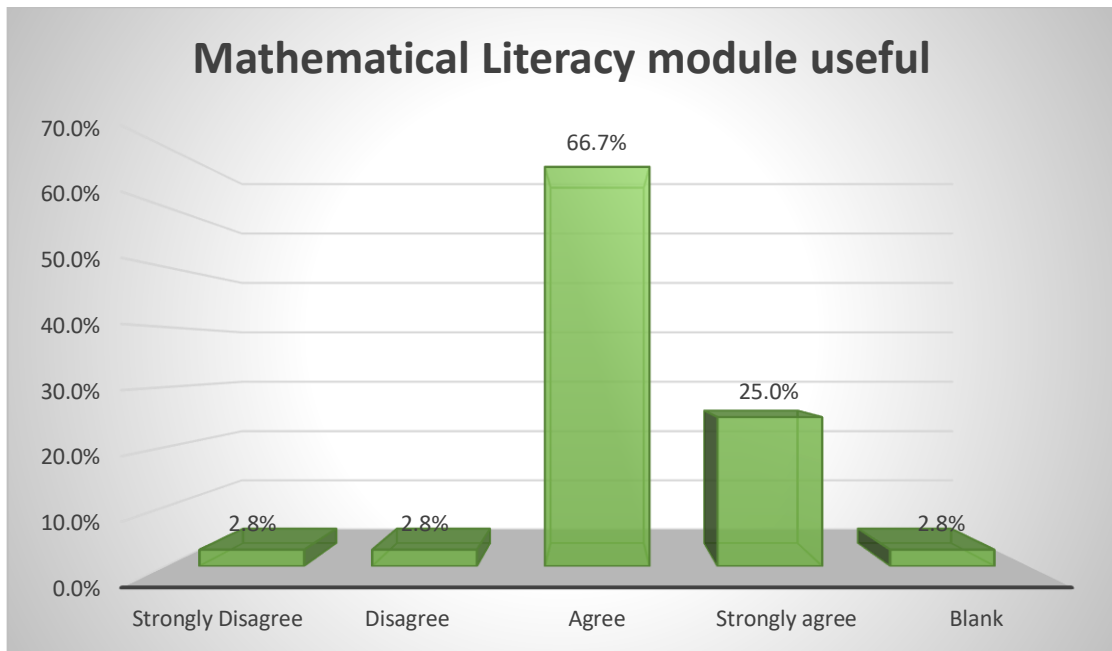


Figure 4.16: Mathematical Literacy module useful

91.7% of respondents found the mathematical literacy module useful while 5.6% did not find it useful and 2.8% of them abstained from responding to this statement.

4.3.4.3 Life skills

Item 3q: I can make informed choices to maintain a healthy life-style.

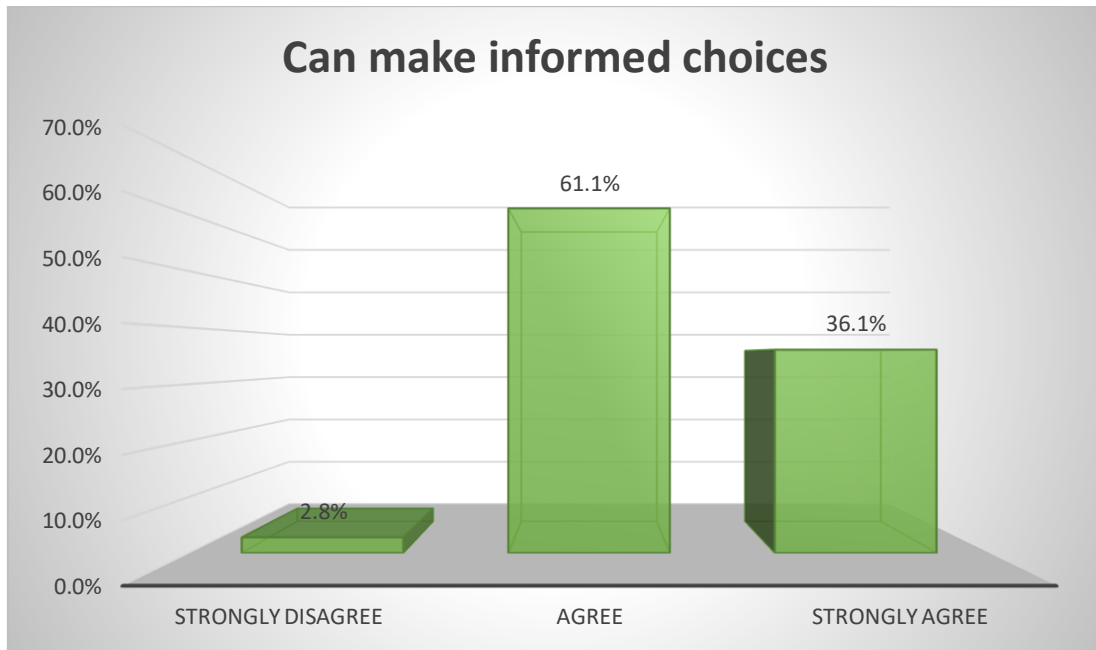


Figure 4.17: Can make informed choices

97.2% of respondents stated that they could make informed choices to maintain a healthy lifestyle compared to 2.8% who said they could not.

Item 3r: I have acquired knowledge to maintain positive relationships.

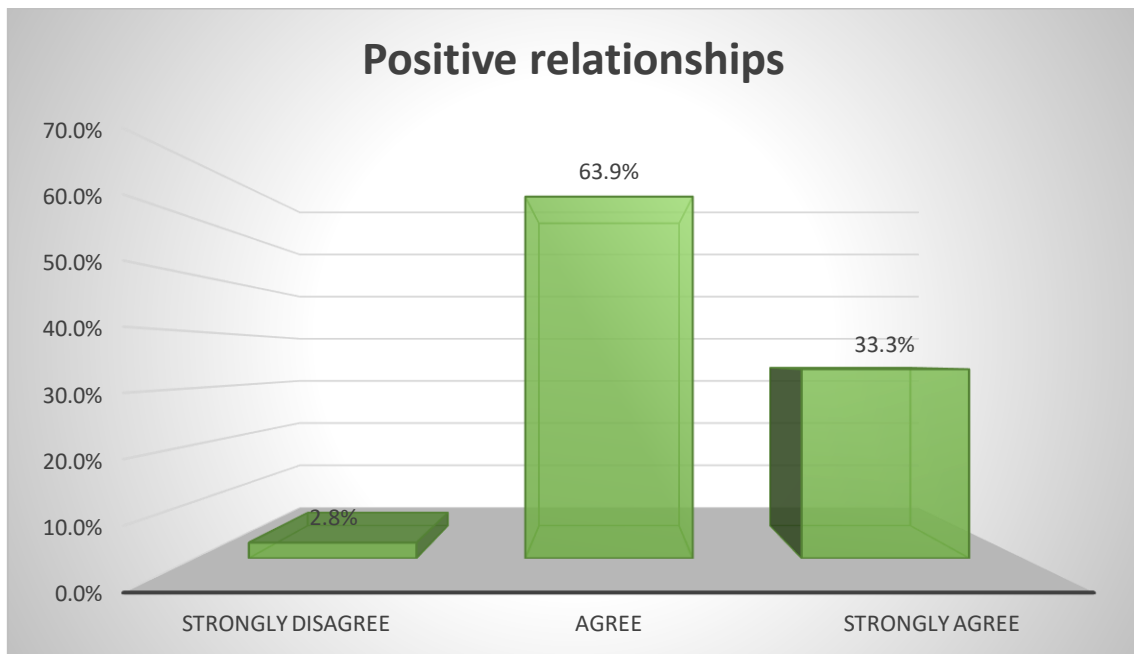


Figure 4.18: Can maintain positive relationships

97.2% of respondents stated that they had acquired knowledge that helped them to maintain positive relationships compared to 2.8% who said they had not.

Item 3s: I found the Life Orientation module useful.

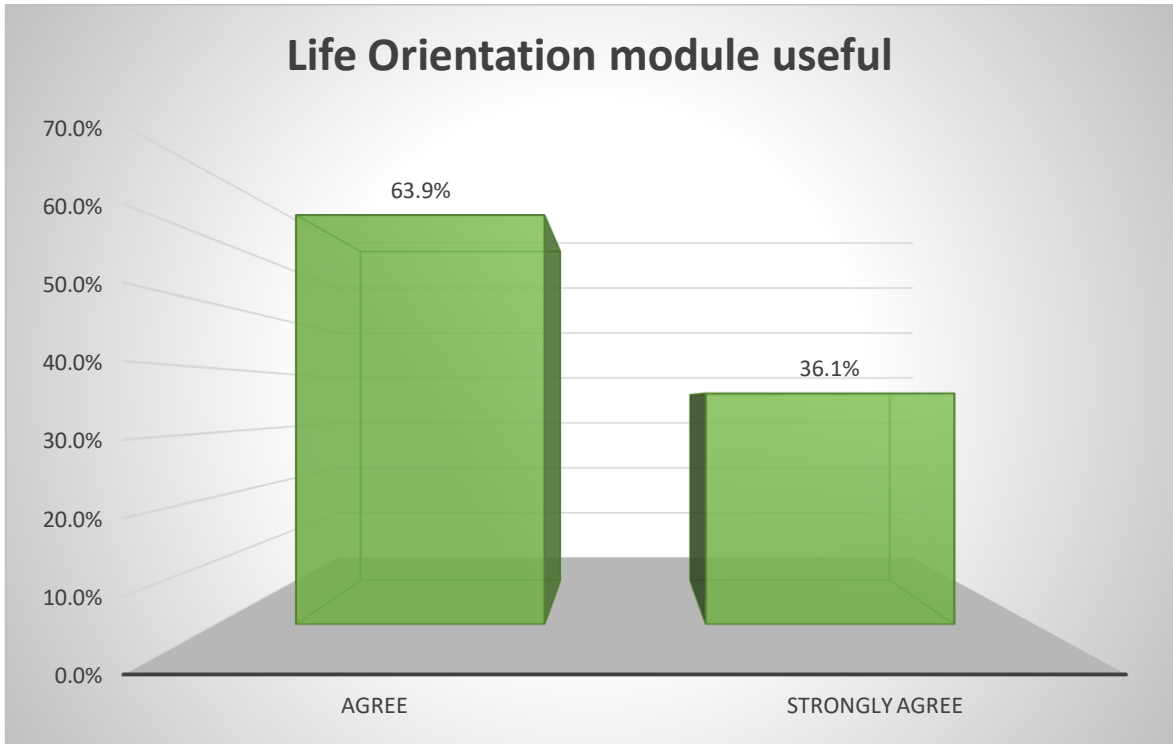


Figure 4.19: Life orientation module useful

All 36 respondents found the life orientation module useful.

4.3.4.4 Wholesale and Retail

Item 3t: I am able to use the knowledge that I gained from the W&R module.

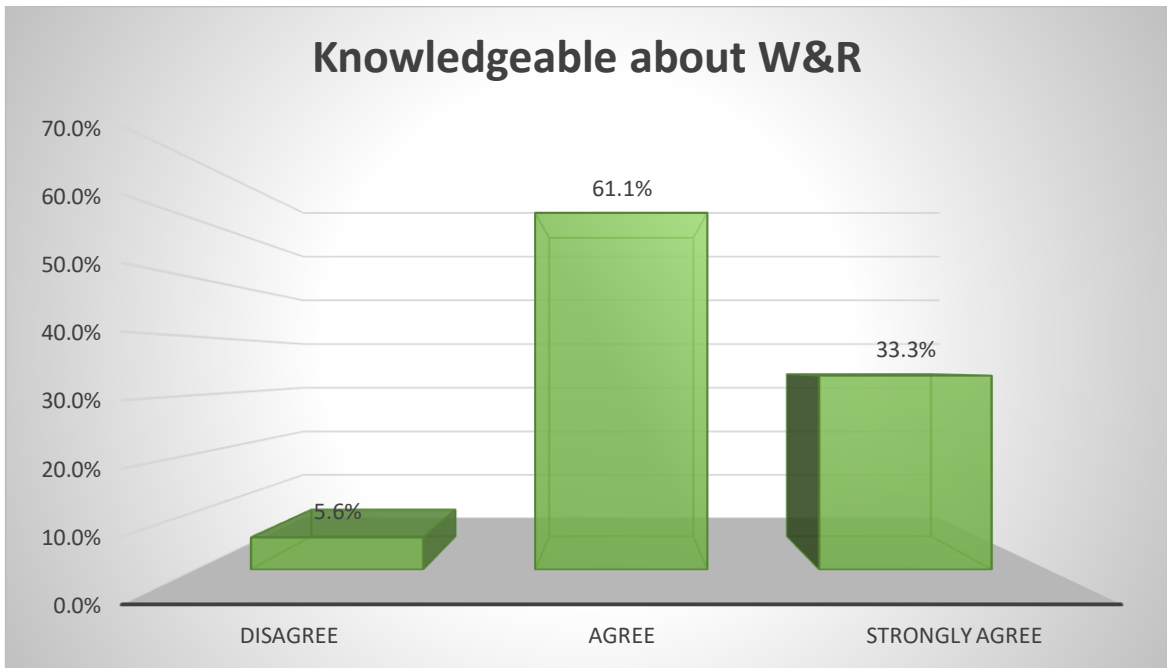


Figure 4.20: Knowledgeable about W&R

94.4% of respondents reported that they were able to use the knowledge that they gained from the W&R module while 5.6% said they were not able to use it.

Item 3u: I am familiar with and can use W&R terminology within context.

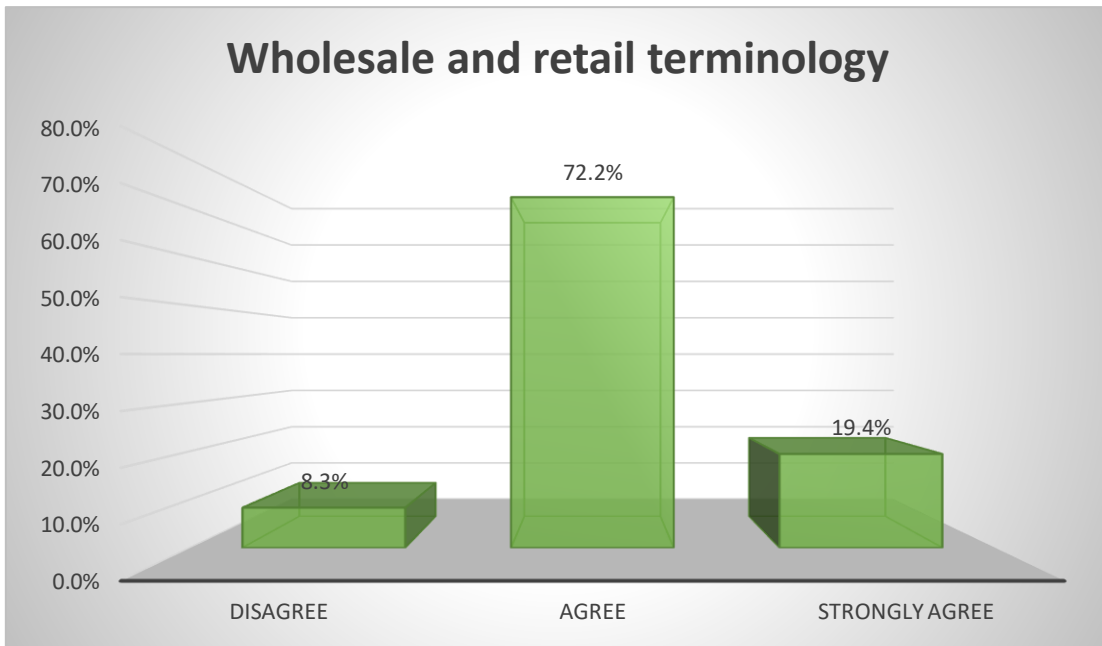


Figure 4.21: Wholesale and retail terminology

91.6% of respondents stated that they were familiar with and could use W&R terminology within context while 8.3% responded negatively to this statement.

Item 3v: I am able to use the skills that I acquired from the W&R module.

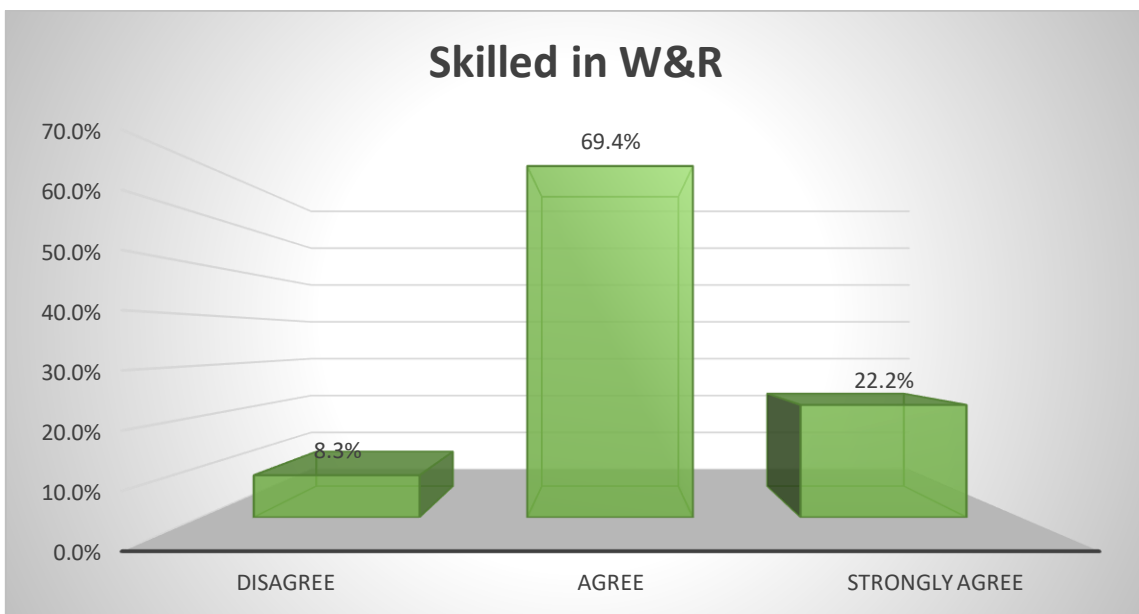


Figure 4.22: Skilled in W&R

91.6% of respondents reported that they were able to use the skills that they acquired from the W&R module while 8.3% said they were unable to do so.

Item 3w: I found the W&R module useful.

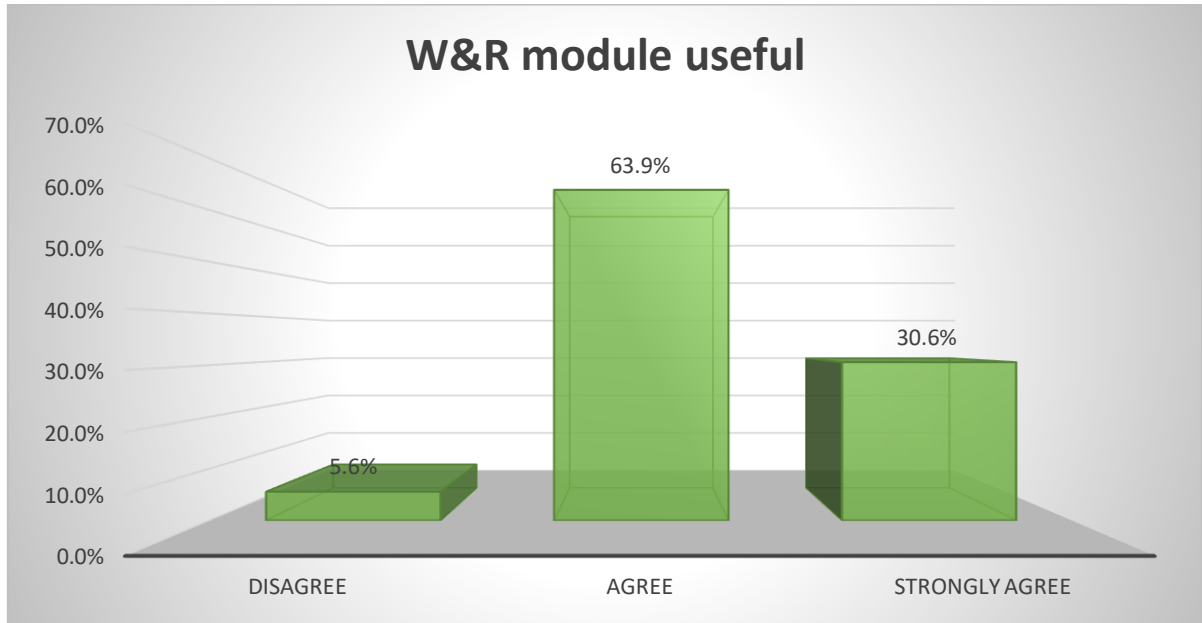


Figure 4.23: Wholesale and retail module useful

94.5% of respondents found the W&R module useful compared to 5.6% who did not find it helpful.

Item 3x: I benefitted from the YFP Level 1 programme that the TVET college offers.

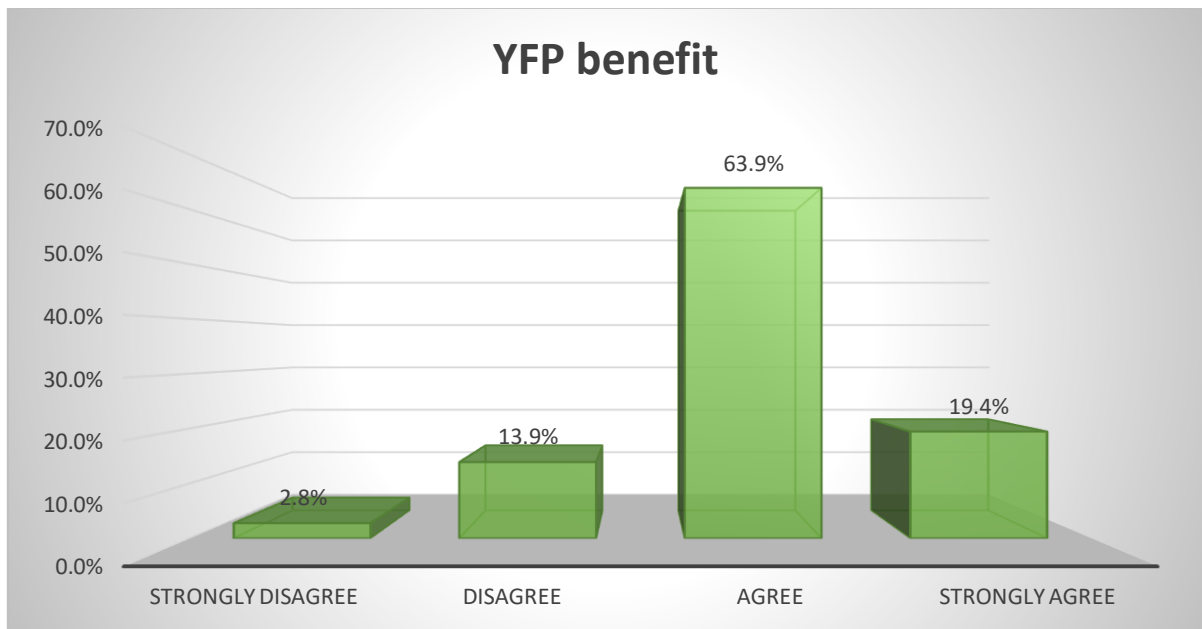


Figure 4.24: Benefitted from the YFP L1

83.3% of respondents reported that they had benefitted from the YFP L1 programme that the TVET college offers, compared to 16.7% who said they had not benefitted from it.

Item 3y: I would encourage other at-risk learners to enrol for the YFP learnership programme.

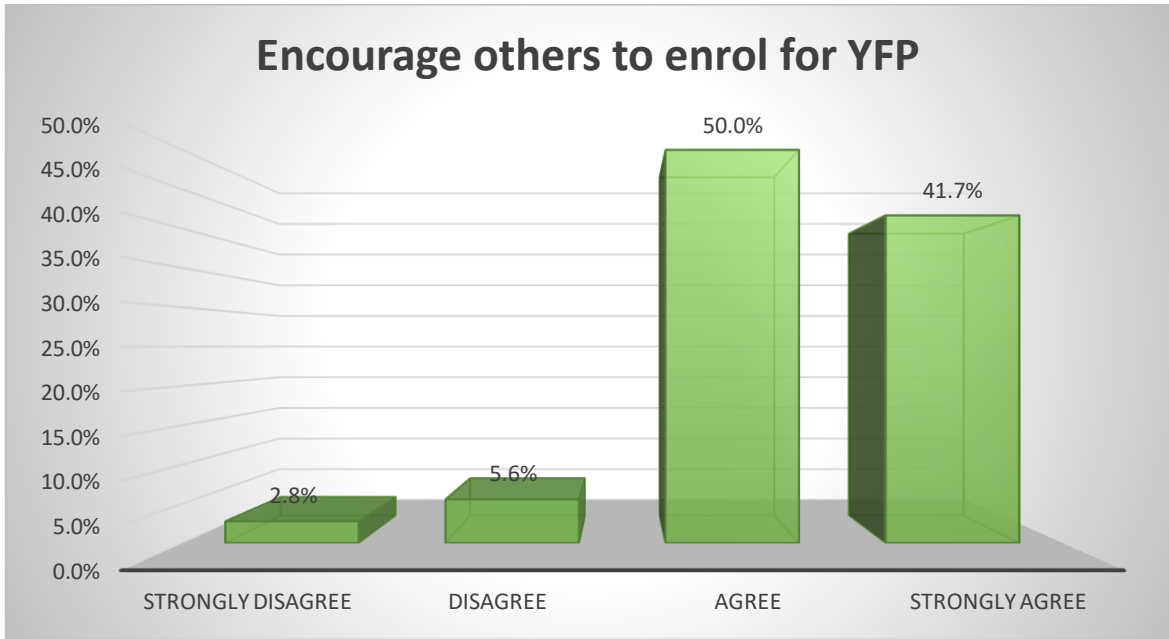


Figure 4.25: I would encourage others to enrol for the YFP.

91.7% of respondents stated that they would encourage other at-risk learners to enrol for the YFP learnership programme while 8.4% said they would not.

Item 3z: The YFP Level 1 training adequately prepared me to work in the W&R sector.

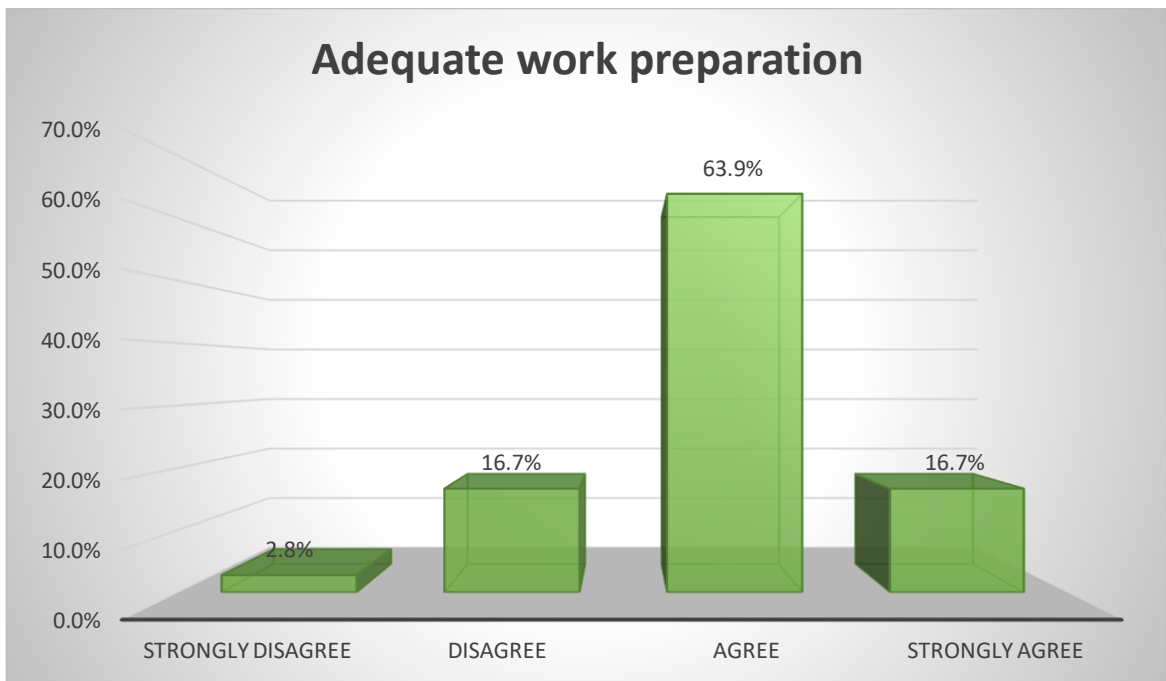


Figure 4.26: YFP L1 adequate preparation for work in W&R sector

80.6% of respondents reported that the YFP L1 training adequately prepared them to work in the W&R sector compared to 19.5% who stated that the training did not prepare them adequately to work in this sector.

The Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for all 16 items serving as a measure of the YFP curriculum of the questionnaire are:

- 0.858 for raw variables; and
- 0.882 for standardised variables.

These results are above the acceptable level of 0.7 (De Vos et al., 2013: 177; Goforth, 2015; Le Roux, 2003:111) and, thus, prove that these items are reliable and consistent. The YFP L1 curriculum improvements as contained in this research study are reliable and can be implemented by the TVETs and will help to improve the L1 graduates' knowledge, skills and attributes and, hence, assist them to obtain employment in the W&R sector.

4.3.5. Chi-square test results.

In this investigation, a Chi-square test was conducted on the 26 items of the questionnaire and below are the results for the three themes.

4.3.5.1 Youth employability

Item 1a: There are employment opportunities upon completing L1 of the YFP learnership programme.

There was a significant association between the YFP L1 learnership programme and employment opportunities, $\chi^2 (3, N = 36) = 34.444, p < .01$.

Item 1b: I obtained employment in the W&R sector after completing Level 1 of the YFP learnership programme.

There was a significant association between the YFP L1 programme and graduates' employability within the W&R sector, $\chi^2 (2, N = 36) = 15.167, p = .001$.

Item 1c: I obtained employment in a different sector after completing Level 1 of the YFP learnership programme.

There was a significant relationship between the YFP L1 learnership programme and graduates' employability in a different sector, $\chi^2 (2, N = 36) = 32.000, p < .01$.

Item 1d: I am self-employed.

There was a significant association between the YFP L1 programme and graduates' self-employment, $\chi^2 (2, N = 35) = 30.914, p = .01$

Since the p-value for the items under the Youth Employability theme is less than the significance level $\alpha = 0.05$, the conclusion is that there is an association between the YFP L1 programme and youth employability.

4.3.5.2 Skills Development

Item 2f: I progressed to the next level (Level 2) of the YFP learnership programme at this TVET college.

There was a significant relationship between the YFP L1 programme and graduates' progression within the same programme at the same TVET, ($\chi^2 (3, N = 36) = 11.778, p = .008$).

Item 2g: I progressed to the next level within a different programme at the same TVET college

There was a significant relationship between the YFP L1 programme and graduates' progression within a different programme at the same TVET, $\chi^2 (3, N = 36) = 25.333, p < .01$.

Item 2h: I progressed to Level 2 within a different programme at another TVET college.

There was a significant association between the YFP L1 programme and the graduates' progression within a different programme at another TVET college, $\chi^2 (3, N = 36) = 53.778, p < .01$.

Item 2i: I did not study further at any TVET college.

There was a significant association between the YFP L1 programme and graduates not studying further at a TVET college, $\chi^2 (3, N = 36) = 11.111, p < .01$.

Item 2j: I continued my skills development at my present workplace.

There was a significant relationship between the YFP L1 programme and graduates' skills development at their present workplace, $\chi^2 (3, N = 35) = 15.171, p = .002$.

Since the p-value for all the items under the theme Skills Development is less than the significance level $\alpha = 0.05$, the conclusion is that there is a relationship between the YFP L1 programme and graduates' skills development.

4.3.5.3 Youth Focus Project curriculum

Item 3k: I can communicate effectively within different communication situations.

There was a significant association between the YFP L1 programme and graduates' communication skills, $\chi^2 (3, N = 36) = 46.444 p < .01$.

Item 3l: I can use verbal and non-verbal communication codes effectively in appropriate situations.

There was a significant association between the YFP L1 programme and graduates' use of communication codes, $\chi^2 (2, N = 36) = 22.167, p < .01$.

Item 3m: I found the Communication Literacy module useful.

There was a significant association between the YFP L1 programme and the communication literacy module, $\chi^2 (2, N = 36) = 24.500, p < .01$.

Item 3n: I can use numbers appropriately in everyday life situations.

There was a significant relationship between the YFP L1 programme and graduates' use of numbers, $\chi^2 (2, N = 36) = 23.167, p < .01$.

Item 3o: I can identify data in everyday life situations.

There was a significant relationship between the YFP L1 programme and graduates' identification of data, $\chi^2 (3, N = 36) = 59.778, p < .01$.

Item 3p: I found the Mathematical Literacy module useful.

There was a significant association between the YFP L1 programme and the mathematical literacy module, $\chi^2 (4, N = 35) = 55.667, p < .01$.

Item 3q: I can make informed choices to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

There was a significant association between the YFP L1 programme and graduates' choices on health issues, $\chi^2 (2, N = 36) = 18.500, p < .01$.

Item 3r: I have acquired knowledge regarding how to maintain positive relationships.

There was a significant relationship between the YFP L1 programme and graduates' knowledge of how to maintain positive relationships, $\chi^2 (2, N = 36) = 20.167, p < .01$.

Item 3t: I am able to use the knowledge that I gained from the W&R module.

There was a significant relationship between the YFP L1 programme and graduates' knowledge of the W&R module, $\chi^2 (2, N = 36) = 16.667, p < .01$.

Item 3u: I am familiar with and can use W&R terminology within context.

There was a significant association between the YFP L1 programme and graduates' use of W&R terminology, $\chi^2 (2, N = 36) = 25.167, p < .01$.

Item 3v: I am able to use the skills that I acquired from the W&R module.

There was a significant association between the YFP L1 programme and graduates' skills acquisition from the W&R module, $\chi^2 (2, N = 36) = 22.167, p < .01$.

Item 3w: I found the W&R module useful.

There was a significant relationship between the YFP L1 programme and the W&R module, $\chi^2 (2, N = 36) = 18.500, p < .01$.

Item 3x: I benefitted from the YFP Level 1 programme that the TVET college offers.

There was a significant association between the YFP L1 programme and graduates who benefitted from the programme, $\chi^2 (3, N = 36) = 31.111, p < .01$.

Item 3y: I would encourage other at-risk learners to enrol for the YFP learnership programme.

There was a significant relationship between the YFP L1 programme and the extent of their encouragement of others to enrol in the programme, $\chi^2 (3, N = 36) = 25.556, p < .01$.

Item 3z: The YFP Level 1 training adequately prepared me to work in the W&R sector.

There is a significant association between the YFP L1 programme and graduates' work readiness, $\chi^2 (3, N = 36) = 30.889, p < .01$.

Since the p-value for the above items for the theme YFP curriculum is less than the significance level $\alpha = 0.05$, the conclusion is that there is an association between the YFP L1 programme and the YFP L1 curriculum.

4.5 Main quantitative findings

The quantitative data produced the following main findings for consideration during the results discussion:

4.5.1 Biographical data

The respondents comprised an equal number of males 18 (50%) and females 18 (50%). The respondents comprised Black Africans (44.4%) and Coloureds (55.6%). 52.8% of the respondents were aged between 19-21 years while 47.2% were aged between 22-25 years. The majority of respondents (58.3%) had Grades 9 or 10 (36.1%) as their highest qualification, thus, all of them had completed the Grade 9/L1 programme while 36% of respondents has progressed to Grade 10.

4.5.2 Youth employability

The vast majority of respondents (69.5%) had high hopes regarding the possibility of obtaining employment after completing the YFP L1 learnership programme while a few (30.6%) felt there were no employment opportunities.

Some respondents (38.9%) indicated that they obtained employment in the W&R sector after completing the YFP L1 programme while 8.3% said they had obtained work in other sectors. Only 5.6% of the respondents were self-employed while more than half of them (55.6%) were unemployed.

There was a significant association between the YFP L1 programme and youth employability.

4.5.3 Skills development

A substantial percentage of respondents (41.7%) indicated that they progressed to YFP L2 at the same TVET, while 27.8% said that they chose a different course at the same TVET college, compared to 11% who opted to progress to L2 within a different programme at another TVET college. Some respondents (33.3%) indicated that they had not studied further at any TVET college while the majority of respondents (66.6%) indicated that they had progressed with their studies.

30.6% of the respondents revealed that they received training at their respective workplaces. The reason for posing this particular enquiry was to find out whether the employed respondents had undergone any form of training or refresher courses at their respective workplaces. Continuous training is vital in order to make sure that employees remain abreast within the changing work environment. Continuous training is a lifelong process and, if conducted properly, it may benefit not only the employee but also the employer and the customers.

The study results indicated a significant association between the YFP L1 programme and skills development.

4.5.4 Youth Focus Project curriculum

An overwhelming majority of the respondents found all the modules useful. 97.2% found the communication module useful, 94.2% found the mathematical module useful, 100% found the life orientation module useful while 94.5% were satisfied with the W&R module. Most of the respondents (83.3%) indicated that they had benefitted from the YFP L1 programme, 91.7% said that they will encourage other at-risk learners to enrol for the programme while 80.6% indicated that the training adequately prepared them to work in the W&R sector.

4.6 Qualitative results

Responses to the 13 open-ended questions were interpreted through the interrelationships between the following themes: (1) youth employability; (2) skills development and (3) the YFP L1 curriculum.

The question and its purpose is stated first. Each respondent's answers and the frequency of their responses are displayed in text boxes and the themes and subthemes appear vertically, and these are analysed and interpreted to obtain answers to the research questions.

4.6.1 Youth employability

4 questions were posed under the youth employability theme and below are the responses.

4.6.1.1 Current job position in the W&R sector

The first open-ended question was "What is your current job position?" and is related to those graduates currently employed in the W&R sector. The question was aimed at ascertaining the exact jobs that the YFP L1 graduates were fulfilling within the W&R sector and also determining the nature of the work that YFP L1 graduates were completing within their field of study.

Table 4.6: YFP L1 graduates employed in the W&R sector

Question: What is your current job position?			
Frequency of responses	Respondents' answers	Sub-themes	Theme
9	Respondent 3: "employed as a cashier at Markham's". Responded 5: "fashion consultant and till operator". Respondent 11: "customer service consultant". Respondent 13: "security guard". Respondent 14: "cashier". Respondent 21: "salesperson". Respondent 22: "cashier". Respondent 23: "merchandiser". Respondent 27: "stores person".	EMPLOYED	YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY

19	Respondent 2: "I was employed as a merchandiser, but contract ended in December 2020". Respondent 7: "I was a cashier but lost my job due to Covid 19". Respondent 8: "not working". Respondent 9: "do not work". Respondent 16: "not working". Respondent 17: "no job". Respondent 18: "no job". Respondent 19: "no job". Respondent 24: "unemployed". Respondent 25: "unemployed". Respondent 26: "unemployed". Respondent 28: "none". Respondent 29: "none". Respondent 30: "not working". Respondent 31: "currently none". Respondent 33: "not employed". Respondent 34: "a packer until December 2020". Respondent 35: "not yet working". Respondent 36: "I am not working".	UNEMPLOYED	
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A total of 28 (78%) responses were received, while 8 (22%) respondents failed to respond to the question. The results in Table 4.6 above show the words such as "employed as a cashier (appeared 3 times)"; "salesperson"; "merchandiser", "fashion consultant", "security guard", "stores person", "customer service consultant" and these responses suggest that 9 respondents are employed within the W&R sector. Phrases such as "no job"; "unemployed", "not working", appeared 19 times and, thus, indicate the number of respondents who were unemployed.

4.6.1.2 Current job position in a different sector

"What is your current job position?" is the second open-ended question which aimed to determine the employability of the YFP L1 graduates within a different sector after completing L1 of the learnership programme.

Table 4.7: YFP L1 graduates employed in other sectors

Question: What is your current job position?			
Frequency of Responses	Respondents' opinions	Sub-themes	Theme
3	Respondent 4: "communication coordinator in the media industry". Respondent 15: "driver". Respondent 20: "receptionist".	EMPLOYED	YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY
1	Respondent 10: "was a supervisor for a cleaning company".	UNEMPLOYED	

The results reflected in Table 4.7 above indicate that only 3 respondents were employed in sectors other than W&R with words and phrases such as "communication coordinator in the media industry", "driver" and "receptionist", while 1 respondent lost their "supervisory job in a cleaning company".

4.6.1.3 If self-employed, what business do you own?

The next question under the theme youth employability was posed as a follow-up on self-employment – "If self-employed, what business do you own?"

Table 4.8: Business ownership

Question: What business do you own?			
Frequency of Responses	Respondents' opinions	Sub-theme	Theme
2	Respondent 6: "I have my own mobile barber which is a side-thing". Respondent 12: "a clothing shop".	ENTREPRENEURSHIP	YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY

2 respondents were business owners. One owned a mobile barber shop and the other one a clothing shop, thus, the YFP L1 programme helped 2 graduates to develop a W&R business model. Perhaps, a module on entrepreneurship should be included in the YFP L1 programme to give students the knowledge to start their own businesses.

4.6.1.4 Reason for being unemployed after completion of YFP L1 programme

“Why do you think you are unemployed after completing the YFPL1 learnership programme?” was the last question posed under the theme youth employability. The question posed was important in order to find answers to the research questions. The YFP L1 programme was started in order to help at-risk learners obtain a qualification that will help them either to obtain a job in the W&R sector or progress with their studies at any TVET in SA. The research intends to determine how the YFP L1 programme (knowledge, skills and attributes) affects the graduates' employability.

Table 4.9: Reason for being unemployed

Question: Why do you think you are unemployed after completing the YFP Level 1 learnership programme?			
Frequency of Responses	Respondents' opinion	Sub-theme	Theme
8	Respondent 1: “I am employed part time because I am still studying”. Respondent 24; “currently studying”. Respondent 28: “because I applied to study further”. Respondent 29: “currently studying”. Respondent 30: “currently studying”. Respondent 31: “I have not looked for a job yet because I am currently studying”. Respondent 32: “no, I don’t think I am unemployed, I am still studying”. Respondent 34: “I applied for another course at CCT”.	STUDYING	YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY

10	<p>Respondent 2: "It is because the contract ended".</p> <p>Respondent 7: "Due to Covid 19 many people lost their jobs. I was part of those people".</p> <p>Respondent 8: "no jobs on the market due to corona".</p> <p>Respondent 10: "unemployed due to Covid 19."</p> <p>Respondent 16: "can't find job".</p> <p>Respondent 19: "there are no jobs on the market".</p> <p>Respondent 25: "lack of jobs".</p> <p>Respondent 26: "company closure due to Covid 19."</p> <p>Respondent 33: "lack of employment opportunities and also lockdown".</p> <p>Respondent 36: "lack of jobs in SA".</p>	GENERAL LACK OF JOBS / COVID 19	
4	<p>Respondent 6: "It was honestly a waste of a year, have no idea how it helped, because the next year I found out I could have gone straight to another campus and started at Level 2 without having to do this."</p> <p>Respondent 17: "no experience".</p> <p>Respondent 18: "I don't know".</p> <p>Respondent 35: "maybe the working industry expected a higher qualification".</p>	OTHER	

A total of 22 (61.1%) responses were received, while 14 (38.9%) of the respondents failed to answer the question suggesting that they were employed. Phrases such as "currently studying" appeared 8 times and this repetition indicated that the respondents were unemployed because they were still students. Various words and sentences are illustrated in Table 4.9, such as "unemployed due to COVID 19" (appeared 5 times), "contract ended", "can't find job", "no jobs on the market" (appeared 3 times), while other reasons that were indicated with phrases such as "waste of time", "don't know", no experience and "industry expected a higher qualification" appeared 4 times.

Main findings from the questions posed under the theme 'youth employability' indicated that the graduates' unemployment was due to the fact that some respondents were currently studying, others were unemployed due to a general shortage of jobs on the labour market, while others blamed it upon COVID 19, some respondents had not thought about starting their

own businesses while others blamed their joblessness on the 'low-level' of the YFP L1 qualification.

4.6.2 Skills development

3 questions were posed under the skills development theme and the responses are delineated below.

4.6.2.1 Programme currently enrolled for at the same TVET

The first question under the theme skills development is “what programme are you enrolled for at the same TVET?” According to the YFP, a graduate of L1 can choose either to progress with their studies at any TVET college of their choice provided they meet the minimum entry requirements or find employment in the W&R sector. It should be noted that 15 YFP L1 graduates had already completed their L2 at the same TVET during the period under survey and were busy searching for employment.

Table 4.10: Programme currently enrolled for at the same TVET

Question: What programme are you currently enrolled for?			
Frequency of Responses	Respondents' opinion	Sub-theme	Theme
5	<p>Respondent 4: “Information technology and computer science”.</p> <p>Respondent 28: “Information technology”.</p> <p>Respondent 29: “Information technology”.</p> <p>Respondent 31: “Information technology”.</p> <p>Respondent 32: “Information technology”.</p>	<p>TECHNOLOGY</p> <p>COMMUNICATION</p> <p>INFORMATION AND</p>	SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
2	<p>Respondent 6: “Finance, economics and accounting (FEA) NCV”.</p> <p>Respondent 34: “Office Administration: NCV 3”.</p>	<p>STUDIES</p> <p>BUSINESS</p>	

Findings in Table 4.10 above indicate that 5 respondents were enrolled in a computer course while 2 were studying a business programme at the same TVET. It could be that the YFP L1

programme afforded the graduates exposure to other study disciplines that could promote their employability.

4.6.2.2 Programme currently enrolled for at another TVET

The second question “what programme are you enrolled for at another TVET” was posed to determine if the YFP L1 graduates were choosing to progress with their studies at other colleges since the YFP learnership was running at all the six TVETs in the WC or, better still, if the YFP L1 graduates were enrolling in different courses.

Table 4.11: Programme currently enrolled for at another TVET

Question: What programme are you currently enrolled for at another TVET?			
Frequency of Responses	Respondents' opinion	Sub-theme	Theme
2	Respondent 1: “Office Administration: NCV 4”. Respondent 24:” NCV 4 Business Studies”.	BUSINESS STUDIES	SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
2	Respondent 12: “mechanical engineering”. Respondent 30: “spray-painting”.	TRADE ENGINEERING	

As indicated in Table 4.11 above, 2 respondents were enrolled in a business programme with one studying office administration and the other business studies at NCV 4 Level. Two respondents indicated that they were studying mechanical engineering and spray-painting respectively. It could be that the YFP L1 programme afforded the graduates exposure to other disciplines of study for promoting their employability.

4.6.2.3 Training programmes attended

The last question under the Skills Development theme is “List the training programmes that you attended” that was posed to ascertain any skills development interventions at the various workplaces for employed YFP L1 graduates.

Table 4.12: Training programmes attended

Question: List the training programmes that you attended.			
Frequency of Responses	Respondents' opinion	Sub-theme	Theme
6	Respondent 2: "retail training programme". Respondent 14: "customer-care". Respondent 20: "customer-care". Respondent 21: "working in a pressurised environment and brand awareness". Respondent 23: "business etiquette". Respondent 27: "handling customer complaints".	CUSTOMER CARE	SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
2	Respondent 1: "I did not attend any training programme". Respondent 5: "nothing".	NO TRAINING	
3	Respondent 3: "basic computer course". Respondent 13: "safety and security". Respondent 22: "communication skills/attention to detail".	OTHER	

Table 4.12 above shows 6 respondents attended customer-care training indicated by such phrases as "business etiquette", "retail training", "customer-care" (appeared 4 times), 2 had not engaged in any training while the other 3 undertook training in basic computers, safety and security and communication respectively.

4.6.3 Youth Focus Project L1 curriculum

This section focuses on the responses to the questions on the usefulness of the four modules namely: communication literacy, mathematical literacy, life skills and W&R, as well as the need for additional skills or subjects, if any, in order to determine the need for any curriculum areas for improvement so that graduates can become employable. The results will help answer the last research question and the possible adjustment of the current curriculum or development of a new curriculum for the YFP L1 programme.

4.6.3.1 Usefulness of the modules

The question "If not, explain why you did not find either communication literacy, mathematical literacy, life orientation or W&R module useful" was posed as a follow-up to the statement, "I found the communication literacy, mathematical literacy, life orientation or W&R module useful.

Table 4.13: Usefulness of the modules

Question: If not, explain why you did not find any of the modules useful			
Frequency of responses	Respondents' opinion	Sub-theme	Theme
35	Language, Literacy and Communication Respondents 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14, 15,16, 17,18,19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24,25, 26, 27, 28,30,31,32,33,34,35,36	USEFUL	YFP CURRICULUM
34	Mathematical Literacy Respondents 1,2,3,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16, 17,18,19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24,25,27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36		
36	Life Orientation Respondents 1, 2, 3, 4, 5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14, 15, 16, 17, 18,19, 20, 21,22, 23, 24,25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35,36		
34	W&R Respondents 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,16, 17,19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24,25, 26, 27, 28,29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36		
1	Respondent 29: "language barrier in Communication Literacy module".	NOT USEFUL	
2	Respondent 4:"I struggled with Mathematical Literacy at times". Respondent 26: "challenges understanding numbers".		
2	Respondent 15: "I am not using W&R knowledge in my work". Respondent 18: "I have no job, so I find the W&R module not useful".		

Table 4.13 above shows that an overwhelming majority of respondents; 35 for Communication Literacy, 34 for Mathematical Literacy, 36 for Life Orientation and 34 for W&R, found all the modules useful. One respondent, however, indicated that a "language barrier" posed some challenges in understanding what was taught, another respondent "I struggled to comprehend numbers", while two others mentioned that they "already know all the concepts being" covered in W&R and that they "were not using the knowledge anywhere because they were unemployed".

4.6.3.2 Any additional skills to be added to the YFP L1 programme

This question sought to determine whether there is need for any additional skills to be added to the YFP L1 programme to improve graduates' employability. The YFP L1 programme was initiated to solve the problem of at-risk learners by affording them an opportunity to study and obtain a qualification that will enable them to progress with their studies or to find employment within the W&R sector.

Table 4.14: Additional skills needed for the YFP L1 curriculum

aa) What skills should be added to the YFP L1 programme to improve graduates' employability?			
Frequency of Responses	Respondents' opinion	Sub-theme	Theme
12	Respondent 7: "how to handle different types of customers". Respondent 8: "problem solving skills". Respondent 10: "how to represent yourself towards customers e.g., attitude". Respondent 19: "effective communication skills". Respondent 21: "time management". Respondent 22: "how to work under pressure". Respondent 23: "problem solving skills". Respondent 25: "time management". Respondent 26: "good customer care". Respondent 27: "how to work in a busy place". Respondent 34: "admin skills for answering enquiries, etc.". Respondent 36: "time management".	Soft skills	YFP CURRICULUM

14	Respondent 1: "management skills". Respondent 2: "retail management skills". Respondent 4: "there should be more practicals". Respondent 11: "more physical activity." Respondent 14: "computer skills". Respondent 16: "computers". Respondent 17: "computers". Respondent 20: "management skills". Respondent 24: "computer skills". Respondent 29: "do more practicals". Respondent 30: "IT skills". Respondent 32: "computer skills and programming". Respondent 33: "computer skills". Respondent 35: "computer skills".	Hard skills	YFP CURRICULUM
8	Respondent 3: "I don't think we need any more skills added to our workload". Respondent 5: "other sectors of learning not only based on W&R". Respondent 6: "don't know". Respondent 15: "nothing". Respondent 12: "how to start own business". Respondent 13: "safety and security skills". Respondent 18: "don't know". Respondent 31: "nothing".	Other	

A total of 34 (94.4%) responses were received and the most common were those comprising both hard and soft skills. Such phrases as "time management" (appeared 3 times), "effective communication skills", "problem solving skills" (appeared 4 times), "customer care" (appeared twice) and "administration skills" (appeared under the sub-theme of soft skills), while hard skills had such responses as "computer skills" (appeared 8 times), "management skills" (appeared 3 times) and "practicals" (appeared 3 times). A minority of the respondents felt that there was no need to add more skills under the sub-theme of other with phrases such as "nothing" (appeared 5 times), "other sectors of learning" (appeared twice) and "how to start a business".

4.6.3.3 Any additional subjects to be added to improve the YFP L1 programme

This question sought to discover whether there is need for additional subjects that will enhance the YFP L1 graduates' chance of obtaining employment. 35 respondents answered the

question. Furthermore, the other aim of this question was to elicit information that will help in the redesigning of the YFP L1 curriculum, since an objective of this research study is to ascertain areas for curriculum improvement.

Table 4.15: Additional subjects to improve the YFP L1 programme

bb) What subjects should be added to improve the YFP L1 programme?			
Frequency of Responses	Respondents' opinion	Sub-theme	Theme
15	Respondent 4: "consumer studies". Respondent 7: "customer services". Respondent 8: "retail management". Respondent 12: entrepreneurship". Respondent 13: "customer care". Respondent 17: "business studies". Respondent 19: "business communication". Respondent 23: "basic retail selling." Respondent 25: "marketing management". Respondent 26: "public relations." Respondent 27: "sales management". Respondent 30: "customer care". Respondent 33: "business studies". Respondent 34: "office admin and business studies". Respondent 36: "retail management".	Business related	YFP CURRICULUM
8	Respondent 2: "computer or office data processing". Respondent 14: "computer operations". Respondent 16: "computers". Respondent 20: "computers". Respondent 21: "computer operations". Respondent 22: "using point of sale system". Respondent 28: "information technology and electronics". Respondent 29: "information and communication technology". Respondent 32: "principles of computer programming".	Information technology related	

12	Respondent 1: "none". Respondent 3: "I think all they offered us was enough considering the circumstances". Respondent 5: "accounting, history and agricultural subjects". Respondent 6: "don't know". Respondent 9: "Afrikaans". Respondent 10: "none". Respondent 11: "physical education". Respondent 15: "nothing". Respondent 18: "don't know". Respondent 24: "social science". Respondent 31: "pure math". Respondent 35: "life sciences".	Other	
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A total of 35 (97.2%) responses were received, while 1 (2.8%) of the respondents failed to answer the question. 15 respondents indicated that business related subjects such as "customer/retail subjects" (appeared 7 times), "marketing subjects" (appeared 3 times) and "business subjects" (appeared 5 times) be added to the curriculum, 9 respondents opted for "computer related subjects" (appeared 9 times) while 12 respondents felt that high school subjects such as "social science subjects" (appeared 3 times), "natural science subjects" (appeared twice), "languages" (appeared once) and "nothing" (appeared 6 times) also be part of the curriculum for the YFP L1 learnership programme.

4.7 Main qualitative findings

The qualitative data produced the following main findings for consideration during the results discussion:

4.7.1 Youth employability

9 respondents were employed in the W&R sector, 3 respondents were employed in other sectors while 2 respondents were running their own businesses. 8 respondents were unemployed because they were still studying, 5 respondents indicated that they were unemployed due to the effect of the corona virus pandemic while 3 respondents stated that there were generally no jobs available on the labour market.

4.7.2 Skills development

5 respondents indicated that they were currently enrolled for an Information Technology programme at the same TVET, 4 were studying at a different TVET with 2 respondents enrolled in a business course and 2 in an engineering-related programme. 6 respondents indicated that they attended business-related training programmes at their respective workplaces. Based

upon these findings, it is evident that the YFP L1 programme afforded the enrolment of its graduates within other programmes.

4.7.3 Youth Focus Project curriculum

An overwhelming majority of the respondents indicated that they found all the modules useful. 12 respondents stated that soft skills should be added to the YFP L1 curriculum to improve graduates' employability, compared to 14 respondents who opted for hard skills, while 5 respondents felt that there was no need for additional skills. 15 respondents recommended that business-related subjects be added to improve the YFP L1 learnership programme, 8 opted for computer related subjects, 5 chose other subjects such as social sciences and natural sciences, while 6 respondents indicated that no other subjects needed to be added to the YFP L1 curriculum.

4.8 Discussion of the research results

This section discusses the research results via the embedded mixed methods approach, combining the primary quantitative findings and secondary qualitative findings with salient points of view from the reviewed literature, to articulate responses to the study's research questions.

4.8.1 Biographical Data

Although the respondents comprised an equal number of males and females this fact does not imply that an equal number of females and males were enrolled for the YFP L1 learnership programme at the selected TVET college. This information was necessary to ascertain the gender weighting of at-risk learners who were enrolling in learnerships in order to acquire qualifications.

55.6% of respondents were Coloured and 44.4% were Black African while there were no Indian, Asian or White respondents. Given that the YFP L1 graduates come from disadvantaged backgrounds within the WC, these statistics were not unusual.

There are five career phases of human beings according to Gie (2020:4-5) and Career Research (2021) namely: growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance and decline. The exploration stage aptly describes the YFP L1 graduates because the majority of them are aged between 16-24 years and have successfully completed the first level of W&R, some of them are seeking jobs within the W&R sector while others have progressed to the next level with their studies.

The responses to the questionnaire concur with the insights gleaned from the literature review presented in Chapter Two. In its preamble, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996) clearly articulates that its aim is to improve the quality of life of all citizens and ensure they develop to their full potential. The right to education is prioritised in the

Constitution because it affords all South Africans a fair start in life, thereby increasing their chances of employment. Furthermore, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) contends that SA has made progress in ensuring access to education for all its citizens, despite the many obstacles faced by children born into poverty. All the study respondents possessed a basic level of education since they had attained at least Grade 9 as well as an occupational qualification equivalent to Grade 9.

4.8.2 Youth employability

The first theme of youth employability exists at the heart of youth development. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient (-0.405) for youth employability was not reliable within this study but, nevertheless, it yielded statistical significant information about the dependent and independent variables. The p-value for the items under the youth employability theme is less than the significance level $\alpha = 0.05$, and the conclusion is that there is an association between the YFP L1 programme and youth employability.

Due to a high number of jobless youth in SA, it was beneficial to discover if there are employment opportunities for graduates upon completion of a learnership programme. Through posing this question, the researcher sought to establish that the YFP is a gateway to employment for at-risk learners upon successful completion of this skills training programme. There was a statistically significant relationship between the YFP L1 programme and prospects of finding a job after finishing the learnership programme, $\chi^2 (3, N = 36) = 34.444, p < .01$. Based upon the preceding data sets, it is clear that the respondents were positive about employment prospects within the W&R industry.

The research findings have shown that 38.9% of respondents were employed in the W&R sector while only 8% were employed in other sectors. The YFP L1 programme has a significant relationship with graduates' employability in the W&R sector, $\chi^2 (2, N = 36) = 15.167, p = .001$. This result may mean that the YFP L1 qualification also influences employability within the W&R sector. The respondents employed in the W&R sector were working as cashiers or as a salesperson, merchandiser, fashion consultant, security guard, stores person and customer service consultant. There was a significant relationship between the YFP L1 programme and employability in a different sector, $\chi^2 (2, N = 36) = 32.000, p < .01$. The three respondents employed in other sectors were working as a communication coordinator, driver and receptionist respectively. Based upon these findings, it can be inferred that the W&R sector is absorbing YFP L1 graduates, even though it is not easy for all the graduates to obtain employment in this or any other sector of the economy.

The self-employment question was posed to find out whether the YFP L1 graduates were job creators as well as job seekers. There was a significant relationship between YFP L1 programme and self-employment, $\chi^2 (2, N = 35) = 30.914, p = .01$. This relationship could

mean that the YFP L1 programme opened entrepreneurial doors for its graduates because 2 respondents (5.6%) were self-employed business owners, one of whom operated a barbershop and the other one a clothing company. Based upon these findings, it is clear that entrepreneurship is another employment route that the graduates can explore, therefore, it is recommended that an entrepreneurship module should be included in the YFP L1 curriculum. Sihu (2022) concurs with the above and states that entrepreneurship should be encouraged by the government and society as it eases the burden of youth unemployment.

In the literature review, the term 'youth' is defined as a period of life in-between childhood and adulthood which comprises elements such as history, societal norms and traditions as well as the hopes and dreams of young people, all of which shape an individual's personal life (United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 2020; Henze in Schafer 2015). Likewise, the YFP L1 graduates have hopes and dreams of a better life, hence, the importance of their empowerment through education and skills development, despite the high number of jobless youth in SA.

From the aforementioned findings, the researcher surmises that unemployment among the YFP L1 graduates is an unhealthy issue. No significant relationship exists between the YFP L1 programme and the unemployed graduates. This result could be interpreted to mean that the YFP L1 graduates employability is not influenced by the YFP L1 programme. The unemployed respondents (56%) were asked to explain the reasons why they were unemployed after successfully completing the YFP L1 programme. Their responses included the following: "still studying", "COVID 19", "no jobs are available within SA's labour market", "enrolling for the YFP learnership programme was a waste of time", "lack of experience" and "industry expected higher qualifications". The data of unemployed YFP L1 graduates aligns with Stats SA (2021) which reported a staggering 46.3% youth unemployment rate for those aged between 15-34 years during the first quarter of 2021. Sauvati (2021) asserts that youth employability is possible through provision of requisite vocational education, strengthening of support measures to increase jobs and increase the value of youth on the labour market.

The fact that the W&R sector was considered an essential industry during the Covid pandemic hard lockdown, suggests that all the YFP L1 graduates should have been absorbed into the labour market because they already possessed an essential occupational qualification. Their unemployment situation attests to the inability of SA's economy to provide work for all its labour force even when the economy is thriving. Complementing the above explanations, Labour Minister, Mr Thembelani Thulas Nxesi, as stated above, posits that high youth unemployment stems from the structural nature of the SA economy whereby the demand for high skilled labour stands in contrast to the reality of the majority of SA youth who enter the labour force with minimal or no skills (Graham & Mlatsheni, 2015), low economic growth levels, socio-economic challenges, rapid changes in the labour market and high poverty levels among Blacks that may

result in school drop-outs, limited skills acquisition and insufficient preparation for entry into the world of work (BusinessTech, 2020; Jumpah, Owusu-Arthur, & Ampadu-Ameyaw, 2022:3-4).

The data on the unemployment level of respondents is corroborated by findings from Graham & Mlatsheni (2015:51-52) who revealed that labour market absorption rates are highest among youth with a post matric qualification. The YFP L1 graduates had not achieved matric level and the vocational qualification they possess is equivalent to Grade 9. In essence, this finding suggests that their failure to obtain employment could be linked to their qualification, a fact that is in line with that of Stats SA (2021) which reported a graduate unemployment rate of 40.3% among youth aged 15-24 years and 15.5% among those aged 25-34 years. Such a scenario raises questions about the relevance of a L1 qualification in curbing youth unemployment when graduates with higher level qualifications are struggling to find jobs.

Some researchers mentioned in the literature review, (Draft: Human Resources Development Strategy for South Africa 2009-2030, 2008a:11; Meyer, 2013:18; Modise, 2020; Rankin, Roberts & Schoer, 2014) noted that youth are the hardest hit by unemployment because they either do not possess any skills or have skills that do not match the labour market demands. This is reported by Bojadjieva, Cvetanoska, Kozheski, Mujčinović, & Gašparović, 2022:20 whose study suggests that the school to work transition is inefficient which implies a mismatch between graduates' knowledge, skills and experience and the demands of the labour market. The importance of skills and training provision driven by industry demands is prioritised in the National Skills Development Strategy III (NSDA III, 2014:4; South Africa, 2011:15-17) that aimed to address problems such as inadequate skills levels, poor work readiness among the youth and critical skills shortages. The YFP helps to absorb the at-risk learners, thereby improving work opportunities for SA's youth. However, evidence from the case study indicates that although the youth are empowered with knowledge, skills and attitudes, such efforts are being challenged because SA's economy cannot absorb all the learnership graduates into the labour market.

Consistent with the constitutional values of basic education for all, the SDA Act No. 97 of 1998 (South Africa, 1998) provides that learnerships are established to improve participants' work readiness and skills development. Relatedly, the SDLA Act No. 9 of 1999 (RSA, 1999a) is a vehicle that drives the funding of skills development initiatives through partnerships between the public and private sectors and quality assures all processes within the education and training system. Overall, the study results corroborated that youth from the greater Cape Flats area have been given the opportunity to enrol for the YFP L1 programme and, upon graduation, continue with their studies at any TVET college of their choice.

StatsSA (2019) reports that despite SA's triple challenge of poverty, inequality and unemployment, meaningful headway has been made to realise a "better life for all". On the contrary, the research findings suggest the dire situation of the YFP L1 graduates who are struggling to sustain themselves due to unemployment.

The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient (-0.405) for youth employability was not reliable but it relates to the qualitative findings explained above. Moreover, the findings revealed that research sub-questions 1 and 3 were fully addressed. The next section – 4.8.3 Skills Development – discusses the study's findings in so far as the transferability of knowledge, skills and attitudes from the YFP L1 learnership programme into the labour market is concerned.

4.8.3 Skills Development

The Cronbach Alpha co-efficient for skills development was -0.431 and although the results were not considered to be reliable, they yielded statistically significant information wherein the p-value for all the items under the theme is less than the significance level $\alpha = 0.05$. The conclusion is that there is a relationship between the YFP L1 programme and graduates' skills development.

For the purpose of this research, the South African National Youth Policy 2009-2014 defines youth development as a programme which provides opportunities and support to the youth so as to better the lives of both the young people and society at large (NYDA, 2014:7-8). The YFP L1 learnership programme is a bridging course that allows graduates to choose to follow a path any field provided the graduate meets the minimum entry requirements of the chosen course. This research study, as mentioned previously, sought to ascertain the number of YFP L1 graduates who had progressed to the next level at the same TVET college or another college, even in a different programme.

42% of the respondents indicated that they had progressed to YFP L2 at the same TVET college while 28% stated they had chosen a different course at the same TVET college compared to 11% who progressed to L2 in a different programme at another TVET college. The YFP L1 programme has a significant relationship with graduates' progression within the same programme at the same TVET college, ($\chi^2(3, N = 36) = 11.778, p = .008$). This result implies that the YFP L1 programme influences skills development because the graduates progressed with their studies either at the same or another TVET college. Of the 28% respondents who chose a different course at the same TVET, 5 were currently enrolled in IT programmes, 2 were studying a business course and the remainder had completed their chosen courses in the previous years. Of the 11% of respondents who progressed to the next level at another TVET college, 2 respondents were currently studying a business studies related course and the other 2 were enrolled in an engineering programme. The researcher

assumed that these YFP L1 graduates will choose to progress to the next level within the same programme at another TVET college since this learnership was a fully funded course being run at six different TVETs in the WC. The percentage of the respondents who progressed further with their studies attests to the keenness of the graduates to obtain higher qualifications that they assume will enable them to obtain a job, even though, unfortunately, higher qualifications do not guarantee employment.

There was a significant association between the YFP L1 programme and graduates studying further at a TVET college, $\chi^2(3, N = 36) = 11.111, p < .01$. Many respondents (66.6%) reported that they studied further at a TVET college, thus, showing that the YFP L1 graduates were eager to progress with their studies in the hope of obtaining employment that will better their lives, since youth development programmes are designed to address the labour, economic and development needs of SA, a fact that is affirmed by the South African National Youth Policy 2009-2014 that aims to develop the youth by enabling access to education, health, civic and economic participation (NYDA, 2014:7-8).

The YFP L1 programme has a statistically significant relationship with graduates' skills development in the workplace, $\chi^2(3, N = 35) = 15.171, p = .002$. This result may mean that continuous training and development programmes are essential elements for life-long learning because they provide the individual employee with the requisite knowledge, skills and attributes that will, in turn, also benefit the organisation. Of the respondents who indicated that they had received training at their respective workplaces, 6 indicated that they attended business related training programmes, such as customer care and business etiquette, 3 mentioned that they received training in computer, communication or safety and security skills. However, 2 respondents said that they did not attend any training at their respective workplaces. The training and development of employees is perceived as crucial for an organisation's effectiveness because it equips employees with the necessary skills to help the organisation realise its goals (Nikandrou, et al., 2009:255). Moreover, SA introduced the following legislation to support skills development in the country: Skills Development Act (SDA) No. 97 of 1998 (South Africa, 1998), Skills Development Levies Act (SDLA) (Act No. 9 of 1999), National Skills Development Strategy III (NSDS III), National Youth Development Agency Act (NYDA) (No. 54 of 2008), amongst many others. Furthermore, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA, 2020) calls for the empowerment of youth through education because a nation's future lies in the hands of its youth. The YFP is one such programme helping the youth from disadvantaged backgrounds acquire a qualification that will help them obtain a job. Tackling youth's lack of skills helps reduce social deprivation which is linked to unemployment and poverty and youth skills development programmes are one of the strategies for equipping youth with the requisite skills for entering the job market.

The Cronbach Alpha coefficient for skills development was -0.431 and although the results were not considered to be reliable, they relate to the qualitative findings explained above. Moreover, these findings show that research sub-question 2 was fully addressed.

4.8.4 Youth Focus Project curriculum

For the YFP L1 curriculum, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient was 0.858 which indicated acceptable reliability of the results for this category. This result can be interpreted to mean that the YFP L1 curriculum improvements as contained in this research study are reliable and if implemented by the TVET college will help to improve the L1 graduates' knowledge, skills and attributes and, thus, enhance their chances of obtaining employment in the W&R sector.

Questions on YFP L1 curriculum were intended to ascertain whether it is adequate to ensure graduates' work readiness. 97.2% of respondents found the communication module useful, 94.2% of them found the mathematical module valuable, and 94.5% of respondents were satisfied with the W&R module. There was a statistically significant relationship between the YFP L1 programme and the YFP L1 curriculum for the communication literacy, $\chi^2 (2, N = 36) = 24.500, p < .01$, mathematical literacy, $\chi^2 (4, N = 35) = 55.667, p < .01$ and W&R, $\chi^2 (2, N = 36) = 18.500, p < .01$ modules. This result implies that the graduates were satisfied with the curriculum for the mentioned modules and that it was adequate to ensure graduates' work readiness. However, there was no significant relationship between the YFP L1 programme and the life orientation module (YFP L1 curriculum) ($\chi^2 (1, N = 36) = 2.778, p = .096$). This discrepancy could be interpreted to mean that the YFP LI curriculum for life orientation does not necessarily influence the imparting of the knowledge, skills and attributes to the YFP L1 graduates.

The life skills questions were posed bearing in mind the age range of the participants, the life choices that the YFP L1 graduates had to make, the suitability of the life skills curriculum as well as the graduates' transition into the world of work. All (100%) the respondents found the life orientation module useful and stated that it disseminated vital information about health issues for the young adults. It can be generalised that the graduates could easily relate to the life orientation module because it depicted their day-to-day experiences.

The YFP L1 graduates had an in-depth understanding of their major field of study and could easily relate to its terminology, meaning that the YFP L1 graduates had the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes for working within the W&R sector. The researcher assumed that being able to use skills acquired from the W&R module was sufficient to enable the graduates to obtain employment within this field. However, the study findings alluded to earlier regarding YFP L1 employment statistics showed a different picture since the majority (56%) of graduates were unable to obtain employment in the W&R industry. There seems to be a disjuncture between the knowledge and skills that the graduates possess and those that the

various industries want as evidenced by the YFP L1 graduates' low rate of employment in this sector.

The majority of respondents (83.3%) indicated that they benefitted from the YFP L1 programme, 91.7% of them said that they will encourage other at-risk learners to enrol in the programme while, 80.6% of respondents indicated that the training adequately prepared them to work in the W&R sector. Despite the questions surrounding the relevance of the YFP L1 programme in so far as employment is concerned, the YFP L1 graduates indicated that they would recommend the project to their friends, meaning that this type of training opportunity was highly valued. The young people were aware of the value of the learnership programme which is indicative of the valuable contribution made by the WCED, W&R SETA and TVET colleges to youth empowerment through skills development. Moreover, the respondents all agreed that the YFP L1 learnership programme adequately prepared them to work in the W&R sector, despite the hostile labour market.

The question posed regarding the addition of other skills to the YFP L1 programme was to establish whether the study respondents felt there was need to expand the courses offered within the learnership programme in order to assist YFP L1 graduates to acquire practical job-related skills that will enhance their employability. The researcher assumed that the graduates' input was essential for improving the YFP L1 curriculum. 12 respondents indicated that soft skills, such as time management and problem-solving skills, be added to the curriculum, 14 said that hard skills, such as computer and management skills needed to be added, while the remaining 8 respondents felt the current curriculum was satisfactory. These findings confirm that there is need for more skills courses to be included within the YFP L1 curriculum because these subjects might help the young people acquire additional knowledge, skills and attributes, thus, preparing them for the world of work.

The question on subject addition to the YFP L1 programme sought to discover whether there is a need for any additional subjects that will enhance the chances of the YFP L1 graduates obtaining employment. 15 respondents indicated that business related subjects should be added to the curriculum, 9 opted for computer related subjects, while 12 chose high school subjects and the remainder felt no further subjects should be added to the curriculum. The economic era of the 21st century is positioned in the Information Era (1955-2030) with technological advances driving automation and computerisation in the office environment (digitisation) and manufacturing (Industry 4.0) (Gie, 2021: 16), thus, curriculum renewal is vital to ensure that the YFP learnership programme adequately prepares L1 graduates for the modern W&R workplace. This view is congruent with the results obtained from the questions on additional skills and subjects whereby the majority of the respondents chose IT related subjects and skills. The findings indicate the need to adjust the YFP L1 curriculum so that the students will have a greater chance of obtaining employment after graduation.

Gijbels et al. (2010:240) and Tymon (2013: 841-856) suggests that the curriculum in learning institutions ought to respond to the dictates of the labour market, an opinion that is confirmed by this study's findings. This requirement entails labour/business working alongside education and training policy makers, service providers, funders, project participants and any other relevant stakeholders, to re-design a curriculum that meets the employers' demands. Collaboration among stakeholders will benefit everyone in that the graduates will be more readily employable while the employers will receive employees with the requisite knowledge, skills and attributes to steer the companies in the right direction.

To summarise, the YFP curriculum category, it is important to first clarify that the reason the YFP L1 graduates enrolled for the learnership programme was either to progress to the next level with their studies or to find employment in the W&R sector, thus, the research sought to ascertain whether the YFP L1 curriculum adequately prepared graduates to enter the labour market. Moreover, the curriculum is the nucleus of the graduates' employability and, as such, the researcher intended to determine whether the match/mismatch between what the YFP L1 programme offered students and what the W&R industry wanted from employees, had a direct bearing on the employability of the YFP L1 graduates. The findings delineated above indicate that research sub-question 4 was fully addressed.

4.9 Summary

Chapter 4 has presented, interpreted, analysed and provided a discussion of the data obtained from both the closed- and open-ended questions. The researcher obtained three themes from the research findings, namely: youth employability, skills development and the YFP L1 curriculum.

Within the theme "youth employability", lack of jobs for the youth was regarded as one of the biggest challenges facing SA, despite a significantly high proportion of respondents indicating that there are employment opportunities upon completing the YFP L1 programme. A few respondents were employed in either the W&R sector or other sectors while some of them were still studying. The respondents explained that the youth unemployment situation was due to a general lack of jobs in SA, a situation that have grown worse due to the COVID 19 pandemic. The literature review produced a plethora of empirical evidence that shows that SA has been grappling with a surge in the number of youths entering the labour market and, thus, the youth unemployment rate is one of the highest in the developing countries, therefore, it is not surprising that more than 50% of the YFP L1 graduates who participated in the research study were unemployed. It can be generalised that the majority of the YFP L1 graduates do not find employment within the W&R sector either because there are no positions available due to SA's high unemployment levels or because the YFP L1 graduates' knowledge and skills may not be strictly 'fit-for-industrial purpose'.

The data from this research presents a stark picture of the vulnerability of the SA youth within the labour market. Youth unemployment denies the younger generation an opportunity to sustain themselves and, hence, contribute meaningfully to the development of SA.

The skills development theme results show that a significant majority of the respondents progressed to the next level with their studies in different vocational fields at different TVETs. This result shows that the YFP L1 graduates were keen to acquire higher skills that will enhance their chances of obtaining a job.

Finally, the YFP L1 curriculum theme indicated that the majority of the respondents found all the modules useful, despite the lack of employment opportunities. Also, the respondents suggested that additional hard and soft skills, business, high school and computer related subjects should be included in the YFP L1 curriculum. Despite the lack of job opportunities after successful completion of the learnership programme, an overwhelming majority of respondents strongly believe that the course adequately prepared them to work in the W&R field and that they will encourage other at-risk youths to enrol in the YFP L1 programme. In essence, this finding suggests that the YFP L1 graduates found the entire curriculum for the YFP L1 useful, despite the high level of unemployment among the graduates.

The analysis, interpretation and discussion of the data has highlighted a few important factors in this study. The two main factors gleaned from both the quantitative and qualitative data analysis were that (1) the respondents were happy with the YFP L1 curriculum even though (2) the majority of graduates were facing challenges in obtaining employment.

The next chapter will provide the conclusion and propose recommendations to the TVETs in order to address YFP L1 graduates employability concerns identified in the results of this research study.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to investigate and determine the extent to which the YFP L1 graduates (who previously had been considered at-risk learners) had found employment in the W&R industry. During the research study, the number of employed and unemployed graduates in the sector was identified, the reasons behind the joblessness of some of the graduates also was explained. The number of graduates who had progressed with their studies was identified, as well as factors regarding improvements to the YFP L1 curriculum. The findings were considered in light of findings from similar studies in other contexts delineated in the literature review.

The previous chapter highlighted findings gleaned from the questionnaires' closed- and open-ended questions. Those findings were related to three themes, which were subsequently examined and explained. A discussion compared the researcher's findings with those of researchers discussed in the literature review to determine if a correlation or contradiction existed between them.

This chapter provides an overview of how the study met the research objectives and provided answers to the research questions, as well as made recommendations based upon the findings of the research.

5.2 Concluding remarks with respect to the objectives of this study

The objectives of the study were classified as shown below into the Main objective and Sub-objectives 1 to 4, and are discussed here, along with the conclusions drawn. The sub-research objectives were established to determine the employability of YFP L1 learnership graduates in the W&R sector.

5.2.1 Main research objective

To investigate the employability of YFP Level 1 graduates in the wholesale and retail sector. This research confirmed that despite the low levels of employment recorded for the YFP L1 graduates, most graduates felt very positive about the skills training they had received. Consequently, more graduates had decided to continue with their studies at various TVETs. The majority of the graduates, however, would have preferred to have received more exposure to practical training and information and communication technology (ICT). The YFP L1

graduates stated that they would recommend the learnership programme to their friends and other at-risk learners.

5.2.2 Research sub-objective 1

To determine the extent of YFP Level 1 graduates employed in the wholesale and retail sector.

Addressing this sub-objective, the following findings can be linked:

- There are employment opportunities in the W&R sector upon completing L1 of the YFP learnership even though only a few graduates were employed at the time of the study.
- YFP L1 graduates can venture into entrepreneurship to gain meaningful employment.
- The causes of unemployment among the YFP L1 graduates was because (1) some graduates continued with skills development, (2) the general lack of jobs on the market, which was compounded by the Covid 19 pandemic, (3) lack of experience as well as the fact that the qualification was pegged at L1.

5.2.3 Research sub-objective 2

To identify how many of YFP Level 1 graduates progressed with their studies to Level 2. In accordance with this objective, the following findings can be related:

- The majority of YFP L1 graduates progressed with their studies in W&R, while a few others chose other courses such as business studies, ICT and engineering.
- The number of respondents who progressed further with their studies attests to the keenness of the graduates to obtain higher qualifications.
- A few of the YFP L1 graduates continued with their skills development at their workplaces.

5.2.4 Research sub-objective 3

To identify how many of YFP Level 1 graduates remain unemployed. The following findings can be associated with this objective:

- More than half of the YFP L1 graduates were unemployed at the time of the study.
- Reasons cited for the unemployment of the graduates were that (1) they were still studying, (2) there were no jobs on the market and the situation was worsened by the Covid 19 pandemic, and (3) lack of experience as well as possession of a low-level qualification.

5.2.5 Research sub-objective 4

To ascertain the YFP Level 1 curriculum areas for improvement. In view of this objective, the following findings can be linked:

- There is need for additional skills (both soft and hard) and subjects such as entrepreneurship and computer technology to be added to the current YFP L1 curriculum.
- The YFP L1 graduates benefitted from the YFP L1 programme and would encourage other at-risk learners to enrol for the programme.
- YFP L1 curriculum improvements can be implemented by the TVET college to help improve the L1 graduates' knowledge, skills and attributes to obtain employment in the W&R sector.

Table 5.1 Possible “modules” and topics for YFP L1 programme

Modules	Topics
Module 1: Work readiness programme	Soft skills -interpersonal skills -customer services -management skills -communication skills -time management and assertiveness -managing teams and change -attitude and motivation Employment skills -CV writing skills -interview skills -employer/employee relationship -end-user computing Life Skills -counselling skills -entrepreneurial skills -Occupational Health & Safety (OHS)

<p>Module 2: Human, cognitive and technical competencies</p>	<p>Human skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -integrity, trustworthiness, -committed, flexible, ethical -sincere <p>Cognitive skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -influential and persuasive -decision-making and conflict management -creativity and innovative thinking <p>Technical skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -communication and oral and written presentation -self-management and working with others -selling skills such as closing the sale, overcoming objections, sales presentation that sells and prospecting for sales success.
<p>Module 3: Information and Communication Technology</p>	<p>End-user computing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -word processing: Ms Word -spreadsheets: Ms Excel -presentation: Ms Power –Point -database: Ms Access -point of sale (POS) software -Email and E-commerce
<p>Module 4: Small Business Management for Entrepreneurs</p>	<p>Entrepreneurial skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -creativity, innovation -ability to take calculated risks -project planning and management <p>Small business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -micro-enterprise -very small -small -medium <p>Business management task for the self-employed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -starting own business -technical expertise -marketing and networking <p>Business environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -micro environment -market environment -macro environment

(Author's own construction; PC Training & Business College, 2011:191-205; Terblanche & Bitzer, 2017: 119-122)

Module 1: Work readiness programme: This module helps to prepare learners with little or no work experience, for the working environment. It assists them to achieve success in the workplace by providing them with the insight and skills needed to adjust to the social environment and pressure of work.

Module 2: Human, cognitive and technical competencies: This module has the potential to empower learners with the human, cognitive and technical competencies skills required in the workplace. A combination of these traits should be applied since one trait alone cannot guarantee that graduates have the ability to obtain and/or retain a job within the W&R industry or to start a business.

Module 3: Information and Communication Technology: This module can assist learners with the everyday use of digital technology to communicate and prepare for jobs in the future.

Module 4: Small Business Management for Entrepreneurs: This module is designed to help learners start and run their own businesses by showing them how to handle new challenges such as taking responsibility for one's own life and business operations. Entrepreneurship involves risks and uncertainties as well as opportunities, monetary rewards a sense of achievement, peer recognition and success.

The four modules suggested above are based upon information provided by the participating YFP L1 graduates' response to the fourth research sub-question. If the suggested modules are adopted, they will need to be contextualised to the W&R sector as well as the various individual training providers offering the L1 learnership programme.

This study has shown that unemployment among the youth is a concern around the world because, as mentioned previously, it robs members of the younger generation of an opportunity to sustain themselves and contribute meaningfully to the development of a nation. The findings of this research study confirmed that more than half the participating YFP L1 learnership graduates were unemployed, a fact that corresponds with the data from Statistics SA.

Skills development has been seen as one way of eradicating youth unemployment and, therefore, organisations within both SA's public and private sector have implemented various youth skills development programmes. However, it is questionable whether the YFP L1 learnership programme has empowered the youth to become employable. It was this uncertainty that prompted the researcher to determine whether there are areas of the YFP L1 learnership curriculum that need improvement.

The curriculum of a skills training course is the nucleus of graduates' employability and, as such; it should be at the heart of educational practices. The researcher stated in Chapter 2 above that renewal of the YFP L1 learnership curriculum was necessary in order to ensure that it continues to meet its intended outcomes of ensuring graduate employability, together with opportunities for further studies. It is on this premise that the researcher proposes the addition of the four modules described in detail above, namely: Work Readiness Programme, Human, Cognitive and Technical Competencies, Information and Communication Technology and Small Business for Entrepreneurs.

5.3 Study limitations, implications and suggestions for future research

Limitations in a study form the basis for future research so that problems identified maybe addressed (Creswell, 2002:253).

Several limitations in this study were identified, these are listed below and their implications for future research are discussed.

- Owing to the low questionnaire response rate, the results of this study are unique to the TVET and W&R sectors. For this reason, if the proposed curriculum is to be implemented elsewhere, it should be contextualised within that particular environment and customised according to that organisation's workplace/business needs.
- The sample size of n=36 is suspected to reduce the statistical power of the analysis of the study's findings. Implications of this limitation means that the research results must be viewed with caution.
- The initial sample for the research were YFP L1 learnership graduates from the years 2014 to 2017, to whom the self-administered questionnaires were to be distributed. Unfortunately, as mentioned previously, the researcher could only locate graduates for the years 2015, 2016 and 2018. The 'get-together' dates approved by the chosen TVET college were 7 and 9 April 2020, both of which fell within SA's Covid-19 pandemic level 5 lockdown period. As a result, the data collection process was delayed because the researcher had to wait until SA reached its level 2 lockdown period before she could approach the sample group. Also, the location in which the proposed study respondents resided was considered dangerous, a fact that prevented the researcher from visiting them at their homes or places of work in order to collect data.
- This study was limited to only one selected TVET college in the Western Cape with L1 graduates from three academic years. It would be beneficial to broaden the scope to include more TVETs both within the WC and other provinces in SA.

In the context of high levels of youth unemployment, further research on at-risk youth and possible remedial interventions, such as the YFP L1 learnership programme, is critical to ensure the employability of graduates within SA's labour market, such as within the W&R sector. There is a need to conduct research regarding the nature of skills-related training programmes being provided for at-risk learners in relation to labour market demands. This research ought to involve the employers in the various industrial sectors so that they can share their views and opinions upon the knowledge, skills and attitudes that graduates need to acquire employment in their industry. Also, for further research, it would be helpful if other researchers conducted a study across all the TVETs in the WC or throughout SA and the entire Southern African region in which youth unemployment is rampant.

5.4 Significance and contribution of this research

Youth unemployment, as has been stated throughout this research report, is a global problem. One way of eradicating youth unemployment is through the implementation of youth skills training programmes. This research study contributed to the body of knowledge on youth development in SA through learnerships for at-risk learners. TVET colleges have a significant role to play in the provision of skills across SA. Youth skills development directly speaks to the South African National Skills Development Strategy, hence, it is crucial that such programmes are offered as a means of helping to eradicate unemployment and poverty.

5.5 Recommendations for this research

The researcher offers the following recommendations based upon the study's findings and the subsequent discussions.

5.5.1 Research recommendations 1

These recommendations address the first research sub-question:

- Identify the demand levels for W&R personnel in relation to the capacity of the industry and its needs and prevent the present glut of unemployable YFP L1 learnership graduates.
- Encourage cooperation among all W&R stakeholders, especially industry and higher learning institutions to construct a curriculum that matches the industry needs so as improve the employability of YFP L1 graduates.
- Foster growth of businesses at grass roots levels to encourage youth self-employment/entrepreneurs.

5.5.2 Research recommendations 2

These recommendations address the second research sub-question:

- The YFP L1 learnership programme should be part of the at-risk learners' career path not just because it is on the budget of the W&RSETA or the WCED. It is important to design youth programmes that cater for the needs of the intended students. Vocational training programmes should commence early in high school and the youth should be allowed to choose the courses they wish to study.
- Work readiness programmes that will help the YFP L1 graduates to obtain employment in the W&R sector should be included in the curriculum.
- Organisations should provide work related programmes that address organisational objectives, as well as equip their employees with the requisite job-related skills. This practice will result in both greater efficiency in the completion of tasks and employee motivation.

5.5.3 Research recommendations 3

These recommendations address the third research sub-question:

- The W&R industry should ascertain the knowledge, skills and attributes that they require of L1 graduates wishing to work within the W&R sector and then liaise with training providers to design a curriculum that meets the industry's needs. Such a process would help to ensure that graduates do not encounter problems obtaining jobs and, thus, reduce the youth unemployment rate.
- The YFP L1 graduates should be both encouraged and enabled to become entrepreneurs by starting their own business, rather than just relying upon attaining employment. The WC provincial and local government spheres should implement more youth incentive programmes that will provide start-up capital for young entrepreneurs in various sectors.

5.5.4 Research recommendations 4

These recommendations address the fourth research sub-question:

- Tasks performed by W&R personnel should be tallied against the current curricula used by TVETs, broken down into expected outcomes and study materials subsequently created that match the industry's requirements. The broken-down tasks should be used to design the subjects for use in the TVETs running the YFP L1 learnership programme. Curriculum improvements will then be possible through the

inclusion of additional subjects such as Entrepreneurship, Information and Communication Technology and Small Business Management, as well as other hard and soft skills.

- Partnerships should be established to foster beneficial relationships between industry and TVETs that enable the implementation of skills training programmes that respond to the dictates of the labour market.

5.6 Conclusion

This research focused on the employability of YFP L1 graduates in the W&R sector and it emerged from the problem of unemployment among such graduates. To resolve this issue, four sub-objectives were set and, accordingly, four research sub-questions needed to be answered. The aim of this research study is to determine the extent to which the YFP L1 learnership has empowered its L1 graduates, who were considered to be at-risk learners, with the required knowledge, skills and attributes to obtain employment in the W&R sector. In other words, the research sought to determine the extent to which the YFP L1 programme is helping the graduates obtain employment in the W&R sector.

Using the mixed-method research approach, quantitative and qualitative forms of data collection and findings were combined for interpretation. Questionnaires with open- and closed ended questions were used to collect information regarding three themes. Each theme consisted of statements about which members of the target research sample expressed an opinion (quantitative data), linked with probing questions to obtain in-depth information (qualitative data). The target population for this study was limited to all the YFP L1 graduates for the years 2015, 2016 and 2018 at one TVET college while the study sample comprised 36 graduates of the YFP L1 learnership programme. The SPSS 27 and thematic analysis are the strategies used to analyse and interpret the quantitative data and qualitative data respectively.

Based upon the findings of this study, it is concluded that more than half of the participating YFP L1 graduates were unemployed at the time of the study. The unemployment rate among the YFP L1 graduates is due to a combination of factors such as (1) graduates are still studying, (2) a general lack of jobs on the market, which has been compounded by the Covid 19 pandemic, (3) a lack of experience and (4) industry expectations of higher qualifications. It, therefore, is recommended that TVETs offering the YFP L1 learnership programme in the WC should offer the right combination of subjects, (comprising knowledge, skills and attitudes) to enhance graduates' employability in the W&R sector. This process will entail improvements to the YFP L1 learnership programme curriculum to ensure that the subjects offered match the needs of the W&R industry.

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APPENDIX A: RESEARCH PARTICIPANT'S INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Research Title: Employability of Youth Focus Project Level 1 graduates in the Wholesale and Retail sector, Western Cape

Researcher: Ms. Esther Nyapokoto

Supervisor: Dr. L. Gie

You are requested to participate in the attached questionnaire, which concerns the Employability of YFP Level 1 graduates in the Wholesale and Retail sector at a selected TVET in the Western Cape, South Africa. Please note that participation is voluntary, and that you can withdraw from the survey at any time, should you wish to do so, and without any consequences. If you decide to participate, please sign the form below, indicating your consent.

The purpose of this research study is to improve the YFP Level 1 curriculum to ensure graduate employability in the wholesale and retail sector, and /or learning progression to the next level of studies. Research outcomes could benefit the TVETs, as the YFP curriculum could equip youth with relevant skills that should prepare them for the labour market. This will, in turn, decrease the high unemployment rate amongst youth in South Africa.

This study will not reveal participants' personal details or identifying characteristics. Your responses in this questionnaire will be treated confidentially, and all data will be securely stored. Your honest responses will be highly appreciated.

For any further information about the research, clarity on the statements, and/or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher, Esther Nyapokoto, at 073 587 1166, or nyapokotoe@yahoo.com.

Participant: By signing this consent form, you are voluntarily choosing to participate in this research.

Signature of Participant

Date Returned

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR YOUTH FOCUS PROJECT GRADUATES

This questionnaire is designed to determine the employability of Youth Focus Project Level 1 graduates in the Wholesale and Retail sector in the Western Cape, South Africa. The employability questionnaire is divided into two sections: biographical information in section A; and YFP graduates' employability in section B.

If you wish to participate in this questionnaire, please read and sign the research participant informed consent form. Please return the signed informed consent form and the completed YFP Level 1 graduates' employability questionnaire to the researcher, Esther Nyapokoto, thank you.

Instruction for research participant:

Please place an "X" in the appropriate box, which most reflects your answer.

SECTION A: Biographical information

- Gender

Male	
Female	

- Population group

Black	
Coloured	
Indian	
Asian	
White	

- Age

18 or younger	
19 – 21	
22 - 25	
25 +	

- Highest level of education

Grade 9	
Grade 10	
Grade 11	
Grade 12	
Certificate	
Diploma	

SECTION B: YFP Level 1 graduate employability

Please place an "X" in the appropriate box, which best reflects your answer.
Below is an example that shows you how to complete the statements.

Item		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom.	1	2	3 X	4
	Why is education important?	Answer: <u>Education helps me to get a job.</u>			

Please complete the statements below:

Item		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Youth employability				
(a)	There are employment opportunities upon completing Level 1 of the YFP learnership programme.	1	2	3	4
(b)	I obtained employment in the wholesale and retail sector after completing Level 1 of the YFP learnership programme.	1	2	3	4
	What is your current job position?	Answer:			

(c)	I obtained employment in a different sector after completing Level 1 of the YFP learnership programme.	1	2	3	4
	What is your current job position?	Answer:			
(d)	I am self- employed.	1	2	3	4
	If so, what business do you own?	Answer:			
(e)	I am currently unemployed.	1	2	3	4
	Why do you think you are unemployed after completing the YFP Level 1 learnership programme?	Answer:			
2	Skills development				
(f)	I progressed to the next level (Level 2) of the YFP learnership programme at this TVET college.	1	2	3	4
(g)	I progressed to the next level in a different programme at the TVET college.	1	2	3	4
	What programme are you currently enrolled for?	Answer:			
(h)	I progressed to Level 2 in a different programme at another TVET college.	1	2	3	4
	What programme are you currently enrolled for?	Answer:			

(i)	I did not study further at any TVET college.	1	2	3	4
(j)	I continued my skills development at my present workplace.	1	2	3	4
	List the training programmes that you attended.	Answer:			
3	Youth Focus Project Curriculum				
	Language, Literacy and Communication				
(k)	I can communicate effectively within different communication situations.	1	2	3	4
(l)	I can use verbal and non-verbal communication codes effectively in appropriate situations.	1	2	3	4
(m)	I found the Communication Literacy module useful.	1	2	3	4
	If not, explain why you did not find the Communication Literacy module useful.	Answer:			
	Mathematical Literacy				
(n)	I can use numbers appropriately in everyday life situations.	1	2	3	4
(o)	I can identify data in everyday life situations.	1	2	3	4
(p)	I found the Mathematical Literacy module useful.	1	2	3	4
	If not, explain why you did not find the Mathematical Literacy module useful.	Answer:			

	Life Orientation				
(q)	I can make informed choices to maintain a healthy lifestyle.	1	2	3	4
(r)	I have acquired knowledge to maintain positive relationships.	1	2	3	4
(s)	I found the Life Orientation module useful.	1	2	3	4
	If not, explain why you did not find the Life Orientation module useful.	Answer:			
	Wholesale and Retail				
(t)	I am able to use the knowledge that I gained from the Wholesale and Retail module.	1	2	3	4
(u)	I am familiar with and can use wholesale and retail terminology within context.	1	2	3	4
(v)	I am able to use the skills that I acquired from the Wholesale and Retail module.	1	2	3	4
(w)	I found the Wholesale and Retail module useful.	1	2	3	4
	If not, explain why you did not find it useful.	Answer:			
(x)	I benefited from the YFP Level 1 programme that the TVET college offers.	1	2	3	4
(y)	I would encourage other at-risk learners to enrol for the YFP learnership programme.	1	2	3	4

(z)	The YFP Level 1 training adequately prepared me to work in the wholesale and retail sector.	1	2	3	4
(aa)	What skills should be added to the YFP Level 1 programme to improve graduates' employability?	Answer:			
(bb)	What subjects should be added to improve the YFP Level 1 programme?	Answer:			

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

APPENDIX B: LETTER OF PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH FROM THE TVET



Dr Liiza Gie

CPUT

24 October 2019

CONFIRMATION OF APPROVAL : ESTHER NYAPOKOTO RESEARCH PROJECT

Dear Dr Gie

We confirm that permission to conduct the proposed research was granted on 18 September 2019 by the Principal, Mr Louis van Niekerk.

Approval was granted in terms of "Policy DHET 004 Approval to Conduct Research in Public Colleges" to Esther Nyapokoto to conduct her research study at the College on the topic of "Employability of Youth Focus Project Level 1 graduates in the Wholesale and Retail sector, Western Cape".

Kindly refer to the digital copy of "DHET 004: Appendix 1: Application form for Students to Conduct Research in Public Colleges" provided to Ms Nyapokoto for the official approval in terms of the policy.

We note that the obligation for a formal approval letter, which is not part of the DHET process, appears to be a requirement unique to CPUT.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Winks', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Quality Manager
Andrew Winks

CENTRAL OFFICE

334 Albert Road, SALT RIVER, 7925,
P.O. Box 1054, CAPE TOWN, 8000

Tel: +27 21 404 6700 • Fax: +27 21 404 6701

Info Line: +27 86 010 3682 | email: info@cct.edu.za | Website: www.cct.edu.za

APPENDIX C: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



P.O. Box 1906 ☐☐ Bellville 7535 South Africa ☐ Tel: +27 21 4603291 ☐☐ Email:
fbmsethics@cput.ac.za Symphony Road Bellville 7535

Office of the Chairperson Research Ethics Committee	Faculty: BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES
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The Faculty's Research Ethics Committee (FREC) on **17 October 2019**, ethics **Approval** was granted to **Esther Nyapokoto (209117656)** for research activities of **Master of Human Resource Management** at Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

Title of dissertation/thesis/project:	Employability of Youth Focus Project Level 1 graduates in the Wholesale and Retail sector, Western Cape Lead Supervisor (s): Dr L Gie
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Comments:

Decision: Approved

 Signed: Chairperson: Research Ethics Committee	17 October 2019 Date
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APPENDIX D: LANGUAGE EDITOR'S CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE EDITING

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree Master in Human Resources Management in the Faculty of Business and Management Sciences at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, District Six, Cape Town.

Entitled:

Employability of Youth Focus Project Level 1 graduates within the Wholesale and Retail sector, Western Cape.

By Esther Nyapokoto

has been subjected to an English language edit by:

Dr Barbara Basel

D.Litt. University of Pretoria,
MA Potchefstroom University,
BA UNISA

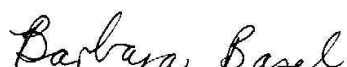
Vice President of the Council of English Academy of Southern Africa

Associate Member Professional Editors' Guild

Past Lecturer in English Literature, Linguistics, Communication and Business English for 10 years at Pearson Institute for Higher Education (previously Midrand Graduate Institute), Cape Town Campus.

Academic Editing – PhD, MBA, MComm, MEd, MPM and Master's in Graphic Design Theses, External Examiner for MEd Thesis.

1 Six Oaks,
5, Adelaide Road
Plumstead Cape Town 7800
Tel: 021 761 4289, Cell: 082 651 1659
barbara.basel@gmail.com



13 July 2022