PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AS A CRITICAL CONTRIBUTOR TO HOLISTIC YOUTH DEVELOPMENT TOWARDS EMPLOYMENT IN GAUTENG

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Declaration of Authenticity

I declare that the research project, *Psychosocial development as a critical contributor to holistic youth development towards employment in Gauteng, South Africa*, is my own work and that each source of information used has been acknowledged by means of a complete Harvard Referencing System. This dissertation has not been submitted before for any other research project, degree or examination at any university.

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I would like to acknowledge God who makes all things possible and remains the source of the many facets of my existence. To my wife Karen, my greatest fan and most loving critic, you are still my reason for so many things, I remain grateful to God for you. To by daughters Jessica and Amy who challenge and inspire me daily to be a better father and version of myself, thank you. To a system that raised me to have this deep desire to make a difference and contribute where I am placed.

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This dissertation remains one of the most challenging accomplishments of my professional life and the personal growth in this time I will cherish for the rest of my life.

Abstract

Youth development in South Africa is currently missing the mark. The current high investment in youth development is not producing sustainable returns. This reality is not helpful to a South African economy that is in crisis and desperately in need of skills to help change the negative growth outlook. Youth skills contribute significantly to the South African labour pool, and how we develop these skills will stand us in good stead as we rebuild our economy.

The question is, are we getting a return on investment for youth development, and if not, what is missing in our approach? Therefore, this study aimed to understand the relevance of a psychosocial development framework in youth employability development programmes in South Africa. The study further researched how evident the relationship between psychosocial development and youth employability is and identified gaps in current employability development programmes that can be addressed to attend to the psychosocial development needs of youth entering the world of work. Employing an exploratory qualitative approach, an interview guide was used as the data collection tool to understand if a framework can be created for youth skills development where psychosocial support/development is a key contributor. Participants included unemployed youth, employed youth, potential youth employers and youth skills training providers.

After analysis, the emergent themes from the interviews were: Coaching and Self-Management, development as an enabler, youth employability, psychosocial development and ways of closing the gap. The results of this study propose a review of the current approach to a more holistic approach. An approach where psychosocial development becomes compulsory in a holistic youth development approach in youth skills development in South Africa.

Key words

Youth, Development, Curriculum, Attributes, Work, Legislation.

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1. CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Investment in alleviating youth unemployment in South Africa appears to be missing the mark. In 2017, the top 250 companies on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) contributed close to R48 billion in skills and enterprise development as part of their Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) obligation (Russel, 2018). These contributions, slanted toward youth, appear to have made little to no impact. Six years on, one can observe an increase in youth unemployment (including discouraged youth) from 53.5% in 2017 to 59.5% in 2021 (Stats SA, 2021). With annual investments worth R48 billion by businesses and additional government support through legislation, why are we not seeing a return on this investment? And why is youth unemployment still growing?

The South African economy faces several threats to a prosperous and inclusive South Africa. In a 2018 article, Graham argued that the stubbornly high unemployment rate among young people, including discouraged youth, is among the most severe threats to the country (Graham, 2018). The National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 vision document published by the National Planning Commission (NPC) in 2012, guides what South Africa needs to look like in 2030. The NDP document suggests that the determinant of success in South Africa will be the ability of the country to harness the advantage of having a large youth population which is able and willing to work. The NDP further suggests that the education, skills, and support provided to school leavers will help them find jobs that will contribute to and stimulate their aspirations (National Planning Commission, 2012). The South African population of approximately 60.14 million inhabitants included roughly 37.6 million people younger than 34 years (Stats SA, 2021). According to the NDP document, the opportunity for South Africa is to harness the skills of these 37.6 million youth to respond to the prosperity needs of the country through a focused skills development support effort that results in a prosperous and inclusive South Africa.

It is important to note that South Africa is running out of time as the youth grow impatient with increased unemployment. The social consequences of youth unemployment expand to

a socio-economic threat that is currently in crisis. Altbeker and Bernstein (2017: 2) suggest that this crisis is evident in the high numbers of unemployed youth involved in "criminality and substance abuse and becoming disruptive presences in their communities". They further suggest that more of the same solutions to youth unemployment will not be sufficient, South Africa needs more decisive leadership and a different approach (Altbeker & Bernstein, 2017).

In this study, the researcher argues that a different approach is required to improve the current return on skills development investment and this approach needs to be holistic. The researcher further suggests that a holistic development approach is where the technical skills programmes being offered (the what) are Inclusive of a programme that considers the various human condition and psychosocial history of the human beings (the who) participating in learning programme. This approach recognises the human beings behind the learning and is captured in a psychosocial support programme.

A psychosocial support programme is concerned with the development of the whole human being. Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) (2016: 7) argued that psychosocial support is "the dynamic relationship between psychological aspects of our experience (that is, our thoughts, emotions, and behaviours) and our wider social experience (that is, our relationships, family and community networks, social values, and cultural practices)". Therefore, it can be concluded that psychosocial development is concerned with the development of skills to be aware of and manage psychological and social experiences.

This study focuses on a youth development approach that includes both technical skills development (the what) and psychosocial development (the who), therefore a holistic development approach was adopted. The study considered a method where the attribute of psychosocial support is a critical contributor to improving current skills development investment outcomes. This study further explores how to improve youth skills development investment towards youth employment in South Africa through a holistic development approach. The study therefore aims to assist in addressing the efficacy of youth skills development investments in response to the youth unemployment crisis in South Africa.

This chapter introduces the study and provides the context and details of the problem statement. The chapter also outlines the study's objectives and gives an overview of the philosophy and the methodology.

1.2. Research context

The youth unemployment crisis is not isolated to South Africa but is a global concern. The 2020 International Labour Office (ILO) report on Global Employment Trends stated that whilst the global youth population increased from 1 billion to 1.3 billion in 2020, the total number of youth engaged in the labour force decreased from 568 million to 497 million. The report further reported a global youth unemployment rate of 13.6%; this percentage is different per region (ILO, 2020). It is important to note that South Africa contributes significantly as part of the sub-Saharan Africa region, and in 2020, South Africa listed the highest level of youth unemployment among the twenty (20) global countries that make up the G20 (Szmigiera, 2022).

According to the ILO report (2020), the unemployment rate measures the explicit demand for jobs. The misalignment in the supply and demand for jobs acutely contributes to the high underutilisation of youth in an economy. The ILO reported that the underutilisation of youth is three times higher than that of adults (ILO, 2020). "It is important to try to determine the extent to which an economy provides opportunities for harnessing the full potential of young people" (ILO, 2020: 37). Therefore, one can conclude that an economic environment articulates the demand for skills informed by current and perceived future needs. Efforts to address youth employability, therefore, require knowledge and awareness of the economic climate.

The global and South African environments have been described since the mid-1980s as 'volatile', 'uncertain', 'complex' and 'ambiguous' (VUCA). This has become known as the VUCA world or environment. A VUCA world describes the changes in the job market and volatility in the world of work (Sinha & Sinha, 2020). This VUCA world has resulted in an economy with poor intelligence (knowledge and awareness) to define skills needs in the VUCA present. Moreover, the current VUCA world is unable to clearly articulate the skills needed by youth to meet the needs of the future world of work, thus failing to facilitate their entry into future

employability. In more recent times, especially with a global Covid-19 pandemic, Jamais Cascio, an anthropologist, historian, and futurologist, noted that the global environment has moved to be 'brittle', 'anxious', 'non-linear' and 'incomprehensible', a 'BANI' environment or world (de Godoy & Filho, 2021). Cascio believes that a period of the global pandemic has proven that the historical methods we have developed to recognise and respond to disruption are increasingly inadequate in an environment where global change is unprecedented in its speed and scale.

The researcher speculates that a VUCA and now a BANI global environment is unable to define a clear pathway for the millions of youths entering the world of work. Young people entering the world of work now require, more than ever, the skills that allow them to harness and develop their psychological and social experiences as tools to navigate the VUCA and BANI world of work. The researcher further suggests that in a VUCA and BANI world of work, investment in youth skills development should instead have a holistic approach where "the who" of the learning is placed central to the development process through the inclusion and emphasis on a psychosocial development programme. Holistic youth development provides a practical way to consider the whole lives of young people in development. Holistic youth development, according to Fletcher's concerned with "all those aligned human elements, linked to a young person, to strengthen when we deal with defined development objectives" (Fletcher, 2014: 5)

The South African national skills development legislation is an essential skills development vehicle to help facilitate this employability matching (Coetzee & Potgieter, 2014). Coetzee and Potgieter (2014) further argued that it is essential to note that research indicates that what individuals learn is driven fundamentally by their learning style preferences. Learning styles refer to who the individual is and what they have gained from their psychosocial reality. However, these authors acknowledge that whilst there is adequate literature around learning styles and preferences, research on how the psychosocial attributes needed to manage and sustain youth in the world of work is lacking (Coetzee & Potgieter, 2014). This raises the question as to what constitutes appropriate psychosocial development and how this would be reflected in preparation for the world of work.

Considering the INEE definition of psychosocial support stated above, as a dynamic relationship between psychological experiences and social experiences (INEE, 2016), we can conclude that psychosocial support recognises and addresses the unique person participating in development interventions. It refers to developing personal social attributes as part of a holistic development journey. Awareness of and ability to manage useful psychosocial attributes will give credibility, substance and efficacy to the way youth contribute to the world of work and how they will apply their skills sets. The psychosocial attributes linked to employability emphasise an individuals' self-regulatory capacities, behaviour and affect and enhance an individual's suitability for appropriate and sustained employment opportunities, for example navigating the world of work (Coetzee & Potgieter, 2014).

Managing one's continued employability requires a range of attributes including dispositions, values, and attitudes to requisite skills. These attributes allow for proactive adaptability within changing (i.e., VUCA and BANI) environments thus, increasing the likelihood of achieving a career (Coetzee & Potgieter, 2014). In expounding on the psychosocial self-regulatory capacities and self-evaluations individuals require for managing their employability, Bezuidenhout (2011) identified eight core psychosocial attributes. These attributes are career self-management, career resilience, cultural competence, entrepreneurial orientation, sociability, self-efficacy, proactivity, and emotional literacy.

Given this context, this study investigates on the efficacy of stakeholders' current investment in youth development towards employment in Gauteng, a province of South Africa, and the contribution that psychosocial development can make to improve this outcome. The researcher studied the benefit of a holistic development approach where psychosocial development enhances the sustainability of youth employability.

The researcher is aware that the word sustainability in employability holds many definitions. However, the meaning and application of the measurement of sustainability within this research relates to sustainability in youth employment that has been framed by the Institute for Employment Studies in the United Kingdom (Hillage & Pollard, 1998). Hillage and Pollard's (1998) study included the following key attributes for sustained employability:

a) Employability is equal to the capability to gain initial employment

b) Maintain employment and obtain new employment if required

c) For the individual, employability depends on:

    a. their assets in terms of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they possess or gain,

    b. the way they use and deploy those assets,

    c. the way they present them to employers, and

    d. crucially, the context (e.g., personal circumstances and labour market environment) within which they see work.

Sustainability, in this context, therefore, relates to the youth's multifaceted ability to obtain and remain in employment. It is important also to define employability and how it was applied in this research context. According to Harvey (2001), employability requires the following considerations:

a) Job type - For some, employability is about securing any job, given that there is a view that it is no longer possible to delimit a 'graduate job'. For others, it implies getting a graduate-level job. They may be referred to as 'fuelling work', a job that 'requires graduate skills and abilities' or a 'career-oriented job'. For the purposes of this research, job type will refer to an entry-level employment for a 12-month period or greater.

b) Timing - Is employability signalled by getting a job within a specified time after graduating or by doing so before there is any need for retraining? Given the research objectives, time between training and employment will not be an area of focus.

c) Attributes on recruitment - Does employability signify an ability to demonstrate desired attributes at the point of recruitment to 'hit the deck running'? Alternatively, is it developmental, indicating the likely ability to develop attributes (rapidly) to 'get up to speed' quickly? The study will explore the need for attributes for employability and more specifically, psychosocial attributes.

d) Further learning - One view of employability holds that 'the degree is not the end of learning' and values graduates who are ready for further development. Another places more weight on achievement at graduation while recognising the

importance of 'willingness to learn and continue learning'. Given the research objectives, this area will not be a focus for this study.

    e)   Employability skills - Employability can be understood as possessing basic 'core skills', an extended set of generic attributes, or attributes that a type of employee (discipline-linked, sector-related, company-type) specifies. Sometimes they get specified in detail or, more often, shorthand 'critical skills', for example, is used. This research will explore the expansion of this definition to include psychosocial attributes.

The research questions and data collection for this study has been framed around the above research context to explore employability.

1.3.   Problem statement

The post-pandemic BANI South African environment, with a lower GDP, has deepened the low demand for youth skills and increased the pre-existing high youth unemployment rate to 59.5% in 2021 (Stats SA, 2021). As Meyer (2020: 2) expected, the South African economy has been decimated by the overall and prolonged lockdown imposed by the government; the results indicate the biggest contraction of the economy on record. These results were also evident in the 2021 gross domestic product (GDP) growth of 1.2%. The economy was 1.8% smaller than it was in the first quarter of 2020. Real GDP continued to lag pre-pandemic levels (Stats SA, 2021).

Youth unemployment is a crisis and needs a new response (Altbeker & Bernstein, 2017). This youth skills crisis provides an opportunity for South Africa to respond to an economic recovery plan. According to Altbeker and Bernstein (2017: 10), "not only does it increase a young person's likelihood of finding work, but it also increases the productive potential of the workforce, thereby increasing the economy's capacity to grow". Youth skills development is, therefore, a crucial investment. Altbeker and Bernstein (2017) argued that those youth with a grade 12 or a formal qualification have a better chance of being absorbed into the economy, which is directly correlated with economic growth. They further emphasised that the economy grows by the evolving skills within the population that organically stretch their immediate environment and create an economy that responds, more like a push factor (Altbeker & Bernstein, 2017). Therefore, it is apparent that a more qualified youth population

directly relates to the economy and can even aid growth. Altbeker and Bernstein (2017) support Anyanwu's (2014) assertions that economic growth is an important consideration when addressing youth employability, and Altbeker and Bernstein (2017) suggest that these two outcomes are intrinsically linked.

The current growth need in the South African economy requires a youth skills development plan that can respond to the skills needed within a BANI economy. This skills development plan requires a well-coordinated intervention between policymakers, employers, educators and trainers, and young people (Graham, 2018). Such a youth skills development plan must include a holistic development approach that responds to a BANI world of work. Graham (2018) further suggested that there needs to be 'cross-pollination' between the supply side of youth unemployment (training) and the demand side (encouraging risk-averse employers to hire young people). Poor co-ordination between these two will result in a failed skills development plan.

The South African 2020 critical skills list produced for the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) listed 357 occupations in an acute shortage and strategic priority for the country. Of these, 52 professions were critical to the country and strategically important to the government (DNA Economics, 2020). The DHET critical skills list annually drives the skills development priorities in the country. Whilst the 2020 critical skills document acknowledged the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on industry and job categories, it did not include the focus on critical personal skills needed to navigate the new (BANI) world of work—skills that allow the learner to be responsive to changes in their BANI environment.

The researcher suggests that the real problem faced currently is that the critical skills needed in a BANI world require youth entering the job market with psychosocial awareness. The researcher therefore suggests that psychosocial development should be included in youth skills development in order to equip and prepare young people for an evolving BANI world.

1.4. Purpose of the study

This study aims to propose a learning framework that considers the value contribution of psychosocial development as part of a holistic development approach toward youth employability.

1.5. Objectives of the study

The objectives of this research in support of the above aim of the study are to:

1.5.1. Explore the relevance of psychosocial development attributes in youth development for employability.

1.5.2. Explain how psychosocial support can support youth development for employability

1.5.3. Identify gaps to be addressed to attend to psychosocial development needs of youth entering the world of work.

1.6. Research questions

1.6.1. Primary research question:

1.6.1.1. How relevant are the attributes of a psychosocial development theoretical framework to youth employability development programmes in South Africa?

1.6.2. Secondary research questions:

1.6.2.1. How evident is the relationship between psychosocial development and youth employability (outcomes observed, expected, and valued)?

1.6.2.2. How can gaps in current employability development programmes be addressed to attend to psychosocial development needs of youth entering the world of work?

1.7. Research philosophy: ontology, epistemology, axiology

1.7.1. Ontology

According to the Guarino, Oberle and Staab (2009), ontology is defined as a particular theory about nature of being or the kind of things that has existence. Ontology as a branch of philosophy is the science of what is, of the kinds and structures of objects, properties, events, processes, and relations in every area of reality (Guarino *et al.*, 2003).

The researcher holds a B Tech Degree in Human Resources and started his career in corporate human resources development and has approximately 15 years of experience in this field. The researcher has spent the last 11 years of his career in youth development and employability.

This experience has allowed the researcher to engage extensively within the current South African youth employability and development value chain. The researcher has witnessed first-hand the misalignment of investment and youth development outcomes and the impact thereof. The researcher is acutely aware that the community and social services industry is growing and is one of the largest industries in South Africa (Altbeker & Bernstein, 2017). From JSE-listed organisations alone, this industry has close to R50 billion aimed at areas of skills development annually (Russel, 2018).

With this magnitude of focus and investment, why does South Africa still have such a high youth unemployment rate? The researcher believes that this is attributable to having a youth development approach that is not holistic and avoids the contribution of psychosocial development in a BANI environment.

The researcher is subjective in the research philosophy as several phenomena needed to be considered in this study to explore the research question. As this study is concerned with a holistic development approach that includes a young person's psychological and social experience (INEE, 2016), an objective ontology is therefore very difficult to apply.

The researcher believes that his experience in the youth development and employability and his corporate human resources qualification and experience has positioned him well to conduct this study. Moreover, this is a current area of interest and passion for the researcher.

1.7.2. Epistemology

The researcher does not wish to predict the cause and effect of the research subject and, therefore, took an epistemological position of interpretivism. Interpretivism is based on the assumption that reality is relative and multiple; thus, there can be more than one reality and more than one structured way to access such realities. The interpretive paradigm (subjective regulation) seeks to explain the stability of behaviour from the individual's viewpoint (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). The researcher believes that this position allowed exploration of the research question openly with a willingness to be informed by the research outcomes.

Therefore, this research aimed to co-construct a joint account of the reality around youth employment and skills, as well as how attributes like psychosocial development will contribute to a holistic development outcome.

1.7.3. Axiology

Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) refers to axiology as "the role of values and ethics within the research process". This incorporates questions about how researchers deal with both their own values and those of research participants (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). The researcher is a husband and father with strong Christian values who subscribes to the values of truth, integrity, and a strong drive to contribute to any system he is privileged to partake in.

The researcher's values guided this study and ensured a consideration for dignity and respect of each participant to this study. These values further guided an honest effort and delivery of work. The researcher strived not to offend nor discriminate in any part of this study. The researcher also committed to adherence to any applicable legislation and governance and policies of the Da Vinci Institute.

1.8. Research methodology

There are three types of research designs that are outlined by Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) exploratory, descriptive, and causal. The approach adopted for a particular study depends on the purpose of the study.

This research aims to propose a framework where the inclusion of psychosocial development enhances the outcome of youth employability investments. The researcher applied a qualitative research strategy and used an interactive mode of study. After considering all three options available to the researcher, the adopted research design for this study was exploratory in nature and aimed to define the problem statement and priorities for further study. A case study methodology was applied to further support the exploratory nature of the study. The researcher applied purposive sampling to include a variety of stakeholders and role-players in the youth employability crisis in Gauteng, South Africa. The research population entailed South African youth and stakeholders operating within the Gauteng region. This study included employed and unemployed youth, together with stakeholders in the form of employers and training providers focused on youth employability. Data was

collected using an interview method. This collection method is elaborated on in Chapter three of this study.

The researcher believed that this research design would allow for the best possible outcomes in achieving the research aim and objectives. In addition, this design would provide the researcher with multiple stages of data collection and present opportunity to compare data with emerging theories and information.

1.9. Theoretical framework

Theoretical frameworks are usually based on the propositional statements that result from existing theories (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). The framework for this study aims to contribute to a more extensive socio-economic system. This research, therefore, applied systems theory as a theoretical framework. Systems theory is defined by Patton and McMahon (1999: 9-10) as the "ongoing relationship, between elements or subsystems of the system and the changes that occur over time as a result of these continual interactions".

As this research included a study of the dynamic relationship between psychological aspects of lived experience and young people's broader social experience, the researcher also applied Experiential Learning Theory (ELT). This captured the life experience of the youth included in this study. "Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) provides a holistic model of the learning process and a multilinear model of adult development, both of which are consistent with what we know about how people learn, grow, and develop. The theory is called 'Experiential Learning' to emphasise the central role that experience plays in the learning process, an emphasis that distinguishes ELT from other learning theories" (Kolb, Boyatzis & Mainemelis, 2019: 2).

1.10. Conceptual frameworks

Conceptual frameworks are derived through the identification and definition of concepts and the propositional relationship between these concepts (Jabareen, 2009).

This research considered the following concepts as part of this study. The following concepts are central to this research:

a) How psychosocial development contributes to achieving development outcomes and, ultimately, employability.

b) The relationship and inter-relationship between youth skills development, psychosocial development and youth employability.

c) The level of misalignment between skills development investment and available jobs.

d) How holistic youth development contributes to a system or economy.

The following concepts assist in providing background to the study:

e) Youth skills demands in the global, African and South African markets.

f) Potential barriers to entry for youth in the global, African and South African markets.

g) How youth skills development, psychosocial development and youth employability influence one another in a functional environment using a system approach.

1.10.1. Who is youth?

The UN Secretariat uses the terms youth and young people interchangeably to mean anyone that falls within ages 15 to 24 years, with the understanding that member states and other entities use different definitions. In its 20-year review, the South African government stated that youth is defined in various ways according to different organisational perspectives (South African Government, 2014). The South African government stated that while the United Nations generally describes the youth as the population between 15 and 24 years, South Africa elects to define youth population as people from 15 to 35 years old. It further suggests that youth are people represented in their stage of development between childhood and adulthood (South African Government, 2014). To justify this extended age category, the South African Government has allowed the influence of the National Youth Commission (NYC) Act of 1996 which asserts that: "the essence of these was that many of the older youth, most of whom were disadvantaged by their role in the struggle against apartheid, needed to be included in the youth development initiative" (South African Government, 2014: 3).

This researcher acknowledges that the research was conducted within the South African context. Therefore, youth in this study is defined as the population group between the ages of 15 to 35 years, as per the South African Government guidelines.

1.10.2. Youth unemployment in South Africa

Figure two below presents the South African unemployment statistics released for the first quarter of 2021. According to Stats SA (2021), young people are still struggling with unemployment in the South African labour market, as presented in the figure below. The official national unemployment rate was 32.6%. This rate was 46.3% among young people aged 15-34 years, implying that almost one in every two young people in the labour force did not have a job in the first quarter of 2021. About a quarter (24.4%) of the youth have jobs, and 45.3% participate in the labour market. Within the youth, those aged 15-24 years are more vulnerable in the labour market, with an unemployment rate of over 63%, an absorption rate of about 7.6% and a labour force participation rate of 20.6% (Stats SA, 2021).
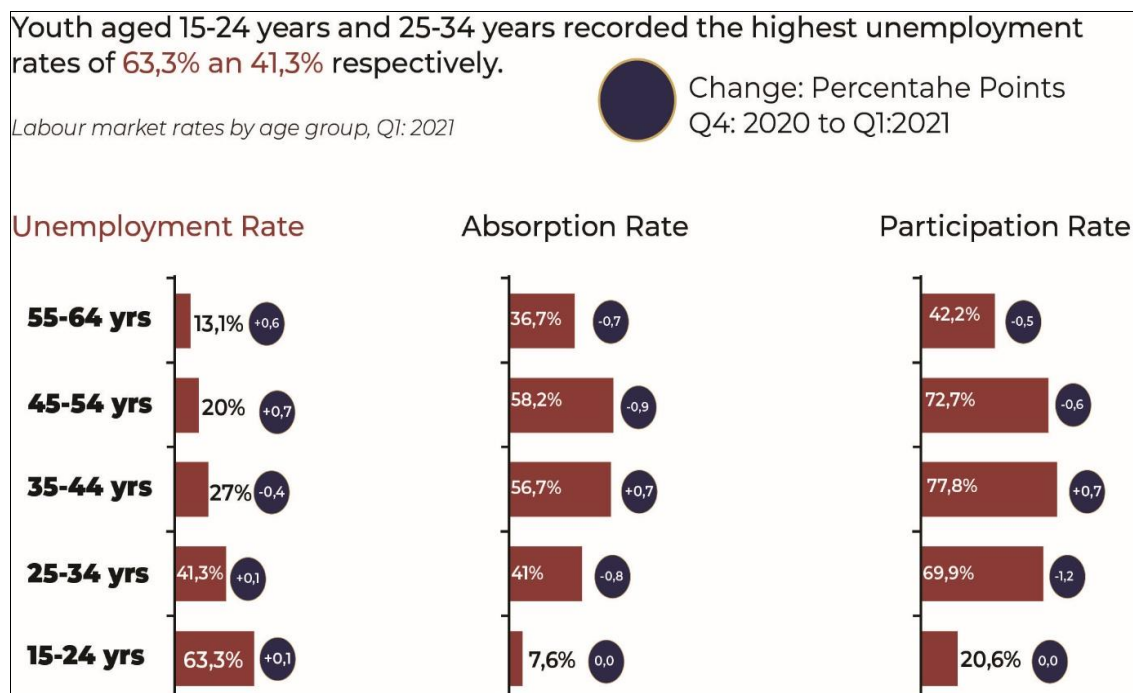
Figure 1 : SA Unemployment Rate

Source: Stats SA (2021)

Statistics SA (2021) further argued that unemployment is concentrated among the youth, who account for 59.5% of the total unemployed persons. Further findings were that the

unemployment rate among the youth remained high regardless of education level. Youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) in 2021 accounted for approximately 3.3 million of the 10.2 million persons aged 15-24 years, i.e., 32.4%. Furthermore, some of these NEETs have been discouraged from participating in the labour market or developing a skills base through education and training. These factors increase South Africa's unemployment rate to over 60% (Stats SA, 2021).

According to Altbeker and Bernstein (2017), youth unemployment is South Africa's most pressing socio-economic crisis. They further added that "for [majority] of young people not to be in school, training or employment poses an enormous challenge." (Altbeker & Bernstein, 2017: 1). Some of the challenges pointed out by Altbeker and Bernstein include unemployed youth being involved in "criminality and substance abuse, and to become disruptive presences in their communities" (Altbeker & Bernstein, 2017: 2).

1.11. Significance of the study

The significance of this study is to:

a) contribute to the body of work around youth employability;

b) propose a framework that will further enable the holistic development of youth skills towards employability;

c) understand the skills necessary to assist youth in navigating a BANI world environment;

d) contribute to improving the return on investment (ROI) in youth skills development and guide compliance with B-BBEE spending towards areas of impact;

e) assist in developing youth that will be able to respond to changes within the world of work using their psychosocial awareness; and

Beneficiaries to this study include:

a) youth who enter the world of work - by experiencing a more holistic development that will enable them to navigate the evolving world of work;

b) a better-adjusted youth population entering the working environment able to contribute to the changing world of work; and

c) may assist government with relevant input to policy that informs youth skills development in a BANI environment.

1.12   Delimitation and scope of the study

The definition of youth guided the research as defined by the South African legislation, more specifically, the youth who can be legally employed as defined by the economic active population guidelines of South Africa. Therefore, this study focused on South African youth, which is members of the population between the ages of 15 and 35 years living in Gauteng, both employed and unemployed. It also included employers of youth and training providers focused on youth skills development operating in the same region of South Africa.

1.13   Brief chapter overview

This dissertation includes six chapters, including this chapter, which are outlined below.

Chapter 1

The first chapter provides a detailed overview of the entire study. This includes the background, context of the study, the philosophy that frames the research and an outlined research problem and methodology used.

Chapter 2

The second chapter provides a critical review of the literature relevant to the study. Relevant concepts, including youth skills development, the TIPS managerial leadership framework, psychosocial support as well as employability, are explored in line with their contribution to the research topic.

Chapter 3

In this chapter, the researcher discusses the details of the research design and the research methodology. In addition, this chapter includes data analysis tools and ethical considerations.

Chapter 4

The qualitative study findings that come from the interviews conducted are outlined and discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 5

This chapter evaluates and discusses the research findings in relation to the literature. A view of the findings through the lenses of the TIPS framework is also discussed. Finally, this chapter proposes a framework developed.

Chapter 6

The final chapter answers the research question and sub-questions through the framework implementation and also presents recommendations for future studies. The ROI of this study is also presented in this chapter.

1.14   Conclusion

This chapter introduced the research and set the context of this study. It also laid the foundation of chapters to follow and how these will be approached. This chapter has framed the research questions and the researcher's approach to reach a conclusion for this study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the theory and academic literature that guides this research. The chapter also delves deeper into the main concepts of this study. The chapter concludes by drawing from the literature review to raise research questions and solidify this study's reason.

2.2 Theoretical frameworks

2.2.1 Theory development

Moore (1991) described theory development as a method that helps understand what we don't know and, therefore, acts as a guide to our research. According to Moore (1991: 3), "research that is not grounded in theory is wasteful. It might solve an immediate problem, but it doesn't fulfil its promise".

The researcher followed an inductive process towards theory development. Bansal, Smith and Vaara (2018) purported that researchers can uncover new meanings and knowledge using qualitative inductive procedures that may be difficult to do with quantitative methods. This method employs qualitative data collected through interviews and observations to improve or expand current theory rather than relying on earlier literature to accomplish so. As a result of this method's lack of reliance on historical data, inquiries can be honed and broadened to disclose fresh facts that may help give rise to new theories or new approaches.

This study did not attempt to thoroughly investigate all aspects of the value chain related to youth employability. However, the research still focused on holistic skills development as a critical component of the youth employability discourse.

2.2.2 Theoretical frameworks

This study was guided by systems as well as experiential learning theories. These are discussed below.

2.2.2.1 Systems thinking

According to Wiek, Withycombe and Redman (2011: 207), systems thinking "is the ability to collectively analyse complex systems across different domains (society, environment, economy, etc.) and different scales (local to global), thereby considering cascading effects, inertia, feedback loops and other systemic features related to sustainability issues and sustainability problem-solving frameworks."

The ability to appreciate the pluriverse, i.e., the multiple descriptions of reality that leads to multiple coexisting realities, is an important part of systems thinking (Claesson & Svanstrom, 2015). Claesson and Svanstrom (2015) argued that systems thinking allows for a problem not to be viewed as one dimensional, and that several coexisting realities need to be considered in framing a solution. According to Jackson (2016), systems thinking is concerned with the best way to get from the current state of a system to a more optimum state. A holistic approach, Jackson goes on to say allows for a 'joined-up' thinking, looking at all elements to optimise for a better outcome. This thinking or approach in viewing a problem allows for a more profound approach and outcome (Jackson, 2016). Jackson further added that "fundamentally, simple solutions fail because they are not holistic or creative enough" (Jackson, 2016: 31). The research considered the value of taking a more holistic approach to youth development to seek a more profound outcome to the current efforts. Considering the research topic and the facts around the South African context, it will be remiss of the researcher to assume that youth employability and skills development are the sole requirements to create a holistic sustainability without considering among others:

I.   The economic growth of South Africa

II.   The labour structure and unemployment as a whole

III.   Government policies towards achieving objectives outlined in the National Development Plan

IV.   The negative socio-economic reality of most South Africans

V.   Globalisation and the fourth industrial revolution

It is important to note that while the researcher is aware of these coexisting realities, the researcher was also flexible and open to considering the emergence of new information as the research evolved, allowing the sum of the parts to emerge. The emergence of new data or information is what would respond positively to the research problem. With all the activity around skills development in South Africa, only 25% of those eligible to complete a course will do so (Altbeker & Bernstein, 2017). These statistics and those mentioned above offer a realistic view that confirms that some essential components necessary to address the youth employability issue effectively are missing.

2.2.2.2 Experiential learning theory

Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) can be defined as a process through which knowledge is created through a transformative experience (Kolb, Boyatzis & Mainemelis, 2019). Knowledge is therefore an outcome of the results from a blend of grasping and transforming experiences. Grasping experiences includes concrete experiences and abstract conceptual experiences, while transforming experiences includes reflective observation and active experimentation (Figure 1).
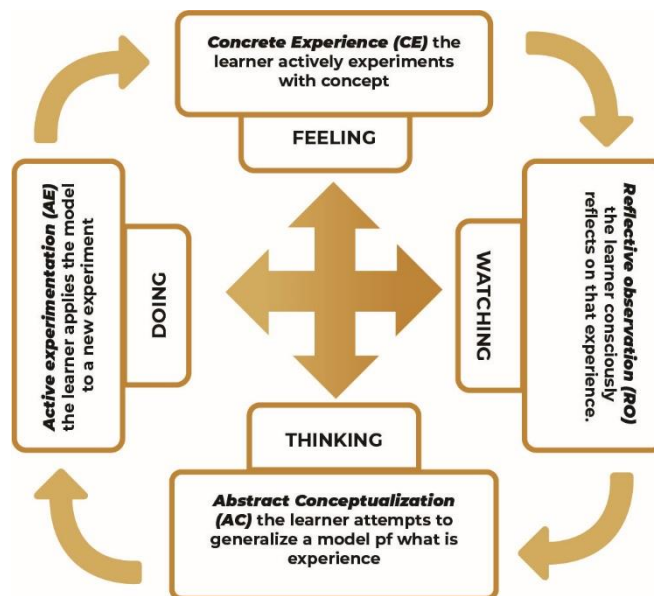
Figure 2: Experiential Learning Theory Mode

Source: Kolb, Boyatzis and Mainemelis (2019)

According to Kolb *et al.* (2019), there are four stages of experiential learning. In the learning cycle depicted in Figure 1 above, during the (i) Concrete Experience stage, the learner actively experiments with a concept, then in the (ii) Reflective Observation stage, the learner consciously reflects on that experience, in the (iii) Abstract Conceptualization stage, the learner attempts to generalize a model of what they experienced, and in the final stage of (iv) Active Experimentation, the learner applies the model to a new experiment.

The ELT therefore suggests that immediate or concrete experiences are the basis for observations and reflections. These reflections are assimilated and distilled into abstract concepts from which new implications for action can be drawn. These implications can be actively tested and serve as guides in creating new experiences (Kolb *et al.*, 2019).

The ELT model suggests that a learner will have to apply a combination of grasping and transforming experiences to gain new knowledge. Grasping experiences will entail new information assimilation through experiencing that which is tangible or concrete through senses, also known as concrete experience. Others may have a preference to grasp new information through symbols or abstract conceptualization through analysis rather than sensing – this is known as abstract conceptualization. In transforming or processing experiences, some people may prefer to carefully observe others who are involved in an experience and reflect on what is happening, is it referred to as reflective observation, while others may choose to get going and start doing things themselves - active experimentation. It is important to note that watchers favour reflective observation, while the doers favour active experimentation.

2.2.3   Conceptual frameworks

This research was undertaken at a learning organisation that has adopted the Mode 2 learning approach. The conceptual framework therefore included the principles outlined below.

Application-based: The new knowledge gained in this research was sought in the context of activity within the area of youth employability. The researcher considered that the results are inconsistent and, on the increase, as highlighted earlier. The researcher's view is that the knowledge gained from this research can contribute to a new approach that may yield a more sustainable result in skills development towards youth employability.

Trans-disciplinary: The researcher was open and flexible in exploring interrelated disciplines to youth employability and skills development. The researcher also explored the impact of economic growth and labour reform on this theory, as Altbeker and Bernstein (2017) discussed.

Heterogeneity: The researcher's approach was broad and considered lead and lag causality for the research topic. The researcher believes that systems thinking created an adequate framework for this research. The researcher made an earnest attempt to contribute to the conversation of youth employability.

2.3 Psychosocial support

One can never venture into the field of psychosocial support without leaning on the seminal work of Erikson (1968). According to Erikson's theory, any individual passes through eight developmental stages. In these stages, an individual must face and manage a central psychosocial problem or crisis (Munley, 1975). According to Maree (2021: 4), Erikson's psychosocial support framework is premised on epigenetics, which "lies at the heart of [Erikson's] theoretical framework and has strong links with the notion of 'identity crises." Maree summarized that Erikson's, "epigenetics holds that people's personalities progress from birth until old age through eight stages in human development in a prearranged sequence of psychosocial development" (2021: 4).

The eight crises outlined by Erikson are as follows: basic trust versus mistrust, autonomy versus shame and doubt, initiative versus guilt, industry versus inferiority, identity versus identity confusion, intimacy versus isolation, generativity versus stagnation, and ego integrity versus despair. This seminal work suggested that each of the crises is reflected in the perceptions or attitudes, which develop as the outcome of each stage. These basic attitudes and perception theoretically contribute to an individual's psychosocial effectiveness and subsequent personality development (Munley, 1975). Table 1 below details the eight stages of Erikson and the basic strength it unlocks within the individual (Batra, 2013).

Table 1: Attributes of psychosocial support

	Stages	Psychosoical crises	Radius of significant relations	Basic strengths
I	Infancy 0-1 ½ years	Basic Trust vs Basic Mistrust	Maternal person	Hope
II	Early Childhood 1 ½- 3 years	Autonomy vs Shame, Doubt	Parental persons	Will
III	Play Age 3 -6 years	Initiative vs Guilt	Basic Family	Purpose
IV	School Age 6- 12 years	Industry vs Inferiority	Neighbourhood', school	Competence
V	Adolescence 10-24/26 years	Identity vs Identity Confusion	Peer groups and out groups; models of leadership	Fidelity
VI	Young Adulthood 18/22 - 40 years	Intimacy vs Isolation	Partners in freindship, sex, competition, cooperation.	Love
VII	Adulthood 30-65 years	Generativity vs Stagnation	Divided labour and shared household responsibilities	Care
VIII	Old Age 55- 60+ years	Integrity vs Despair	Mankind, my kind'	Wisdom

Source Adapted from Batra (2013)

Batra asserted that Erikson in his theoretical framework makes provision for adults to heal and develop through these eight stages using reflection and guided therapy (Batra, 2013). Batra further clarified Erikson's approach by stating that "his writings are complex and draw upon the etymology of words across disciplines (biology, anthropology, psychology, philosophy and religion) to make overt connections between individual and social development" (Batra, 2013: 252). It is therefore important to consider that as youth participate in skills development programmes, they may be going through any of the stages above, at any given time, hence the need to consider their psychosocial development.

In their research around a framework for planning youth sports programmes that foster psychosocial development, Petitpas, Cornelius, Van Raalte and Jones (2005) suggested that psychosocial development cannot be viewed in isolation. These authors found that youth sports programmes that promote psychosocial development are vehicles that provide experiences that encourage self-discovery and teach participants life skills intentionally and systematically (Petitpas *et al.*, 2005). Petitpas *et al.* further proposed that a positive psychosocial growth is a set of critical rules and boundaries, that assist in managing one's emotions, handle personal wins and losses, and persevere in the face of adversity. Psychosocial skills are most likely to occur when young people are (a) engaged in the desired

activity within an appropriate environment (context), (b) are surrounded by caring adult mentors, and a positive group or community (external assets), (c) learn or acquire skills (internal assets) that are important for managing life situations, and (d) benefit from the findings of a comprehensive system of evaluation and research (Petitpas *et al.*, 2005).

The study of the term 'psychosocial' has evolved over the years. In 2016, the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE, 2016) suggested that the term psychosocial refers to "the dynamic relationship between psychological aspects of our experience (that is, our thoughts, emotions, and behaviours) and our wider social experience (that is, our relationships, family and community networks, social values, and cultural practices)" (INEE, 2016: 8). The authors further argued that psychosocial support focuses on physical and psychological aspects of health and well-being (INEE, 2016). According to INEE (2016: 8), psychosocial support refers to a "process that facilitates resilience within individuals, families and communities." Hlalele (2012) in (Ebersöhn, Loots, Malan-Van Rooyen, Mampane, Nthontho, Omidire & Sefotho, 2018:3) added that "psychosocial support is a process which focuses on the psychological, emotional, spiritual and social development of individuals toward achieving positive human development." Hlalele (2012: 71) concluded that "psychosocial support, guided by a developmental agenda, is more likely to yield meaning in life - the cognisance of order, coherence, and purpose in one's existence, the attainment of worthwhile goals, and an accompanying sense of appreciating and valuing oneself." This statement by Hlalele (2012) is at the core of this research, that "the who" in the development journey needs to be considered holistically as stated earlier.

2.3.1   Psychosocial support and skills development

With the understanding of the paramount role played by psychosocial support on overall human development, when one looks at it from a skill the development perspective, Cross and Cross (2017) argued that "in addition to supporting the development of skills, any talent development agenda must consider the psychological and social variables associated with the learning process" (2017:1). What is key to the authors' argument above is their assertion that skills development cannot exist outside of specific variables such as psychosocial support. Maree (2021), also leaning on the seminal work of Erikson in Erikson, Erikson and Kivnick (1986) added that, "in the presence of adequate support structures as well as actual support,

education and guidance, people who are emotionally and socially 'healthy' can successfully negotiate the numerous psychosocial struggles in their lives" (2020: 6). The common thread among these authors is their agreement that the wholesome development of a person depends heavily on psychosocial support. To emphasize this point within the skills development perspective, Maree (2021) added that "career development is based on the process of forming a career-life identity where people's potential to remain in control of their circumstances is emphasized as much as the decision-making process itself. Career is regarded as 'an exciting journey, rather than…a goal-oriented drudgery that is imposed on individuals by society" (2020: 8).

Cross and Cross (2017) used Erikson's Developing Purpose as an example, and argued that during this developmental stage, when children are afforded the liberty to dream, they can develop confidence in their own initiative. This is supported by Maree who added that "people go through a systematic process of problem-solving before eventually arriving at a career choice, [with youth particularly needing] to develop foundational attitudes, competencies, and resources useful to their life-long career planning, decision-making, and work adjustment" (2020:8). This study therefore leans on Cross and Cross (2017) as well as Maree (2021), to argue that when the youth are given the liberties to explore, while given the requisite support, through skills development initiatives such as learnerships and internships, they can develop confidence in their own initiative and cement their competencies towards employability. This is in line with the argument by Maree (2021) that many people derive identity and psychological benefits from employment and from being productive.

2.3.2 Psychosocial support and employability

Potgieter and Coetzee (2013) suggested that employability is a psychosocial construct that represents the career-related attributes that allow graduates to adapt cognitively and behaviourally in such a way that positively impacts the graduates' suitability for appropriate and sustained employment opportunities. Bezuidenhout and Coetzee (2010) proposed a career-related or employability attributes framework and described a set of eight core employability attributes that are essential for increasing the likelihood of securing and sustaining employment opportunities. The eight core employability attributes of Bezuidenhout and Coetzee (2010) are:

1. Career self-management – This is the ability to reflect on one's own career aspirations and develop clarity for the skills needed and actions to be taken to succeed. Career self-management also implies that this individual possesses the confidence and perseverance to engage continuously in development activities to achieve ongoing career goals.

2. Cultural competence – This is having the confidence to communicate interculturally, finding it easy and enjoyable to do so. Cultural competency also requires the ability to initiate and maintain relationships with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

3. Self-efficacy – This includes the ability to function independently of others, to make one's own decisions towards one's own goals while working through challenges.

4. Career resilience – Refers to the ability to adapt to changing circumstances by welcoming job and organizational changes and the learnings derived from these changes.

5. Sociability – Refers to the ability to build networks of friendships with people who can advance one's career through feedback and to use the networks feedback and support to find new job opportunities.

6. Entrepreneurial orientation – Refers to the ability to be curious about, and continuously venturing into new opportunities in work and study.

7. Proactivity – Refers to accepting the responsibility for decisions and challenging oneself with new targets and opportunities, without this being suggested by other people.

8. Emotional literacy – Refers to the ability to use emotions adaptively as well as the quality of people's ability to read, understand and manage their own and others' emotions.

Bezuidenhout (2011) added to the work of Bezuidenhout and Coetzee (2010) and emphasized that career self-management, career resilience and cultural competence are key personality attributes. These attributes influence one's ability to sustain their employability. The other five attributes (self-efficacy, sociability, proactivity, emotional literacy and entrepreneurial orientation) are self-evaluation of personal disposition. The combination of all eight attributes promotes proactive adaptability in changing environments and increases a person's suitability for employment and the likelihood of achieving career success (Bezuidenhout and Coetzee, 2010).

2.4 Employability

Marock (2008: 5) argued that there is "no standard agreement regarding the definition of employability" globally. He further argued that "the meaning will vary depending on culture, level and type of economic development and employer norms" (Marock, 2008: 5). Given Marock's assertion on the definition of employability, Hillage and Pollard maintained that "employability is about having the capability to gain initial employment, maintain employment and obtain new employment if required" (Hillage & Pollard, 1998: 1).

In adding to the above definitions, Du Toit (2003) added that employment is not just a means to sustain life. She argued that it is about economic participation, social participation and self-identity as it "provides people with the feeling of self-worth and self-esteem as they experience a feeling of mastery and self-fulfilment when they successfully engage in work activities" (Du Toit, 2003:2). According to Sanders, Munford, Boden and Johnston (2020: 8), "young people placed a high value on having a job; it was a tangible representation of their desire to be financially independent [and] represented a key opportunity for them to stake a claim to a positive, prosocial identity and a sense of place within mainstream society." We, therefore, understand that one's ability to gain and maintain employment is not just about putting bread on the table, but is linked to holistic "psychological, emotional, spiritual and social development of individuals toward achieving positive human development" (Hlalele, 2012 in Ebersöhn *et al.*, 2018: 3).

Coetzee and Potgieter (2014: 4) maintained that "psychosocial employability attributes are an aspect of individuals' self-regulatory capacities that promote adaptive cognition, behaviour and affect and enhance an individual's suitability for appropriate and sustained employment opportunities." Adding to Coetzee and Potgieter (2014), Hillage and Pollard (1998: 1), in their research concluded that for the individual seeking employment, employability depended on:

a)   their assets in terms of the knowledge, skills and attitudes they possess,

b)   the way they use and deploy those assets,

c)   the way they present them to employers and

d)   crucially, the context (e.g., personal circumstances and labour market environment) within which they see work.

Coetzee and Potgieter (2014: 4) further added that "managing one's continued employability requires a range of attributes (dispositions, values, attitudes and skills) that promote proactive adaptability in changing environments and the likelihood of obtaining career success." This then suggests that employability is primarily dependent on the person seeking employment. Coetzee and Potgieter (2014: 4) term this as 'career self-management, "the individual's ability to sustain employability through constant learning, problem-solving, decision-making, and career planning and management efforts." However, the phrase 'no man is an island' teaches us that individuals (youth in this case) seeking employment do not function in a vacuum. Individuals are part of a culture, society and economy. Therefore, they do need psychosocial support from the environment within which they operate to be successful in gaining and keeping meaningful employment. This is consistent with the findings of Thomas (2018: 1) that "central to effective social development strategies is the need for peer- and community-based initiatives to foster shared responsibility, hope and a sense of significance."

On the other hand, Golubovskaya, Solnet and Robinson (2019), in their study on talent management within the hospitality industry, found that "[talent management] discourses are misaligned with the workforce composition of the hospitality industry, which young, often inexperienced, workers dominate" (Golubovskaya, Solnet & Robinson, 2019: 4105). Tansley (2011:1) found that "current meanings of talent tend to be specific to an organisation and are highly influenced by the nature of the work undertaken." These works of Golubovskaya *et al*. (2019), and Tansley (2011) assert that employers are a stakeholder in youth development. Employers have a role to play in the employability of the youth. As per Golubovskaya *et al*. (2019), we note that the misalignment in terms of what employers deem to be talent and the essential skills that youth possess may lead to increased youth unemployment.

2.5 Skills development

According to Allais (2012: 633), "skills development sometimes refers to occupational education and workplace-based training programmes such as apprenticeships or shorter training programmes in the workplace. Still, it sometimes refers to all education and training

which is aimed at the workplace." The immediate challenge with the first part of this definition is its narrow focus on the 'workplace'. One then has to ask, what happens to those who are not in the 'workplace'? This perhaps points to the many skills development challenges faced in South Africa; how skills development is defined dictates how it will be handled, to a certain extent. Allais expands the definition to include "all education and training which is aimed at the workplace" (Allais, 2012: 633). This then broadens the definition to provide a different view of how to look at skills development. Not only from inside the 'workplace' but also from outside and preparing those who are out to enter into the 'workplace'.

When dealing with national skills development, one would expect that skills development legislation would lead the strategy. However, in South Africa, the Skills Development Act 97 of 1998 strives to "provide an institutional framework to devise and implement national, sector and workplace strategies to develop and improve the skills of the South African workforce" (Government Communication and Information Systems, 1998: 2). Herein lies the challenge: the focus is on the 'workforce' and not necessarily those who are unemployed. The statement further cements that the Act's purpose is to "develop the skills of the South African workforce…" (Government Communication and Information Systems, 1998: 8). Therefore, the Act appears to be lacking in terms of driving skills development for the unemployed, let alone their participation in the economy. Where then does one look for direction for such a national imperative?

One place to look is in the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030, the vision document for what South Africa needs to look like in 2030. The NDP argues that "the determinant of success is whether a country can harness the advantage of having a large number of young people who are able and willing to work. To do so means providing them with education and skills, and helping school leavers find work that is stimulating and through which they can fulfil their aspirations" (National Planning Commission, 2012:19). With this in mind, the Commission adopted a 'youth lens' and proposed among other initiatives, the need to "strengthen youth service programmes and introduce new, community-based programmes to offer young people life-skills training, entrepreneurship training and opportunities to participate in community development programmes" (National Planning Commission, 2012: 20). This, according to the Commission, is one of the ways in which to create an inclusive economy that

will create more jobs. The Commission also added that "in moving towards decent work for all, the short-term priority must be to raise employment and incentivise the entry of young people into the labour market" (National Planning Commission, 2012: 31).

The above suggests that the Commission understands that as much as the youth are part of community ecosystems, they are also individuals who need life-skills training that will help them to meaningfully participate in the economy and fulfil their aspirations. The Commission also understands that youth participation in the economy needs to be stimulated through initiatives such as appropriate skills development and incentives to other stakeholders. Maree (2021: 6), reiterated and supported this in suggesting that "in the presence of adequate support structures as well as actual support, education and guidance, people who are emotionally and socially 'healthy' can successfully negotiate the numerous psychosocial struggles in their lives".

2.6 TIPS

The Da Vinci Institute TIPS managerial leadership framework™ provides a systematic understanding of the multiple sub-systems that are at play within any society and system. This framework allows one to consider their own mental models, make sense of these mental models with the aim to co-create alternatives that allows for new knowledge (Da Vinci, 2021). TIPS stands for (T) Tools or metric to achieve differentiation, (I) Ideation to create value, (P) People or Human interface and (S) Systems Thinking. The TIPS framework is used to navigate changes in thinking and to add to the new knowledge. Figure 3 below is a graphic depiction and model of the TIPS framework. The Da Vinci Institute TIPS managerial leadership framework applied by the institute provides a systematic understanding of the multiple sub systems that are at play within any society and system. This framework allows one to consider one's own mental models, make sense (sense making) of these mental models with an aim of co-creating alternatives that allows for new knowledge (Da Vinci, 2021). The researcher used the TIPS framework in as a looking glass through which to view findings and help make sense of the research study.
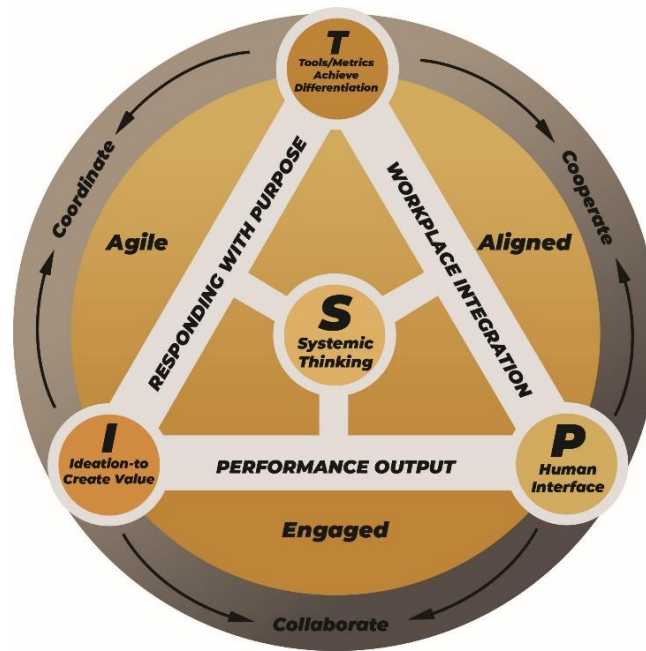
Figure 3: TIPS Framework™

Source: Da Vinci Institute (2021).

2.7 Conclusion

This Chapter provided the literature that informed this study. It also discussed the main concepts of this research and framed the importance thereof within youth skills development work. Bezuidenhout and Coetzee (2010), leaning on the seminal work of Erikson, argued that the eight core employability attributes are essential for increasing the likelihood of securing and sustaining employment opportunities. Also, the combination of all eight attributes promotes proactive adaptability in changing environments and increases a person's suitability for employment and the likelihood of achieving career success (Bezuidenhout and Coetzee, 2010). This study therefore leans on these eight attributes as guidance within psychosocial development of youth, towards employability as it is clear from Bezuidenhout and Coetzee (2010) that these attributes will not only assist youth in gaining employment but will also assist them in being proactive and adaptive within the world of work.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1   Introduction

This chapter outlines the research method used in this study. It also provides analysis of the population of the study, the unit of analysis, the sampling method and size, the measuring instrument and the data gathering process. The chapter closes by detailing the analysis approach as well as pointing out the limitations of this study.

3.2   Research design

Akhtar (2016) posited that a research design is a parameter used to define the methodical collection of research data, the measurement of such data as well as its analysis. Jamshed (2014) agreed and added that research design is the strategy or architectural design wherein the researcher details their plans on how they will approach the research problem. Accordingly, a research design contains tools and techniques to collect and analyse data (Akhtar, 2016; Jashmed, 2014). Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) advise that depending on the purpose of the research, there are three types of research designs: exploratory, descriptive, and causal.

This research is exploratory in nature as it sought to explore the relevance of psychosocial theory attributes towards youth employability initiatives. Thomas and Lawal (2020) pointed out that exploratory research is concerned with "establishing of facts, gathering new data and determining meaningful patterns or themes in a relatively unknown research area, hoping to gain new insight into the phenomenon being researched" (Thomas & Lawal, 2020: 80). Exploratory analysis is well suited to qualitative studies since they tend to be subjective, context-dependent, and socially constructed, they allow insights and knowledge by posing open-ended questions (Saunders *et al.*, 2019; Creswell, Hanson, Plano & Morales, 2007). According to Sarma (2015), the qualitative research approach acknowledges the human element as an instrument of data collection, and hence the qualitative exploratory research approach is better suited for this study.

3.3   Research philosophy

Saunders *et al*. (2019: 106) defined research philosophy as "a system of beliefs and assumptions about the development and nature of knowledge." This study follows an interpretivist approach towards the development of knowledge around the research topic. According to Rehman and Alharthi (2016), interpretive research is concerned with understanding the interpretations of individuals about the social phenomena they interact with. The authors further added that interpretive research believes in socially constructed multiple realities where truth and reality are created, as mediated by our senses (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). This research has therefore sought to explore, with the intention to understand, the interpretations of the participants regarding the role of psychological support/development towards youth skills development that leads to employment. Saunders *et al*. (2019) also added that interpretivism allows the researcher to discover context-specific factors through semi-structured interviews by interpreting and constructing the meaning of the research participants' behavioural emotions, lived experiences, and realities. The assertion by Saunders *et al*. (2019) is supported by Bhattacherjee (2012: 19), who added that interpretivism enables researchers to obtain "subjective interpretation of participants involved, [such as by] interviewing different participants and reconciling differences among their responses using their own subjective perspectives". Within this context, exploratory research was well suited for this research as it aligns well with the interpretive paradigm in terms of being context dependent as well as its approach to socially constructed knowledge about a phenomenon.

3.4   Population and sampling strategy

According to Van Rijnsoever (2017), a population is a complete set of information sources potentially relevant to answering the research questions. Bryman and Bell (2011: 717) added that a population is "the universe of units from which the sample is selected". The population for this study included participants from stakeholders that are based in the Gauteng province of South Africa. Within this population, a sample of 16 participants was selected. Creswell and Poth (2016) recommended a sample size of between 15 to 25 participants for qualitative studies, as guided by the research design, objectives and questions. The authors also opined

that a researcher often reaches saturation within this sample size, thereby confirming the validity of the sample size. The sample for this study included the following participants.

a) Four (4) unemployed youth – youth that is unemployed after being part of a development programme to facilitate their employment in the last 24 months.

b) Four (4) employed youth – youth employed in the last 24 months after exiting a career development programme.

c) Four (4) select youth employers – employers actively engaged in employing youth in their business environment and are currently prospective employers for youth skills

d) Four (4) select youth skills training providers – representatives who work with skills development towards youth employability.

This study employed purposive sampling. Saunders *et al*. (2019) stated that purposive sampling is frequently used for non-probability sampling. Participants for this study were South African youth between the ages of 15 and 35 years living in Gauteng, both employed and unemployed, and youth employers and youth training providers operating in the same region of South Africa. Therefore, the researcher has specified an inclusion criterion against which the participants were selected (Saunders *et al*., 2019).

Rudestam and Newton (2014) also added that purposive sampling is mainly used to select research participants with in-depth knowledge of the area under research. In support of this approach, Moser and Korstjens (2018) stated that sampling strategies should be chosen to return rich information aligned with the methodological approach used by the research. For this reason, this study included employers of youth and training providers focused on youth skills development operating in the same region of South Africa.

3.5   Data collection instruments

Data was collected through the use of semi-structured interviews (Annexure B) during interviews scheduled with participants. According to Zikmund, Babin, Carr and Griffin (2013), data collection tools like interviews may be highly structured, semi-structured or unstructured. Zikmund *et al.* added that semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to "ask about a set of themes using some predetermined questions [and are appropriate when

the researcher] wishes to gather data about a particular topic; generate data to enable theory development, encourage participants to tell stories form their perspectives and gain insights into individuals' experiences or lifeworld's" (Zikmund *et al.*, 2013: 158). According to Townsend, Cox and Li (2010), semi-structured interviews have the advantage of providing the researcher with an opportunity to build rapport with the participants and to follow up with clarifying questions and probe for further details. This ability to ask clarifying question and to probe assists to mitigate researcher bias (Fusch, Fusch & Ness, 2018).

Because of some remaining Covid-19 restrictions, all interviews were conducted virtually and recorded through MS Teams and Zoom. The interviews were structured so as to maintain the credibility of the process. The researcher introduced himself as well as the study and the reason thereof. The researcher reiterated that participation was voluntary and that participants could withdraw at any time, without any negative consequences. The researcher sought permission to record the interviews and explained that the recordings would be used to create transcripts from which analysis would be conducted. He also explained that the recordings would serve to ensure that he does not misrepresent any participant as the transcripts would be checked against the recordings. During the interviews, the researcher made hand-written notes on important aspects as they came up.

3.6   Data analysis

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) purported that data analysis is a process that involves the organising, accounting for and explanations pertaining to data collected. In qualitative research, the researcher uses participants' responses to make sense of the data collected (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). Saunders *et al*. (2019:202) also added that the researcher should analyse during the data collection process to "recognise initial insights suggested by early interviews in later interviews as well as recognised when you have reached data saturation". The researcher employed thematic analysis, which incorporates identifying common themes and insights from the data collected from the research participants (Zikmund *et al*., 2013). According to Kiger and Varpio (2020: 2), thematic analysis is "a method for analysing qualitative data that entails searching across a data set to identify, analyze, and report repeated patterns". During this process, the researcher not only describes the data, but also interprets the data, selects codes and constructs themes (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). The

authors also added that this analysis method "is an appropriate and powerful method to use when seeking to understand a set of experiences, thoughts, or behaviours across a data set" (Kiger & Varpio, 2020: 2). This then aligns well with this exploratory research, which sought to understand the participants' lived experiences, within their own contexts. Braun and Clarke (2012) added that thematic analysis is considered a widely used approach in qualitative studies and is found to be flexible as it allows for multiple ways of data interpretation by either focusing on the entire data set or one particular aspect of the phenomenon in depth.

This study followed the steps below, as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2012):

Step 1: Read the transcripts to familiarise yourself with the data.

Step 2: Code critical points from the transcripts to highlight relevant points.

Step 3: Group the codes into themes to identify patterns in the data.

Step 4: Review the themes to ensure they represent data accurately.

Step 5: Define and name the themes for meaning.

Step 6: Complete the write up for the analysis of the data.

3.7   Pilot study

The researcher conducted a pilot study on two (2) participants in the Gauteng region of South Africa to test the instrument, with the aim to refine it where necessary and improve the validity thereof. Some of the learning in this pilot included the framing of the questions, the structure and flow that included specific questions per group of interviewees. This was corrected in the final version.

3.8   Quality controls

According to Spiers, Morse, Olson, Mayan and Barrett (2018), reliability and validity are critical concepts for rigour in qualitative research. Reliability refers to the idea of data adequacy, while validity refers to data appropriateness (Spiers *et al.*, 2018). In this study, the trustworthiness of data was considered.

To improve the credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependability of the research and findings, the following actions were implemented:

a) To ensure transferability, a purposive sample contained participants with the requisite experience to provide insights required for answering the research questions posed.

b) The participants provided their full consent for the interviews. An ethical clearance process was followed, and ethical clearance approval was obtained for the study (see Appendix C). This contributed to the respondents' keenness to express their lived experiences, thereby improving validity through ethicality (O'Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015).

c) Respondents were selected for diversity in terms of gender, ethnicity and profession.

d) The researcher used semi-structured interviews with the interview guide derived from the literature review to improve the likelihood of accurate and reliable theory. Furthermore, open-ended, expansive questions were posed, encouraging the respondents to contextualize their responses (Flick, 2018). Interviews were also reflective and iterative, with additional probing notes added after each interview.

e) The researcher noted the presence of interviewer bias, interpreter bias and response bias during the interview and data analysis process (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). As a result, the research attempted to achieve validity and reliability and ensure rigor through prolonged engagement and persistent observation of participants during interviews. The average interview length was between 35 to 45 minutes.

f) All interviews were fully transcribed and stored electronically. The transcripts were compared to the recordings again by the researcher for accuracy, thus increasing reliability (Flick, 2018).

g) Each transcript created from the participants words in the interview was loaded onto Atlas.ti, a qualitative data analysis software (Saunders *et al.*, 2019), to guide the analysis process. The coding process was inductive by using open codes from which categories were derived and themes related to each research question. Furthermore, the results were discussed through quotations from various participants to ensure confirmability and transparency (Jensen, 2012; Rheinhardt, Kreiner, Gioia & Corley, 2018).

h) Data triangulation across participants and through cross-group analysis helped to corroborate and enrich findings and increase the validity and confirmability of the research.

i) An audit trail of the data construction, data-gathering and analysis process provided a clear record of the coding process, and Excel was used to portray the saturation results. This ensured further confirmability and dependability (Jensen, 2012; Seale, 2012).

j) An extensive explanation of the data-gathering and analysis process was provided to ensure the credibility of the process (Rheinhardt *et al.*, 2018).

3.9   Ethical considerations

The researcher obtained the institution's ethical clearance before commencing the research (Appendix C).

Ethical considerations are one of the most critical parts of the research. If not done correctly, they can result in the failure of a dissertation (Dudovskiy, 2018). Dudovskiy suggested the following essential points for ethical consideration in research:

a) Research participants should not be subjected to harm in any way whatsoever.

b) Respect for the dignity of research participants should be prioritised.

c) Full consent should be obtained from the participants prior to the study.

d) The protection of the privacy of research participants must be ensured.

e) Adequate level of confidentiality of the research data should be ensured.

f) Anonymity of individuals and organisations participating in the research must be ensured.

g) Any deception or exaggeration about the aims and objectives of the research must be avoided.

h) Affiliations in any form, sources of funding, as well as any possible conflicts of interest, have to be declared.

i) Any type of communication in relation to the research should be done with honesty and transparency.

j) Any type of misleading information and representation of primary data findings in a biased way must be avoided.

Dudovskiy (2018) further suggested the following steps to address ethical considerations of a study. The researcher was guided as follows:

a) Participation in the research is voluntary. Respondents to the research have the right to withdraw from the study.

b) Respondents participate based on informed consent.

c) Avoid the use of offensive, discriminatory, or other unacceptable language in formulating interview questions.

d) Privacy and anonymity of respondents should be respected.

e) Works of other authors used in any part of the dissertation must be acknowledged, with the use of the Harvard referencing system.

f) The researcher should maintain a high level of objectivity in discussions and analyses throughout the research.

g) Adherence to The Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013 (POPIA) in the research.

The researcher maintained professional integrity and explained to participants that their involvement in the research was voluntary and needed to provide informed consent to participate. The researcher explained that the study would not cause any harm to the participants and that if they had discomfort at any stage, they could withdraw with no adverse consequences.

Each participant in this study completed an informed consent form in which the title, intention of this study and details of the researcher was presented. The participants were informed upfront of the purpose and objective of the research, and there was no form of coercion from the researcher's side. The interview process was clearly stated upfront, recordings were also done with the participants' consent, and confidentiality was also guaranteed. In line with the axiology section above, the researcher remained truthful and treated the participants with respect and integrity. Participants was reminded that participation is voluntary, and that information of participants will be kept confidential. Participants also understood that there would be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research, and feedback on findings would be shared with participants. The

researcher explained that together with the participants, this research presented an opportunity for a meaningful contribution to business, government and society at large.

3.10   Conclusion

This chapter introduced and outlined the methodology followed by this study. It also explained the population of the study, the unit of analysis, the sampling method and size, the measuring instrument and the data gathering process. The chapter closed by outlining the analysis approach followed and pointed out the ethical considerations employed in the study.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the results from the interviews conducted and aligned with the research questions listed in Chapter 1. The research findings are presented thematically as they relate to the research questions, using thematic analysis as detailed in Chapter 3 (Braun & Clarke, 2012). This chapter beings by presenting a description of the demographics of participants and their significance in participating in this research, thereafter, the data preparation and analysis processes are discussed.

4.2. Description of the sample

As presented in Chapter 3, non-probability, purposive sampling was used in this study. In this study, the researcher included criteria against which the participants were selected (Saunders *et al*., 2019). Sixteen participants from the population contemplated in Chapter 3 were included as per the criteria below. From the population as contemplated in Chapter 3, potential participants that did not meet the criteria were excluded.

a) Four unemployed youth – youth that is unemployed after being part of a development programme to facilitate their employment in the last 24 months.

b) Four employed youth – youth employed in the last 24 months after exiting a career development programme.

c) Four select youth employers – employers actively seeking the youth for employment.

d) Four select youth skills training providers – representatives who work with skills development towards youth employability.

The sample groups provided for diverse perspectives around the research questions, allowing for multiple perspectives on the problem statement. Table 2 below is a summary of the participants.

Table 2: Summary of Participants

Participant	Group Category
E1	Employed youth
E2	Employed youth
E3	Employed youth
E4	Employed youth
O1	Youth employer (Organisations)
O2	Youth employer (Organisations)
O3	Youth employer (Organisations)
O4	Youth employer (Organisations)
T1	Youth Skills Training providers
T2	Youth Skills Training providers
T3	Youth Skills Training providers
T4	Youth Skills Training providers
U1	Unemployed learners
U2	Unemployed learners
U3	Unemployed learners
U4	Unemployed learners

As guided by Creswell and Poth (2016), this sample size proved to be sufficient for the study. The researcher obtained saturation at about Participant 10 as shown in Figure 4 below, where no new information was emerging, thereby achieving confirmability and dependability (Jensen, 2012; Seale, 2012).
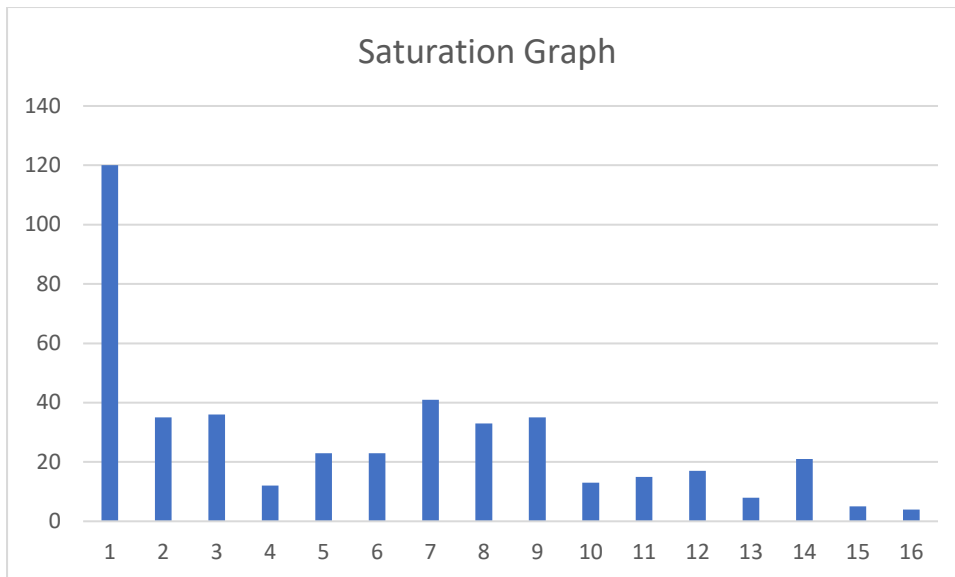
Figure 4: Saturation Graph

Source: Author

As per Figure 4 above, 16 participants were interviewed. As per the norm, most of the codes originated from the first participant. However, as the interviews were conducted, there was no new information emerging from Participant 10 onwards. This therefore reiterates that the sample size was sufficient for this study as saturation was achieved within the sample.

4.3. Data preparation and analysis process

As described in Chapter 3, the researcher used a semi-structured interview guide (Appendix B), the order of the questions was maintained and questions per group included additional questions. While the order of the questions was maintained, probing questions to solicit more details were used. The interview guide included specific questions that were aligned intentionally with the research questions. These questions aimed to ensure that the interview questions solicited adequate responses from the participants. A pilot study of two participants was conducted to assess the interview guide against the desired outcomes and the interview guide was further improved were necessary. Improvements included rephrasing some of the questions for clarity as well as adding some relevant questions to the interview guide. The interviews were conducted post the lifting of the Covid-19 restrictions, however, as a precautionary measure and with preference from the participants, the interviews were conducted virtually using video mode on Zoom/MS Teams and recorded on audio recording

for transcription. Using this mode, the researcher was able to clarify points raised and ask probing questions where appropriate. At the conclusion of the interviews, the participants were thanked for their time and contribution. The recorded interviews were then saved in an audio format and transcribed for further analysis (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). All transcripts, recordings and consent forms have been saved electronically.

Sixteen interviews were conducted, producing 149 pages of transcripts, with the average length of interviews being 38 minutes. Interviews were conducted at a time that was convenient for each of the participants and allowed for low interruption and discouraged response bias. The interviews were concluded within four weeks from the first interview.

All 16 interviews were transcribed by a professional transcriber through a process of manually listening and transcribing recordings into written transcripts for analysis. Transcripts were then reviewed by the researcher for veracity and meaning in line with original audio recordings. This allowed the researcher to be familiar with the dataset and limit interpretation bias. Transcripts where then loaded onto Atlas.ti, a qualitative data analysis software (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). This software was used to inform the analysis process.

A thematic analysis was conducted, and initial open codes were generated where the words of the participants were taken at face value. This coding, which was the quotations as per the participants' own words, were reviewed to ensure that the correct quotations are assigned to each code. This, in certain instances, included delinking some codes from quotations and recordings. The next step was to add a prefix to the codes based on the linking to different codes. This resulted in splitting, merging, and deleting some of the codes. This resulted in the creation of 23 meaningful categories. These code categories are known as code groups in Atlas.ti and held potential significance to the research questions. This step was followed by an Excel report extracted from Atlas.ti. This Excel report contained the full code book - i.e., the complete list of codes and categories sorted according to commonality.

The researcher conducted a further analysis of this Excel report to consider commonality and coherence to form themes which provided a response to and insights on the research questions. To further enrich the data, data triangulation across the participants and literature review examination aided to verify and enrich findings and trustworthiness. According to

Kekeya, triangulation involves looking "at something from several angles rather than to look at it in only one way" (Kekeya, 2021: 124).

Finally, the researcher did a write up of the analysis and presentation of the themes which provided clarity on the final themes and ensured that these themes fully responded to the research questions posed in Chapter 1. Figure 5 below is a process flow of the data preparation and analysis.
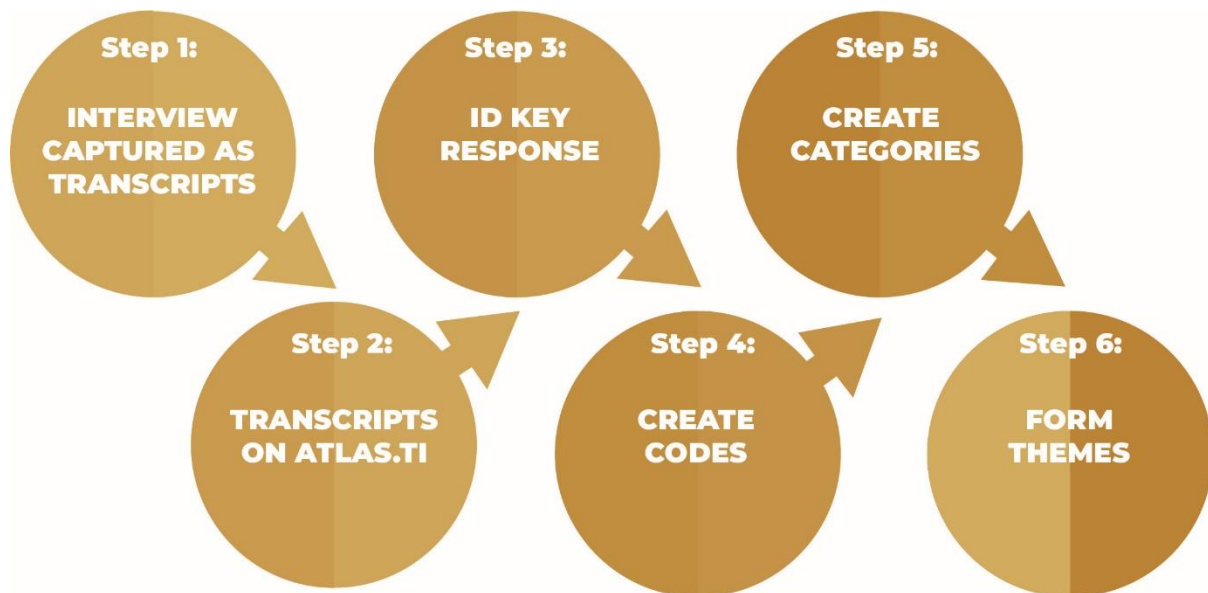
Figure 5: Coding Process

Source: Author

4.4. Research findings

The findings presented below are grouped as per the emergent themes within the context of the research questions and objectives.

The primary research question for this study was: How relevant are the attributes of psychosocial development theorical framework in youth employability development programmes in South Africa?

To respond to this question, two sub-questions were raised. The first sub-question was: How evident is the relationship between psychosocial development and youth employability (outcomes observed, expected and valued)? This question aimed to establish if youth skills development activity currently draws a clear link between psychosocial development and

youth employability. It was essential for the researcher to understand all participants' perspectives on this question and draw from their lived experiences around the youth skills development work they have encountered or participated in. The interviews explored the participants' feedback framed around the eight core psychosocial attributes proposed by Bezuidenhout (2011). The interview questions, therefore, underpinned the attributes of career self-management, career resilience, cultural competence, entrepreneurial orientation, sociability, self-efficacy, proactivity, and emotional literacy.

The second sub-question was: How could gaps in current employability development programmes be addressed to attend to psychosocial development needs of youth entering the world of work? This question aimed to establish the inherent gaps within current youth development programmes in terms of making the same youth employable. The question also sought to explore how the inclusion of the proposed psychosocial development attributes (Bezuidenhout, 2011) could be used to address some of these gaps.

Table 3 below summarises the emergent themes in relation to the research questions. The themes are then discussed in detail below.

Table 3: Summary of themes and sub-themes

Theme	Sub-theme
Coaching and Self- Management	Approach to managing expectations of learners
	Approach to managing own advancement
Development as an enabler	Role of practical exposure
	Aspects of soft skills
	Misalignment of training and the world of work
	Benefits of youth development programmes
	Challenges faced when implementing development programmes
	Topics covered by formal training
Youth Employability	Challenges encountered with youth
	Challenges faced by youth
	Types of employment opportunities accessed by learners
	Factors contributing to youth unemployment
Psychosocial Development	Inclusion of psychosocial support

Theme	Sub-theme
	Focus on the individual
	Journey to self-awareness
	Measuring impact and outcomes
	Outcomes of psychosocial development
	Pillars of personal development
Closing the Gap	Recommendation to strengthen youth participation
	Recommendations of additional topics for holistic development
	Recommendations to expand impact of learnerships
	Employer participation

4.4.1 Coaching and self-management

Under this theme, participants shared that there is a need for a combination of coaching (external) and self-management (internal) in order to create a context for learning. This combination assists youth in their development towards employment. The sub-themes that emerged from this theme are discussed below.

Approach to managing expectations of learners

Under this sub-theme, participants shared the importance of stating and managing the expectations on youth in a development programme. i.e., what is expected from the youth?

Participant E2 as an employed learner, referred to context to facilitate expectation management and shared that:

> "I think, when you're on a learnership, they need to teach you policies, procedures, or just make it known to you that this is what can happen if you act a certain way. I think that's very important."

Participant U2, an unemployed learner, supported this view by highlighting the importance of a clear learning context.

> "I think by them being involved, knowing what's going on, knowing what we want, knowing what we expect and giving us what is expected from us."

Participants identified that expectation clarification is reciprocal, and that this creates context for skills development to occur. This aligns with the literature in Chapter 2 and with the researcher's views that expectation around learning outcomes needs to be clarified at the outset of training in order for parties to the training to value the journey and impact of the development process.

Approach to managing own advancement

Under this theme, participants shared their views on the importance of managing how one shows up in the workplace and how this contributes to their own advancement. Participants used phrases like resilience, proactiveness and entrepreneurship to describe approaches to managing youth's own advancement within the world of work.

Participant U1 suggested that resilience guides how one enters their career and sticks to the course.

> "Let's say career resilience will actually prevent you from job hopping if you understand what I'm saying. So basically, how you carry yourself within the career that you're in at that moment would actually determine, am I going to be job hopping or am I here to stay for life."

Participant O1, as a prospective employer, suggested that proactivity is essential in managing own advancement in the world of work.

> "I would say essential, yeah, to be proactive. You are forced to think outside the box, you are forced to better yourself, and so I definitely think being proactive and you know the youth sometimes they want to work smarter and not harder, but it pushes their boundaries in a good way and yeah if they can come up, they can teach the older generation a few things. So proactiveness is important."

Participant U3, an unemployed learner, suggested that entrepreneurial orientation is essential for managing one's own advancement.

"It's about being an entrepreneur, but you need to exploit the fact, and you need to also sell yourself to companies when you go for interviews. So, I think that would be a great support aspect."

Participants highlighted that development or own advancement needs a multi-dimensional approach. The researcher holds the view that this is not an exhaustive list and that it will differ from one youth to the other. Any framework or model to address youth employability must therefore be adaptable to these nuances.

4.4.2. Development as an enabler

Under this theme, participants shared their lived experiences where development translated into enabling youth to engage in the world of work. Below are the sub-themes that emerged from this theme.

Role of practical exposure

Within this sub-theme, participants shared their views on how vital practical exposure is in developing youth skills entering the world of work. Aligned to this is the importance of practical exposure linked to a real job.

Participant E2, an employed learner, referred to the value of practical exposure when she shared:

"So, we take skills development very seriously and I think it's a great thing, especially to empower young people like myself, who were not privileged to go to university."

Participant U2, an unemployed learner, added to this point and said his experience was gained through practical exposure.

"I think it's experience, you know, some people lack early exposure, so they get to be exposed to the career while they continue learning. So, I think that's the disadvantage to some of us who just, you know, have the certificate, but now the experience is not there."

Participants highlighted the point that practical exposure is essential for youth entering the world of work. This exposure allows for real work experience and the testing of learning. It is

the researcher's view that exposure needs to allow an understanding of the world of work and create pathways in a changing BANI world as detailed earlier in this document.

Aspects of soft skills

Participants elaborated on how soft skills development is crucial in enabling employability.

Participant E1, an employed learner, suggested that soft skills development is a crucial differentiator for youth entering the world of work.

"I think it boils down to more of the soft skill side. Because that differentiated us."

Participant E2, an employed learner, supported this view and further suggested that those basic things in the workplace enable youth to engage effectively.

"Maybe that's the way they do things, but it's very different in the workplace and I think they need to teach us, you know? Basic skills. Even learning to greet somebody properly, I struggled with it. I didn't know that I needed to smile all the time because I work in HR, and I needed to be. I actually had to find that out myself, but I feel like these are the things and it's simple, but not everybody understands it."

Participants highlighted the importance of developing soft skills as part of a holistic development approach. These views are supported by literature in Chapter 2. The researcher holds the view that holistic development is crucial for youth development in a changing world of work as it prepares the youth for BANI world and providing soft skills to navigate these realities.

Misalignment of training and the world of work

The researcher asked specific questions in order to understand participants' views on current development programmes' effectiveness. Several participants felt that some development programmes are effective as all learning is helpful to youth development. Still, there was a feeling that there was room for improvement, especially considering the low employability once the youth has gone through the development programme.

Participant E3, an employed learner, shared that there was a misalignment between training and the world of work and pointed out to potentially dated training programmes.

"I think there's a gap between what you've been trained on and what the work requires of you. I don't know if that's because of the training programmes have been invented long ago. With a square base, the skills must match with what we are trained on and what the job requirements require from us."

Participant U1, an unemployed learner, also concurred with Participant E3 and added that:

"We are gaining skills, but then it's not working because those skills aren't actually being put to use immediately after getting them. This could be because the skill doesn't match what the employer is looking for. Sometimes when you look at the job specifications on the job adverts, there is no link between what the employer is looking for and what we the youth are being trained for. So, I think that's one of the biggest reasons there's a lot of youth unemployed."

Participant T1, a training provider, added to the debate about the mismatch between supply and demand.

"Like I am saying, a mismatch between supply and demand, companies not doing training because it's part of this succession plan and growth and giving back to the communities. It becomes a tick box exercise for BEE points and tax incentives."

Participant T2, a training provider, suggested that this mismatch extends to a lack of matching the learner with a career path.

"There's a massive amount of people that are going out and being skilled or actually certified, but the demand on the other side to be absorbed is not there, and it needs to be the other way around. The second part is, do we deliver the skills to the right people? In other words, I can have the right skills I want to train, but is it the right young people in the right programmes?"

Participants confirmed the mismatch between the supply and demand for youth skills. Participants further confirmed that this mismatch is on several levels, from employable skills development to career pathing. The researcher views this as a key finding as this has a direct correlation to youth employability.

Benefits of youth development programmes

Participants gave views on how they believe youth development programmes benefited the youth. These benefits included work experience, self-development as well as motivation to pursue careers.

Participant T3, a training provider, suggested that youth development programmes intend to grow youth in preparation towards the world of work.

> "So, we provide work experience for young people aged between 18 and 35 and putting them into various job streams with the aim of getting them employable and in front of job opportunities, and we have been doing this for the past four years now."

Participant T1, also a training provider, supported this view with their objectives being to grow individuals for the world of work.

> "But the objective is what can we sow into her life? How can we grow? Who? So, at the end of this 12-month interview, she can also make the right kind of decisions as she wants to continue working with us and become a permanent employee of the company."

Participant O2, a youth employer, went further to share that the benefits of development included goal setting and self-development.

> "Once we teach them about the importance of having a goal, many of our youth don't understand the purpose of having a goal because without the goal, you're not really going anywhere. When these learnership opportunities become available to them, that's an opportunity where they are learning and developing skills, so it's positive in the sense that you are changing that person and giving them in the smallest sense, knowing they are learning business admin."

Participant E3, an employed learner, suggested that an investment in learners makes them feel valued and motivates the learner as a job may be imminent.

> "As a learner on a bursary programme, when you think somebody invests in you with the bursary, you would expect them to see a return. So, I have less anxiety about it. Maybe there is employment afterwards because there is more investment in it."

The responses from participants supported the researcher's view that youth development cannot be done in isolation, development holds value to the youth and the system or organization demanding these skills. The researcher holds the view that it is therefore the responsibility of the organization involved in youth development to ensure that youth development is holistic and captured within a framework with objectives aligned to the demand for youth skills.

Challenges faced when implementing development programmes
Participants pointed out to various challenges that were faced in the implementation of youth skills development programmes. They pointed out to challenges such as lack of support for the youth as well as legislative challenges.

Participant O2, a potential youth employer shared that possible corruption linked to current legislation is a cause of resistance in development programmes.

"There is so much that they are looking for, but for some strange reason, the conduits that they use, I think, is part of the corruption system, so the people will do the bare minimum and forgetting the impact they are supposed to make, and that's the destiny. I don't think there is a shortage of opportunities, yes there is a shortage of jobs, but with skills development in and of itself, there are opportunities in it and its either the provider that these funds are being filtered through is not really doing what they were supposed to be doing, in getting the delegates to this or organisations like ourselves that they use, there can be so many."

Participants assisted in responding to the research questions and the need for a framework. This response is also aligned with the literature in Chapter 2 that refers to stakeholder participation in developing such a framework that includes the learner on the supply side and business on the demand side.

Topics covered by formal training
Participants shared their experiences in terms of important content that should form part of youth development programmes. Among others, participants pointed out topics around self-awareness and management, business communication as well as overall soft skills.

Participant O2, a potential youth employer, suggested that it is those areas of training that delve into the self that are essential topics to be covered.

> "When that switch flips in the mind of a youth, and you say to them, do you know who you are? Do you know your worth and you see that light come on in there. It's a different human being."

Participant E3, an employed learner, added that youth training topics must include broad business communication areas.

> "And as I mentioned, communication, business communication."

Participant E4 supported this view.

> "Getting along with other people in the workplace also because communication is one of the things that we in the workplace like, so it would be very much essential."

Participant E1 supported a holistic approach to training when they shared.

> "I definitely think it is important. It's actually vital. Just when we started, for the first sessions with the induction side of the learnership, we actually had this training. Exactly what you're talking about. Just to kick-start the process, and we were taught about being self-aware."

Participant E2 suggested that self-management topics are essential.

> "Definitely essential, self-management. You have to learn to manage yourself because in the corporate world there is nobody that's basically going to be some sort of support to you. So, you need to learn self-discipline in order to grow."

Participant T3, a potential youth employer, emphasised that topics must include soft skills training that prepares youth for a changing world of work.

> "I think that we could focus more on the things that we deemed as soft skills but actually matter and we should focus, or we could focus more on the type of human being that we deal with now who is not the same."

Participants supports the literature in Chapter 2 and highlight the value of a holistic youth development approach. It was shared by participants that development cannot be in isolation

and a holistic approach will include the soft skills away from technical training. Participants also highlighted the importance of certain of the Bezuidenhout (2011) eight core psychosocial attributes discussed as part of the findings.

4.4.3. Youth employability

Participants shared their lived experiences about what facilitates and what inhibits youth employability. Below are the sub-themes that emerged.

Challenges encountered with youth

When asked about challenges faced when dealing with youth through development programmes, participants pointed out to challenges such as youth's lack of self-awareness, youth's entitlement as well as youth's expectations to earn higher salaries while starting out in their careers.

Participant T2, a training provider, suggested that a fundamental problem exists with the youth's understanding of themselves and what to expect from a programme towards employability. The participant specifically mentioned a "lost generation" which refers to a generation of youth present in South African who present themselves as poorly skilled and socialised for the current socio-economic needs of the country.

> "I think we've got more than two or three lost generations of young people in general that have got no idea who they are."

Participant O2, a potential youth employer, added to this by saying that youth development programmes must address this lack of self-understanding.

> "But when they do not understand their value, and I'm not showing it to them, that there's a need to have a goal. They're just doing it, you know, and it becomes this thing."

Participant T1, a training provider, suggested that a critical challenge with youth entering the world of work is their expectations around remuneration.

> "I want to walk into a job, and they must pay me around R30 000 a month."

This view was supported by a youth peer in Participant E1, an employed learner, who said:

"I know I've gone through that phase where people are just expecting to earn big bucks immediately, right off the back. There's no sense of I need to improve myself; I need to work on myself to get to a certain level."

According to Participant E2, an employed learner, this need for immediate financial gain is also evident in how learners engage with their stipends to help their development journey.

"What I've noticed in my time working in skills development is that there are actually a lot of young people that do take on learnerships just for the stipend. I feel like, you know, sometimes youngsters don't take the ownership seriously."

Participant T1, a training provider, shared that the challenges faced with youth, included their attitude.

"There are also a lot of young people that feel that they are entitled to be handed stuff, which I know it sounds very harsh."

Participant T3, a training provider, added to this view.

"I would say it is essential, and with the young people that we particularly deal with, there's a problem. Although it's not really a problem that there's an issue in terms of entitlement, you know, the entitlement that young people sometimes have. And they come with an element of things must come to me; things must be done for me."

Participants in this section support the literature in Chapter 2, that the lack of a psychosocial development as part of youth development is manifesting in the workplace as misplaced expectation from an understanding of the world of work. From the participants responses it is also evident that youth in development are not always clear on their own value or contribution to the environment they are placed in.

Challenges faced by youth

When asked about youth development programmes and the challenges that youth in these programmes face, which contribute to their unemployability, participants reiterated the misalignment between supply of skills and demand from employers. Participants also

reiterated the lack of support for the youth as well as unwillingness from employers to invest time on youth to mentor them and to enable them to acquire the requisite job experience.

According to Participant U4, an unemployed learner, youth is faced with the challenge of misalignment between the supply of youth skills and demand from the world of work.

"I mean, like, I'm having to look at most of these people coming into our job specifications, they don't have the qualifications, and I think that's the thing our working environments require — qualification. So, at this point, I would say there's an imbalance between the qualifications and what they require from us."

Participant U4 added that the lack of learner support once the development programme is concluded, adds to the challenges youth are facing.

"Look at myself, after a two-year learnership what is going to happen? Do I get support from the very same people which I've done a learnership with? So, there's a serious lack of support in terms of what is going to happen afterwards?"

Participant E2, an employed learner, indicated that experience is a significant challenge for youth entering the world of work.

"I think what we learn, and even in college, they don't teach you what you actually experience in the workplace. It is very far-fetched."

Participant U1, an unemployed learner, supported this view and added that:

"One other reason that I can actually pinpoint is experience. You've just come out of school and then you don't have any work experience."

Participant T1, a training provider, shared from their dimension around the experience requirements that youth face as an employability challenge.

"Companies are not necessarily wanting to invest time in somebody that doesn't have the skill set that they're looking for, and they still have to train that person."

What is interesting from Participant T1's comments above are the contrast with the notion of misalignment of demand and supply of skills. If companies are not willing to invest in someone who does not have the desired skill set, one then wonders what the role of development

programmes such as learnerships is? Participant T1 also added that the need for experience is driven by employers not wanting to or not having the time to mentor new entrants.

"But I think the key focus is that people are not wanting to mentor the next generation."

Types of employment opportunities accessed by learners

Participants shared the type of employment opportunities that youth could access as a result of being involved in youth development programmes.

Evidently, most learners accessed first-time employment through a fixed-term contract. Participant E1, an employed learner, supported this and said:

"Actually, I got employed immediately. But it was on a fixed-term contract."

Participant E2, an employed learner, also supported this.

"When I finished my learnership, I was then put on a fixed-term contract."

Participant E4 also found access to employment through a learnership.

"I was doing a learnership based on administration work. Following this, I was offered a second year on a fixed-term contract."

Factors contributing to youth unemployment

Under this theme, the researcher wanted to understand what the participants perceived to be the factors that contributed to youth unemployment in South Africa.

Participant E1, an employed learner, shared that overall high unemployment has negative impact on the prospects of youth finding employment as new entrants into the job market.

"When you get out of high school, you start competing with people that's unemployed for 15 years. You're just joining the ranks now."

This participant also shared that this reality is compounded by non-South Africans taking up entry level positions.

"Opportunities are given to others that's not from South Africa."

Participant E3, an employed learner, suggested that low economic growth has a negative impact on youth employability.

> "I think mostly finding suitable employers in South Africa with the low rate of growth and also with where our unemployment stands, there's not many opportunities even after the training has elapsed."

Participant O2, a potential youth employer, supported this suggestion.

> "I think we all know where the problem is, where there's lack of growth and where there's an economic social problem, and that the one doesn't succeed without the other."

Participant U3, an unemployed learner, shared that another factor impacting unemployment in South Africa is how non-university skills are viewed.

> "I think that we are overlooked. People don't see it as a proper and real qualification even though it is accredited."

Participant T4, a training provider, suggested that a changing world of work and technology contributes to youth unemployment.

> "Technology has started to play a role, and covid actually accelerated the whole process. Now the rate of change is too fast, if something is posted on social media today, chances are it will not be there within two weeks. Similarly, when companies could not have physical people to run operations due to lockdown regulations, some companies resorted to the use of technology, thereby eliminating the need to employ more people."

Participants in this section raised several challenges or barriers faced by youth. Several responses referred to organisations that are not committed to the development process and require skills that support immediate business success outcomes given economic pressures. Time to develop youth to have skills that may exist in other areas, including the foreign labour force, are a challenge for youth entering the world of work.

It is also noted in the responses by participants that rapid technological advances and the resultant unexpected socioeconomic change from covid are barriers for youth employability. It is the researcher's view that this supports the research around having a youth development

programme that includes both technical skills and soft skills development embedded in the holistic development approach. This aligns with the literature in Chapter 2 that argues for a more holistic approach.

4.4.4. Psychosocial development

Participants shared their experiences with how psychosocial development elements appear in youth employability development programmes. Below are the sub-themes that emerged from this theme.

Inclusion of psychosocial support

Under this theme, participants shared their experiences in terms of inclusion of psychosocial support in youth development programmes.

Participant E3, an employed learner, shared that in their experience, development programmes excluded psychosocial support.

> "Our development programmes do not include psychosocial support. The focus is more on things like accounting, basic business skills, business finance."

Participant T4, a training provider, shared that the practical focus (as opposed to psychosocial support) of their development programmes is to assist youth to be employable.

> "With a focus on trying to get absorption for the unemployed learners that are on our learnerships, but also doing some short learning programmes just to upskill unemployed learners to make them, you know, more ready for the workplace."

Participant T3, a training provider, added that in their pursuit of a more holistic approach, which includes psychosocial support, they partner for success.

> "We started incorporating certain things like getting counsellors and trying to get them channels to the qualified people who can help with psychosocial aspects and so that's how far we've gotten so far. But we understand that it's only just also the start. There's still lots more that we still trying to learn as well."

Participant T1, a training provider, supported these views and added that development needs to be adaptable to the learner being developed.

> "We forget that we are dealing sometimes with unique individuals, and a framework needs to be able to apply and be able to adapt and adjust to individuals."

Participant O2, a potential youth employer, shared that funding for youth development does not always reach the beneficiaries.

> "So, this is the thing, this conduit that is supposed to connect the two has become very commercialised, and I think the fault is not where the funding is and where the people are, but the conduit that is supposed to connect the two and I am speaking especially from government projects."

Responses from participants in this section support the researcher's view that psychosocial support is not always present in youth skills development.

Focus on the individual

Participants shared their experiences in terms of the type of support needed for youth development programmes. Most of the participants pointed out that there needed to be more focus on the unique individual, and hence focused psychosocial support.

Participant T4, a training provider, suggested that a supportive environment is essential for employability.

> "Well then, the support will automatically flow from day one, which will create a better learner at the end of the day, which means more absorption."

Participant T2, a training provider, shared that a supportive approach includes an approach that serves the humanity of the learner.

> "You need to have people that understand the human part of the individual."

Participant T1, a training provider, added that their approach as a training provider combines technical learning with mentoring, coaching, and leadership development.

"Yeah, there needs to be mentors that want to be involved. I think the starting point would be to have mentors or people come alongside these young people that want to actually be there and that'll be consistent. Because it's not just about formal training but it's also about the transference of life skills.

Participant O1 as a prospective employer added the dimension of peer support they are exploring in their environment.

"Obviously, you speak to these youngsters, and you sort of try and coach them. I really think, what I need to do is have these three so that if there's another group that comes in so that they can sort of speak to the rest and explain to them the process and the journey that they have walked and where they are now because I could see there is definitely that gap."

Participant T3, a training provider, shared that their interventions include counselling as part of their approach.

"So, we started incorporating certain things like that and we've started trying to get counsellors and trying to get them channels to the qualified people who can help and so that's how far we've gotten so far."

Participant T3 went further to emphasise the importance of a supportive approach based on their experience.

"If you don't open up yourself you are running the risk of not being able to reach that human being within the young persons that we deal with."

Participant T1, a potential youth employer, added to this, suggesting that the inclusion of psychosocial support is a holistic approach.

"So, they don't try and become a carbon copy of somebody else. Right. So as their unique self, they can contribute in their own significant way, and it becomes a holistic growth process. So, when we go into training, we've got the soft skills and the technical skills training, but we also make it very true that we have real life conversations. Um, and we use those times in the classroom with the learners to sow those, those seeds and have

those conversations and build those skills within as well. So, you have a well-rounded person leaving."

This view was supported by Participant T3.

"Because you actually don't know who you're dealing with, and that actually puts a strong focus on your psychosocial issues."

The responses of participants in this section supports the value of psychosocial support in a holistic youth development approach. Participants' responses also correlate with the literature in Chapter 2 that refers to the value of a youth development framework that includes psychosocial development.

Journey to self-awareness

Participants shared their views around self-awareness, as part of youth development.

Participant E3, an employed learner, suggested that self-management is essential for youth to achieve their goals.

"Self-management, if I can define it in my own words, would be basically, how you as an individual structure, your environment and how you are going to work to achieve your goals."

Participant T2, a training provider, supported this view and shared that emotional intelligence is critical for this journey to self-awareness.

"I mean, we look at you discover yourself, emotional intelligence, and a critical part of emotional intelligence also, when you start looking at social interaction. How do you control your emotions when you are confronted with different opinions and different environments? So emotional intelligence is critical."

Participant O2, a potential youth employer, suggested that the journey to self-awareness is an essential foundation for career development.

"It is having that self-awareness and not being stuck in one particular corner, even with your personal career. I think it's so important to have that because you'll see that doing that actually takes you higher and further in your career."

Participant E3, an employed learner, shared that a key contributor to self-awareness is working on yourself.

"So, it's working on you. It being your own boss, not your own boss, but managing yourself."

Participants reiterated that self-awareness, a category of psychosocial support, was essential in the journey of youth development towards employability. This section supports the views of the researcher and emphasis the literature in Chapter 2.

Measuring impact and outcomes

Under this theme, participants shared their experiences in terms of measuring the outcomes of youth development programmes.

Participant T1, a training provider, suggested that their measurement is the condition of the person exiting a training programme.

"So, you have a well-rounded person leaving."

Participant O1 as a prospective employer suggested their measure is a learner that is equipped to take up employment.

"I actually had a discussion the other day with a host employer who employed three learners to come permanently after their learnership programme."

Participant E3, an employed learner, suggested that for them, the first measurement is the development of new competencies.

"Yeah, probably getting the competency of the learnership because it was one of the requirements. Being competent in the learnership leads you to get to the bursary."

Participant E1, an employed learner, supported Participant E3's suggestion and added that all development of competencies contributes to the overall development of a learner.

"Firstly, skills development does help with the youth unemployment rate, people can get opportunities. To make some sort of difference in their lives. Uhm, then I also understand there's levels to it, so people get onto learnerships. Others get onto internships. The requirements are a bit stricter as you go up the levels."

Participants mentioned gaining employment as well as gaining competence as some of the key outcomes they use to measure the impact of youth development programmes. This section points out to the researcher that it becomes easy in youth development to ignore or displace psychosocial support for the visible short-term gains of employment or competencies gained.

Outcomes of psychosocial development

Participants shared their lived experiences in terms of the eight core psychosocial attributes proposed by Bezuidenhout (2011) and how these impacted on youth development.

Participant T4, a training provider, suggested that elements of the eight core psychosocial attributes of Bezuidenhout (2011) enable youth to show up better in the workplace.

"You know, sort of just a better way of thinking of, you know, once you're in the workplace. And if this doesn't happen, then how do I use this to give the better version of myself to the workplace?"

Participant T2, a training provider, added that elements of the eight core psychosocial attributes of Bezuidenhout (2011) enable youth to manage outside influence positively.

"Remember, if I know who I am and what I can do, what I mean, then I can manage myself now, at the moment. Again, I think that we are in a time and age where a majority of outside influences for various reasons, are trying to manage individuals. They want to manipulate the behaviour of individuals, so if you don't know, you're not solid in yourself, you don't know how to manage yourself, or you don't manage your influences."

Participant T1, a training provider, shared that elements of the eight core psychosocial attributes of Bezuidenhout (2011) assist youth to differentiate themselves in an oversupplied market.

"Get the person to see what their potential is and unlock their true potential. So, they don't try and become a carbon copy of somebody else. Right. So as their unique self, they can contribute in their own significant way."

Participant O2, a potential youth employer, shared that elements of Bezuidenhout's (2011) eight core psychosocial attributes empower youth with more than technical skills development.

"Whereas if I empower them more, they want to learn more, they want to see their work, they want to see themselves doing, and that's how a country grows, and our youth will develop more. So, I think, besides the skills, the thing that's really going to make a difference is if we impart a little bit more value, especially in these areas in our youth and that's soft-skilled, it's something that we seem to neglect."

Participant U3, an unemployed learner, shared that elements of the eight core psychosocial attributes of Bezuidenhout (2011) can help youth like them excel in the world of work.

"I think it's essential, and I think that's one way that we can excel, is by believing in yourself so wholeheartedly and just getting that confidence and such a support aspect will be very great because that's one thing a lot of young people struggle with — being confident. So, I think that would be very much essential."

Participant U1, an unemployed learner, shared that elements of Bezuidenhout's (2011) eight core psychosocial attributes are critical to youth development.

"So, it's that self-awareness, self-understanding that is key in the development."

Participant T1, a training provider, also shared that the emotional literacy attribute enables youth to engage others in the workplace more professionally.

"Okay, we need to be able to read ourselves, read others and without people saying watch, be able to identify where people are at emotionally and how they're responding to certain

things. I think that's an important skill to have; where you don't necessarily need to ask somebody, well, are you angry or what's going on?"

Participant U3, an unemployed learner, supported the views of Participant T1 regarding the emotional literacy attribute.

"I think it is essential, and I do think so, because we are all different human beings, and we're all going to react differently to situations. So, if we can manage that, or if we can be taught how to manage that, it would be great. It would teach us how to go about different situations."

Participant O1, a potential youth employer, added to Participant U3 and Participant T1's views on the emotional literacy attribute.

"Essential. Emotional intelligence is very important and that would also sort of, it would influence how you would behave in a workplace and with different people at different levels."

Participant E3, an employed learner, contributed that the attribute of career self-management is essential for youth and leads to focus.

"Because managing yourself makes you able to focus on the work that needs to be done. It includes stuff like time management. So, time management and focusing on that stuff. So, it will be an advantage if it's in."

Participant E2, an employed learner, supported Participant E3, in confirming that the career self-management attribute is essential for youth and leads to self-discipline.

"Definitely essential self-management. You must. You have to learn to manage yourself because in the corporate world, like I said, there is nobody that's basically going to be some sort of support to you. So, you need to learn self-discipline in order to grow."

This participant added that the attribute also includes goal setting.

"You need to understand why you are there, like I said, and you must also set goals for yourself, even if it's short-term goals. Even if it's daily goals, you know you need to set goals

for yourself, because if there are no goals, it's almost like you are working towards nothing."

Participant E3, an employed learner, contributed that the attribute of self-efficacy helps a young person to realise their full potential.

"Self-efficacy, you are knowing your ability, you have potential."

Participant E3 also contributed that the attribute of cultural competencies is closely related to emotional intelligence and essential to youth entering the world of work.

"As we see, as you said, we work in a social environment, we work in different cultures. We need to behave with emotional intelligence, so it's essential to put it in a training programme."

Participant U1, an unemployed learner, added that they believe there is a link between cultural competence and sociability.

"Cultural competence I am going to combine another one with sociability. So cultural competence says that you understand that there are different people from different cultures, different beliefs, different backgrounds, and how you interact with them, that is sociability."

This participant went further and said, "sociability is important, the ability to meet and spend time with other people in a way that is open."

Participant U3, an unemployed learner, supported the views around sociability and said:

"I think it is essential, I do think as people we know many, are not islands and we need one another. We need to be social; we need to get along with people and to build good relationships."

Participant T1, a training provider, shared that cultural competencies as part of a framework create strong personal identity for youth.

"It's not just about race, gender, creed, and all that kind of stuff. I think there are specific values. And framework needs to be able to accommodate all those kinds of things so that

we are building a culture where everyone has a strong identity of who they are, but at the same time, those identities understand how to, with other identities as well."

Participant O1 as a prospective employer, suggested that the proactivity attribute is essential in managing youth advancement in the world of work.

"Essential. I would say essential, yes, to be proactive. You are forced to think outside the box, you are forced to better yourself, and so I definitely think being proactive. And you know the youth sometimes they want to work smarter and not harder, but it pushes their boundaries in a good way and if they can come up, they can teach the older generation a few things. So proactiveness is important."

Participant E1, an employed learner, supported participant O1.

"Yes, definitely. So having to be proactive, it means that you need to be hands-on in terms of whatever you're doing with your task."

Participant T1, a training provider, added that proactiveness impacts thinking styles and links back to career self-management.

"OK. Proactiveness. Heck. Yeah, definitely essential. Um, I think proactiveness ties into critical and strategic thinking as well. And it also ties into the self-management element. You are able to take initiative and do what you need to do."

Participant O2, a potential youth employer, further contributed to both attributes of, proactivity and entrepreneurial orientation. They shared that these attributes are essential for holistic youth development.

"Yeah, I think that fits in with entrepreneurial sort of abilities. An entrepreneur is proactive, moving around. So, I think it's pretty essential."

Participant T2, a training provider, further contributed about how the entrepreneurial orientation attribute benefits youth in a development programme.

"It entails becoming an entrepreneur of your life and not letting others take ownership of your own life and where you go and how you do it."

Participant E1, an employed learner, suggested that career resilience is essential.

> "I was saying it's essential because once you conquer something that is placed in front of you, that's when you become innovative. That's when you make the system your own."

Participant O1 as a prospective employer added to career resilience.

> "I think it's essential as well because, you know, for them to build that resilience would just add value in terms of their career path so I definitely, definitely think it's essential."

Participant O2, a potential youth employer, also added to career resilience.

> "I think, I think it's essential. Okay, because we are living in an environment where things are changing all the time. I think it's very essential that you have that resilience within. Yes, and to see how you can navigate, you know? I think it's essential to success."

Participant O2, a potential youth employer, shared that they see the full value of the eight core psychosocial attributes proposed by Bezuidenhout (2011) in the development process of youth for the world of work.

> "I think they are very important. All of them. And I think that. We can facilitate them, and they will make a difference. I can't think off the top of my head because the drivers, I believe, need to be there in terms of the soft skills, you know. So yes, it can be, and I can't think, of something that's missing from there."

Participant T1, a training provider, supported the view that the eight core psychosocial attributes proposed by Bezuidenhout (2011) in a framework will help address youth unemployment.

> "And I think once everybody's on board and everyone's in agreement with their kind of framework and structure, and this is how we going to approach it, I really do believe that it will reduce the unemployment issues."

Participants confirmed the value of the eight core psychosocial attributes proposed in Chapter 2. This section confirms the value of the research and supports the inclusion of psychosocial development as part of a youth skills development framework.

Pillars of personal development

Under this theme, participants shared their experiences in terms of what they deem to be the pillars of personal development. This included development of soft skills, goal setting, desire to grow, as well as keeping a positive attitude.

Participant O2, a potential youth employer, suggested that while technical skills are essential for personal development, soft skills development is as crucial.

"So, I think there's a soft skill requirement, a big one, that needs to accompany any technical skill, and then it's going to be the youth that's probably going to drive the decision-makers better."

This participant viewed soft skills development as an enabler of learning.

"Whereas if I empower them more, they want to learn more, they want to see their work, they want to see themselves doing, and that's how country grows, and our youth will develop more."

Participant O2, a potential youth employer, also added that goal setting is an important pillar.

"Once we teach them about the importance of having a goal, you know, many of our youths don't understand the purpose of having a goal because without the goal, you're not really going anywhere."

Participant E1, an employed learner, supported Participant O2 with the importance of goal setting.

"You reach your goal; you can use what you currently have to reach your next goal. So, I think it's essential to first acknowledge that whatever you have is all you need."

Participant U3, an unemployed learner, shared their view that young people must enter development with a desire to grow.

"I think it's, essential, and I think that's one way that we can excel, is by believing in yourself so wholeheartedly and just getting that confidence and such a support aspect will be very

great because that's one thing a lot of young people, especially, struggle with, with being confident. So, I think that would be very much essential."

Participant E2, an employed learner, supported the views around a desire to grow and shared what helped them was a positive attitude.

"Because I started off positive and told myself, you know, I'm going to work myself up here. You need to know what you're working towards and where you are heading to."

Participant T2, a training provider suggested that a critical pillar of development is to build a person and clarify their role contribution.

"I'm talking about part of the programme is to build up a young person to discover who and what he or she is, what they can do and how they can contribute effectively into society. What are their roles? How can they, what are the tools that they can use to become a major role player?"

Participant O1 as a prospective employer shared that development must lead to a qualification which enables the youth to gain employment.

"So as much as it is important for the learners to obtain their qualification, it is extremely important for them to get workplace experience."

Participant T4, a training provider, added that a key pillar is being employable, and for this, there is a need for valuable contribution.

"And the thing is, you know, we always say to our clients as well: 'You want absorption at the end of the day, the only way you can get the absorption is if that person will add value'."

4.4.5. Closing the gap

Under this theme, participants shared what they believed to be key factors to be considered in terms of closing the existing gaps within youth development programmes. These included recommendations on how to strengthen youth participation, how to tackle holistic development as well as recommendations on how to expand the impact of youth development programmes.

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Recommendation to strengthen youth participation

Participants pointed out the importance of having youth that participate meaningfully within youth development programmes.

Participant E1, an employed learner, proposed job reservation for youth as a recommendation for the meaningful participation of youth in the development for employment.

> "There are certain jobs that I feel should be reserved for young people who have just gotten out of school."

Participant E4, an unemployed learner, suggested holistic development that includes psychosocial development attributes as a recommendation to enable meaningful youth participation in the development for employment.

> "I think it is essential cause you are saying that it's more about yourself, right? So, it's important to know how you handle yourself in the workplace."

Participant O1 as a prospective employer shared that creating an ecosystem and awareness will strengthen meaningful youth participation in the development for employment.

> "But it's just we need to build communities where the youth can thrive. Yes, I think it is working. I think it's just we need to create a lot more awareness, and you know, help the youth understand what it is. But I think the main thing is creating awareness and getting corporates on board and expanding it. I'm sort of speaking just from an opposite perception a little bit. Let's say, for instance, in the community of Eersterus in Pretoria, there aren't training centres within that community to create awareness for the youth in that particular area. There might be, but I'm not sure that everybody is aware, and also you know, that's why I'm saying creating awareness."

Participant O2, a potential youth employer, shared that how a youth development programme is structured could strengthen meaningful youth participation in the development for employment.

"I think it's essential, but I think how we package it is equally important, because self-management to a youth person sounds like work. You need to make it into something where they feel like this is essential for my success."

Participant T2, a training provider, shared that career self-management is essential for meaningful youth participation in the development for employment.

"Set a goal that they feel they can achieve. But again, it's a process of being self-motivated and so belief and the ability to self-manage. It goes back to self-management so that I can achieve the goal."

Participant E1, an employed learner, shared that practical exposure is essential for meaningful youth participation within the development for employment.

"I think practical exposure is effective. I think it's one of the most effective elements."

Participant E2, an employed learner, supported the views of Participant E1 and suggested that practical exposure was essential "to empower young people, like myself, that were not privileged to go to university.

Participant U2, an unemployed learner also contributed this these views.

"I think it's experience, you know, some people lack early exposure, so, they get to be exposed to the career while continuing to learn. So, I think that's the advantage to some of us who just, you know, have the certificate, but now the experience is not there."

Participants pointed that meaningful youth development programmes are essential. To this end, participants offered recommendations which included job reservations for youth, holistic youth development as well as how youth development programmes are structured. This supports the research objectives outlined in Chapter 1.

Recommendations of additional topics for holistic development

Under this theme, participants elaborated on recommendations for holistic development of the youth. These included conflict management within development programmes as well as skills on how to deal with the VUCA and BANI worlds.

Participant E4, an employed learner, proposed that a topic of conflict management can be added.

> "How to deal with certain things. For instance, let's say how to deal with conflict. So, it gives you an idea as to how to work around certain things. So, at this point I think it would be very much essential."

This participant also proposed the topic of communication to be added to improve holistic development.

> "So, at this point I would say it would be your basic communication. Such as how to draft an e-mail or how to communicate with your seniors. So basically, there could be basic communication skills development."

Participant E3, an employed learner, suggested an addition of elements of a VUCA and or BANI world of work.

> "And as you explained it, I think it would be a great advantage to do. Teach us how to adapt to the knowledge economy, which we have in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. So how we focus on being agile, flexible and how we can manage change so that we can adapt. Yeah, to the changing work environment. It's essential because we are in a changing environment."

Participant O2, a potential youth employer supported these views when they shared:

> "There are other options with technology now so that we can create, I think it's just a lack of vision and creativity in terms of taking the skills that we can impart them with in terms of entrepreneurial skills."

Participant T3 also contributed to the need for a topic that includes an VUCA or BANI world.

> "I think we need to not only prepare them for the world that's changing, but we also need to change with them, because I find that we sometimes are stuck in our own ways because they used to work five years ago, but we're not moving with the change."

Recommendations to expand impact of learnerships

Participants shared their recommendations on the potential to expand the holistic development impact of a learnership as an acceptable vehicle for youth development in South Africa. Some of the recommendations included more practical exposure for youth, management of demand and supply of skills as well as taking into account different learning styles.

Participant E4, an employed learner, proposed that learnerships can allow for a wider variety of practical exposure for the youth.

> "At this point, I think if I'm being exposed to more things in the working environment, for instance, having to take us from different jobs with different environments. Because I mean at this point, I'm only exposed to my own company and I already know what's expected from them, or rather I know what is to be expected in the workplace. So, a little bit of more exposure when it comes to the corporate world."

Participant E2, an employed learner, shared that for them more focus on the practical part of the world of work is essential.

> "I feel like when you are teaching, even if it's not a learnership, even at varsity. Maybe that's the way of how they do things, but it's very different in the workplace and I think they need to teach us, you know, basic skills. Even learning to greet somebody properly, I struggled with it."

Participant E3, an employed learner, suggested that to expand the holistic development impact of a learnership is to focus on demand.

> "I think it depends on what the measure of success of skills development is. Is the measure of success of skills development employment after? Or is it the training that you receive? In between, on the program, is it the training or is it employment after. If that's the goal, the objective, then it's successful only if it reaches you to employment."

This view was supported by Participant O2.

"And he speaks about vision, that's vision and the people will then reap the benefits of that. So, it's always going to come to the top. There is no lack of, I think we know what the demand is. We need to get our people employed."

Participant T1 also added to these views.

"I think there's also a mismatch between expectations between private and government or public."

Participant U3, an unemployed learner, argued that learnerships need to create an electronic footprint of learners to track learners during and post-training.

"I do think there can be other supports such as jobs listed on a skills development page where you list your skills, and all the applicable jobs can come up there. But yeah, maybe like more support platforms."

Participant T1, a training provider, recognised that acknowledging learning styles in learnership can support the impact expansion.

"And it's also understanding that people learn effort and people process information differently."

Participant T3 added to this.

"The way that they want to be taught is not the same anymore. The way that they receive the information that we try and give them is not the same. The old methods of doing things are not quite working because they are a different breed and also, we need to start focusing on all of the things that we may not deem as important."

Participant T1, a training provider, shared that learnerships need to consider post training mentorship.

"And what we've also started is being very mindful of doing. We can start strongly moving towards that is a mentoring element and to say post training, then what? Because it's all nice and dandy in the training and everyone will start and goes well, that was amazing. And

then it gets forgotten about, so we actually want to now start actively working with learners."

Participant T2, a training provider, argued that learnerships must take a more holistic development approach that includes soft skills as part of the official curriculum.

"Then lastly, part of that is I think the program needs to be of such of any training program that there is a continuation of let's call it soft skill support."

Participant T3, a potential employer, argued that learnerships should collaborate with industry specialists for success.

"I should think that he's doing well, or they are doing well. But I would not know because there isn't that collaboration between us for us to be able to see how well other people are doing and where they have gaps, where we have gaps and how we could actually work together."

Participants under this section highlighted the value of learnerships as a vehicle for holistic development as part of youth development. The researcher also sees the model of learnerships as a critical consideration in the development of a frameworks for holistic youth development.

Employer participation

Participants shared views that employers can do more to enable better youth participation and preparation for the world of work. Some of the suggestions included a review on how employers view suitable skills for specific jobs as well as how they view learnerships.

Participant O2, a potential youth employer, suggested that employers are moving in the right direction.

"From an employer's perspective I think in that space it's working. In the corporate, we can do more. I think what we're just doing is turning around because the bottom line is always there and profits is a driver and we forget who actually imparts knowledge, but I think there is enough being done in terms of movement in the right direction."

Participant O2 also suggested that employers have to review how they view skills suitable for employment.

"But when you train people in who they are, it doesn't matter who you're speaking to or when you learnt that skill. It's about knowing your own worth. And so, we did this training in terms of the gaps, where they're lacking because they've already got their technical skill, they're ready to go and work."

Participant T1, a training provider added that this change in employers can include how a learnership is viewed. This is an opportunity to observe a learner over a long period.

"But the objective is what can we sow into her life? How can we grow? Who? So, at the end of this 12-month interview, she can also make the right kind of decisions to see if she wants to continue working with our organisation and become a permanent employee of the company."

Participant T4 further suggested that it will entail changes in workplaces.

"And I think that's where we need to make the mind shift from an unemployment perspective as well; what maybe needs to change in the workplace? To assess the unemployment and to get these youth of today into the workplace."

This, according Participant T3, further extends to how we view work experience.

"And I think the one biggest thing or one of the biggest stumbling blocks is the fact that people who can employ are not employing the people that are available, and people who can employ are wanting people with experience."

Participant T1, a training provider argued that compliance spend can be used to enable youth development.

"Developing our youth as just, and I'm going to say it again, as just the money exercise. So yes, we need money to continue with our businesses and, you know, keep operations running. But I think there needs to be a social responsibility and a deep ingrained aspect of that within the business community of saying: 'Yes, I'm, getting so much for the training

and my score part of my tax incentives, but what am I actually going to throw back and invest into the future of the country?'"

Participant T1, a training provider proposed a platform for collaboration can take place for impact. Employers have a part to play.

"We need to stop working in silos. We need to stop saying public is public, and private is private, because the two together make up the country. Doesn't matter who they are, everybody can contribute because it's only through that that we can start being able to have the conversations to collaborate better."

Participant T2 shared this view.

"Yes, I think when I say it's the right skill obviously it's how skills develop. And as I say, I'm a firm believer that skills development in a country is always the mandate of government. So, it can happen, and then you have to allow the private sector to contribute to that."

Participants supports the researchers views that employers have an important role to play in the development of a framework for a holistic youth development programme. This also aligns to the literature and earlier discussion around demand for youth skills and the articulation thereof.

In closing the gap, participants shared several approaches that could help close the gap in existing youth development programmes. Participants' recommendations included strengthening youth participation, ways to tackle holistic development, as well as recommendations on how to expand the impact of youth development programmes. Coetzee and Potgieter (2014) argued that it is essential to note that research indicates that what individuals learn is driven fundamentally by their learning style preferences. Learning styles refer to who the individual is and what they have gained from their psychosocial reality. Participant O2, a potential youth employer, agreed that learning is enhanced through how it is packaged, "I think it's essential, but I think how we package it because self-management to a youth person sounds like work. We need to make it into something where they feel like this is essential for my success".

Participant O1 believed we need to structure ecosystem and awareness with stakeholders in order to strengthen meaningful participation in the development of youth for employment. "But it's just we need to build communities where youth can thrive. Yes, I think it is working. I think it's just we need to create a lot more awareness, and you know, help the youth understand what it is and, but I think the main thing is creating awareness and getting corporates on board and expanding it". This view is supported by Graham (2018) who shared that a skills development plan requires a well-coordinated intervention between policymakers, employers, educators and trainers, and young people. Graham (2018) went on to argue that there needs to be "cross-pollination" between the supply side of youth unemployment (such as training) and the demand side (encouraging risk-averse employers to hire young people), with poor co-ordination between the two, this will fail.

Participant E1 from the study proposed job reservation as a way of closing the gap between skill development and employment by saying, "there are certain jobs that I feel should be reserved for young people who have just got out of school". This may facilitate the challenge of finding that initial employment as defined by Hillage and Pollard (1998).

4.5.   Conclusion

This chapter captured the answers to the research questions and supports the literature that a holistic approach to youth development is needed to optimise the value of the development efforts. Participant supported a holistic youth development framework that includes psychosocial development. The eight (8) core psychosocial attributes identified by Bezuidenhout (2011) were tested with participants as a basis for the study and not as an exhaustive list. The value of these psychosocial attributes in youth development was consistently supported by participants. The ecosystem presented as recommendations by participants to close the gap between development and initial employment support a development approach where supply and demand are aligned. The researcher sees these findings as an important contribution in shaping a framework and de-risking the current ROI being observed.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the findings of the study are discussed and interpreted in relation to the research questions posed in Chapter 1 and the results presented in Chapter 4. The discussion follows a thematic analysis approach. The objective of this chapter is to review and interpret these findings in line with the existing literature as set out in Chapter 2.

5.2. Analysis of the findings

The analysis of the findings presented in Chapter 4 follow the same thematic approach i.e., the findings are analysed within the emergent themes.

5.2.1. Youth employability

Hillage and Pollard (1998) defined sustained employability as a process that includes the capability to gain initial employment, maintain employment and obtain new employment if required. Hillage and Pollard (1998) went on to propose that employment further depends on the following factors evaluated in the hands of the individual seeking employment:

I.   the assets in terms of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes the individuals possess or gain,

II.   the way they use and deploy those assets,

III. the way they present them to employers, and

IV.   the work context, crucially, the context (e.g., personal circumstances and labour market environment) within which they deliver on work.

Participants from this study have pointed out to the difficulty of gaining initial employment, for various reasons. Participant E1 pointed out that one of the hindrances is the very high unemployment rate among the youth when they said, "when you get out of high school, you start competing with people that have been unemployed for 15 years. You're just joining the ranks now". This shows that within the South African context, for the majority of youth, the first step towards employability by Hillage and Pollard (1998), being able to gain initial

employment, is a significant challenge. Participant O2, a potential youth employer, added that indeed the South African environment is, in itself, a hindrance towards employability. This was evidenced when they said, "I think we all know where the problem is, where there's lack of growth and where there's an economic social problem. And the one doesn't succeed without the other". This view was further supported by Pasara and Garidzirai (2020), who found causal effect between gross capital formation, unemployment and economic growth. In their study, the authors found that indeed where there is no economic growth, this lack of economic growth led to high unemployment (Pasara & Garidzirai, 2020).

Marock (2008: 5) argued that there is "no standard agreement regarding the definition of employability". He further argued that "the meaning will vary depending on culture, level and type of economic development and employer norms" (Marock, 2008: 5). Within the context of Marock (2008) and further to this and the assertion by Hillage and Pollard (1998), the researcher found that in the economic condition of South Africa, initial employment for most of the employed learner participants took the form of either a fixed-term contract or a learnership. This has an underlying impact on how these participants participate in the economy with sustained employment. The researcher has recognized a need to further explore and define more clearly the employer, the employment norm within the South African context, and how employment is defined. The research findings helped to confirm that the ability of youth to participate in the economy of South Africa is hindered by the lack of sustainable economic growth along with how we currently view employment. The negative growth experienced by South Africa has a direct impact on how jobs are created and influences the demand for skills in a broader sense. This impact is augmented with youth who, as new entrants to the labour force, need to compete with existing skilled and experienced candidates. These competitive experiences for youth contribute to the high unemployment rate.

The findings have also revealed that although some youth are able to gain initial employment, such employment is through fixed term contracts or extended learnerships. Harvey (2001) argued that some people see employability as securing any 'job'. While these fixed term contracts and extended learnerships may qualify as 'jobs', it is apparent that this employment cannot be considered to be sustainable. This is because both a fixed term contract and a

learnership have definite end dates. This may then also lead to some youth in these jobs not committing fully to them as they are busy searching for their next jobs for when the current one's end. This creates a potential vicious cycle where youth are not performing optimally because there is no incentive per se, while, on the other hand, the employer perceives the youth as being lazy and not coming to the party, and therefore not offering them long term employment. This aligns with Harvey's (2001) argument that employers are often not prepared to spend time coaching and mentoring the youth. It becomes a catch 22 because the employer is not willing to invest time where they don't see potential, on the other hand, the youth do not want to invest their time and talents on a fixed term employment that may not lead to job security.

5.2.2. Coaching and self-management

According to Bezuidenhout and Coetzee (2010), self-management within the context of a career, helps one to reflect on one's own career aspirations and develop clarity for the skills needed and actions to be taken to succeed. An employed learner, Participant E3 for the study, confirmed this by saying that self-management needs a context created by personal reflection on how to achieve goals for success. According to Participant E3, "self-management, would be basically, how you as an individual structure your environment and how you are going to work to achieve your goals". Hlalele (2012) suggested that this context to the attainment of goals is the consequences of psychosocial support, guided by a developmental agenda. Participant O2, a youth employer, confirmed this iteration of Hlalele and went further to share that the benefits of development included goal setting and self-development when they said, "once we teach them about the importance of having a goal, many of our youths don't understand the purpose of having a goal because without the goal, you're not really going". Bezuidenhout and Coetzee (2010) further added that career self-management, career resilience and cultural competence are key attributes to influence one's ability to sustain employability.

Participants for this study identified that self-management includes a number of attributes working together. Participant T1 said that "the reason why I'm saying self-management is the ability to be productive during the day and do what you need to do, but also the ability to set

healthy boundaries so that you have the element of wellbeing". Participant T1 went further to say that these attributes are being used as part of a learner coaching and mentoring approach in the current learning agenda in their environment.

The research findings affirm the importance of self-management to guide the actions towards successfully achieving goals. It is also evident that self-management is transmitted by training providers within a coaching or mentoring medium and is yielding success. It is important to note that self-management is the result of a facilitated process and requires an external driver. It is the view of the researcher that a psychosocial framework driven by holistic skills development is essential as it coexists with career resilience and cultural competence attributes. These attributes are essential for sustained employability for youth. Holistic development departs from a sense of self-awareness, which has been highlighted by participants.

It is also important to note that self-management is guided by an understanding of expectations from the environment and by the environment, a measuring tool if you like. Clarity around expectations from the environment and by the environment is essential for youth to define the route to self-management as this creates a context for youth to move. The importance of this was expressed by Participant E2 as an employed learner, considering the need for this within a learnership setting coming from the organisation i.e., by the environment, when they said, "I think, when you're on a learnership, you know they need to teach you policies, procedures, or just make it known to you that this is what can happen of you if you act a certain way. I think that's very important". Participant U2, an unemployed learner, considering the need for this within a learnership setting coming from the learner added that, "I think by them being involved, knowing what's going on, knowing what we want, knowing what we expect and giving us what is expected from us, I think yeah, that's it". The overlay of this allows for a healthy psychosocial environment for development.

5.2.3. Development as an enabler

According to Allais (2012: 633), "skills development sometimes refers to occupational education and workplace-based training programmes such as apprenticeships or shorter training programmes in the workplace. Still, it sometimes refers to all education and training

which is aimed at the workplace". Participant E2, an employed learner, confirmed the value of workplace-based training programmes such as apprenticeships or shorter training programmes in the workplace when saying, "so, we take skills development very seriously and I think it's a great thing, especially to empower young people like me that were not privileged to go to university". Altbeker and Bernstein (2017) suggested that youth skills development is a crucial investment for South Africa. Like Altbeker and Bernstein (2017), the findings of Participant O2, a prospective employer, suggest that skills development creates opportunity for youth. Participant O2 exclaimed that "I don't think there is a shortage of opportunities. Yes, there is a shortage of jobs, but with skills development in and of itself, there are opportunities". Participant E1, an employed learner, suggested that all development, including soft skills development is a crucial enabler for youth entering the world of work. This was evidenced when Participant E1 said, "I think it boils down to more of the soft skill side. Because that differentiated us".

According to the ILO report (2020: 36), "the unemployment rate measures the explicit demand for jobs". The misalignment in the supply and demand for jobs acutely contributes to the high underutilisation of youth in an economy. The ILO reported that the underutilisation of youth is three times higher than that of adults (ILO, 2020). As per Golubovskaya, Solnet and Robinson (2019), this misalignment goes deeper in that it manifests in what employers deem to be talent they require versus the essential skills that youth possess and being trained by implication. This sentiment was confirmed by Participant E3, "I think there's a gap between what you've been trained on and what the work requires of you". Participant U1 also confirmed this by saying "we are gaining skills, but then it's not working because those skills aren't actually being put to use immediately after getting them. This could be because the skill doesn't match what the employer is looking for".

This mismatch is evident in the high youth unemployment numbers and further augmented by the rigidity of the South African skills development legislation. This legislation is clearly contributing to the high unemployment when one considers the mismatch in the outcomes of training and the lack of focus on unemployed youth. The Skills Development Act 97 of 1998 strives to "provide an institutional framework to devise and implement national, sector and workplace strategies to develop and improve the skills of the South African workforce"

(Government Communication and Information Systems, 1998: 2). As stated before, herein lies the challenge: the focus is on the those in the workforce and not necessarily those who are unemployed and the need for skills to help them become economically viable. This legislation also creates a challenge for youth entering the world of work. Participant E1, commented on how the legislation around learnerships can become a stumbling block for youth entering the world of work by saying, "companies are still limited. Limited by how much they spend on skills development, limited by what they can do for skills development". This sentiment was shared by a training provider, Participant T4, calling it a tick box exercise that misses the impact and development objectives, "like I said, there's a lot of tick box exercises, people spending it for legislation, tick box exercises, but not necessarily to absorb the youth."

Potential employers also need to take some responsibility in working with the legislation to combat the occurrence of the mismatch through their recruitment and matching. Participant O3 added that, "there's like a mismatch in terms of probability of success. So, you would have 10 people coming into your learnership programme, but only two of them might end up being employable afterwards. And I think employers have a bigger role to play with regard to the recruitment of the learners, I would definitely feel more empowered and more in control of the process if I have recruited those guys myself and I think it's just because people just pass on the responsibility to people who are running learnership programmes and to recruit".

Learnerships by design are well placed as a vehicle to create channels for practical exposure towards economically viable skills. Participant E1 emphasized the value of learnerships by saying, "but it's that vehicle that's available for people to access it, for people to take it. And I understand that it's very helpful and beneficial to our youth". Participant E2 had this to say about learnership as a vehicle for skills development in South Africa, "so, we take skills development very seriously and I think it's a great thing, especially to empower young people like myself, who were not privileged to go to university". Participant U2 also highlighted the value of practical exposure as part of a learnership by adding that, "I think it's experience, you know, some people lack early exposure, so they get to be exposed to the career while they continue learning".

Learnerships are designed to provide exposure. Cross and Cross (2017) as well as Maree (2021) argued that when the youth are given the liberties to explore, while given the requisite support through skills development initiatives such as learnerships and internships, they can develop confidence in their own initiative and cement their competencies towards employability. Cross and Cross (2017) along with Maree (2021) suggested that skills development that extends beyond the technical skills is essential i.e., holistic development. We therefore understand that one's ability to gain and maintain employment is not just about putting bread on the table, but is linked to holistic "psychological, emotional, spiritual and social development of individuals toward achieving positive human development" (Hlalele (2012) in Ebersöhn *et al.*, 2018: 3).

Participant E1 said that training that goes beyond the technical training, i.e., a more holistic approach, is what differentiates youth entering the world of work by saying, "I think it boils down to more of the soft skill side, because that differentiated us". This holistic development is described by Participant T1 as an opportunity to grow youth and provide them with the tools to make informed decisions. Participant T1 exclaimed that "the objective is what can we sow into her life? How can we grow her? So, at the end of this 12-month interview, she can also make the right kind of decisions as to whether she wants to continue working with us and become a permanent employee of the company". This resonates with the work of Maree (2021: 8) that "career development is based on the process of forming a career-life identity where people's potential to remain in control of their circumstances is emphasized as much as the decision-making process itself. Career is regarded as 'an exciting journey, rather than a goal-oriented drudgery that is imposed on individuals by society".

Healthy goals are also a positive outcome of development. Part of the findings highlighted the benefits of healthy goal setting. Participant O2 argued that "once we teach them about the importance of having a goal, you know, many of our youth don't understand the purpose of having a goal because without the goal, you're not really going anywhere. When these learnership opportunities become available to them, that's an opportunity where they are learning and developing skills, so it's positive in the sense that you are changing that person and giving them skills, in the smallest sense, knowing they are learning business admin".

The findings confirm that all forms of development act as an enabler for youth entering the world of work. It further confirms that training and development need to be holistic in order to be enablers for youth development. Skills development legislation has been identified as a stumbling block in the youth development process, with no demand for a holistic approach. It rather has a one-dimensional development approach that is measured as compliance (i.e., a tick box exercise). The value of soft skills training has been highlighted by participants and is supported by literature.

5.2.4. Psychosocial development

The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE, 2016) helped to define the term psychosocial development and suggested that psychosocial development is "the dynamic relationship between psychological aspects of our experience (that is, our thoughts, emotions, and behaviours) and our wider social experience (that is, our relationships, family and community networks, social values, and cultural practices)". Maree (2021) summarised psychosocial development framed on the seminal work of Erikson (1968) around psychosocial support work. Maree noted that according to Erikson's theory, any individual passes through eight developmental stages (Maree, 2021). The stages from infancy to old age elicit certain psychological crises that results in certain accompanying strength and or core pathologies (see Table 1 in Chapter 2).

Participant O3 referred to the value of the development stages by saying that "it's exactly what we do in our natural ability with our children, we helped him to understand what lies within them and then they know how to apply this because we cannot define where they will apply this, we don't have control over that because the world is changing as fast as we are creating things and they need to be able to navigate that so the only thing we can do is in order to respond to those changes, whatever they mean". It was interesting to observe that employed and unemployed youth participants touched on the basic strengths that are at time present or absent given the reality that the South African socio-economic environment offers. Participants exhibited hope, will and purpose in responding to the interviews. Participant E1 expanded on how expectations need to be managed and helping them seek their purpose above money, "so I know I've gone through that phase where people are just expecting to

earn big bucks immediately right off the back. There's no sense of I need to improve myself, I need to work on myself to get to a certain level. It's just I want straight instant success. I want straight at the big bucks so I can drive whatever car, get anything material that I want. So, it's really getting on to the basic ground level in telling youngsters, listen, you need to work to where you want to get to. If I need to sit down with you, I'll show you".

Petitpas *et al*. (2005) suggested that psychosocial development cannot be viewed in isolation. Participant T3, a training provider, concurred with Petitpas *et al*. (2005) when they shared that their interventions extended to include counselling as part of their development approach. Participant T3 added that "we started incorporating certain things like that and we've started trying to get counsellors and trying to get them channels to the qualified people who can help and so that's how far we've gotten so far". Both employed and unemployed participants all agreed that a holistic development experience has been more beneficial for them in their development journey. Participants from the prospective employer and training provider categories see holistic development as a more meaningful intervention with better results. It should be noted that all participants view a holistic development approach as one that includes elements of psychological and social development. This was confirmed in the value contribution of the eight psychological attributes identified by Bezuidenhout (2011) as part of the research interviews.

Hlalele (2012: 71) concluded that "psychosocial support, guided by a developmental agenda, is more likely to yield meaning in life - the cognisance of order, coherence, and purpose in one's existence, the attainment of worthwhile goals, and an accompanying sense of appreciating and valuing oneself". Participant T2, a training provider, supported Hlalele's (2012) assertions and confirmed that youth in development programmes were inclined to achieve better results in the workplace or in training if they know who they are. Evidence of this was when Participant T2 commented that "remember, if I know who I am and what I can do, then I can manage myself now, at the moment".

Cross and Cross (2017: 1) argued that "in addition to supporting the development of skills, any talent development agenda must consider the psychological and social variables associated with the learning process". In the research findings, Participant T1, a training

provider, supported the position of Cross and Cross (2017) around the benefits of considering the psychological and social variables associated with the learning process when Participant T1 stated, "get the person to see what their potential is and unlock their true potential. So, they don't try and become a carbon copy of somebody else. Right. So as their unique self, they can contribute in their own significant way". Current skills development legislation and training fails to acknowledge the person behind the training and drives the need to be like the other in order to fit into the system. This refers back to INEE's definition of psychosocial support stated above, as a dynamic relationship between psychological aspects of one's psychological experiences and social experience (INEE, 2016. Psychosocial support recognises the person behind the development intervention. Participant T1, a training provider, shared that a "framework needs to be able to accommodate all those kinds of things so that we are building a culture where everyone has a strong identity of who they are, but at the same time, those identities understand how to be with other identities as well and other individuals".

Potgieter and Coetzee (2013) suggested that employability is a psychosocial construct that represents the career-related attributes that allows graduates to adapt cognitively and behaviourally in such a way that positively impacts the graduates' suitability for appropriate and sustained employment opportunities. Bezuidenhout and Coetzee (2010) proposed a career related or employability attributes framework and described a set of eight core employability attributes that are essential for increasing the likelihood of securing and sustaining employment opportunities. Participant O2, a potential youth employer, shared that they see the full value of the eight core psychosocial attributes proposed by Bezuidenhout (2011) in the development process of youth for the world of work. Participant O2 commented that "I think they are very important. All of them. And I think that we can facilitate them, and they will make a difference. I can't think off the top of my head because the drivers, I believe, need to be in terms of the soft skills, you know. So yes, it can be, and I can't think of something that's missing from there." Participant T1, a training provider, supported the view that the eight core psychosocial attributes proposed by Bezuidenhout (2011) in a framework will help address youth unemployment. Participant T1 added that "I think once everybody's on board and everyone's in agreement with their kind of framework

and structure, and this is how we going to approach it, I really do believe that it will reduce the unemployment issues".

The research findings confirm the value of psychosocial development as a critical contributor to increasing the likelihood of securing and sustaining employment opportunities. All participants agreed that the value of psychosocial development is a critical contributor to holistic youth development. The sense is that psychosocial development helps prepare youth for an unknown world of work. Participant E3, an employed learner, motivated this by saying, "I think it would be a great advantage. Teach us how to adapt to the knowledge economy, which we have in the fourth industrial revolution. So how we can focus on being agile, flexible and how we can manage change so that we can adapt to the changing work environment. It's essential because we are in a changing environment." Participant T3, a training provider, added that to achieve this, we will need to consider how we are training and be willing to adapt to respond to the changing world of work. Participant T3 said, "I think we need to not only prepare them for the world that's changing, but we also need to change with them." Participant T2, a training provider, suggested that part of this change is the move away from a one-dimensional training approach when they said, "then lastly, part of that is, I think, the programme needs to be of such of any training programme that there is a continuation of let's call it soft skill support".

Participant T3, a training provider, went on to argue that development in the South African economic climate requires collaboration. Participant T3 commented that, "for us to be able to see how well other people are doing and where we have gaps and how we could actually work together". Participant T1, a training provider, proposed that this collaboration is essential for the benefit of South Africa when they said, "we need to stop working in silos. We need to stop saying public is public, and private is private because the two together make up the country. Doesn't matter who they are that everybody can contribute to it because it's only through that that we can start being able to have conversations like we are having well, now."

Participant O2, a prospective employer, emphasized the importance of psychosocial development to be part of this development consideration when they said, "I agree with you 100%. [psychosocial development] is the holistic approach. It's what is missing from this [skills

development]". Participant O2 went on to share their experience with holistic development approaches and said "when that flip of the switch happens in the mind of a youth and you say to them, do you know who you are? Do you know your worth and you see that light come on in there. It's a different human being". Participant T3, a training provider, also affirmed the importance of psychosocial development as part of the development process and said "I think it's do or die at this point and because if you don't you run the risk of not being able to reach that human being and most of the young persons that we deal with, are dealing with a lot and if you don't open up yourself and look at those issues then you have a problem because you will think something is working when it isn't because you actually don't know who you are dealing with, and that actually put a strong focus on your psychosocial issues".

From a prospective employers' perspective, Participant O1 agreed that psychosocial development is lacking and needs to be addressed for youth to benefit from opportunities available to them. Participant O1 argued that "yes, definitely, definitely, it [psychosocial development] is so important, it's lacking, and you know by introducing this [holistic development] the youth can only benefit". Participant O3, a prospective employer, confirmed the importance of psychosocial development and also concurred with its importance by saying "I completely agree with, you know with regards to self-development and increasing self-belief in self-awareness. Because if you think about a young person going through different phases of self-actualization".

5.3. Reflection on the eight core attributes

The eight attributes of career self-management, career resilience, cultural competence, entrepreneurial orientation, sociability, self-efficacy, proactivity, and emotional literacy were used in this study as a basis for researching Psychosocial Development as a contributor to holistic youth development. The study also highlighted the value of each of these attributes for the participants. Attributes like career resilience and proactiveness have been highlighted as essential by participants in how youth will approach and managing their careers. Attributes like self-management, emotional literacy and self-efficacy were listed as essential for youth to unlock in order for them to understand their contribution and significance to a world of

work. The study confirms the need for holistic youth development programmes that include these eight attributes as part of a holistic development approach.

5.4.   Reflection through TIPS framework™

The Da Vinci Institute TIPS framework allows for analysis of complex systems across four key domains akin to systems thinking approach as described by Wiek *et al.* (2011: 207). As with the principles of systems thinking of Wiek *et al.* (2011: 207), the Davinci institute TIPS framework allows for a framework that considers sustainability issues and sustainability problem-solving. The Da Vinci Institute TIPS framework uses systems thinking in framing a solution as described by Claesson and Svanstrom (2015).

It is the researcher's view, based on the findings, that there are no clear or defined tools or metrics to evaluate the youth development effort outcomes or impact in the study area. This is evident, as stated earlier, in that JSE-listed organisations spend close to R50 billion on skills development annually (Russel, 2018), with low measurable impact on youth job creation. The Skills Development Act, 97 of 1998 is slanted towards input and focuses on those in employment (Government Communication and Information Systems, 1998: 2). The current metric that guides youth skills development does not always take account of a holistic development as essential and based on the research, it is poorer in its outcomes as a result. The research study has contributed to casting a light on the stated research problem, i.e., that the critical skills needed in a BANI world require youth entering the job market with psychosocial awareness.

The research findings also support that psychosocial development as part of a holistic development approach will better prepare youth for the evolving BANI world that we find ourselves in. The research findings therefore support a learning framework that includes the value contribution of psychosocial development as part of a holistic development approach toward youth employability. In planning this skills development framework, Graham pointed out that a skills development plan requires a well-coordinated intervention between policymakers, employers, educators and trainers, and young people (Graham, 2018). Graham also argued that there needs to be "cross-pollination" between the supply side of youth unemployment (such as training) and the demand side (encouraging risk-averse employers to

hire young people). Such a framework needs to allow for better engagement among all stakeholders, where the input of young people is not forgotten and create the platform for cross-pollination between supply and demand.

Da Vinci Institute defines the "I" in its TIPS managerial leadership framework as innovation that, in this context, relates to the social impact value created (Da Vinci, 2021). Pasara and Garidzirai found that low economic growth or a lack therefore leads to high unemployment (Pasara & Garidzirai, 2020). Economic growth is therefore part of the process to stimulate employment and in this study, it relates to employment for youth. There is also a need to redefine how employment is defined. Marock suggested that the meaning of employment will vary based on culture, the level and type of economic development happening and employer norms that exist (Marock, 2008). It is the researcher's view that we need to be innovative in the skills we develop, given our current economic climate and the plan for solution and offering around the skills we have and not the wish to have. Altbeker and Bernstein (2017) suggested that the youth skills crisis provides South Africa with an opportunity to be innovative about our economic recovery plan. The crisis therefore is an opportunity, and a framework needs to consider the "I" or innovation in its development. This review of how innovation will manifest in a skills development framework will be evident in how technology is used, where for example augmented reality, virtual reality and the internet of things is used to benefit youth skills development outcomes and lead to employment.

Da Vinci Institute defines the "P" in its TIPS managerial leadership framework as the people or human interface (Da Vinci, 2021). It is the researcher's view that the current framework for skills development is not a sufficient measure of skills development, it rather focuses on input as opposed to output. It is the view of the researcher that this engagement can only be achieved through a holistic development approach. This approach will include a technical skills programme ("the what") matched with the human condition or ways of learning ("the who"). This approach engages the human being behind the learning and can be achieved through a framework that includes a psychosocial dimension. Psychosocial development as a dimension suggests that a framework includes in its metric the development of skills to be aware of and manage psychological and social experiences (INEE, 2016). This approach

embraces the youth learner as well as the learning, allowing for motivation for the youth to participate and retain them in a programme.

Da Vinci Institute defines the "S" in its TIPS managerial leadership framework as a process of "divergence and convergence to synthesise and integrate all seemingly unrelated activities to enhance engagement" (Da Vinci, 2021). Altbeker and Bernstein (2017) suggested that South African youth skills development has a direct impact on the economic recovery plan. South Africa is therefore in need of youth that are fully evolved to contribute to the changing world of work. Maree (2021) went on to say that youth that are exposed to an adequate support structure that includes education and guidance, and where they are emotionally and socially 'healthy', engaged, will be able to successfully negotiate a changing environment where psychosocial struggles are present. Potgieter and Coetzee (2013) suggested that employability is a psychosocial construct that represents the career-related attributes that allows graduates to adapt cognitively and behaviourally in such a way that positively impacts the graduate's suitability for appropriate and sustained employment opportunities (Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013). Bezuidenhout and Coetzee (2010) proposed a career related or employability attributes framework and described a set of eight core employability attributes that are essential for increasing the likelihood of securing and sustaining employment opportunities.

It is the researcher's view that these eight core attributes, presented within a healthy learning environment as part of a holistic development process, can contribute to youth employability in Gauteng, South Africa. These attributes will benefit from a youth skills development framework where the metric or tools used to evaluate success includes employability as an outcome. These metrics or tools must enable skills development where the person within the training is not lost or forgotten, and their psychological and social experiences is viewed as part of the development process and included in the metric for success. Technology that can be used to enable such an evaluation must therefore extend to both psychosocial and economic impact and these results must be used to influence decision-making and ongoing thinking in the area of youth employability.

5.5. Conclusion

This findings in this chapter point to a youth skills framework where youth skills development and talent development consider psychological development as part of the holistic youth skills development process. The set of eight core employability attributes that are valuable al for increasing the likelihood of securing and sustaining employment opportunities were highlighted in the findings. The benefit of the eight attributes of career self-management, career resilience, cultural competence, entrepreneurial orientation, sociability, self-efficacy, proactivity, and emotional literacy are all valuable for youth to help navigate the BANI world of work. It is evident from the research, that in aggregate, the presence of these attributes will enhance and add value to youth skills development programmes.

The findings also confirm that that status quo needs a review, and this study proposes a framework where psychosocial development is placed on the same footing as technical skills development under a holistic development banner.

CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses and shares a summary of the main findings from Chapter 5 and responds to the research questions in Chapter 1. The chapter also presents the proposed framework as an output of the study, it also presents recommendations for future research, discusses limitations of the study and the return on investment (ROI) from various perspectives.

6.2 Summary of findings

The aim of this research, as stated in Chapter 1, was to propose a learning framework that considers the value contribution of psychosocial development as part of a holistic development approach toward youth employability. The researcher endeavoured to seek a framework that will assist in addressing the efficacy of youth skills development investments in response to the youth unemployment crisis in South Africa. The objectives of this study included:

I. Explore the relevance of psychosocial development attributes in youth development for employability.
II. Explain how psychosocial support can support youth development for employability
III. Identify gaps to be addressed to attend to the psychosocial development needs of youth entering the world of work.

The primary research question was, *how relevant are the attributes of psychosocial development theorical framework in youth employability development programmes in South Africa?* To answer this main question, two sub-questions were raised. Findings relating to these questions are discussed below.

6.2.1 How evident is the relationship between psychosocial development and youth employability (outcomes observed, expected and valued)?

The aim of this research question was to understand the relationship between psychosocial development and youth employability and how psychosocial development could improve learning outcomes towards employability. Participants confirmed that psychosocial

development has an important relationship with youth employability through a holistic youth skills development. According to the participants, psychosocial development in a relationship with youth development takes the form of coaching and self-management. Participants shared that self-management helps the youth to manage their own advancement and their expectations while providing opportunity for the potential employer to manage their expectations.

Participants also emphasised that psychosocial development allows for the development of the entire human being. This psychosocial development differentiates the individual in an employment environment. The psychosocial support programme is concerned with the development of the whole human being (INEE, 2016). A holistic development programme for youth development that includes the psychological and social environments is critical for the development of the whole young person and is beneficial for employability. Participants also shared that psychosocial development helps youth to be ready for the workplace. Petitpas *et al*. (2005) suggested that psychosocial development cannot be viewed in isolation. The authors confirmed a relationship between psychosocial development and youth development (Petitpas *et al*., 2005:5). Cross and Cross (2017:1) argued that "in addition to supporting the development of skills, any talent development agenda must consider the psychological and social variables associated with the learning process".

Participants to the research shared that managing advancement and expectation is simple to understand but still needs to be developed and coached in the employment of youth. The managing of expectation of learners can address the misalignment between training and the world of work. This misalignment becomes more evident in a BANI world and requires more aligned soft skills (psychosocial development) that differentiate young people in youth employment opportunities. This research therefore concludes that the relationship between psychosocial development and youth employability is evident. Not only is this relationship evident, but participants also confirmed the relationship to be a positive one, therefore suggesting that the attributes of psychosocial development in youth employability development programmes in South Africa are relevant and necessary.

6.2.2 How could gaps in current employability development programmes be addressed to attend to psychosocial development needs of youth entering the world of work?

According to participants of this study, the gaps in the current employability development programmes can and should be addressed to attend to psychosocial development as part of a holistic youth skills development programme. The participants shared that development that will fill this gap should include a consideration of what is included in training, what role practical exposure plays in youth skills development, and how youth challenges are understood. Further to Coetzee and Potgieter's earlier assertion, what people learn is impacted by how they learn (Coetzee & Potgieter, 2014), the ELT learning model creates a context for the consideration of a holistic development framework. Participants also shared that a key challenge faced by the youth are misalignment between stakeholders of youth development and moreover, supply and demand. This manifests for participants in their experience of first-time employment opportunities that mainly occurs to be through fixed-term contracts.

Addressing the gaps in the current employability development programmes requires a multi-stakeholder involvement in the supply and demand cycle of youth employability. Graham (2018) pointed out that a skills development plan requires a well-coordinated intervention between policymakers, employers, educators and trainers, and young people. Graham helps to understand that such a coordination extends to the supply side of youth unemployment (i.e., training) and the demand side (i.e., the potential employers). Government and policymakers need to extend their focus on development to the core of development, from being workforce centred to include youth skills development towards employment as a key focus, (Government Communication and Information Systems, 1998).

According to the participants, the inclusion of psychosocial support or development is essential for holistic youth development, and the eight core psychosocial attributes identified by Bezuidenhout (2011) contribute to youth self-awareness. All participants in this research study confirmed the value and importance of these attributes as part of youth skills development. It is also evident that these psychosocial development skills are essential for the youth to be able to respond to a BANI world. This study therefore concludes that in

relation to the second sub-question, gaps have been identified and ways to address them have also been tabled.

By answering the two sub-questions above, this research has therefore answered in affirmative that the attributes of psychosocial development theorical framework in youth employability development programmes in South Africa are relevant. These attributes are relevant as there is evidence as per sub-question one, that a positive relationship exists between them and youth employability. This research has revealed that the attributes of a psychosocial development theorical framework in youth employability development programmes in South Africa are critical for youth employability. This is supported by literature that, "psychosocial support, guided by a developmental agenda, is more likely to yield meaning in life - the cognisance of order, coherence, and purpose in one's existence, the attainment of worthwhile goals, and an accompanying sense of appreciating and valuing oneself" (Hlalele, 2012: 71).

6.3 Conclusions

The responses captured under the secondary research questions adequately address the primary research question of *how relevant the attributes of psychosocial development theorical framework in youth employability development programmes in South Africa are.* The literature of Cross and Cross (2017) as well as Maree (2021), among others, confirm that a psychosocial development theorical framework in youth employability development programmes in South Africa is relevant as it supports the technical development competencies towards employment. The feedback from the research participants concurs with this as they all agreed that the eight core psychosocial attributes identified by Bezuidenhout (2011), which formed the basis of the research interviews, are essential for holistic youth development towards employment.

6.4 Summary of contributions

A key contribution of this study is towards the body of work already done around youth skills development and employability. It is the researcher's view that the findings can contribute to identifying the gaps in the cross-pollination engagement between policymakers, employers, educators and trainers, and young people (Graham, 2018). This gap, moreover, identifies that

psychosocial support is not included as a key component in youth skills development on equal footing with technical skills development.

Taking the findings from this study, the ELT model as well as the attributes proposed by Bezuidenhout (2011), this study therefore proposes a theoretical framework as contemplated in Figure 6 below as another key contribution.
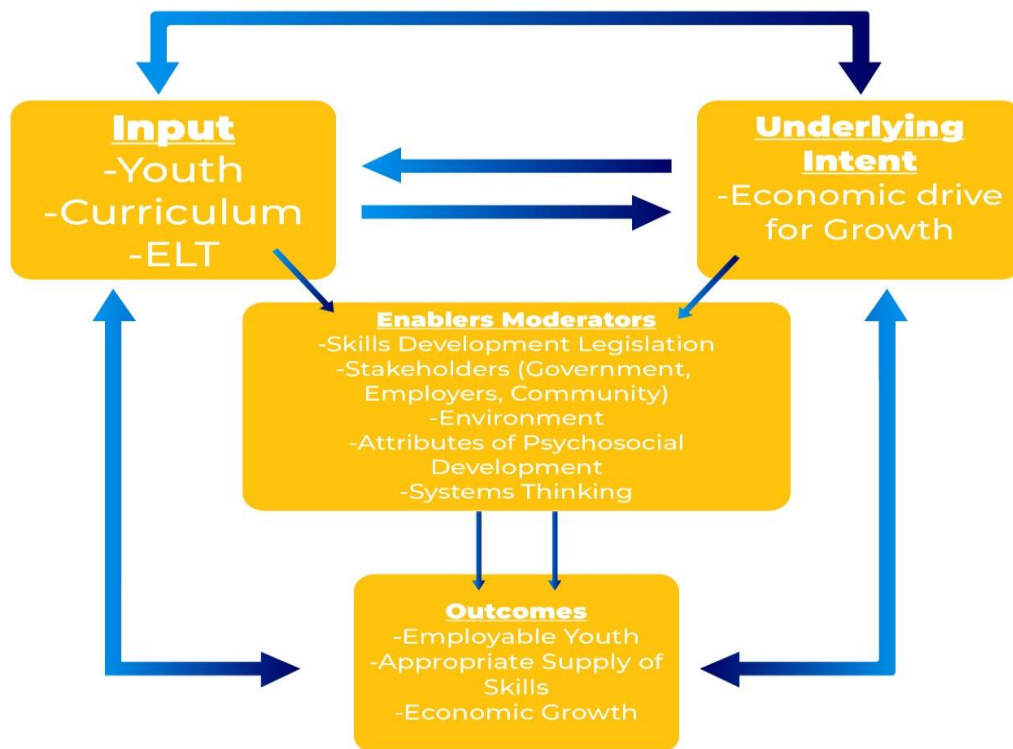
Figure 6: Proposed Theoretical Framework for Holistic Youth Development

Source: Author

As per Figure 6 above, the researcher proposes a theoretical framework that is premised on the underlying intent. The researcher proposes that this underlying intent be agreed upon by the relevant stakeholders and should be centred around the economic drive and growth of the country, in other words, what type of economy does South Africa want to be, or what type of economic activities will drive the South African economic growth. This underlying intent forms a fundamental foundation for the framework to function. Once the underlying intent is in place, the researcher proposes that the outcomes of such an underlying intent

should include youth that are employable, the intent should drive the supply of appropriate skills that ultimately drive economic growth.

The Framework proposes that the inputs needed to arrive at the proposed outcomes include the youth themselves, the curriculum as well as the ELT model. These inputs then operate within an environment filled with existing moderators. These moderators, such as the Skills Development legislation, need to be put in place by relevant stakeholders in such a way that they provide appropriate platforms for the inputs in order to arrive at the desired outcomes. This, as the researcher sees is, is the crux of what holistic youth development looks like. Development that is aimed at national imperatives such as economic growth where the solution is co-created, and the psychosocial attributes are not ignored as a critical enabler.

6.5 Return on investment (ROI)

I. From a personal dimension, the personal ROI from this research journey has been quite significant. It has been a challenging process but at the same time very rewarding. My wife has, as always, been my gentlest critic and firm supporter even through the many times I wanted to give up, and there were many times. My two daughters who are both engaged in tertiary studies look up to me to lead them in this journey. But truth be told, their drive, work perseverance and commitment to their own academic journeys, even during covid, was and still is my inspiration. The collective of these three humans I always hold as a mirror and true north to my life. This journey has helped me to further understand and articulate my contribution to my professional and spiritual life. The call to serve the youth.

II. From a Professional dimension, this journey had a profound impact on my life. If discomfort and growth are synonymous, then I have had significant growth. As youth development is central to my professional and organization life, I see how the learning has permeated into my professional life in the way I approach projects and find solutions for the same. The organizations I am part of have direct benefit of this shift in knowledge as I can apply the new knowledge daily.

III. Youth unemployment is a socio-economic issue, and the societal ROI can be translated from the fact that research like this can contribute to the body of work that can help

change this trajectory. Ongoing academic research can contribute to finding solutions to this crisis. This research will contribute to the body of work that already exists.

6.6 Limitations of study

This research was exploratory, and the researcher used purposive sampling where participants were either known to the researcher or referrals from known individuals. It is therefore possible that the researcher may have inadvertently chosen respondents that may have been biased towards certain views around youth development. As most of the interviews were conducted online, connectivity and load-shedding at times did not allow the researcher to see the participants facial expressions. All of this may have allowed for a different outcome. The selection of a small sample size and focus only on the geographic area of Gauteng may not necessarily be representative of the entire population and should not be generalized as such.

6.7 Recommendation from this study

It is recommended that as an outcome of this study, that current legislation needs to be reviewed or new legislation needs to be considered. . The Act should be more intentional in including jobseekers and not just those in employment. It is further recommended that such a review should include psychosocial development as a compulsory input of a holistic youth development approach in training modes such as learnership or internships. It can also to be considered that psychosocial development be included in the high school development phase so as to create a clear line of sight for youth from high school into tertiary development. Black economic empowerment legislation has a contribution to make in clarifying the supply and demand expectation from industry. Industry and not government should guide the need for first time employees where youth are in the higher percentage.

This study has also revealed that there is a lack of research on how the psychosocial attributes needed to manage and sustain youth in the world of work contribute to career outcomes (Coetzee & Potgieter, 2014). It further revealed that psychosocial development is a critical contributor to holistic youth development towards employment. As postulated in literature, "we, therefore, understand that one's ability to gain and maintain employment is not just about putting bread on the table, but is linked to holistic "psychological, emotional, spiritual

and social development of individuals toward achieving positive human development" (Hlalele, 2012 in Ebersöhn *et al.*, 2018:3). The eight core psychosocial attributes identified by Bezuidenhout (2011) informed the researcher's thinking around a holistic framework. The attributes of career self-management, career resilience, cultural competence, entrepreneurial orientation, sociability, self-efficacy, proactivity, and emotional literacy were confirmed by participants in the research study as critical to a holistic youth development approach (see research finding detailed in Chapters 4 and 5). There is also an opportunity for further studies to look deeper into Erikson psychosocial understanding of human development, applied by (Batra, 2013) to the eight stages of Erikson and the basic strength it unlocks within the individual. This will see how these stages are managed from early childhood development to industry where a holistic human being is anticipated. The researcher recommends for this to be viewed from an industry perspective informed by defined future industry needs.

Given the limitations of the sample size as well as geographical area, this study recommends a study with a representative sample that will permit national generalization. This will help to confirm or to refute fundings of this study, before embarking on the last recommendation below and before embarking on a review of legislation that impacts the whole country.

Lastly, the researcher recommends further studies around the proposed framework in Figure 6, wherein perhaps the framework is developed further and is followed by a longitudinal study that tests the intricacies of the framework towards the desired outputs.

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Appendix A: Sample Letter(S) of Permission to Conduct the Study

<u>Psychosocial Development as a critical contributor to holistic youth development towards employment in Gauteng, South Africa</u>

Date 1 May 2022

Participant

Organisation

Dear Ms Participant,

I, Errol Pillay, am researching under the supervision of Prof Paul Singh towards a master's degree at the Da Vinci Institute. We invite you and your organization to participate in a study entitled Psychosocial Development as a critical contributor to holistic youth development towards employment in Gauteng, South Africa

The study aims to understand the contribution of psychosocial support on youth development towards employment in South Africa (S.A.). This research explores this gap in the youth developmental journey. It proposes ways to incorporate psychosocial support into current youth development initiatives and employability measures to positively redress the current reality, a framework if you like.

Your company has been selected because they are involved in youth learning outcomes. The study will entail interviews with selected team members.

The benefits of this study are that we will understand if psychosocial support can improve youth employment outcomes in Gauteng South Africa.

Potential risks are low, as it involves human participants with only foreseeable risk of inconvenience. The study is non-vulnerable adult participants, and non-sensitive information will be shared.

Participation is voluntary, and the information of participants will be kept confidential.

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. The feedback procedure will entail report to the participants of the findings.

Supervisors Contact Details:

Initials and surname	Prof. Paul Singh
Contact details	Mobile: 082 6196004
Email	pauls@davinci.ac.za

Yours sincerely

Errol Pillay

To Whom It May Concern

I Participant, hereby acknowledge receipt of the letter directed to my organization for access to conduct interview towards to master's dissertation study for Errol Pillay around: Psychosocial Development as a critical contributor to holistic youth development towards employment in Gauteng, South Africa

As a result of this, I grant my approval for such an interview/s to be conducted within my organization.

I look forward to the results and its application.

Yours Faithfully

Participant

Director

Mobile:

Email:

Appendix B: Data Collection Instruments

<u>Introduction</u>

- Thank you for your willingness to participate in this interview.
- Please confirm your name for this recording.

Participants Name and Surname: _____

Participants Role: _____

Date of Interview: _____

- Interview Conducted by: <u>Errol Pillay</u>

- Please confirm the following with me:

  1. You agree that this interview is recorded and used within this study.
  2. You confirm that I have asked your consent to take part in this research and that I have told you about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation. Also, confirm that you understood the study as explained in the information sheet.
  3. Also, confirm that you have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions, that you are prepared to participate in the study and that you understand that your participation is voluntary and that you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).
  4. You also confirm that you are aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that your participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.
  5. That you have signed a written consent form
- The time for this interview will not be more than 45 min.

Interview Guide

2. Evaluate if current youth development programs achieve youth employability.
   2.1. How will you describe the development of skills?
   2.2. What factors do you believe contribute to youth unemployment in South Africa?
   2.3. Unemployed Youth: Are you currently employed? If No
      2.3.1. How long have you been looking for Employment?
      2.3.2. Would you say you have adequate and relevant skills to be employed?
      2.3.3. What do you think is/are the stumbling blocks?

3. Research the factors that influence the effectiveness of current youth development programs.
   3.1. How effective do you believe are current youth development programs?
   3.2. What training/ development do you believe can improve youth employability in South Africa?
   3.3. What other support do you think youth require as part of their development for Employment, and who should provide this support?
   3.4. EMPLOYED YOUTH
      3.4.1. Are you currently employed? Yes/ No
      3.4.2. How long did it take you to find Employment?
      3.4.3. What do you think improved your chances of getting Employment?
      3.4.4. How did the recent skills you developed contribute to you obtaining this Employment?
      3.4.5. Do you think you were prepared well for all dimensions of the world of work?
      3.4.6. If not, what training/ development do you believe could have prepared you better for the world of work?

4. Evaluate the relationship between psychosocial development on youth skills development training.

If psychosocial development is concerned with the development of skills to be aware of and manage psychological and social experiences.

4.1. Do you think that all youth skills development should include psychosocial support? Why?

4.2. As a contributor to youth skills development in South Africa, do you include psychosocial aspects in your formal or informal development processes**?**

(I.e., self-awareness: our thoughts, emotions, and behaviours. Within the context of the world: broader social experience, personal relationships, family and community networks, social values, and cultural practices)

5. Can a framework be created that will guide the development of youth skills where the inclusion of psychosocial support is a key contributor?

   5.1. Please rate the following psychosocial attributes in terms of importance in youth development for Employment in South Africa. And I will ask you to motivate your selection or give a practical example.

Psychosocial Attributes	Essential	Moderately Important	Not Import	Motivate or provide a practical example
1. Self-Management Self-management is about finding the self-control and mastery needed to take control of one's work (e.g., to manage one's time, workflow, and communication).				
2. Career Resilience Career resilience, by extension, refers to one's ability to adjust and adapt to career changes as they occur. Developing career resilience means taking charge of your own career path and continuously developing new skills to remain in-demand.				
3. Cultural Competence Cultural competence — loosely defined as the ability to understand, appreciate and interact with people from cultures or belief systems different from one's own				
4. Entrepreneurial Orientation Doing something new and exploiting opportunities				
5. Sociability The quality of liking to meet and spend time with other people				

Psychosocial Attributes	Essential	Moderately Important	Not Import	Motivate or provide a practical example
6. Self-efficacy Individuals believe in their capacity to reach a specific goal.				
7. Proactiveness The act, characteristic, or habit of thinking and acting so as to prepare for, intervene in, or control expected events, especially negative or challenging ones;				
8. Emotional Literacy Having self-awareness and recognition of your own feelings and knowing how to manage them				

5.2.   Are there any other attributes you think I have missed on the list above? Why?

5.3.   What contribution do you believe can the psychosocial attributes (above mentioned) make to the effective transition of youth into the World of Work?

6.   Conclusion

   6.1.   Thank you for your participation.

   6.2.   Do you have any questions for me?

Time ended.

Appendix C: Ethical clearance letter

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Research · Design · Education

Reference: 01222
Date: 14 June 2022

Ethical Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the Masters Research of the student named below has received ethical clearance from The Da Vinci Institute Ethics Committee. The student and supervisor will be expected to continue to uphold the Da Vinci Institute's Research Ethics Policy as indicated during the application.

Proposed Title: Psychosocial support as a key contributor to effective youth development towards employment in South Africa

Student Name: Pillay Errol

Student number: 5181

Supervisor: Prof Singh Paul

Co-Supervisor: N/A

Period: Ethics approval is granted from 2022/06/14 to 2022/10/22

(signature)
_____

Chairperson: Research & Ethics Committee

Prof HB Klopper
Executive Dean: Research and Institutional Partnerships

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