



LABOUR MARKET
INTELLIGENCE PARTNERSHIP

Public Attitudes to Work in South Africa

Bongiwe Mncwango

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
ISSP	International Social Survey Programme
LMIP	Labour Market Intelligence Partnership
LSM	Living Standards Measure
NCAP	National Career Advice Portal
OLS	Ordinary Least Squares
SASAS	South African Social Attitudes Survey
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
TVET	technical and vocational education and training

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PREFACE

The 2009 South African government administration, informed by a results-focused philosophy, identified 12 priority outcomes for the country. Government departments are committed to a ‘joined-up’ approach to deliver on each of the outcomes. Outcome 5 refers to ‘a skilled and capable workforce to support an inclusive growth path’, and the delivery of this outcome is being led by the Minister of Higher Education and Training.

Delivery Agreement 5 consists of three parts, with Output 5.1 committing the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) to establish a credible mechanism for skills planning, in collaboration with 20 national and provincial ministries. The DHET commissioned the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) to support the DHET in establishing a credible institutional mechanism for skills planning (Memorandum of Agreement between the DHET and the HSRC, February 2012).

To inform the architecture of the skills planning mechanism, the following reports have been written:

- Marcus Powell & Vijay Reddy (2014) *An Architecture for Skills Planning: Lessons and Options for Reform in South Africa*, Report 9
- Marcus Powell & Vijay Reddy (2014) *Roadmap for the Implementation of a Skills Planning Unit*, Report 10
- Marcus Powell, Vijay Reddy & Andrew Paterson (2014) *Approaches and Methods for Understanding What Occupations Are in High Demand and Recommendations for Moving Forward in South Africa*, Report 11
- Cuen Sharrock & Sybil Chabane (2015) *International Comparative Analysis of Skills Planning Indicator Systems across National Contexts*, Report 12
- Vijay Reddy & Marcus Powell (2015) *Indicators and Data to Support Skills Planning in South Africa*, Report 13
- Andrew Paterson, Mariette Visser, Fabian Arends, Menzi Mthethwa, Thembinkosi Twalo & Titus Nampala (2015) *High Level Audit of Administrative Datasets*, Report 14
- Fabian Arends, Sybil Chabane & Andrew Paterson (2015) *Investigating Employer Interaction with the Employment Services of South Africa (ESSA)*, Report 15
- Bongiwe Mncwango (2015) *Public Attitudes Towards Work in South Africa*, Report 16
- Xolani Ngazimbi & Marcus Powell (2015) *Information and Skills Planning for the Workplace: Case Studies of Companies in South Africa*, Report 17
- Lynn Woolfrey (2013) *South African Labour Market Microdata Scoping Study*, Working Paper 2
- Andrew Kerr (2013) *Understanding Labour Demand in South Africa and the Importance of Data Sources*, Working Paper 5

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The significance of public attitudes for ensuring the effectiveness of national government skills and labour market interventions and policies has been widely recognised. Attitudes serve as significant predictors of individuals' behaviour and can thus provide clues about behaviour related to finding and keeping paid work, as well as about perceptions of commitment to work, skills acquisition and satisfaction at work. It is, therefore, imperative that skills planners have a comprehensive understanding of labour market perceptions. In South Africa, data-driven scientific studies of the public's attitudes to work, their expectations, preferences and job search behaviours are limited. To address this gap, the Labour Market Intelligence Partnership (LMIP) initiated a unique study with specific, focused questions about social attitudes to the labour market.

The underlying assumption of the study is that understanding public attitudes offers insight into the factors that influence decisions about labour market and education participation. The research adds value by providing detailed attitudinal data in order to complement existing labour market macro-data sets. Data were collected from a representative national sample that included the employed, unemployed work seekers and those who are inactive in the labour market. A total of 2 885 South Africans participated in the study. Using self-reported data, 30% could be classified as employed, 37% as unemployed, and 33% as economically inactive. Questions were fielded through the Human Sciences Research Council's (HSRC) South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) of 2013.

Who is employed, unemployed and inactive?

The study found that employment status is intertwined with race, education and class. Black African respondents continue to be overrepresented among those with lower levels of schooling. More importantly, education remains a significant explanatory factor – those with tertiary education experienced lower levels of unemployment compared with the other groups. Individuals with tertiary education were three times more likely to be employed than those with less than a matric or equivalent level of education. Moreover, individuals from households of a high social class were more likely to be in employment.

What do South Africans want from jobs?

Job security was rated as very important feature of a job more often than any other characteristics. Prospect of advancement was identified as the second 'very important' factor in a job. Other characteristics, related to whether the job is interesting, useful to society, or provides high income, were also rated highly, but were not perceived as the highest priority. Therefore, although the public sees a need for occupational growth, intrinsically satisfying jobs and good income, security of tenure is what makes a job 'good' compared to other job conditions and financial benefits.

However, there were discrepancies between what those in employment perceived as important, and

their actual experience on the job, in relation to two key expectations: economic reward for their labour, and the prospect of upward social mobility. This suggests that workers were relatively more satisfied with the nature of their employment (its usefulness to society and whether it is interesting and provides security) than its ability to meet their immediate and longer-term material needs.

What are the public's views on the value of education and intergenerational mobility?

The public strongly believes that education is key to a positive labour market outcome and improved likelihood of employment. This finding was most pronounced among those with no or lower levels of education.

Social and economic mobility was strongly linked to education, which was seen to facilitate economic advancement, irrespective of family background. This view was most pronounced among black Africans and those with low educational levels.

What does the public perceive as the causes of unemployment?

The study found that almost equal proportions attributed unemployment to societal and to individual factors. Thus, unemployment is seen as the responsibility of both government and individuals. There is consensus that a lack, and the poor quality, of education is a bottleneck to participation in the labour market. The public strongly believes that education is central to positive labour market outcomes and improved labour force participation. This finding, therefore, provides a good spur for government efforts to improve the quality and reach of education.

To what extent are workers satisfied with their jobs?

Almost two-thirds of the employed expressed some level of satisfaction with their jobs. Job satisfaction was significantly, and most positively, associated

with workers rating their jobs as providing interesting content, fair remuneration, and security. Black African workers remained less satisfied with their jobs than white workers. Those with a low or medium standard of living also recorded significantly lower satisfaction scores than those with a high standard of living.

To what extent do workers perceive a match between their qualifications and what is required in a job?

Just under a quarter (21%) of employed South Africans regard themselves as overqualified for their jobs. Almost a third (30%) of the respondents stated that they were underqualified for their jobs. Some sociodemographic groups are more likely than others to be mismatched. Black Africans were almost three times more likely to be overqualified than white and Indian workers. The incidence of overqualification was also more common among rural commercial-farm dwellers, while older workers and those living in informal settlements were more likely to report that they were underqualified.

Who has received training among the employed?

About six in every ten workers (59%) interviewed had not received any form of training in their workplaces. The strongest demographic pattern among those who have not been trained is a significantly disproportionate representation of less educated workers. Workers with a tertiary education were almost three times more likely to be offered training than were those with lower educational levels.

Who has experienced skill change in the workplace?

The study revealed a positive relationship between skill intensification in a workplace and educational attainment. Workers with higher levels of education experienced change in skill requirements more than those with lower levels of education.

How are the unemployed looking for jobs?

The results revealed a reliance on informal methods for finding work, including the use of social networks. Reliance on social networks reaffirms that the inaccessibility of information about vacancies supplied through formal sources is a barrier to finding employment.

Concluding comments

The study's findings underscore the value of a national survey seeking to understand the public's attitudes to, and experience of, employment and

unemployment. Such attitudes and experience vary significantly and are influenced by an individual's race, educational attainment, and social class. The results also highlight different dimensions of disadvantage, suggesting the need for adaptable and targeted policies in order to benefit vulnerable segments of our population. Understanding the general public's attitudes to the labour market and perceived bottlenecks to participation can provide critical insights so as to inform the government's skills-planning interventions. Our research places the need to take into account the views and beliefs of ordinary South Africans firmly on the policy agenda.

1. THE RESEARCH STUDY IN CONTEXT

Study context

The importance of public attitudes for ensuring the effectiveness of national government skills and labour market interventions and policies has been widely recognised (Geoghegan-Quinn, 2013; Lisi, Ruiu & Lucidi, 2012; Roberts, Wa Kivulu & Davids, 2010; Crawley, 2009; Jowell, 1998). Conceptualised as antecedents of behavioural intention, attitudes serve as significant predictors of individuals' behaviours and can thus provide clues about behaviour related to finding and keeping paid work, as well as about perceptions in respect of commitment to work, skills acquisition, and satisfaction at work. It is, therefore, imperative that skills planners have a comprehensive understanding of labour market perceptions and their potential impact on the efficiency of government interventions.

Unfortunately, the role of attitudes in education and labour market outcomes remains neglected in education and skills development discourses endeavouring to reduce unemployment in South Africa.

To close this gap, the Labour Market Intelligence Partnership (LMIP) collected data on social attitudes to the labour market by including questions in the Human Sciences Research Council's (HSRC) South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) of 2013. Privileging the connection between labour market behaviours and work attitudes, the study examined public attitudes to work in order to gain a deeper understanding of South African work values, preferences and experiences, and labour market behaviour patterns. While social attitudes to the

labour market are dynamic, they also are shaped by perceived opportunities and constraints, which, in turn, frame expectations and aspirations in respect of education and labour market participation. Therefore, if the challenge for policymakers lies in how they can understand decision-making about work, job searching, and education and training opportunities, an understanding of the public's lived experiences as labour market participants offers critical information for effectual skills planning.

With an unemployment rate currently at 27%–36% if one counts the discouraged unemployed who have given up looking for a job (Stats SA 2016) – the study of attitudes to work is critical in the South African context. South Africa's working age population face varied labour market circumstances ranging from unequal access to employment to unequal rewards, testifying to high levels of inequality. However, it is not only the labour market opportunities that are unequally distributed, but also the type of jobs available, with specific groups likely to be underemployed, in non-standard forms of employment or in 'working poverty'. Indeed, unemployment profoundly affects the most disadvantaged segments of the population – those who have low levels of education and skills, those who reside in relatively poorer provinces and black people, are most likely to be vulnerable to unemployment (Yu, 2008 in Festus et al. 2015; Stats SA 2014). Nevertheless, despite a wealth of information, little is known about how South Africans perceive, define or explain unemployment or its causes.

It is thus important to gain insight into the attitudes, motivations and behaviours of individuals in order to

formulate tailored employment and skills-development interventions.

Research must attend to the labour market's heavily fragmented nature, refining studies to account for distinct labour market states, namely the employed, unemployed and economically inactive. Labour market segmentation theory provides a useful lens for analysing the inequalities in access to, and experience of work, in the South African context. The fundamental assumption is that inequality is a result of structural forces and cannot be reduced to the qualities of individual employees, and that different processes generate inequality in different segments of the labour market (Stavik & Hammer, 2000). Importantly, the theory notes the interaction between the qualities of particular jobs and the individual attributes of employees. Taking into consideration the heterogeneous nature of our respondents, we thus designed a survey to address key questions as detailed in the following section.

Study questions

Public perceptions of the labour market

- What do South Africans value in a job?
- To what extent is education perceived to produce positive labour market outcomes?
- What are the perceptions of barriers to labour market participation?

Perceptions of those in employment about the quality of employment

- How satisfied are the employed with their jobs?
- What is the prevalence of perceived qualification mismatches among the employed?
- Who has received workplace training among the employed?
- To what extent have there been skills requirement changes at places of work?

Perceptions of those without jobs about prospects of labour market participation, and their work-seeking behaviour

- What are the views of the unemployed on the possibility of finding employment in the future?
- What strategies do work seekers use to search for employment?

Report structure

The remainder of the report is structured as follows. Section 2 provides the background of the study, as well as its rationale and motivation, and the approach followed in researching attitudes to work in South Africa. The methodology adopted is reported in Section 3. Section 4 covers attitudes to work more generally, while Sections 5 and 6 examine attitudes to work (and perceptions of the labour market) from the perspective of the employed and unemployed, respectively. Section 7 concludes the report with a discussion of its key findings.

2. AN APPROACH TO STUDYING ATTITUDES TO WORK IN SOUTH AFRICA

Study background

The broad aim of this study is to determine attitudes of the South African public to work. Such an undertaking requires comprehensive analysis of the source and nature of South Africans' work values,¹ attitudes,² perceptions, preferences, expectations and behaviour patterns. The underlying assumption is that the public's attitudes to employment and unemployment experiences offer insight into factors that influence decisions about education, training, and labour market participation. Central to this complex undertaking is, firstly, to have a comprehensive understanding of subjective factors that determine labour market behaviour. Secondly, in order to obtain a better understanding of the attitudes and behaviour patterns, as well as the inequalities, in the labour market, it is necessary to recognise that the public is heterogeneous and thus has varied preferences and beliefs. This section presents the framework adopted to facilitate the study of public attitudes to work in a segmented labour market, and the implications thereof for skills planning endeavours.

¹ Values represent standards or criteria for choosing goals and guiding action (Dose, 1997). Like attitudes, they also have behavioural and affective dimensions, which develop so that individuals can meet their needs in a socially desirable manner (Rokeach, 1973); thus they are shaped largely by the social and cultural context of the individual.

² Attitudes have been described as abstract constructs that represent a person's likes and dislikes. These arise from inner frameworks of values and beliefs, which develop over time. Behaviour is a mere reflection of how these internalised systems are expressed. Jung (1971) defined attitudes as the readiness of the psyche to act in a certain way. Attitudes are comprised of three components: emotions, behaviour and thoughts.

An understanding of factors that account for the behaviour of individuals in the labour market is embedded within the principles of behavioural economics. This school of thought emphasises empirical findings regarding behaviour that are partly at odds with standard economic assumptions (Babcock, Congdon, Katz & Mullainathan, 2012; DellaVigna, 2007; Savage, Knight, Bacon, Millington, Bullock & Buckland, 2011). Research using behavioural economics suggests that people make systematic errors and hold non-standard preferences and beliefs (Babcock et al., 2012) that cannot be explained by mainstream economic theories. In other words, individuals diverge from the standard economic models in three areas: they have non-standard preferences, hold non-standard beliefs, and display systematic biases in decision-making (DellaVigna, 2007). For instance, it seems improbable that a work seeker would reject some form of employment or that a learner would refuse an opportunity for further education in the context of high unemployment. Yet, the Department of Labour has noted some reluctance among low-skilled, unemployed South Africans to accept employment in sectors such as agriculture (Mncwango, Ngandu, Visser & Paterson, 2015). This issue of 'refusal' to accept an employment opportunity despite unemployment represents a systematic error in mainstream economics that can be addressed through a study of public attitudes to work. This theoretical framework, therefore, offers a number of useful insights for the current study.

Significantly, behavioural economics makes it possible to gather rich evidence that observes both objective and attitudinal factors (Savage et al., 2011). Objective evidence includes characteristics,

circumstances and behaviour (e.g. employment status and socio-economic factors of an individual). Attitudinal evidence provides an understanding of what matters most to people, and why it matters. These are subjective factors that determine labour market behaviour. Such evidence would be useful in understanding perceived barriers and motivational factors. Factors influencing labour market behaviour, as well as the changes necessary to enable individuals to make the choices that support skills planning goals, would become apparent.

The fundamental assumption that the public is heterogeneous, with differing preferences and beliefs in the workplace, leads us to the adoption of a segmented, labour market theory framework. The existence of segmented markets, which are distinguished by separate systems of rules, different channels of information, and different skill and job requirements (Deakin, 2013), is at the core of segmented labour market theory. The theory regards the labour market not as a homogenous entity, but as composed of numerous segments (Doeringer & Piore, 1971), which are formed by economic, political and social forces (Jakstiene, 2010). The primary segment is composed of good-quality jobs, characterised by favourable wages, benefits and working conditions, stable employment, possibilities for promotion, returns to human capital, a high degree of trade union membership, good possibilities for internal training, and low risk of unemployment. The secondary segment, however, is characterised by fewer possibilities for internal training, no returns to human capital, low wages, unfavourable working conditions, high turnover, few possibilities for advancement, and a low degree of union membership (Wial, 1991; Sousa-Poza, 2003; Psacharopoulos, 1987).

It has been noted that the South African labour market is characterised by various segments, for instance formal and informal, and rural and urban dualisms (Fourie, 2012). This makes it necessary to understand the perceptions and labour market experiences of those in different segments of our society. The labour market is further fragmented into the well-paid formal sector and the periphery (Uys & Blaauw, 2006). The challenge of unemployment has

also been related to segmentation on the basis of skills, occupations, demographic groups, race (McCord & Bhorat, 2003), earnings (Kingdon & Knight, 2004), formal and informal sectors (Kingdon & Knight, 2004; Heintz & Posel, 2008), employment conditions (Hofmeyer, 2000; Bhorat & Leibbrandt, 2001) and geographical location (Bhorat, Leibbrandt, Maziya, Van Der Berg & Woolard, 2001; Wittenberg, 1999). The theory, however, notes that there is little mobility between primary and secondary markets (Cummings, 1980). It has been observed that disadvantaged workers are more likely to be confined to the secondary sector because of low skills and structural factors such as discrimination (Leontaridi, 1998). If mobility to a better segment of the market is a challenge, the question in a context like South Africa then becomes: What interventions exist to advance those who are trapped in low-skills jobs? This, again, underscores the need to recognise the heterogeneity of South African labour market participants and the challenges this presents for promoting the employment prospects of vulnerable groups.

Using segmented labour market theory provides insights into the South African labour market. Firstly, about 60% of South Africans in employment are in low-skills jobs (Altman, 2006). Secondly, the low-skilled and less educated unemployed continue to face barriers to entry into the labour market. The discussion above has shown that segmentation of the South African labour market is acknowledged by many labour economists. However, the segmentation is diversified across sectors and population groups.

International literature has noted the evolution taking place in labour market statistics, with the introduction of new indicators and old ones being refined (Dewan & Peek, 2007; Sangenberger, 2011) as a result of changing labour market conditions. This has led to a dialogue around the inadequacy of using unemployment/employment measures as the only key indicators of the labour market. Such observations call for more nuanced approaches to assessing the health of the labour market, particularly in developing countries. The value of the current study is that it undertook to gather both

qualitative and quantitative information about the labour market situation of both employed and unemployed individuals in order to enhance the broader understanding of the labour market, and thus allowing us to incorporate measures of job quality.

Having established that there is a need for a comprehensive understanding of public attitudes to work, we now elaborate on the concept 'attitude' and its role in labour market outcomes.

Why is it important to study attitudes to work?

How do different segments of the population view opportunities and constraints with regard to work? 'Attitude', conceptualised as an antecedent of behavioural intention, has an influence on labour market and educational decisions such as job searching and labour market participation. Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) provide rich evidence that attitudes are central to explaining and predicting human behaviour. In other words, people act in accordance with their attitudes. Theories commonly used to explain the attitude-behaviour relationships include Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) theory of reasoned action, Ajzen's (1985) theory of planned behaviour, and Feather's (1982) expectancy value theory. In trying to understand the state of unemployment, the theory of planned behaviour holds that the intention to engage in behaviour is a single, direct predictor of behavioural performance. Thus, human behaviour is best predicted by intention to perform or not perform the behaviour in question. Intentions, in turn, are determined by people's attitudes to the behaviour, the perceived social pressure to perform the behaviour (subjective norm), and the perceived difficulty of engaging in the behaviour (perceived behaviour control). The more favourably individuals view the situation and the more the social pressure from significant others, the more likely they are to form the intention to perform the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen, 1985; Song, Wanberg, Niu & Xie, 2006). For instance, with job-seeking behaviour, the more pressure from significant others (possibly the family), the more likely it is that the work seeker will search intensively

and might eventually become despondent and discouraged upon failure to find a job.

What do ordinary South Africans perceive as causes of unemployment? This is a central piece of information for all interventions aimed at reducing unemployment by increasing the number of individuals in employment, or encouraging them to improve their education and skills in order to better their employment prospects. It is important to understand these perceptions and 'lay' explanations, as they could motivate individuals to participate in the labour market or discourage them from doing so. Thus, perceptions regarding causes of unemployment have the potential to influence decisions to search for employment in the case of the unemployed, or to search for alternative employment among the currently employed, and to influence individual career choices by informing the selection of subjects and qualifications, or by shaping preferences for places of vocational training. On the other hand, depending on what is perceived as a cause of unemployment, work seekers might elect to withhold their labour.

The investigation of public explanations of unemployment is well advanced in developed countries. The literature shows that beliefs about unemployment generally fall into three categories: individualistic explanations, which place the responsibility for unemployment on individuals; societal or external explanations, which place the responsibility on structural, political and economic factors; and fatalistic explanations, which place the responsibility on chance and luck (see Furnham & Hesketh, 1989). Such explanations of unemployment have been related to employment status, voting patterns, motivation to obtain work, job expectations, and demographic factors such as age or level of education (Furnham & Hesketh, 1989). Research has suggested that individuals who have not worked for long periods tend to offer fatalistic and societal explanations for unemployment. Fatalistic unemployed people perceive themselves as powerless to change their circumstances (Furnham, 1982).

While there is valuable scholarship investigating the definition, measurement, nature and magnitude of

unemployment in South Africa, the analysis of the experience of unemployment has been neglected. Kingdon and Knight (2000) investigated whether unemployment in South Africa was involuntary or whether the unemployed chose to stay unemployed. Two possible explanations account for the existence of jobless people who are not actively searching for work. The first is the luxury-employment thesis, in terms of which a jobless person may have developed a 'taste for unemployment' and there is a possibility of redistribution within the household (i.e. in households with high incomes where there is reduced incentive to look for a job) (Kingdon & Knight 2004). The second concerns discouragement. Kingdon and Knight (2006) argue that the category of the discouraged should be identified and recognised. They assert that the unemployed in this category are more deprived and vulnerable than those searching for work and thus face discouragement about the prospects of finding a job and the high costs of job searching. Thus, giving up on job searching is not the outcome of preferences, but is due to constraints. The main discouragement factors include long duration of unemployment, high local unemployment and poverty, limited access to transport and facilities, and the high cost of job searching.

The discouraged-worker thesis proposes that non-searching is a result of the perception of the jobless person that the probability of finding a job is too low relative to the cost of the search. Poor labour market prospects leading to discouragement may be due to individual characteristics, either real or ascribed (Van Ham & Buchel, 2004). Discouragement has also been attributed to the structure of the labour market and poor access to employment opportunities (Van Ham & Buchel, 2004). Kingdon and Knight (2000) found that, in South Africa, non-searching is the outcome of discouragement, with jobseekers hampered by impediments such as poverty (Posel, Casale & Vermaak, 2013; Wilson & Ramphela, 1989), the cost of searching, long duration of unemployment, and adverse local economic conditions. This makes investigation of perceived reasons for unemployment and employability important. Studies looking into the role played by structural factors alongside individual

perceptions in labour market participation would represent an important layer of information explaining the state of unemployment in the country.

The next subsection presents key concepts and frameworks that allow us to investigate the experiences and overall quality of work life of those in employment.

Why do we need to observe behaviour and attitudes of those in employment?

Understanding the sources and impact of work attitudes and behaviour has become very important, since work is increasingly central in most people's lives. Full-time work occupies a major part of our waking hours; therefore, the experience of work can be beneficial or detrimental. Access to employment potentially offers a host of benefits such as income, structured activity, and a sense of achievement, purpose and fulfilment, as well as a feeling of personal and social worth (Winefield, Montgomery, Gault, Muller, O'gorman, Reser & Roland, 2000). Scholars from various fields (e.g. economics, sociology and human resources management) have realised the importance of studying workers' assessments of their quality of work life and the bearing that this has on policy decisions (Diener & Seligman, 2004; O'Donnell & Oswald, 2015).

Departing from the traditional concept of 'working for a wage', studies of attitudes to employment acknowledge that, while paid work is crucial because it provides income, it also has psychological benefits, provides a recognised role in society, and contributes to a sense of personal and social identity (Warr, 1982). Moreover, workers' attitudes about their jobs, their job satisfaction and commitment are important indicators of well-being. Work experiences and job attitudes are known to 'spill over' and affect other areas of workers' lives, including general satisfaction with life. Despite there being common agreement on the importance of work, not all workers value the various aspects of work in the same way. Rather, individuals impute meanings to their work activity. One way to understand the variety of these meanings is to assess the degree to which particular individuals place value on the different aspects of work

(Kalleberg, 1977). Work values signify what people desire from work and serve as useful reference points to assess working conditions (see, for example, Dose, 1997; Ross, Schwartz & Surkiss, 1999; Bu & Mckeen, 2001).

Work values are beliefs pertaining to desirable end-states (e.g. high pay) or behaviour (e.g. working with people). ... they refer to what a person wants out of work in general, rather than to the narrowly defined outcomes of particular jobs. (Ross et al., 1999: 54)

Since values are useful tools for assessing the social world, work values are important for evaluating the workplace, attitudes to specific work situations and behavioural responses. This view suggests that whether or not a job is considered good or bad depends largely on both the workplace situation and individuals' work values. Thus, understanding work orientations and work values is important for understanding job choices, attitudes about work, and choices in behaviour in the labour market, with the alignment of workplace situation and work values representing an important indicator of job quality (Hauff & Kirchner, 2013).

Altman (2006) explored the proportions of the 'working poor' in South Africa and classified 62% of South African workers in this category. Rogan and Reynolds (2015) noted that about 21% of working South Africans lived in households where there was not enough income to meet the most basic needs of all household members. People are considered to be poor if their consumption or income falls below the minimum level required to meet their basic needs (i.e. below the poverty line). The World Bank defines the working poor as those with earnings insufficient to maintain a median household above the poverty line. However, challenges associated with estimating household income based on wage data have been raised. This is due to the possible presence of non-employment-related components of income such as property income or transfers (World Bank, 2006). The concept of the working poor is, nonetheless, useful because it raises questions about employment failing to cushion against poverty. Poor economic outcomes, as perceived by those in employment, might influence

their general attitude to work and willingness to offer labour. The work of Kingdon and Knight (2004), however, provides empirical evidence showing that unemployment in South Africa is largely involuntary and that the unemployed are worse off than those in employment.

Perceptions of qualification matches in the labour market

Qualification mismatches, defined as discrepancies between the qualifications held by workers and those required by their jobs, have been a growing concern among policymakers. Frequently, qualification incompatibilities are recognised as an educational system's failure to provide work-seekers with skills relevant to labour market demands. Conversely, dissonances are sometimes attributed to the labour market's failure to allocate suitable jobs for all workers (OECD, 2014).

The job-searching and job matching theories regard qualification mismatches as a temporal situation in one's career life which is expected to be resolved when workers access complete information about the labour market (Dorn & Sousa-Poza, 2005). However, labour market mismatches are a complex phenomenon which could arise from the multitude of factors. For instance work seekers might accept jobs requiring skills and qualifications that are inferior to what they possess as a way of compensating for lack of work experience (see Sicherman and Galor (1990), Sicherman (1991); Alba-Ramírez (1993); Quintini (2011); Sloane (2014).

It would thus be useful to establish the extent to which those in employment perceive themselves to be mismatched in their jobs, given the high levels of unemployment in the country. More so, because of evidence, showing that qualification mismatches affect individuals variously at different stages of their working lives (Quintini & Pouliakas, 2014).

Why do we need to observe attitudes and behaviours of those without work?

An understanding of job-searching processes and behaviour is urgently needed in a context like that in South Africa where the government's primary focus is to eliminate barriers associated with employment.

Job searching has been formulated as a 'major behavioural pathway leading to re/employment' (Song et al., 2006) because of its role as an antecedent to finding employment (Kanfer, Wanberg & Kantrowitz, 2001; Hoyer, in press; Saks & Ashforth, 1999). Duff and Fryer (2005: 1) refer to job searching as 'one of the most important determinants of the structure of inclusion and exclusion'. The process of job searching has also been referred to as part of the information-gathering process: work seekers collect information about job offers in order to arrive at a job-searching strategy that is perceived to be efficient. Job searching has been compared to fishing, where choices of location and lure help to catch the big fish (Weber & Mahringer, 2006). Different job-searching methods tap different pools of potential employers.

Dating back to Rees's (1996) seminal study, most empirical evidence reveals the importance of relatives, friends and acquaintances, or social networks, in finding jobs. From the perspective of a work seeker, this is one of the least costly and most productive methods of generating acceptable wage offers and reliable information about work opportunities. From an employer's point of view, this serves as a cheap and useful screening method, as employees are most likely to refer friends who are similar to themselves (Weber & Mahringer, 2006). The public employment office is seen as a formal intermediary, but also as complementary to the informal search methods. This service is provided by the state free of charge to employers and employees, thereby intervening directly in matching the two parties (Osberg, 1993). This mode of job searching is designed to serve work seekers who cannot rely on social contacts. However, research has found mixed results regarding the efficiency of the service. While it has been shown that good jobs are often found through informal networks, some of the literature notes that job offers found through this method are characterised by low wages and high rejection rates, from the work seeker's perspective (Blau & Robins, 1990; Osberg, 1993). Studying the different job-searching methods is, therefore, important for the search outcome, as the job-searching method gives access to different pools of employment and to different wage distribution.

Who is searching for employment? What job-searching methods are they using? How often do they search? What factors are responsible for a decision to search for a job? These are urgent questions that need to be addressed in order to understand the job-pursuit behaviour of the unemployed, as well as factors that contribute to attaining successful employment. Developing a better understanding of how and why individuals look for work is critical if the ultimate goal is to promote job-searching behaviour. While there is a wealth of literature on job-searching processes in South Africa, there is a paucity of investigations paying attention to both economic and psychological factors in job-searching processes.

Conclusion

This section has presented the theoretical frameworks appropriate for studying public attitudes to work in a segmented labour market. The study is based on the primary assumption that understanding public attitudes to work offers insights into the factors that influence decisions about labour market and education participation. This requires an understanding of both objective and attitudinal factors that influence the labour market behaviour of individuals. The undertaking is embedded in the behavioural economics framework and investigates the perceived barriers and motivational factors involved in labour market participation.

The heterogeneous nature of the public in its expectations and preferences regarding the workplace is central in the study. Segmented labour market theory is suitable for explaining the varying attitudes and behaviour patterns of South Africans in the labour market. Questions of how different segments of the population view opportunities and constraints to work are critical in the current study. For instance, individual perceptions about barriers to employment have an influence on the decision, and on the method used, to seek work. The overall assessment of the labour market is also likely to influence general perceptions about work, including satisfaction with current employment. In recognising the segmented nature of the labour market, it is important to note that the attitudes of the public are

affected by employment status and attachment to the labour market. Individuals in different segments have varied expectations and experiences of the labour market.

Having presented the key frameworks and central concepts adopted for the study, the next section discusses the design of the research, describing procedures for data collection and analysis.

3. METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Data for the study were collected through the South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS). The SASAS is an annual Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) survey that has been collecting data on South African attitudes, beliefs and behaviour patterns since 2003. The principal objective is to collect, analyse and disseminate data on contemporary South African society in order to track and explain the interaction between the country's changing institutions, the political and economic structures, and the attitudes, beliefs and behaviour patterns of its diverse population (Pillay, Roberts & Rule, 2006). This repeated cross-sectional method of collecting data has been modelled on long-standing attitude surveys in the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Germany.

The study used a representative sample, with the sampling frame for the survey based on the HSRC's Master Sample, which was designed in 2002. The Master Sample contains 1 000 primary sampling units based on the 2001 population census estimates (see Roberts et al., 2010, for detailed information on sampling). Stratified random sampling was used to collect the data. Three explicit stratification variables used were: province, geographical type (urban formal, urban informal, rural formal, and rural informal) and population group (African, coloured, Indian and white).

Face-to-face interviews were therefore used to collect information at the household level. A total of 2 885 South Africans aged 16 years and older participated in the study. These were individuals in and out of the labour market, including students,

work seekers, non-searchers, and those in employment. The sample, therefore, was sufficient to capture the main features of individuals in and out of the labour market, as well as the labour market's segmentation.

A module on attitudes to work

In 2013, the Labour Market Intelligence Partnership (LMIP) initiated a module on 'attitudes to work, employment and unemployment', to be fielded through the SASAS. A set of questions pertaining to attitudes to employment and unemployment was included in the SASAS questionnaire. The module was made up of 41 questions (see Appendix 1). During the project-conception phase, the project team conducted a literature review to identify gaps in the available labour market data and potential themes for inclusion in the module. Guided by the literature review, the following themes were identified so as to inform the development of the questionnaire:

- **Work values.** The public (both employed and unemployed) had to indicate what they perceived as the important characteristics of a job. The features of a job included salary, promotion opportunities, job security, usefulness to society, and interesting nature. These characteristics were taken to reflect the public orientation to work.
- **Perceived role of education in positive labour market outcomes.** Addressed at the general public, these questions, adapted from the 1985 International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), measured people's perceptions of intergenerational mobility. The level of

intergenerational mobility in society measures the extent of equality in economic opportunities or life chances. Furthermore, it assesses the extent to which a person's circumstances during childhood are reflected in their success later in life.

- **Perceived barriers to employment.** This question was designed to assess the public's perceptions of the causes of, and barriers to, employment. It is important to understand these perceptions, as they could motivate individuals to participate in the labour market or discourage them from doing so. Moreover, such perceptions have the potential to influence decisions to search for employment in the case of the unemployed, or to seek alternative employment in the case of the currently employed. Respondents were asked to provide up to three reasons for the high unemployment rate in the country. This took into consideration the fact that the individual's state of employment could influence their attribution of the causes underlying employment status.
- **Subjective evaluation of work.** Posed only to those in employment, these questions asked the worker to evaluate levels of satisfaction with a job, extent of the match between qualification possessed and what was required by the job, training activities, and changes in skills levels in the job.
- **Job-searching attitude and behaviour.** These questions were addressed only to the unemployed. The intention was to get in-depth insight into their job-searching behaviour. Thus, respondents were asked a series of questions about their intention to look for employment, level of optimism about finding employment, and the job-searching strategies they used to seek employment. Research on predictors of job searching, particularly among the unemployed, has shown that the immediate antecedent of job-searching behaviour is the intention to look for a job, which is also influenced by the extent to which a person has a positive or negative evaluation of job-searching behaviour and the perception of social pressure to look for a job.

In addition, the SASAS questionnaire has a core set of demographic, behavioural and attitudinal variables that are fielded annually in order to monitor change and continuity.

A pilot study was conducted in order to test the module. Specifically, the pilot study was conducted to: discover how long it would take to administer the questionnaire; determine the most appropriate sequencing of sections and questions; check for the correctness of the skip patterns; identify whether the wording of questions was clear and understandable to those being interviewed; provide fieldworkers with the chance to practice; and obtain a range of response options that could be used to close questions that previously were open. The instrument was refined and adjusted on the basis of the findings of the pilot study.

Data analysis and interpretation

The data were cleaned and analysed with data-analysis and database-management tools, including IBM SPSS Statistics and Microsoft Excel. The one open-ended question on perceived barriers to employment was recoded in Excel for analysis purposes.

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data. Descriptive statistics, such as mean, frequencies, percentages and graphic displays, were used to describe the sample and the key variables. Cross-tabs were used to compare identified variables, while inferential statistics, such as chi-square tests, were used to test for statistically significant relationships. An Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression model included in the report presents predictors of job satisfaction among the employed South Africans. All percentages used in the report are weighted to the total South African population.

A note on some variables created

How the labour market status variable was created. Individuals were requested to indicate their current labour market status. They then had to select one option that best described their work situation.

The standard question posed in the SASAS is the following: What is your current employment status?

Employment status	Freq.	%
Employed full-time	608	21
Employed part-time	186	7
Employed less than part-time (casual work/ piecework)	39	1
Temporarily sick	17	1
Unemployed; not looking for work	211	7
Unemployed; looking for work	734	26
Pensioner (aged/retired)	457	16
Permanently sick or disabled	53	2
Housewife; not working at all, and not looking for work	160	6
Housewife; looking for work	81	3
Student/learner	266	9
Other (specify)	24	1
Missing	49	21
Total	2 885	100

In constructing this variable, those employed full-time, part-time, as casual workers, or who were temporarily sick were grouped as the 'employed' (n = 850). Individuals who indicated that they were unemployed and looking for work (n = 815) were categorised as 'unemployed'; while those who reported being unemployed and not looking for work, as well as pensioners, the permanently sick or disabled, and learners, were classified as 'economically inactive' (n = 1 147). It needs to be emphasised that this is a self-reported measure of employment status. It is based on the respondent's assessment of their attachment to the labour market. Accepting the premise that individual attitudes are also influenced by their perceived situation in the labour force, for analytical purposes it seemed appropriate to classify the public according to their self-reported employment status.

How the qualification mismatch variable was created. Workers were classified as underqualified if their highest qualification was lower than the qualification they regarded as necessary to carry out their job; they were classified as overqualified if their highest qualification was higher than the qualification they regarded as necessary to do the

job; and they were appropriately matched if there was a match between their level of education and what they reported as required for the job. A qualification mismatch was assessed by comparing workers' objective education measures with what they perceived to be required in a job. Thus, there was reliance on self-reported data to gauge the extent of the qualification mismatch. Although these measures could suffer from some measurement bias, they do provide insight into the match between workers' jobs and their qualifications.

How the quality of work-life deficit variable was created. This is sometimes referred to as the 'decent work deficit', which is a gap between 'people's aspirations regarding their work and current work situation' (Adhikari & Gautam, 2010: 8). All respondents were requested to indicate which characteristic of a job they considered to be highly important. The responses of those who were in employment were then selected in order to explore the extent to which preferred job traits existed in their current jobs. The deficit is thus the gap between what workers prefer in a job and what they experience in their places of employment.

Data value and limitations

It should be noted that the study sought to obtain a qualitative understanding of what South Africans think about the labour market, as illuminated in their subjective evaluation of work and what they perceive to be barriers to labour market participation. In addition, the intention was to gain insight into their experiences and preferences regarding work, rather than to investigate labour force participation trends. Moreover, the current study initiates a systematic and methodologically sound structure for studying the changing work attitudes, values and behaviour patterns of South Africans in and out of the labour market, which will supplement existing labour market macro-datasets that do not address attitudinal variables in much detail.

4. PUBLIC ATTITUDES TO WORK

Introduction

This section presents the public's general perceptions and views of the labour market, irrespective of their labour market status. Thereafter, a description of the sample population is provided. Importantly, in this section, we start to segment the study population into three categories (employed, unemployed and economically inactive) on the basis of their self-reported status in the labour market. In-depth knowledge of the characteristics of the respondents and their attachment status to the labour market is critical, because it has a direct bearing on work attitudes. Thereafter, we investigate what the South African public expects from employment by discussing characteristics that they perceive as important in a job. The next subsection presents the public's views of the perceived benefits of education for labour market outcomes. This provides insights into public perceptions of the value of education for entry into the labour market. The final subsection reports on perceived barriers and constraints to employment.

Who are in the sample?

A total of 2 885 individuals participated in the study. The composition and distribution of the sample are

reflective of the South African population based on the Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) census estimates of 2013.

The sample therefore consists of 52% females and 48% males. The sample is distributed by age as follows: 16–24 years (10%), 25–34 years (28%), 35–44 years (23%), 45–54 (15%), 55–65 (12%) and 65 and above (7%). About 79% are black Africans, 10% white, 9% coloured and 3% Indian.

In terms of education, 59% have an education level below matric, 28% have a matric qualification or equivalent, and a further 12% have a tertiary qualification. The education distribution of the current sample is in line with the Census estimates of 2011: no schooling – 9%; primary schooling – 17%; incomplete secondary education – 34%; matric or equivalent qualification – 29%; and post-school – 12%.

Respondents with less than matric are more likely to be black African or coloured. The pattern is reversed when looking at the individuals with tertiary education, where the proportion of white respondents is double that of Indian and four times that of black African respondents.

Educational background significantly influences the probability of having a job. The employment probability for people with higher levels of education is almost three times higher for people with high levels of education than it is for those who have not completed high school.

Table 1: Sample characteristics (unweighted and weighted)

	Unweighted N	Per cent	Weighted N	Per cent
Total	2 885	100	36 496 491	100
Male	1 044	40	17 562 202	48
Female	1 841	60	18 934 289	51
16–24 years	567	20	1 952 570	10
25–34 years	611	21	9 145 203	28
35–44 years	538	19	7 221 648	23
45–54 years	411	14	4 640 731	15
55–64 years	377	13	3 422 531	12
65 years and above	371	13	2 770 537	6
Black African	1672	58	28 387 284	78
Coloured	510	18	3 362 071	9
Indian/Asian	311	11	1 021 189	3
White	390	14	3 718 323	10
Low	210	7	2 499 175	7
Medium	1 349	47	20 288 610	56
High	1 052	37	10 360 450	28
No schooling	116	4	1 222 593	3
Primary	462	16	5 307 573	15
Some secondary	1108	38	14 300 022	40
Matric or equivalent	783	27	11 238 907	31
Tertiary education	348	12	3 625 384	10
Urban, formal	2 001	69	23 180 899	64
Urban, informal	144	5	3 337 241	9
Traditional-authority areas	599	21	8 988 891	25
Rural, formal	141	5	989 459	3
WC	368	13	4 323 673	12
EC	372	13	4 297 898	12
NC	187	7	792 316	2
FS	224	8	1 931 034	5
KZN	586	20	6 800 588	19
NW	214	7	2 448 676	7
GT	428	15	9 564 223	26
MP	232	8	2 740 879	8
LP	272	10	3 603 180	10

Figure 1: Educational attainment of respondents by race (percentage)

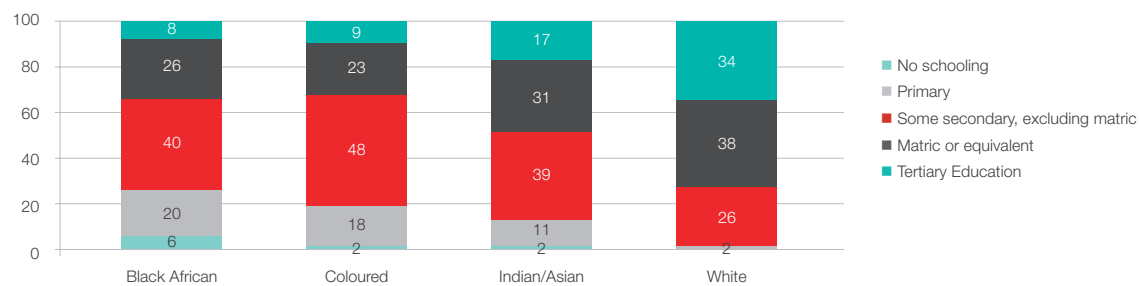
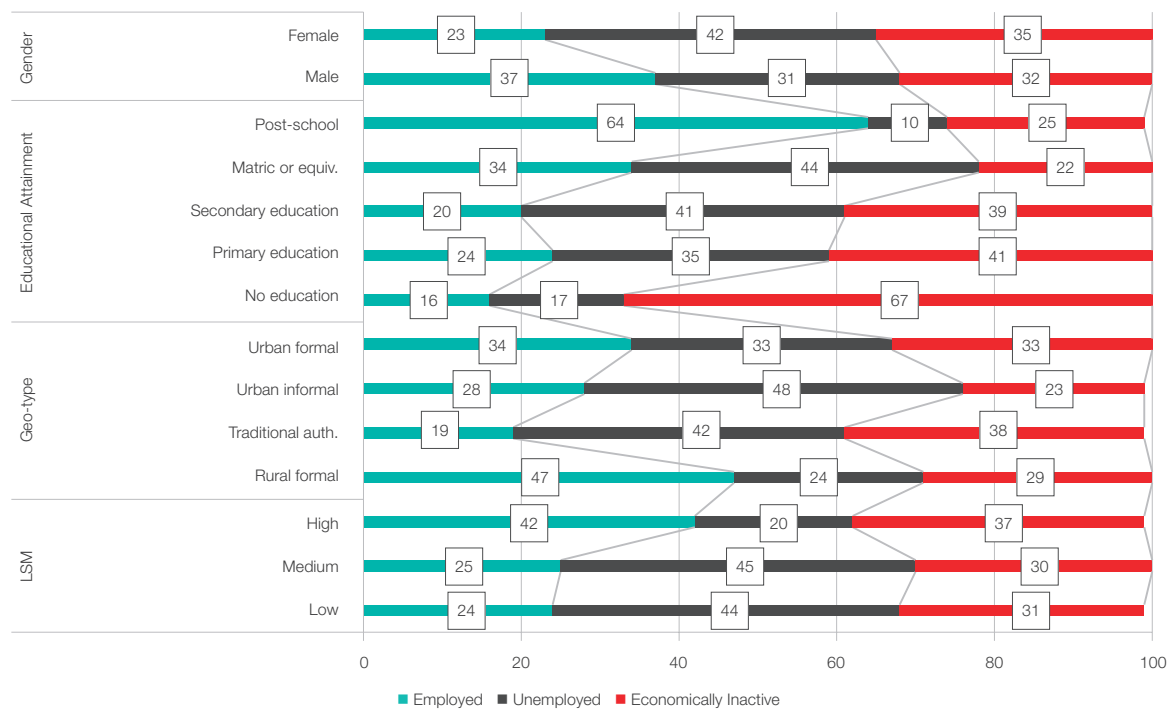


Figure 2: Labour market status by demographics (percentage)



In terms of location, three-quarters (72%) of the respondents resided in urban areas, with 63% in urban formal areas, and 9% in urban informal areas. A further quarter (25%) of the respondents resided in traditional-authority areas, with 3% in the rural formal areas.

To establish the patterns of labour market segmentation, respondents were asked to indicate their employment status. About 30% (n = 850) were in employment,³ a further 37% (n = 815) were not employed, and 33% (n = 1 147) were not economically active.⁴

Who are the employed? Within the ‘employed’ category (850) were those in full-time employment (76%; n = 608) and part-time employment (3%; n =

186); individuals involved in piecework or casual work (4%; n = 39); and a further 2% (n = 17) temporarily away from work due to sickness. More males (42%) than females (23%) were in employment.

Figure 2 reveals four significant patterns. Firstly, males are significantly more likely to be in employment compared with females. Secondly, the likelihood of being in employment increases with level of educational attainment. Individuals with tertiary education are three times more likely to be employed than those with less than a matric or equivalent level of education. Thirdly, the highest levels of employment were found in the rural formal areas, where almost half (47%) of the respondents indicated that they were involved in some form of employment. Fourthly, individuals from households in the higher social classes, according to the Living Standards Measure (LSM), are more likely than those in the middle and low classes to be in employment (42%). Of course, the relationship between the family’s socio-economic status and employment is bi-directional, in that individuals in high LSM may be more likely to be employed, but also households with employed members are more likely to be in higher LSMs.

3 The report uses Statistics South Africa definitions of the employed, the unemployed and those not economically active, but includes all person aged 16 years and above. Employed persons are individuals who indicate that they are working formally or informally. Unemployed persons are those who are without work, are available to work, and are taking active steps to find work. Not economically active persons are those who are neither employed nor unemployed.

4 Taken as a percentage of the labour force, the unemployment rate in the current sample is 49% and is therefore much higher than the official rate of 27%.

Who are the unemployed? As can be seen in Figure 2, there is a strong correlation between educational attainment and employment status. Individuals indicating that they were unemployed were disproportionately represented among those who had attained primary (35%) and some secondary school education (41%) or a matric qualification (44%). This is in line with the message conveyed in Table 2 emphasising the positive role of educational background on the probability of having a job.

The unemployed are also more likely to be residents of urban informal areas (48%) or traditional-authority areas (42%). A much higher occurrence of unemployment is found among those in the low (44%) and medium (45%) LSM groups than in the high LSM group (20%). The unemployed fall largely into the age groups 25–34 and 35–44 years (55% and 46%, respectively).

Who is inactive? The inactive category includes the respondents who indicated that they were unemployed and not looking for employment. Thus, it includes students, pensioners and the permanently disabled or sick. The highest proportion (51%) of working-age people who indicated that they were

neither employed nor seeking work occurred among the youngest group, namely those aged 16 to 24 years. This could be due to the youth still being in education and training institutions. In addition, about 14% of those 65 years and older indicated inactivity in the labour market. Of note is that people with no formal schooling (67%) predominated in the economically inactive category. On average, economic inactivity declines with an increase in education.

Looking at participation in the labour market by province, Figure 3 shows that the provinces with the highest levels of unemployment were Limpopo and Mpumalanga (45% and 46%, respectively). Next were Gauteng (41%) and the Northern Cape (40%). Economically inactive people constituted the highest proportions in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape (both 39%). The Western Cape had the highest proportion of people in employment (46%).

What is their source of household income and income shares?

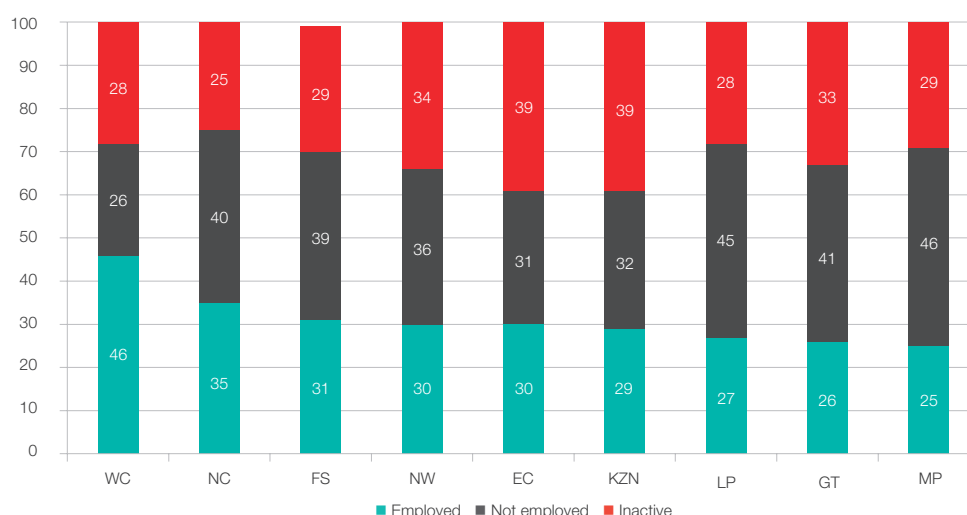
With regard to the socio-economic status of the respondents, Table 3 provides a summary of the distribution of household income of respondents.

Table 2: Unemployment rates by educational attainment, 1995–2013

Educational attainment	1995	1999	2000	2005	2013
Up to incomplete secondary	74	69	70	66	61
Matric or equivalent	22	26	24	30	37
Post-school	3	4	5	3	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Stats SA (1995–1999) October Household Survey; Stats SA (2000–2005) Labour Force Survey; Altman, 2006: 9; HSRC (2013) South African Social Attitudes Survey.

Figure 3: Employment status of respondents by province (percentage)



About 32% of households represented in the survey received no income and below R1500 per month. This included both wages and non-earned income. Notably, the table shows almost three-quarters of respondents indicating that their household income was below R5 001. Respondents whose households did not receive any form of income were predominantly black Africans (96%) who had low educational attainment (less than matric) (63%).

The survey also asked respondents to indicate what the main source of income was for the household (see Figure 4).

Of the households with respondents who indicated that they were employed, 88% relied on wages. This was followed by a negligible 8% who relied on pensions or grants. Households of unemployed respondents tended to rely on multiple sources of income, including wages (43%), grants (42%),

remittances (4%), and farm and non-farm income.⁵ The unemployed segment of the population accounted for 68% of those who indicated a complete lack of income. Those inactive in the labour market identified pensions or grants (50%) and wages (41%) as primary sources of income for their households. Further analysis showed that about 64% of households whose overall income was R1 500 or less (see Table 3) identified social grants as their main source of income.

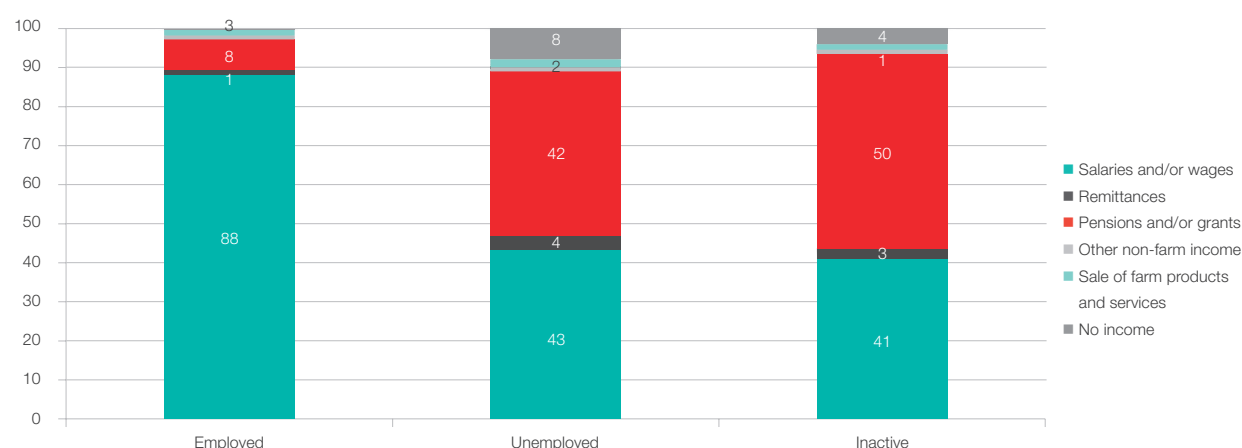
These characteristics of those employed, unemployed or inactive in the labour market are significant for the analysis that follows. The next subsection discusses what the public regards as the important aspects of a job. It was expected that the rating of the different features of a job would be influenced by respondents' employment status and would embody labour market preferences and expectations.

⁵ Non-agricultural income includes sources such as wage employment, self-employment, property income and remittances (Alemu, 2012).

Table 3: Distribution of total household income

Income category	Percentage
No income	4
< R1 500	29
R1 501–R5 000	39
R5 001–R10 000	13
R10 001–R20 000	7
> R20 000	7
Total	100%
Total responses received	2 111
Missing	774
Total number of respondents	2 885

Figure 4: Respondents' main sources of household income (percentage)



What do South Africans value in a job?

In seeking to identify what the public perceived as important in a job, the study evaluated eight aspects relating to work values on a five-point scale, ranging from very important to not important. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which different aspects of a job were important to them. This was asked of the whole population, whether employed, not employed or inactive. Figure 5 presents the percentage distribution of total responses to this question.

Job security was rated as very important more often than any other characteristics (see Figure 5). Almost seven out of ten (68%) respondents said that job security was 'very important', with almost one-third (29%) citing it as an 'important' feature of a job. The respondents also saw jobs that provide the prospect of advancement as 'very important' or 'important' (94%). Furthermore, other characteristics of work such as a job that is interesting, useful to society, or provides high income, although rated 'very important' or 'important', were not perceived as the highest priority (90% each). Therefore, although the public sees a need for occupational growth, intrinsically satisfying jobs and good income, security of tenure is what makes a job 'good' compared with other job conditions and financial benefits. However, again, the fact that job security is also not far ahead of other characteristics shows that South Africans do acknowledge that job quality is determined by a multitude of factors.

How do the views differ between different categories of people? For this, patterns within the group that rated attributes as 'very important' were analysed. We found evidence of great diversity, in terms of demographic features, in what members of the public perceive as valuable attributes of a job.

Table 4 shows that, while there was no significant variation among men and women, there were discernible age, race and class differences. The main age effect was evident among those in their sixties, who, upon reaching retirement age, appear to express lower overall attachment to job security, earnings and promotional opportunities than certain younger cohorts. Black Africans placed greater emphasis on high earnings (56%), job content (52%) and meaningfulness of work (54%) than did other population groups.

There was a strong educational effect across all job-value items. Those with higher levels of education, particularly a matric and tertiary education, tended to register greater concern for issues such as job security, promotion, and interesting work than did those with limited or no formal schooling. The pattern was reversed, however, in the value attached to earnings, with the tertiary educated placing less emphasis on a high income than did those with a matric or lower educational attainment.

As for living standards, job security was a greater priority for those with high living standards than for those with low or medium living standards. Individuals in low or medium social classes were

Figure 5: Perceived important characteristics in a job (percentage)

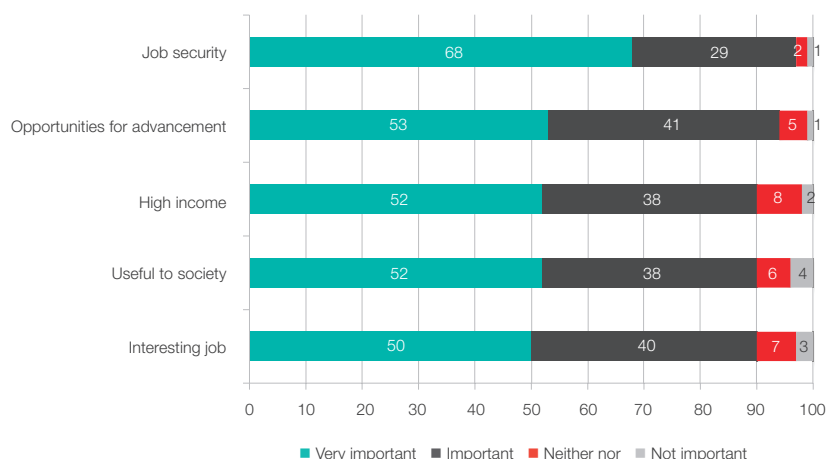


Table 4: South African job values – percentage rating ‘very important’

	Job security	High income	Good opportunities for advancement	Interesting job	Useful to society	N
<i>Gender</i>	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	
Male	68	53	52	49	51	1 044
Female	67	50	53	50	51	1 841
<i>Age group</i>	**	***	***	n.s.	**	
16–24 years	69	54	57	52	58	567
25–34 years	69	57	55	53	52	611
35–44 years	70	51	55	50	49	538
45–54 years	69	51	48	47	51	411
55–64 years	59	42	46	41	43	377
65 years and older	60	38	43	45	48	371
<i>Population group</i>	n.s.	***	n.s.	***	***	
Black African	67	56	53	52	54	1 672
Coloured	72	47	54	39	40	510
Indian/Asian	58	33	46	39	3	311
White	68	27	49	45	45	390
<i>Educational attainment</i>	***	***	***	***	**	
No schooling	55	50	41	46	38	116
Primary	57	52	44	42	46	462
Grades 8–11 or equivalent	67	57	52	52	54	1 108
Matric or equivalent	72	50	57	48	53	783
Tertiary	74	37	59	57	51	348
<i>Living-standard level</i>	**	***	n.s.	*	n.s.	
Low	64	62	50	56	48	210
Medium	67	57	52	53	53	1 349
High	74	42	57	46	51	1 052
<i>Geographic location</i>	**	***	**	***	***	
Formal urban areas	68	47	51	46	49	2 001
Informal urban settlements	74	57	63	61	67	144
Rural traditional-authority areas	63	61	53	54	51	599
Rural commercial farms	62	56	46	50	53	141
<i>Employment status</i>	***	***	***	**	n.s.	
Employed	74	53	58	51	52	850
Unemployed	68	55	53	54	53	815
Economically inactive	61	47	48	44	49	1 147
South Africa (2013)	68	52	53	50	51	2 840
ISSP (2005) average – 32 countries	58	36	32	49	30	43 440

Note: n.s. = not significant; * significant at $p < 0.05$; ** significant at $p < 0.01$; *** significant at $p < 0.001$.

much more concerned about earnings and interesting work. Those in rural, traditional-authority areas were more inclined to attach importance to high income and interesting work than were those in formal urban areas. Those in informal urban settlements were also more predisposed to opportunities for advancement and a job that is useful to society. Looking across all five job characteristics, those in informal urban settlements ranked highest on all except high income. In terms

of employment status, the employed placed greater value on job security than did the unemployed and economically inactive. The economically inactive also tended to place significantly less emphasis on earnings, advancement, and interesting work than did the employed and unemployed.

In summary, the results show that, overall, there are clear patterns of variation based on class, race and, to a lesser degree, age in terms of what people

deem important in a job. While job security, decent earnings, promotional chances and stimulating work take precedence, considerable numbers still believe that other aspects of job content and autonomy are of value. More importantly, there is greater consensus on job security as a defining characteristic of a good job than any other characteristic, and this greater consensus is observed across groups defined by demographics, location and labour market status.

To what extent is education perceived to promote better labour market outcomes?

In this subsection, views of the South African public on the role of education in improving access to, and participation in, the labour market are explored. Respondents were required to indicate the extent to which they were in agreement with the following statements:

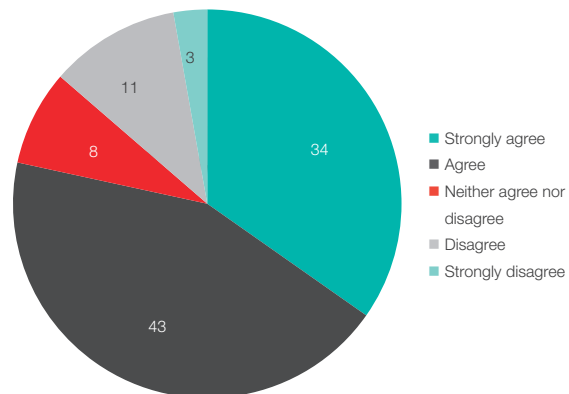
1. In South Africa, being more qualified improves one's chances of getting employment.
2. In South Africa, the children of a professional worker and a factory worker have an equal chance of getting ahead in life.

Perceived labour market outcomes of education

Over three-quarters (77%) of South Africans were of the perception that being educated improves the odds of employment. This comprised one-third (34%) who 'strongly agreed' with the statement and a further 43% who 'agreed'. However, just over one-tenth (14%) did not think that education increased the chance of finding work, and a further 8% said they neither agreed nor disagreed.

While the overall picture is positive, assessment of the role of education in improving chances of labour market participation varied considerably among

Figure 6: In South Africa, being more qualified improves one's chances of getting employment



respondents. Positive perceptions generally declined with the respondents' level of education completed. The view that education improves one's chances of being employed was most pronounced among those with no schooling (86%). Notably, one-fifth of those with tertiary education disagreed with the statement.

The highest proportion of those seeing the value of education in labour market outcomes was among the youth (1–24 years). Such sentiments were also stronger among those currently without jobs (79%) or inactive (80%), residing in rural formal areas (91%) and of a low LSM group (85%). Black Africans (81%) were also disproportionately represented among those who were in agreement that better education leads to better employment prospects.

Whites (27%), those with a post-school qualification (20%) and those with a high LSM (20%) were more likely not to believe that education increases the chance of finding work (14%).

Views on intergenerational mobility

Just over half (56%) of the respondents thought that anyone can get ahead in life and that children have

The public strongly believes that education is key to a positive labour market outcome and improves likelihood of employment.

Social and economic mobility is strongly linked to education, which is seen to facilitate economic advancement, irrespective of family background.

Figure 7: In South Africa, being more qualified improves one's chances of getting employment (by socio-demographic characteristics)



an equal chance of succeeding, regardless of social background (see Figure 8). However, a sizeable 29% were less positive about equality in the distribution of economic opportunities, while a further 15% said that they neither agreed nor disagreed.

While there were no variations by employment status, there were distinct variations in responses based on race and education (see Figure 9). Black Africans (60%) were the most likely to agree with the statement, followed by Indian or Asian respondents (57%). The highest proportion of those who were unsure ('neither ... nor') (17%) occurred among coloured people.

Figure 8: In South Africa, children of a professional worker and of a factory worker have an equal chance of getting ahead in life

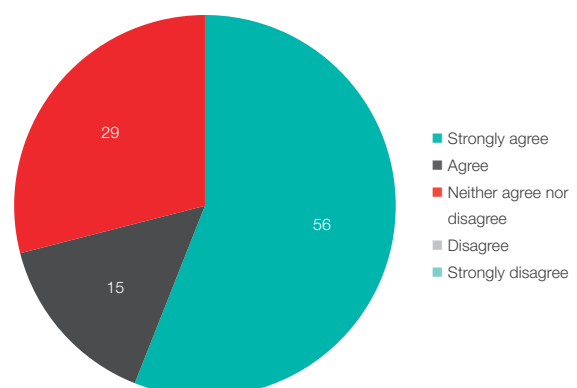
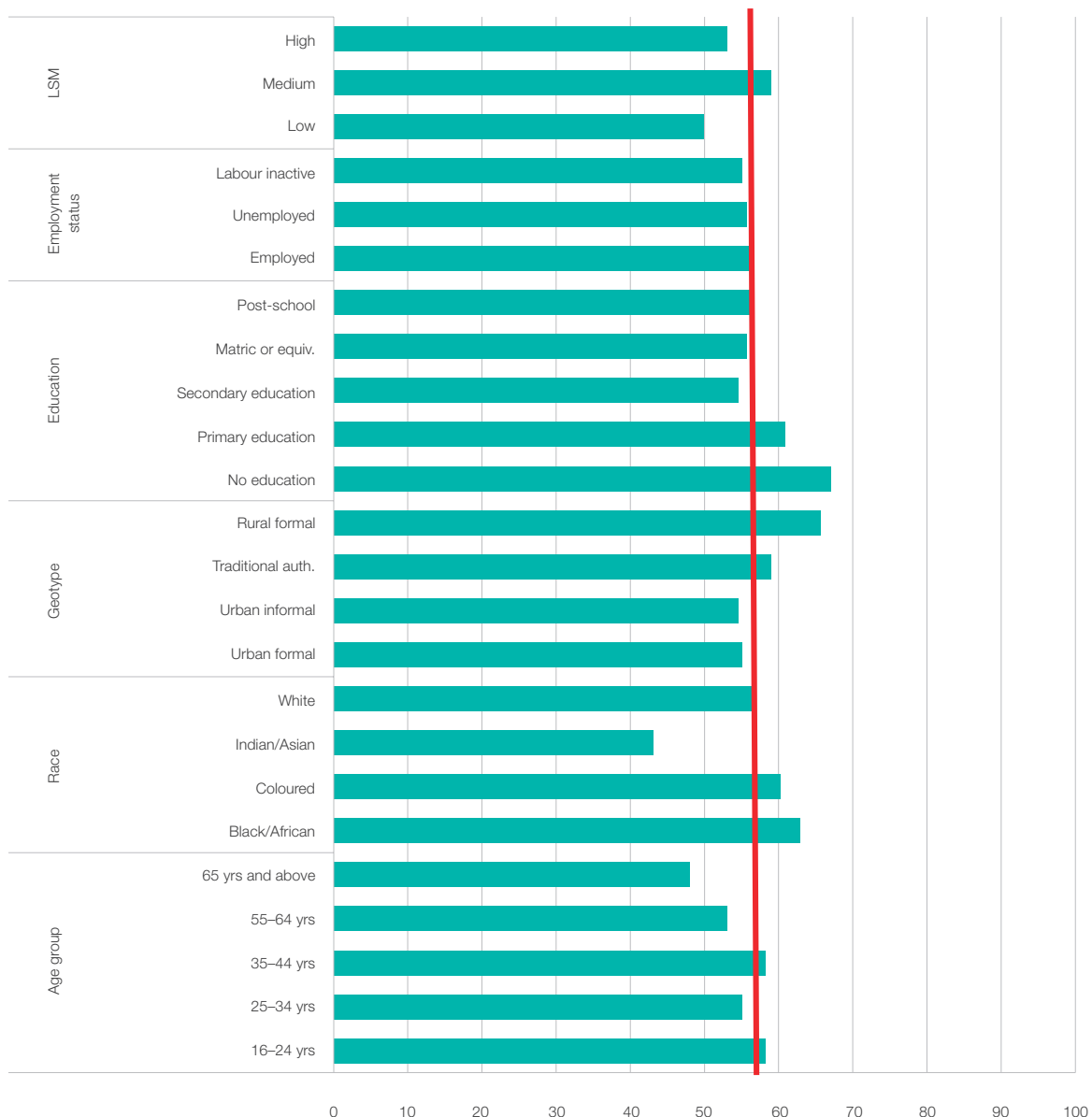


Figure 9: In South Africa, children of a professional worker and of a factory worker have an equal chance of getting ahead in life (by socio-demographic characteristics)



The view that anyone can get ahead in life irrespective of social background was also most prevalent among those with some secondary education (35%), but less so among those with matric and tertiary education (10%).

Those who disagreed with the statement that children have an equal chance of getting ahead in life (29%) were disproportionately represented among white respondents (47%), coloured respondents (41%), individuals aged 55 to 64 years (39%), those with a post-school education (33%), and those with a matric (32%).

What does the public perceive as barriers to employment?

This subsection investigates what ordinary South Africans perceive to be the key reasons for high unemployment in the country. Survey respondents were asked an open-ended question: What do you think are the three main reasons there are so many people who are unemployed in South Africa? The four most commonly identified barriers to employment were the following:

- Education quality (40%);
- Scarcity of jobs (33%);

Figure 10: What the public think are reasons for high unemployment



- Lack of appropriate skills (23%); and
- The unemployed not doing enough to find jobs (22%).

The diversity in the responses underscores the fact that the public is heterogeneous, with differing needs, expectations and perceptions that are shaped by varied circumstances. Figure 10 begins to capture some of the frequently mentioned reasons for high unemployment in the country.

The first reasons given by the respondents were recoded using Furnham's (1982) typology of reasons for unemployment: individualistic (further categorised as education- and skills-related explanations); societal (including structural, economic and political factors); and fatalistic explanations.

Figure 11: Explanations of unemployment using Furnham's typology (percentage)

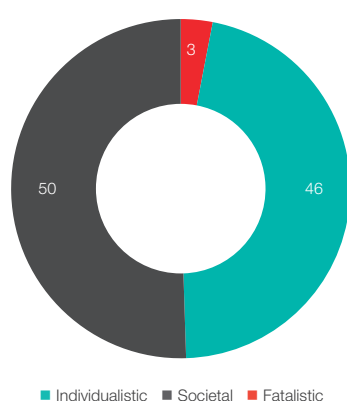
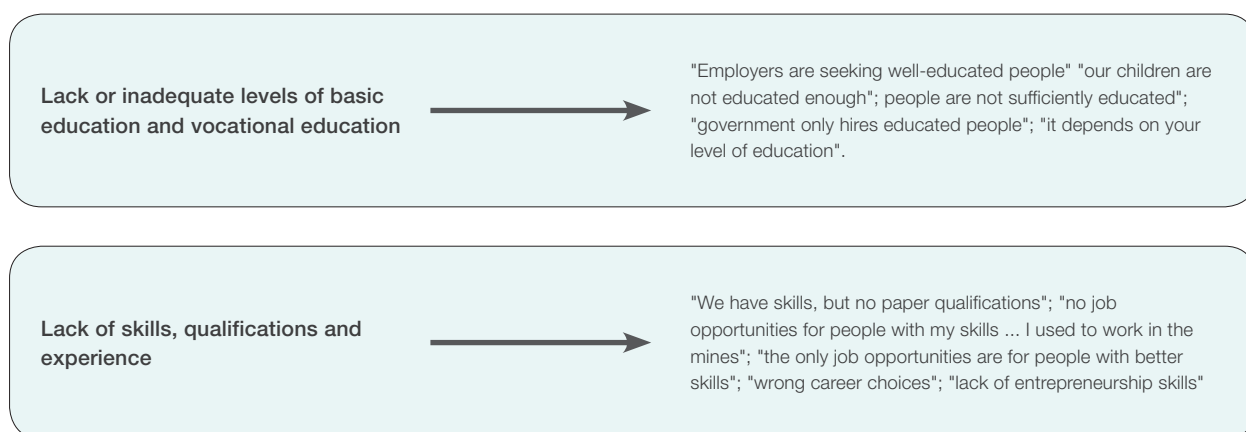


Figure 11 reveals that almost equal proportions of respondents attributed unemployment to individual and societal factors. Exactly 50% attributed unemployment to societal factors (external factors) related to structural and economic reasons, suggesting that unemployment is a social responsibility and a function of societal injustice. Unemployment was seen by 46% as a result of lack of ability and effort (internal factors) on the part of the unemployed to find work. Within that proportion, about 10% made reference to individual deficiencies (in general) in finding work, while 36% specifically cited lack of appropriate education and skills as a hindrance to finding employment. About 3% ascribed unemployment to fatalistic factors, which are beyond the work seekers' control.

The literature has shown that explanations for unemployment are related to a person's employment status and education rather than age and gender (Furnham & Hesketh, 1989). Unemployed individuals are more likely to ascribe unemployment to external reasons (societal or fatalistic attributions), and this intensifies the longer a person is without employment.

The next subsection explores the reasons for high unemployment in greater depth by examining themes that emerged from the open-ended question. These are discussed using the same three categories of explanation: individualistic, societal and fatalistic.

Figure 12: Education and skills deficiencies as reasons for unemployment



Individualistic explanations of unemployment

Responses citing individualistic explanations as underpinning failure to find employment were divided into two categories. The first category contains responses pointing to lack of ability due to an insufficient level of education or skills. The second category is made up of responses referring to lack of effort by the unemployed to seek employment. These individualistic responses attribute the state of unemployment to the unemployed rather than to structural impediments and thus place the responsibility of finding employment on individuals.

Lack of ability to find work: Education and skills deficiencies

Commonly cited explanations for unemployment in South Africa are poor education and inadequate skills. Figure 12 summarises frequently mentioned individualistic reasons for unemployment. The observation that individuals fail to secure a place in the labour market because they are not sufficiently educated and do not possess the skills that are required by firms is highlighted. Of course, lack of education and skills could be classified as fatalistic or structural in the context of individual agency

being limited by structural or circumstantial factors. However, verbatim survey responses tended to place the responsibility of getting education or improving skills on the unemployed individual. Another reflection is that some employers attach greater significance to qualifications than to experience. This has the potential to disadvantage those unemployed who possess the skills but lack the formal credentials, which suggests that, if the unemployed were to improve their education and training, they would be able to secure employment. Residents of rural formal areas disproportionately mentioned the need for interventions that train the unemployed in entrepreneurial and life skills, thereby boosting their self-esteem.

Lack of willpower to find work

A concern that the unemployed are not doing enough to find employment emerged in several comments. In this regard, respondents mentioned the following:

- Absence of willpower to find jobs, and laziness;
- Lack of motivation to exit the state of unemployment;

'Nowadays kids do not want to get education'; 'the youth are not interested in education'; 'people do not want to work'; 'they are lazy' ... 'they are choosy'; 'they expect handouts from the government'; 'it is easier to get a social grant than to work these days'; 'lack interest to look for and to keep jobs'

‘They only employ their relatives’; ‘we do not have money for bribes’; ‘we do not have money to buy jobs’, ‘everywhere you go, you get asked to pay something to get a job’

- Access to non-earned income (such as social grants), which serves as a disincentive to look for work; and
- The youth’s lack of willpower to exploit ‘available’ education opportunities.

Societal explanations of unemployment

A frequently cited societal explanation for unemployment was poor quality of education. Although there was general consensus across the whole population that quality of education was a major constraint to employment, this concern was most prevalent among young people in full-time education.

Corruption, at both the government level and the corporate or organisational level, was also perceived as contributing to unemployment.

Other societal and structural reasons included the following:

- Poor quality of education;
- Government failure to create employment;
- Nepotism;
- Lack of networks to obtain employment;
- Discrimination on the basis of age; and
- Strong preference for work experience on the part of employers.

There was a significant age pattern to concerns about discrimination. The ‘older’ segment of the population saw the labour market as holding more opportunities for young entrants. Further, the older segment felt neglected in terms of education, training, development, and job-creation interventions.

Lack of information about possible work opportunities was another commonly cited reason for failure to find jobs. Concerns about lack of information were more specific among those with low levels of education. This suggests that skills

planners need to consider innovative and non-traditional ways of disseminating information about available job opportunities, such as radio, to access this group.

Economic explanations of unemployment

Some segments of the public attributed unemployment to the general scarcity of jobs as a result of slow economic growth. Another dominant view was that high unemployment was a result of global economic crises, which led to retrenchments. Additional reasons included the following:

- Lack of financial resources (for further education and job searching);
- Company closure;
- Job losses and destruction associated with mechanisation;
- Foreign migrants taking jobs that should be going to South Africans;
- Population growth in South Africa exceeding economic growth;
- Trade unions pricing their members out of work; and
- Labour regulation in South Africa.

A considerable segment of the population attributed high unemployment to poverty. Respondents referred to lack of financial resources to obtain a good education that would enable them to secure good jobs. Related comments pertained to lack of resources (e.g. lack of transport money, and access to the Internet and computer facilities) to search for employment.

Fatalistic explanations of unemployment

The perception that being unemployed was beyond one’s control emerged in comments such as ‘We are just unlucky’, suggesting an acceptance of the inevitability of unemployment. There was also mention of individuals not working because of poor health.

Conclusion

The aim of this section has been to set out the public-attitudes-to-work scenario, which will serve as a backdrop for the discussion to follow. Based on respondents' self-reported labour market status, the section has served the important function of introducing the three segments of the labour market: the employed (30%), unemployed (37%) and those who are inactive (33%). The section conveys four important messages.

Firstly, the study found evidence of a significant and positive relationship between education and labour market position. Individuals with tertiary education are three times more likely to be employed than are those with less than a matric or equivalent level of education. Notably, people in the economically inactive category predominate among those with no formal schooling. Black African respondents continue to be overrepresented among those with no, or lower levels of, schooling, making it difficult for them to find a place in the labour market. Social class also emerged as a significant predictor of labour market position, with individuals from households in high social classes more likely to be in employment. While households of respondents who indicated being in employment rely primarily on wages, households of unemployed persons tend to rely almost equally on grants and wages of other employed family members. This trend is also evident among respondents who are economically inactive, with almost half relying on pensions or social grants. These patterns suggest the existence of various layers of disadvantage, which are important in order to identify policy priority areas for improved labour market participation.

Secondly, respondents rated job security as the most important characteristic of a job. Overall, there are clear patterns of variation based on class, race and, to a lesser degree, age and employment status in terms of what people deem important in a job. While job security, decent earnings, promotional chances and stimulating work take precedence, considerable shares still believe that other aspects

of job content and autonomy are of value. In terms of employment status, the employed place greater value on job security than do the unemployed and economically inactive.

Thirdly, social and economic mobility was strongly linked to education, which was seen to facilitate economic advancement, irrespective of family background. Over three-quarters of South Africans concur that being educated improves one's chances of getting a job. These sentiments are highest among those with low levels of schooling, those not in employment, those living in rural formal areas and/or of low LSM, and blacks. In respect of intergenerational mobility, slightly more than half of the population perceive children to have an equal chance of succeeding regardless of socio-economic background.

Lastly, in the quest to understand how the public explains the reasons for persistent unemployment, the study found that almost equal proportions attributed unemployment to societal and to individual factors. Thus, unemployment is seen as the responsibility of both government and individuals. There is consensus that lack of education and poor quality of education are a bottleneck to participation in the labour market. The public strongly believes that education is central to positive labour market outcomes and improved labour force participation. This finding, therefore, provides a good basis for government efforts to improve the quality and reach of education. Moreover, the study shows that different groups in society have clear views on where they may be disadvantaged within the labour market. For instance, most of the white respondents believed that affirmative-action policies exclusively benefitted their black counterparts, which is a reason for white unemployment.

Having discussed the general attitudes of the public to work, the next section will focus on the attitudes and labour market experience of those in employment.

5. THE EMPLOYED AND THE LABOUR MARKET

Introduction

Using a subset of responses from the employed respondents, this section analyses perceptions of the quality of employment. The analysis thus focuses on the experiences and views of the employed regarding the labour market. Having ascertained what the public believes should characterise employment, the section looks at the extent to which workers actually believe that their jobs provide such outcomes, and at how such evaluations differ on the basis of the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of these workers. Then, the section explores how satisfied workers are with their jobs and what factors account for job satisfaction. Furthermore, we observe patterns of other job outcomes, such as life satisfaction, satisfaction with standard of living, life achievements, and self-reported health status. We also explore the incidence of qualification mismatches as experienced by those in employment, highlighting socio-demographic factors associated with qualification mismatches in the labour market.

Who are the employed?

As noted in the previous section, only 30% (850) of the respondents were in some form of employment. Individuals with tertiary qualifications, those residing in

rural formal areas, males, those with a high LSM, and those aged between 35 and 45 years are most likely to be employed. The survey results show a significant relationship between employment and level of education completed, with the odds of being employed increasing with additional education attained.

Considering that South Africa is characterised by high levels of inequality and poverty, it is important to take a closer look at the earnings patterns of employed respondents. It has been reported that over 60% of working people earn less than the tax threshold of about R5 000 per month (National Treasury, 2013). Table 5 shows the distribution of wages of the employed respondents. From the total sample of the employed, the lowest-paid (29%) earn up to R1 500, about 38% earn between R1 501 and R5 000, while a further one-third earn about R5 000 and above.

Table 5: Distribution of wages of the employed

Category	Percentage	Total number
1 < R1 500	29	187
2 R1 501–R5 000	38	235
3 R5 001–R10 000	15	101
4 R10 001–R20 000	12	100
5 > R20 000	6	47
Missing		180
Total	100	850

Analysing the distance between real and ideal features of a job, about 86% of employed persons consider it ‘very important’ for a job to offer a high income, but only 25% agree that their job provides them with this kind of income.

The majority of employees declare themselves satisfied in their jobs. From the total of those who declare themselves to be ‘completely satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’, men have a higher degree of satisfaction than women. Satisfaction tends to increase with age, level of education and social status.

When one pays closer attention to low earners (< R1 500), it can be seen from the data that some individual characteristics are important risk factors, increasing the possibility of being in the category of low earners. When looking at the educational level of workers, the probability of falling into the low-wage group and educational level are negatively related. Thus, workers with low educational attainment are more exposed to the risk of being low earners. The low-payment risk is about two times higher among workers with lower education (69%) than it is for those with a post-secondary (27%) or tertiary education (4%). Gender is an important factor. Women in employment are slightly more likely than men to be among the working poor: 24% of employed women and 22% of employed men were poor. In terms of age, younger workers (under 35 years) are more vulnerable to low pay than older workers. The demographic characteristics of low pay conform to the findings of other South African studies on low wage work (see Oosthuizen, 2012; Altman, 2006). The concentration of low pay among some vulnerable groups begs for interventions that seeks to facilitate their movement into better-paying employment.

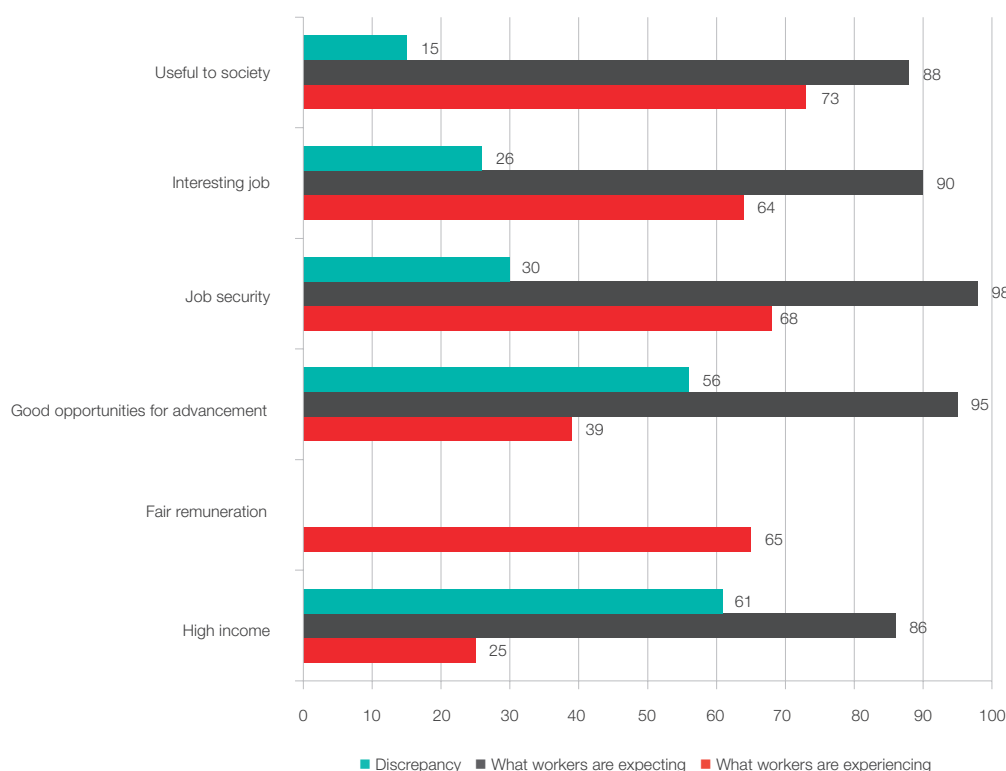
What do the employed value the most in their jobs?

Work values and a 'good job' deficit: What workers want compared with what they have

The previous section investigating the aspects of a job that are perceived as important showed that, irrespective of employment status, job security is the most important aspect of a job for South Africans. This was followed by good opportunities for advancement. Using the responses of the employed group only, Figure 13 points to discrepancies between what workers perceived as important in jobs and what was found in their actual jobs.

While, on average, around two-thirds or more of South African workers believe that their jobs are useful to society, are secure, draw fully on their capabilities, and offer chances for skills development, there is considerable discontent regarding the economic rewards for their labour and prospects for upward social mobility. Only one-fifth of workers consider their incomes to be high, while two-fifths (39%) indicate that they have good promotional opportunities. The discrepancy

Figure 13: Gaps between what workers want in a job and what they have



Note: Respondents were not asked to evaluate 'Fair remuneration'.

Figure 14: Perceived quality of work among non-permanent and low-wage workers

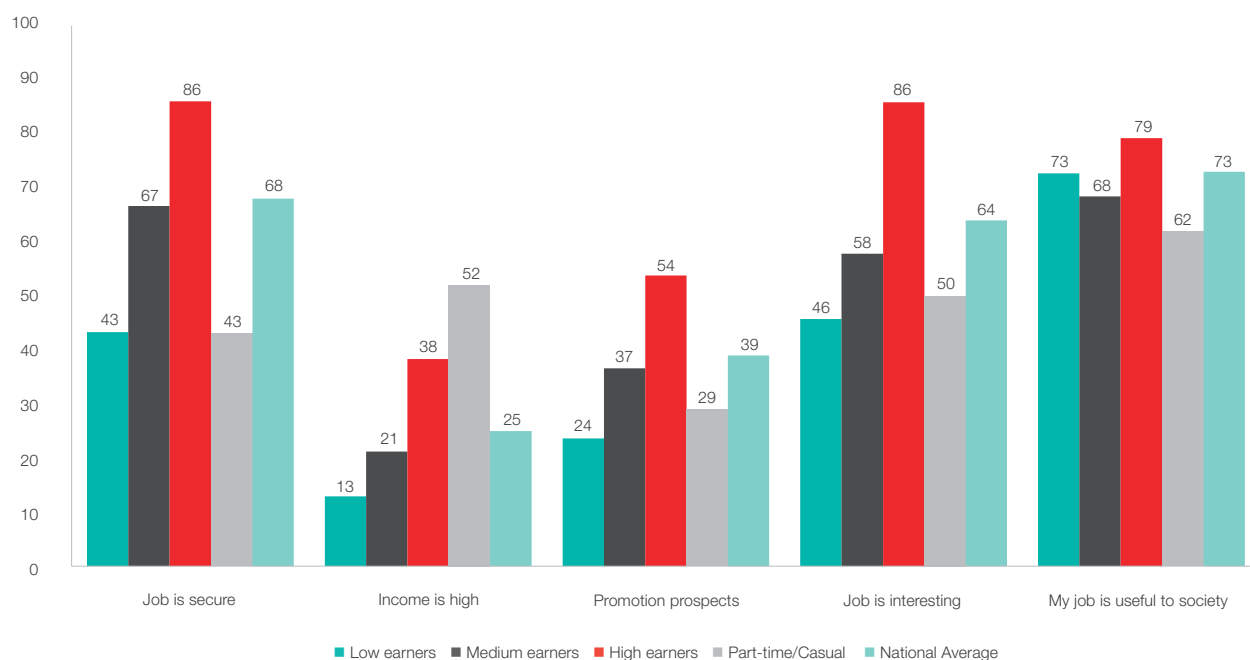
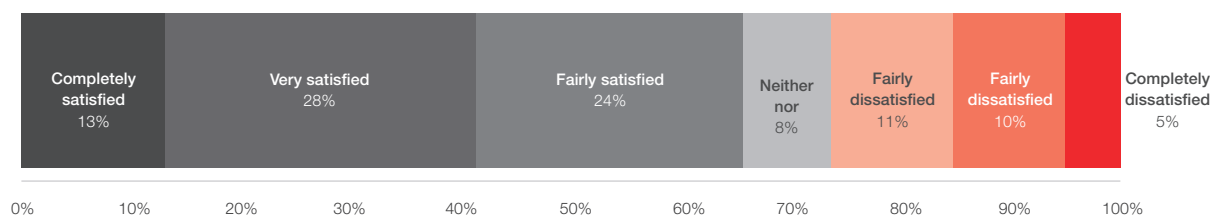


Figure 15: Job satisfaction levels of workers (percentage)



between work values (what workers perceive to be important in a job) and workplace reality (subjective evaluation of what is happening in their current jobs) is, therefore, especially acute in relation to attaining a high income (61%) and good prospects for job promotion (56%). This seems to suggest that workers are relatively more satisfied with the content of their employment (interesting, useful to society, helps others) than its ability to meet their immediate and longer-term material needs.

We then extracted the responses of those who indicated that they were employed on a part-time or casual basis, in order to compare their workplace situations. Workers in short-term or part-time jobs recorded more discontent and were, therefore, worse off than those in full-time employment. Figure 14 suggests that non-permanent employees in low-wage work felt more insecure and registered discontent regarding promotional prospects in their current jobs, which could be due to the limited

training offered. In contrast, employees in relatively higher-paying positions enjoyed favourable working conditions. However, it is notable that employees in non-permanent positions tended to be more content with their wages. Assuming that these employees did not elect to be engaged in part-time or casual employment and face more economic hardship, this finding could be interpreted as the employees having reduced expectations and being merely appreciative of having any job in a context of job scarcity.

How satisfied are the employed with their jobs?

Almost two-thirds (65%) of the employed expressed some level of satisfaction with their job (completely, very or fairly satisfied). Conversely, more than one-quarter (26%) were fairly, very or completely dissatisfied. Who is completely or very satisfied with their jobs?

Table 6: Demographic characteristics of completely satisfied and very satisfied workers

	High job satisfaction (completely or very satisfied) (percentage)	Number
Gender	n.s.	
Male	42	424
Female	38	395
Age group	*	
16–29	33	197
30s	37	239
40s	54	207
50 +	44	169
Population group	*	
Black African	31	428
Coloured	43	153
Indian/Asian	58	82
White	74	154
Educational attainment	*	
Less than matric	32	328
Matric or equivalent	38	275
Post-school	61	197
Living-standard level	*	
Low/medium	28	353
High	58	403
Geographical location	*	
Urban areas	45	661
Rural areas	26	158
National average	44	819

Note: n.s. = not significant; *significant at $p < 0.001$.

Fewer than half (44%) of respondents reported that they were completely or very satisfied with their jobs (see Table 6). Although there were no significant gender-based differences in job satisfaction, the data point to a considerable divide on the basis of age, population group, educational attainment, living standards, and geographical location. One-third of young South Africans aged 16 to 29 years were satisfied with their jobs; and the proportion rose modestly among workers in their thirties (37%)

and more appreciably among those in their forties (54%). Satisfaction levels tapered off to 44% for those aged 50 years and older. The largest observable range in satisfaction values was evident between race groups, with a difference of more than 40 percentage points between the share of black African and white workers expressing satisfaction (32% versus 74%, a 42% difference). Those with a matric certificate or lower educational attainment were significantly less satisfied with their jobs than were those with a tertiary education, while the gap between those with a low or medium living standard and a high living standard similarly stood at around 30 percentage points.

Thus, employed people with a tertiary level of education and/or in the high LSM and/or white group and/or living in an urban formal environment were significantly more likely than other employed people to be completely or very satisfied with their jobs.

The low-pay category had the largest proportion of those expressing dissatisfaction with their pay and benefits (see Table 7). It is to be noted, however, that the percentage which appears to be satisfied within the low-pay category are more likely to be occupying jobs in the secondary sector. There are two possible explanations for the discontent among those in the low-pay category. Firstly, those workers might be unhappy because of working conditions associated with low-pay jobs. Secondly, these could be skilled or educated workers who are displaced primary-sector workers actively seeking mobility back to the primary sector (Burchell & Rubery, 1989). This highlights the value of having attitudinal data alongside objective data on individual employment situations in order to allow for a more complete understanding of the interaction between experience, behaviour and opportunity.

Table 7: Overall satisfaction with pay and benefits by earnings category (percentage)

	Satisfied with pay and benefits	Neither nor	Dissatisfied with pay and benefits	Number
Low	44	5	51	56
Medium	52	12	36	295
High	83	3	13	400
National average	65	7	27	751

What factors account for job satisfaction among the employed?

The ordinal regression results presented in Table 8 reveal that job satisfaction is significantly and most positively associated with workers rating their jobs as providing interesting content, fair remuneration, and security. In terms of socio-demographic factors, black African workers remained less satisfied than white workers with their jobs, controlling for the various job characteristics and other variables, while those with a low or medium living standard also received significantly lower satisfaction scores than those with a high living standard.

Collectively, the set of factors included in the model explains close to half (46.9%) of all variation in job satisfaction evaluations. Looking at the satisfaction of workers with regard to their standard of living, it can be seen that the job characteristics which have

a statistically significant impact are fair remuneration and job security. Fair reward and stimulating work are also shown to be integral to feeling a sense of accomplishment with what an individual is achieving in life. The results show that the job characteristics examined have only a marginal effect on self-reported health status. The only significant effect on health satisfaction can be observed in relation to job security, with the other five traits not yielding a statistically significant association.

We have established factors that influence job satisfaction among workers. Now it is important to determine the extent to which workers feel that their education is utilised in the workplace. Ensuring a good match between skills acquired through education and on the job and those required in the labour market is significant so as to make the most of investments in human capital and in promoting strong and inclusive growth.

Table 8: Regression results for the prediction of selected job outcomes

	Job satisfaction		Satisfaction with living standard		Satisfaction with life achievements		Health satisfaction		Life satisfaction	
	Coef.	Beta	Coef.	Beta	Coef.	Beta	Coef.	Beta	Coef.	Beta
Job characteristics										
Job is secure	0.446***	0.117	0.585*	0.108	0.075	0.014	0.477*	0.101	0.051	0.010
Income is high	0.348***	0.086	-0.101	-0.017	0.338	0.060	-0.330	-0.065	-0.031	-0.006
Good opportunities for advancement	0.168***	0.046	0.254	0.048	0.021	0.04	0.105	0.023	0.082*	0.017
Job is interesting	1.176***	0.319	-0.136	-0.026	0.553*	0.109	-0.194	-0.042	0.529	0.110
Job is useful to society	0.240***	0.060	0.116	0.020	0.035	0.006	0.000	0.000	0.211**	0.041
Pay and benefits are fair	0.645***	0.182	0.577**	0.113	0.934***	0.191	0.309	0.070	0.627	0.136
Socio-demographic attributes										
Female	-0.044	-0.012	-0.149	-0.029	0.093	0.018	0.072	0.016	0.067	0.014
Age	0.066***	0.488	0.030	0.156	-0.011	-0.058	-0.074*	-0.437	0.023	0.131
Age squared	-0.001***	-0.488	-0.001	-0.253	0.000	0.000	0.001*	0.351	0.000	-0.165
Black African (ref=white)	-0.670***	-0.174	-0.907**	-0.163	-0.381	-0.071	-0.220	-0.046	-0.906**	-0.179
Coloured	-0.441*	-0.078	-0.025	-0.025	-0.385	-0.049	-0.030	-0.004	-0.469	-0.063
Indian or Asian	-0.239	-0.025	0.233	0.017	-0.250	-0.019	-1.043*	-0.086	0.023	0.002
Less than matric (ref=tertiary)	0.090	0.025	-0.685*	-0.132	-0.667*	-0.134	-0.950***	-0.212	-0.347	-0.074
Matric or equivalent	0.064	0.017	0.051	0.010	-0.177	-0.035	-0.055	-0.012	-0.010	-0.002
Low/medium living standard (ref=high living standard)	-0.391**	-0.110	-1.331***	-0.260	-0.916***	-0.185	-0.117	-0.026	0.698**	-0.150
Rural area of residence	0.250	0.057	0.626**	0.100	0.577*	0.095	0.593**	0.109	0.834***	0.146
Constant	2 535***		6.476***		6.437***		9.577***		6.211***	
N	713		716		736		716		716	
R-squared	0.4686		0.2352		0.1848		0.0765		0.1531	

Note: The job satisfaction dependant variable is a reversed scale, where 1=completely dissatisfied, and 7=completely satisfied. The other four satisfaction variables are based on an 11-point end-anchored scale, where 0=completely dissatisfied, and 10=completely satisfied. *** $p \leq 0.001$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; * $p \leq 0.05$.

To what extent do workers perceive qualification mismatches in their current jobs?

This subsection examines perceptions about the prevalence of qualification mismatches in the labour market. We will pay closer attention to the mismatched groups than to those that are appropriately matched. Overall, 21% of the respondents assessed themselves as underqualified. Adequately or appropriately qualified

workers accounted for almost 50%. The remaining third reported being overqualified. Perceptions of overqualification are therefore more common than of underqualification.

Table 9 summarises the distribution of socio-demographic characteristics in accounting for reported mismatches between the qualifications possessed and the qualifications required to do the job.

Table 9: Incidence of perception of overqualification/underqualification (percentage) across socio-economic characteristics

Socio-economic characteristics	Underqualified	Appropriately qualified	Overqualified
National	21	49	30
Gender			
Male	24	47	29
Female	15	51	34
Age			
Age 16–24	24	49	28
Age 25–34	16	48	35
Age 35–44	19	51	29
Age 45–54	30	45	24
Age 55–64	30	46	26
Education completed			
No schooling	79		21
Primary schooling	40	11	49
Some secondary	34	30	36
Matric/equivalent	27	59	14
Post-school	26	74	
Population group			
Black African	22	42	36
Coloured	23	54	23
Indian/Asian	18	68	13
White	16	68	16
Living-standard level			
Low	9	35	55
Medium	21	37	42
High	19	62	18
Income level*			
Low-paid	22	32	46
Medium-paid	24	39	37
Highly paid	10	74	15
Geographical location			
Formal urban areas	21	52	27
Informal urban settlements	26	43	31
Rural traditional-authority areas	21	41	38
Rural commercial farms	6	24	70

Note: * Low-paid = R1–R1 500; medium-paid = R1 501–R5 000; highly paid = R5 001+.

The incidence of perceptions of qualification mismatches varied significantly. There were significant gender differences. Males were more likely than females to feel underqualified, and, conversely, females were more likely than males to feel overqualified. This finding lends support to the suggestion that women may choose a job for which they are overqualified to improve their work–life balance (Quintini, 2011).

Overqualification was also frequently reported among those aged between 25 and 34 years, and then diminished with age. While younger adults (25–44 years) were more likely to state that they were well matched, mature adults (45–64), were more likely to feel underqualified.

Apart from workers with no formal education, the incidence of overqualification increases with level of education completed. This finding is consistent with evidence that individuals with low educational levels have a good chance of avoiding overqualification (Dorn & Sousa-Poza, 2005). The current study shows that being better educated increases the odds of workers being well matched.

While white, Indian and coloured workers were more likely to be appropriately matched, black workers were far less likely to report that they were well matched, below the national average. Twice as many black African than white respondents assessed themselves as overqualified.

Residents of rural commercial farms registered more than twice the national average for overqualification. Residents of formal urban areas were more likely to be well matched than were workers in other geographical areas. Residents of informal settlements were more likely to be underqualified for the types of jobs they were doing.

To sum up, the incidence of underqualification was commonly reported among females, individuals with lower levels of education, young and mature adults, and Black Africans and coloured workers. In contrast, the incidence of overqualification was higher for Black Africans, those aged from 25 to 34, those residing in traditional-authority areas and on rural commercial farms (where the incidence was much higher), and those with a low or medium LSM.

The next subsection thus attempts to establish who among the employed have been offered workplace training that could potentially mitigate such mismatches.

Who has received workplace training?

Having established the extent of qualification mismatches among the employed and having noted the prevalence of underqualification among the low-skilled, the next step was to capture the incidence of work-related training. About six in every ten respondents (59%) had not received any sort of training at their workplaces. The strongest

Figure 16: Attendance of workplace training by level of education (percentage)

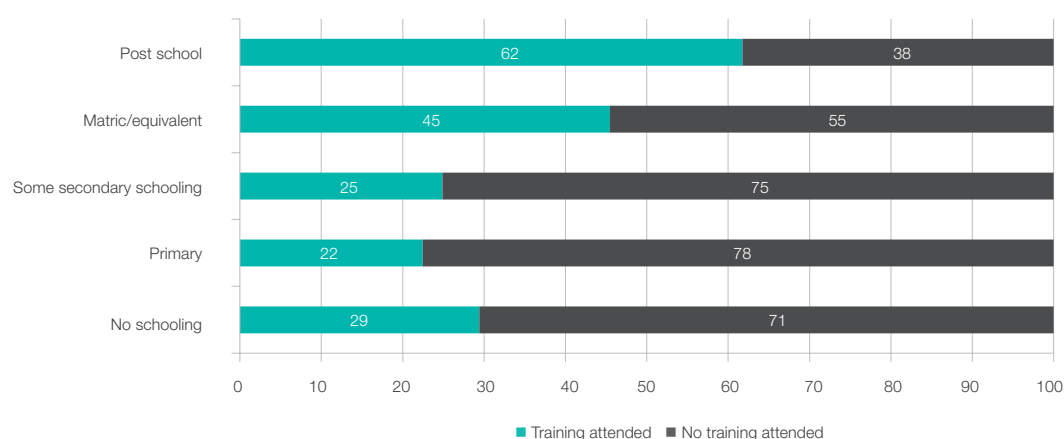
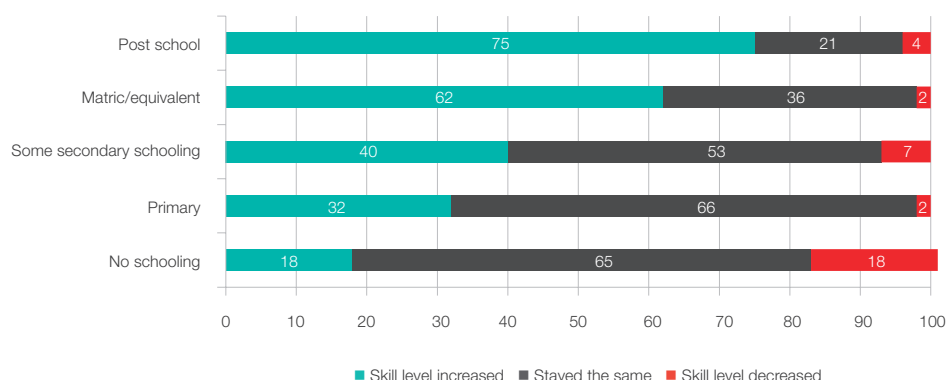


Figure 17: Increase in job requirements by level of education (percentage)



demographic pattern among those who had not been trained was a significant, disproportionate representation of less-educated workers. Workers with a tertiary education were almost three times more likely to be offered training than were those with lower educational levels. A significant relationship emerged between the provision of training and a worker's education level, providing evidence of a relationship between the incidence of training and workers' level of education. Workplace training has been found to increase an employee's wages and the work prospects of individuals with low levels of formal educational attainment and who, therefore, are especially likely to face difficult labour market prospects in the absence of skills development (Gallie, Inanc & Williams, 2009). Thus, lack of workplace or in-house training for low-skilled workers may limit their occupational mobility.

Moreover, results show that more training was offered to workers aged between 25 and 35 years (33%) and between 35 and 44 years (29%) than to individuals in other age groups. A positive finding that is emerging is that a large proportion of those who are well matched in their jobs (46%) have attended training. Related to that, only 14% of the low earners (earning less than R1 500) had attended some training, in contrast to the 37% (R1 501–R5 000) and 59% (R5 000 and above) who had been trained.

Have the skills requirements changed in the past year?

Employed respondents were then asked to indicate whether the overall skills requirements in their current jobs had increased, stayed the same or decreased. Almost equal proportions noted that overall skills requirements in their jobs had increased or had stayed the same (47% and 45%, respectively). While 4% indicated that the skills requirements had decreased, a further 4% said that they did not know. Again, the pattern by educational level is different – Figure 16 indicates a positive relationship between skills intensification at the workplace and educational attainment. Workers with higher levels of education experienced a greater increase in skills requirements than did those with lower levels of education.

Conclusion

The evidence in this section points to the discrepancies between work values and workplace reality. The discrepancies are most extreme in relation to the reality of attaining, a high income and good prospects for job promotion. The analysis further indicates differences in the overall experience of work and job outcomes on the basis of race, education levels, and social class.

Almost two-thirds of the employed expressed some level of satisfaction with their jobs. Job satisfaction is significantly, and most positively, associated with workers rating their jobs as providing interesting content, fair remuneration, and security. Black African workers remained less satisfied with their jobs than white workers. Those with a low or medium living standard also recorded significantly lower satisfaction scores than those with a high living standard.

The literature shows that ‘a good match between skills acquired in education and on the job and those required in the labour market is essential in making the most of investments in human capital and promoting strong and inclusive growth’ (Quintini, 2011: 192). Overqualification was more common than underqualification among the employed respondents. While 30% of the employed said that the minimum levels of education required

to perform their jobs were below their current levels of education, one-fifth indicated that they were underqualified for the work that they were currently doing. Some socio-demographic groups are more likely than others to perceive themselves as mismatched. Black Africans were almost three times more likely to assess themselves as overqualified than were white and Indian workers. The incidence of overqualification was also more commonly reported among rural commercial-farms dwellers, while residents in informal settlements were more likely to consider themselves underqualified. In probing the extent to which workers had been offered training in their respective workplaces, the results showed that less-educated workers were overly represented among those who had not received workplace training. Workers with a tertiary education were almost three times more likely to be offered training than were those with lower educational levels.

6. THE UNEMPLOYED AND THE LABOUR MARKET

Introduction

This section looks at the work-related attitudes and work-seeking behaviour of that segment of the population which indicated their employment status as 'unemployed', whether voluntarily or involuntarily. The section first investigates who among the unemployed were committed to finding work in the future, making references to attitudes of the economically inactive group in some instances. It then goes on to observe their level of optimism or expectations regarding employment prospects. The last subsection investigates how the unemployed search for employment. In addition, we consider the predictors of using specific search methods in looking for employment.

Who are the unemployed?

Almost one-third, that is, 37% (816), of those aged over 16 are unemployed and are actively searching for employment (out of 2 884). Unemployed individuals generally have lower educational levels, are from families falling within low or medium LSMs, or live in urban informal areas or traditional-authority areas. A very high occurrence of unemployment is found among those aged between 25 and 44 years.

As part of the non-employed, about 33% (1 146 out of 2 884) of the respondents could be categorised as economically inactive. This category is made up of members of the public who are not looking for employment and thus include students, pensioners, and those who are permanently disabled or sick. Paying closer attention to those who could work, but are not looking for employment (n = 211) within the economically inactive category indicates that

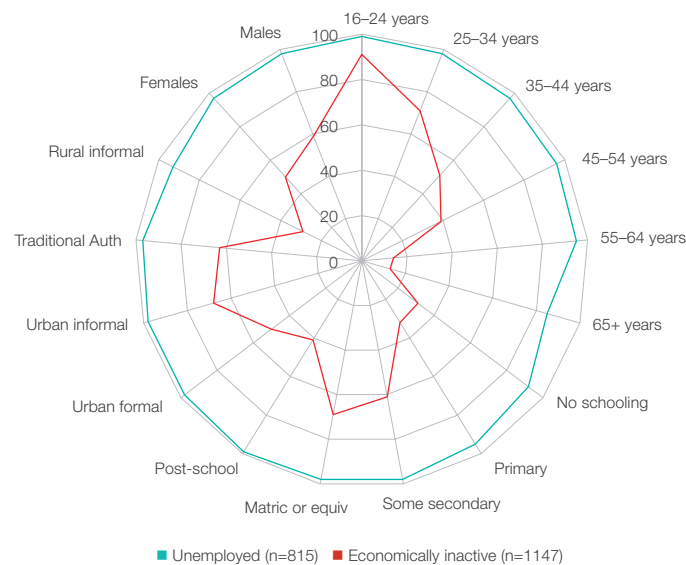
this group is more likely to be Black African (84%), female (65%), unmarried (46%), from medium LSM households (61%), reside in urban formal areas (51%) or traditional-authority areas (35%), and between 25 and 35 years old (27%).

Who among the unemployed would like to have a job?

All respondents who were not employed were asked to indicate whether they would like to have a job (either currently or in the future). As expected, almost everyone within the 'unemployed' category (98%) indicated an intention to find a job. Only 54% of those in the 'economically inactive' category expressed the desire to have a paid job in the future. One main reason for this is that the 'inactive' category includes students and learners, and pensioners.

Figure 18 compares the demographic characteristics of the unemployed and economically inactive persons who want a job. Firstly, for the unemployed group, while there were no gender variations, there were distinct variations in the responses influenced by education, geographical area, and age of the respondents. Desire for employment was more prevalent among those with some secondary schooling or a matric qualification. The unemployed living in urban formal areas were also more likely to desire employment than were the unemployed in other geographical areas. Notably, individuals with a post-school qualification and those in rural formal areas were much less likely to express a desire for employment. Unemployed individuals with no formal schooling, and those older than 55, were also less likely to express the intention to find a job.

Figure 18: Intention to have a job (by demographic characteristics) (i.e. among the non-employed)



Secondly, Figure 18 shows that economically inactive persons who expressed the intention to find jobs in the future were more likely to be young (16–24 years), male, have some secondary or a matric qualification, and reside in urban informal or traditional-authority areas.

What are the prospects of finding employment in the near future?

We have seen that the proportion of unemployed work seekers described as discouraged is gradually increasing over time (Stats SA, 2014); hence it is important to monitor and keep track of work seekers' perceptions of the labour market. Serving as a proxy for the public's view of the labour market, the unemployed respondents were asked to assess their likelihood of finding a job if they were to search for one. Such assessments are a product of multiple factors with varying degrees of severity for each social segment of the population.

Our study findings suggest that a large majority of the unemployed population were pessimistic about finding employment. Only one in every four unemployed respondents thought it was likely that they would find a job in the near future. Males (45%) continued to be more optimistic than their female (37%) counterparts. Unemployed individuals who were not searching for employment were

significantly less optimistic about finding employment (43%) than were those actively seeking work (57%). Young people were more optimistic about the prospect of finding work within the unemployed-and-searching category, with 62% indicating that it was very likely or likely that they would find a job. However, confidence about finding work diminishes among those over 24 years of age.

Looking at the levels of optimism by race within the unemployed category, the proportion that expressed optimism about finding employment was strongest in the black African population group (43%). Optimism about finding a job was strongly influenced by educational level completed. Unemployed individuals with higher levels of education were more positive about finding jobs, echoing Steyn's (2005) finding of the positive influence of education on the levels of optimism about finding employment.

The highest levels of pessimism about finding employment occurred among residents of farming areas, where over three-quarters (76%) responded that it was 'unlikely' that they would find employment.

Geographically, the level of optimism about prospective employment was highest in Limpopo (69%). This was followed by Mpumalanga, where more than two-fifths (44%) were of the perception

Figure 19: Likelihood of finding employment by job-search status and age

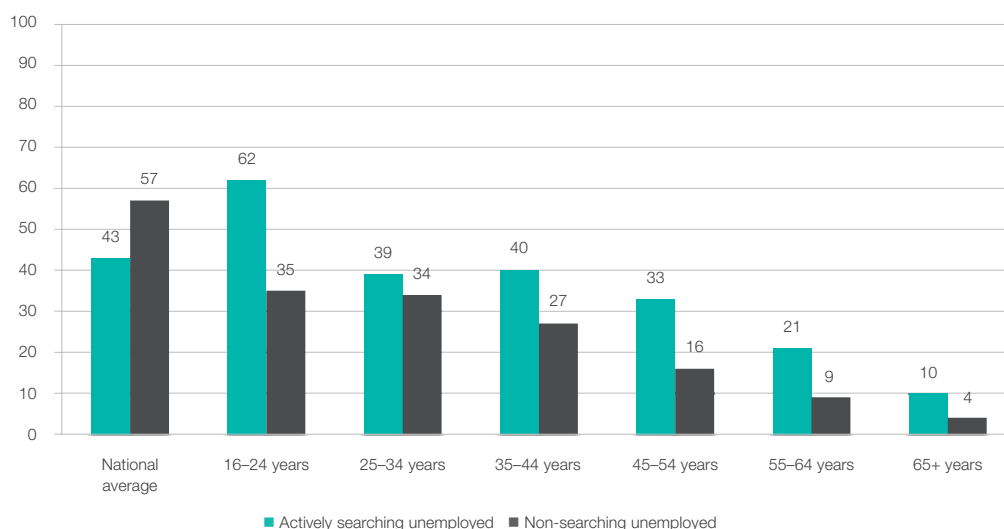
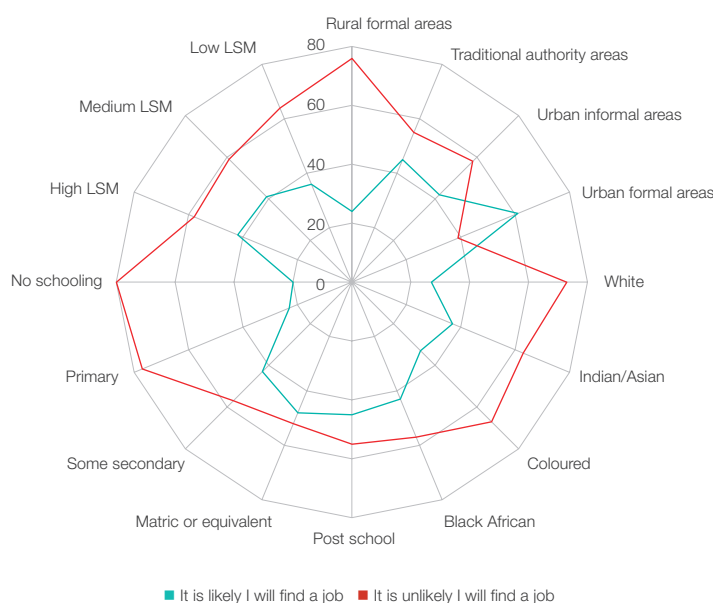


Figure 20: Level of optimism among the unemployed about finding a job



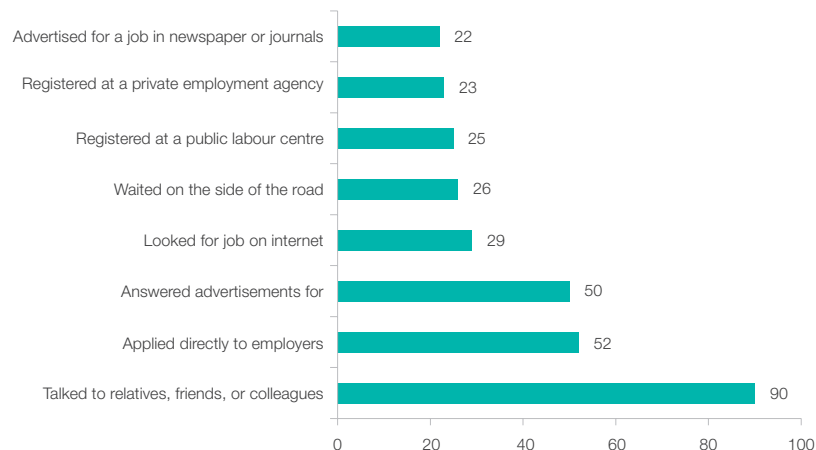
that they would find employment. Positive sentiments were less prevalent in the other seven provinces, with the lowest level (28%) occurring in the Northern Cape.

How are the unemployed searching for employment?

Figure 21 indicates that social networks were the most frequent method used to seek employment, accounting for 90% of responses. This is in line with

the literature on job searching, which portrays networks as an efficient way of seeking employment owing to low search costs and short duration (Merlino, 2014). Furthermore, social networks are used largely in conjunction with, or to supplement, other methods of job searching (Granovetter, 1995). Fifty per cent (approximately 38% less than those who used networks) had either made a direct enquiry to potential employers or had responded to job advertisements in newspapers. Lower proportions of the unemployed had searched for

Figure 21: Employment search strategies used by unemployed respondents (percentage)



Source: SASAS (2013).

Note: N = 816.

jobs on the Internet, had registered at the Department of Labour's labour centres or with a private agency, or had waited by the roadside.

There were some variations in the use of different methods by subgroups (see Table 10). The demographic profile of those who enquired amongst their networks about employment shows that this method was most utilised by males (94%) and people aged between 25 and 54 years (in the prime working age). It was also popular amongst work seekers of all race groups, those with a matric qualification or higher (95: matric, and 99: tertiary) and in the high LSM group (93%). Geographically, it was most common in Western Cape (96%), followed by KwaZulu-Natal (94%), North West (91%) and Gauteng (90%).

Contacting employers directly to enquire about employment opportunities was the approach selected most by people aged 25 to 34 years (56%). It was also a common strategy for whites (76%) and Indians (84%), people with a tertiary qualification (77%), those with a high LSM (66%), and residents of urban formal areas (58%). Western Cape (72%) and Free State (65%) residents were also more likely than those living elsewhere to use this method.

Clear gender differences emerged in respect of waiting by the roadside, with males two times (39%) more likely than females (17%) to do so. The

younger group of youths (16–25 years) were also disproportionately represented in this category (32%), together with older work seekers aged 55 to 64 years. Such responses were also more prevalent among black African work seekers (27%), those with less than matric (30% each), those with a low LSM (38%), residents of the urban informal areas (42%) and traditional-authority areas (36%), and KwaZulu-Natal (50%) and Limpopo (41%) residents.

Taking a closer look at those who used the Internet to search for employment, there were notable gender differences, with females (21%) being 20 percentage points less likely than males (41%) to use this method. Internet usage was also more pronounced among those with some tertiary education (87%) or a matric qualification, although to a lower extent (40%), and residents of urban formal (36%) and urban informal (28%) areas. Internet users were also mostly among those aged 25 to 34 years (32%), individuals in the high LSM category (28%), and residents of the Free State (39%), the Western Cape (35%), Gauteng (34%) and the Northern Cape (30%).

Just over half of males who were seeking employment (56%) indicated they had responded to job adverts. In comparison, only 46% of females had done so. Higher proportions were also found among those aged 25 to 34 years (63%), those with a tertiary (85%) or a matric (63%), white (56%) and Indian (57%) respondents, people in the high LSM

Table 10: Employment search strategies used by unemployed respondents (by subgroup)

	Talked to relatives/ friends	Answered job adverts	Looked on Internet	Applied directly	Advertised in newspaper	Registered at labour centre	Private employment agency	Waited at roadside
South Africa	90	50	29	52	20	25	23	26
Male	94	56	41	59	32	36	36	39
Female	87	46	21	47	16	18	15	17
16–24 years	84	50	34	52	24	23	20	23
25–34 years	93	63	37	56	28	29	31	32
35–44 years	89	39	17	48	14	22	20	22
45–54 years	93	34	20	50	18	28	14	22
55–64 years	84	41	31	40	24	26	28	30
Black African	90	50	27	50	22	26	24	27
Coloured	86	51	38	56	25	21	19	15
Indian/Asian	90	69	47	84	13	10	22	5
White	96	56	61	76	40	7	21	23
Less than matric	86	41	19	49	18	22	18	30
Matric or equivalent	95	63	40	54	29	30	31	21
Tertiary	99	85	87	77	24	36	46	15
Low LSM	84	45	12	37	17	15	14	38
Medium LSM	89	50	26	51	21	28	22	26
High LSM	93	57	59	66	34	25	41	22
Urban, formal	92	51	36	58	24	28	25	18
Urban, informal	87	56	28	50	24	23	27	42
Traditional-authority areas	86	46	15	41	20	22	20	36
Rural, formal	85	39	24	51	14	11	11	15

category (57%), residents of urban informal areas (56%) and those living in the Free State (70%), and Mpumalanga (57%).

Again, notable gender differences were evident regarding the use of labour centres to find employment, with a sizeable 36% of males compared with 18% of females making use thereof. People aged 25 to 34 years were also more likely than others to have registered at labour centres (29%), as were black Africans (26%), those with a matric (30%) and above (36%), in the medium LSM

group (28%), resident in urban formal areas (28%), and respondents living in Limpopo (41%).

The use of private employment agencies in searching for employment was common among black Africans (24%), people in the high LSM category (41%), those residing in urban informal (27%) and urban formal areas (25%), respondents aged 25 to 34 years (31%), and residents of KwaZulu-Natal (37%), Free State (29%) and Eastern Cape (28%)

Selected factors accounting for the use of job-searching methods

The predictors of using specific job-searching methods were investigated to identify broad patterns. In particular, a distinction was drawn between formal (using private and public employment agencies, responding to job adverts in newspapers or on the Internet), informal (asking about jobs from friends or relatives) and direct (approaching the employer) applications, which were considered to be of high interest from research and policy perspectives. This section explores factors that account for the selection of a particular job-searching method.

So, what factors influence the use of formal channels of job searching?

The following conclusions may be drawn from Table 11. Firstly, unemployed work seekers in rural areas were less likely to look for employment via formal job-searching methods than were work seekers in urban areas. Secondly, the least educated work seekers (with an educational qualification less than matric) were also less likely than were those with a tertiary education to search via formal job-searching methods and direct applications. These are people who arguably have less favourable characteristics for obtaining a job. The finding that individuals with low qualifications tend to rely on informal methods of job searching, or use these in conjunction with other methods, is consistent with the literature (Shen, 2015; Try, 2005). Thirdly, access to the Internet emerged as an important factor. Work seekers with access to the Internet had the highest probability of using formal methods.

What factors influence the use of informal channels of job searching?

Firstly, marital status significantly influences the decision to use informal strategies to find work. Unmarried work seekers are more likely to use informal methods to look for employment. Secondly, work seekers with a matric qualification are more likely to search via informal methods or personal networks than are those with a tertiary qualification. According to the literature,

informal job-searching channels do not always lead to significantly better-paying jobs, but this depends on the quality of information transmitted by the networks (Try, 2005; Tardos & Pedersen, 2011; Granovetter, 1995).

Who approaches the employer directly to seek work?

This method is more popular among black work seekers. However, individuals from higher social classes are less likely to directly approach employers or firms. Moreover, individuals with low educational qualifications are also less likely to use this method. Such people might lack connections to firms or employed people in their networks.

Conclusion

Of the unemployed and economically inactive segment of the population, around three-quarters (77%) expressed the desire to have paid employment (either currently or in the future). While the intention to secure paid employment among the unemployed was high, there was great scepticism about the likelihood of securing such employment. The strongest reservations were expressed by women, those older than 50 years, those with primary or no formal schooling, and those in formal urban areas. Conversely, the highest optimism was articulated by the youth.

Questions concerning how the unemployed find work and how vacancies are filled are important in the context of high unemployment and inequality in South Africa. Social networks emerged as the most common method of seeking employment. Almost all unemployed people had spoken to their networks about finding employment. Fewer of the unemployed had searched for jobs on the Internet, or registered at the Department of Labour's labour centres or with a private agency, or had waited by the roadside. Internet use for finding work was more prominent among the middle to upper social classes. The more affluent, therefore, were found to use a combination of methods to search for employment.

Table 11: Factors accounting for using formal, informal or direct methods of job searching

	Formal methods		Informal methods		Direct methods	
	Coef.	SE	Coef.	SE	Coef.	SE
<i>Demographic characteristics</i>						
Black African (ref-white)	.944*	.374	.679**	.285	.706*	.321
Coloured	.620	.390	.575*	.290	.581	.329
Indian	.367	.413	-.192	.318	.090	.366
Married (ref-unmarried)	-.343	.193	-.296*	.139	-.296	.139
Separated	-.081	.402	-.257	.274	-.257	.274
Widowed	-.695*	.338	-1.315***	.210	-1.315***	.210
Rural (ref-urban)	-.625***	.194	-.408**	.139	-.456**	.152
<i>Socio-economic status</i>						
Less than matric (ref-post-school)	-1.324***	.298	-.465	.273	-.630*	.283
Matric or equivalent	-.114	.285	.516	.276	.418	.280
No income (ref-50 000 and above)	.401	.423	.336	.334	.244	.366
R1-R1 500	.083	.442	-.129	.342	-.251	.378
R1 501-R5 000	.359	.476	-.474	.379	-.138	.418
Wages as a source of income			-.245	.237	.011	.248
Grants as a source of income			-.489	.247	-.167	.262
Internet use	.804***	.180	-.070	.149	.299	.155
High living-standard measure (ref-low LSM)	-.330	.224	-.881***	.187	-.641**	.201
Family receiving a grant	.050	.183	.068	.169	-.008	.177
<i>Attitudinal variables</i>						
Positive outlook about labour market	-.386*	.164	-.434***	.132	-.345*	.138
Constant	-1.230	.617	1.319	.514	-.283	.560
N	713					

Note: *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

7. DISCUSSION OF KEY FINDINGS

The broad aim of this study was to investigate the South African public's attitudes to work. The study provided an opportunity to explore citizens' assessment of the state of the labour market, while also gaining insight into their experiences and perceptions regarding constraints and opportunities. Attitudes are significant predictors of preferences, thus influencing the behaviours that manifest in the labour market. An analysis of the attitudes of individuals is thus pertinent to skills planning, as they (attitudes) have the potential to influence labour market demand, supply and matching dynamics. The outcomes of personal decisions on whether to participate, to seek employment, to retain employment, or to engage in education or training, are key determinants of the success of any interventions seeking to correct imbalances and mismatches between the demand for, and supply of, labour.

The study was thus driven by two primary assumptions. Firstly, public attitudes to employment and unemployment experiences offer insights into factors that influence decisions about labour market and education and training participation. Secondly, in-depth attitudinal and perceptual data about labour market participants, above and beyond statistical information on employment or unemployment measurements, can offer more nuanced perspectives on South Africa's labour market challenges. These assumptions are particularly pertinent for investigating a labour market characterised not only by the unequal distribution of opportunities, but also by an increasingly wide variance in the quality of work, along race and socio-economic dimensions. The present section identifies 11 key findings that

emerged from the study, from which implications can be drawn for education and training and/or labour market policy and practice.

1. Employment status continues to be intertwined with race, education and class

The first empirical section reported on the characteristics of the study sample by labour market status. Accordingly, our sample was segmented into three distinct groups: the employed (30%), unemployed (37%) and economically inactive (33%). Unemployment is concentrated among Black Africans, the low-skilled, and residents of urban informal areas and traditional-authority areas. Education remains an important explanatory factor, as it improves individual prospects of participating in the labour market. Individuals with tertiary education were three times more likely to be employed than were those with less than a matric or equivalent level of education. Moreover, individuals from households in high social classes were more likely to be employed.

For most of the employed, wages were the main source of household income. The unemployed and economically inactive identified other family members and pensions or grants as the main sources of income for their families. These trends point to different dimensions of disadvantage in the labour market.

However, the data also showed that some 72% of households represented in the survey received a total household income of less than R5 000, with 32% receiving a total household income of R1 500 or less. This draws our attention to the swelling

share of those in low-wage work and in-work poverty, which is contributing to widening inequalities in the country. Low wage has been associated with low education and skills endowments. This finding suggests the importance of incorporating measures of job quality within labour market analysis.

2. The South African public was most concerned about job security above other job characteristics

The study probed what the South African public perceives as important characteristics in a job, which represent subjective measures of job quality. In times of high unemployment, it may be expected that the employed public would be concerned about not losing their jobs, while individuals without employment would be more concerned about finding and keeping employment. Although there is a need for occupational growth, an intrinsically satisfying job and a good income, in the eyes of ordinary South Africans, job security is what makes a job 'good', in comparison with other job conditions and financial benefits.

However, there was great diversity, in terms of demographic features, in what was perceived as the most valuable job attributes. Distinct from other population groups, Black Africans placed greater emphasis on high earnings, job content and meaningfulness. Once again, level of education emerged as a significant predictor in the rating of job attributes. Individuals with low levels of education were the least concerned about job security, being concerned mainly about higher earnings. Those with higher levels of education, particularly a matric and tertiary education, tended to register greater concern about characteristics such as job security, promotion and interesting work than did those with limited or no formal schooling. Job security was a greater priority for those with high living standards than for those with low or medium living standards. Individuals in low or medium social classes were much more concerned about earnings and interesting work. In terms of employment status, the employed placed greater value on job security than did the unemployed and economically inactive. This shows that the public

has diverse preferences and expectations from the labour market as shaped by their socio-economic characteristics. These are expectations that would influence their labour market participation decisions.

3. Social and economic mobility was strongly linked to education, which was seen to facilitate economic advancement, irrespective of family background

Given the significance of education, we solicited views on the role of education in employment outcomes and intergenerational mobility. Almost eight in every ten South Africans interviewed observed that education is the key to earning a place in the labour market, despite one's socio-economic background. Positive perceptions generally declined with the level of education completed. Notably, this view was most pronounced among those with no schooling, but one-fifth of those with tertiary education disagreed with the statement. It was also strongest among the unemployed, the low social class, and Black African respondents. This reflects the strong beliefs that underpin aspirations to higher levels of education. It also suggests that those with education may have experiences that raise questions about an automatic link between education and economic advancement.

4. South Africans ascribed unemployment to both societal and individual factors

When the public was asked to provide their own reasons for unemployment, almost equal proportions of respondents cited individual and societal factors. Only 3% ascribed unemployment to fatalistic factors, which are beyond the work seeker's control.

Exactly 50% attributed unemployment to societal factors (external factors) related to structural and economic reasons, suggesting that unemployment is a social responsibility and a function of societal injustice. Unemployment was seen by 46% to result from individual (internal) factors, namely a lack of ability and effort to find work on the part of the unemployed. Within that grouping, 10% made reference to individual deficiencies in general, while 36% specifically cited a lack of appropriate

education and skills as a hindrance to finding employment.

The public therefore regarded unemployment as the responsibility of both government and individuals. There was wide agreement that inadequate education is a bottleneck to labour market participation. The concerns about quality of education were inclusive, as references were made to both basic and post-school education. Such perceptions have the potential to influence negatively individual decisions to search for employment in the case of the unemployed, or for the employed to search for alternative employment. Similarly, perceptions about the causes of unemployment are likely to influence individual career choices through informing the selection of subjects, qualifications and preferences for places of vocational training.

Comments about the failure of education to provide a bridge to employment were more prevalent among the youth close to finishing school, which suggest fears that they will not be able to find jobs upon completing their schooling. However, this could also signify dissatisfaction with the ways the current education system is preparing them for the transition to higher education and training institutions. The dissenting voices of a minority attributed failure to obtain work among the youth to lack of motivation, a poor work ethic and insufficient willpower, thus adopting a more individualised explanation for unemployment. These findings provide strong motivation for government efforts to improve the quality and reach of education and training.

A different problem was reported by older and low-skilled individuals. Discrimination on the grounds of age, and misconceptions about their capabilities, were reported by the older segment of the population, who felt that their skills have become obsolete. Moreover, there were voices acknowledging and lamenting further demands in the form of qualifications, which have become a requirement for employment, presenting yet another obstacle to securing jobs.

There was lingering dissatisfaction with government support for the growing group of those at risk of being excluded from the labour market, such as 'dropouts', those with school-leaving certificates only, and those with work experience and know-how but a lack of formal qualifications. There was agreement among the public that these subpopulations are neglected not only in society, but also in education and skills-development discourses. Responses from these groups themselves captured their sentiments of exclusion from job-creation and skills-development interventions.

5. Workers with low educational attainment are more exposed to the risk of being low earners

The data show that certain individual characteristics are risk factors, increasing the possibility of being in the category of low earners (<R1 500). The probability of falling into the low-wage group and educational level are negatively related. The low-pay risk is about two times higher among workers with lower education (69%) than it is for those with a post-secondary (27%) or tertiary education (4%). The role of education in reproducing wage inequality is marked. Women in employment are slightly more likely than men to be among the working poor. In terms of age, younger workers (under 35 years) are more vulnerable to low pay than older workers. The concentration of low pay among vulnerable groups begs for interventions that facilitate movement into better-paying employment. The question then becomes: What are training and development interventions that can be tailored for this most vulnerable group to ensure that they progress to better-paying jobs, or do not regress back to unemployment?

6. There are discrepancies between what workers perceive as important and what is found in actual jobs

On average, around two-thirds of South African workers found their jobs are useful to society, secure, draw fully on their capabilities, and offer opportunities for skills development. There was, however, considerable discontent regarding the economic rewards for their labour as well as

prospects for upward social mobility. There was, therefore, a very clear discrepancy between work values (what workers perceived to be important in a job) and workplace reality (subjective evaluation of what was happening in their jobs) in relation to attaining a high income and good prospects for job promotion. The gap between workers' expectations and what they experience represents a 'good' job deficit that can be used to measure perceived quality of work among the employed. This finding therefore points to a need for continued assessment of work orientations in order for employers to be aware of the possible incongruence between what workers expect from jobs and what the labour market offers.

7. There is a significant social-class gradient in job satisfaction levels

Almost two-thirds of the employed expressed some level of satisfaction with their jobs. Job satisfaction is significantly associated with workers rating their jobs as providing interesting content, fair remuneration, and security. Black African workers remained less satisfied with their jobs than white workers. Those with a low or medium living standard also recorded significantly lower satisfaction scores than those with a high living standard.

The low-wage category had the largest proportion of those expressing job dissatisfaction, but those who appear satisfied are more likely to be employed in the secondary segment of the labour market. Workers might be unhappy because of working conditions associated with low-pay jobs or could be skilled or educated workers who are displaced primary-sector workers actively seeking mobility back to the primary segment.

8. Overqualification was more commonly reported than underqualification among the employed

While 30% of the employed reported that the minimum levels of education required to perform their jobs were below their current levels of education, one-fifth indicated that they were underqualified for the work that they were currently

doing. Some socio-demographic groups are more likely than others to be mismatched.

Overqualification was higher among older youths aged between 25 and 34 years. Black Africans were almost three times more likely to report being overqualified than were white and Indian workers. The incidence of overqualification was also more common among rural commercial-farm dwellers, while residents in informal settlements were more likely to consider themselves as underqualified. Given job scarcity, work seekers, particularly first-time labour market entrants, are likely to accept any available job, even if it requires skills below what they possess. It is critical to achieve a match between the skills attained by workers and job requirements in order to avoid human-capital wastage and skill obsolescence. This highlights a need for research that specifically focuses on analysing the characteristics of mismatched workers and identifies strategies for intervention.

9. Workers with a tertiary education were almost three times more likely to be offered training than were those with lower educational levels

Improved access to training and skills development, particularly for low-skilled workers, can facilitate attainment of better wages or improved labour market prospects. Thus, lack of workplace or in-house training for low-skilled workers hinders workers' occupational mobility to better employment opportunities. The study found that six out of ten workers interviewed had not received any form of on-the-job training. The strongest demographic pattern was the disproportionate representation of those with lower educational levels. Workers with higher levels of education are more likely to receive further training, facilitating upward mobility. Moreover, a large proportion of those who were well matched in their jobs had recently attended some form of training. This highlights the role of training and skills development in mitigating the effects of qualification mismatches in the labour market. Most importantly, in the context of segmented labour markets, training and skills development can serve to leverage workers from secondary to primary labour markets, thereby offering better employment opportunities.

10. A large percentage of the unemployed were pessimistic about finding employment

About six in ten unemployed individuals were pessimistic about finding employment. Here, too, the level of optimism was closely related to the level of education attained, with those at low levels being more pessimistic about their chances of finding employment. The younger generation appeared to be more optimistic, but the level of optimism tended to diminish after the age of 25 years. Males were also found to be more optimistic, as were residents of the three poorest provinces, namely Limpopo, Mpumalanga and the Eastern Cape. High levels of optimism among these residents might be linked to their aspirations to participate in the labour market. High optimism among the youth is a positive finding. The policy challenge is to improve job creation, because unmet expectations might lead to discouragement and apathy.

11. The unemployed rely on social networks to look for jobs

How is this optimism reflected in the strategies the unemployed used to search for jobs? The data revealed a reliance on informal methods, particularly social networks. Reliance on social networks reaffirms that the inaccessibility of information about vacancies received through formal sources is a barrier to finding jobs. As much as social networks as a mode of searching are widely accessible, they are clearly restrictive as well.

However, since this method is so widely used, perhaps the best policy approach would be to encourage additional methods, particularly formal modes of searching such as public employment services. Notably, Internet user profiles indicate that more affluent communities use this medium when searching for employment. Such variety in job-seeking methods must be accounted for in skills-planning structures. This suggests the need for improvements in the career planning and guidance systems and interventions. Particular attention needs to be paid to serving the less educated segments of our communities in this regard. This calls for innovative ways of broadcasting available opportunities that will be user-friendly and

accessible to communities that are already detached from the labour market.

Implications for skills planning

Understanding the general public's attitudes to the labour market and perceived bottlenecks to participation is important to inform government's skills-planning interventions, by placing on the policy agenda the views and beliefs of ordinary South Africans.

Overall, the strong perception that education and training will lead to job opportunities and social mobility is clear. Levels of optimism and job satisfaction remain surprisingly high. Unemployment is ascribed more strongly to individual and societal factors. These trends suggest that skills-planning interventions will be positively received by the public.

However, also strongly evident, attitudes and experience of work vary significantly, and continue to be inequitably influenced by an individual's race, educational attainment and social-class position. These distinct but intertwined dimensions of disadvantage require adaptable and targeted policies in order to benefit vulnerable segments of our population.

Because of its vantage point, the study can serve as a reference from which the value of current policy interventions may be assessed, or to identify areas for further interventions. Here, we propose a number of examples, as a basis for further discussion:

- Our evidence of a widespread lack of access to information about employment opportunities confirms the importance of the National Career Advice Portal (NCAP) project and other career guidance interventions that do not rely on Internet access.
- Our evidence on who receives training suggests the need to increase training targeted at vulnerable labour market participants with low education and skills levels in order to facilitate mobility to better jobs.

- More interventions are required that focus on the labour market phenomenon of overqualification and underqualification in order to enhance the match between qualifications, experience and skill requirements in respect of a job.
- The stubborn persistence of racial inequality suggests that much more needs to be done across all spheres of government – education, higher education and training, labour, and economic development. The efficacy of programmes such as employment equity and broad-based economic empowerment needs to be interrogated. Deeper inquiry and a more concerted effort to ensure the successful implementation of these policies need to be ensured.

The value of understanding public attitudes to work

In conclusion, the findings underscore the value of a national survey to understand the public's attitudes to, and experience of, unemployment/employment.

Such an investigation diverges from the ordinary mass of labour market studies, seeking to address key questions that account for, and engage with, participants' thoughts and attitudes.

It would not be necessary to conduct a study of this nature annually, nor would it be necessary to assess the same attitudinal variables in each survey. For instance, a follow-up study might focus on factors driving career and post-school education institution choices among the public. Attitudes to traditional career choices might also be investigated. It would thus be useful to investigate the public's knowledge of, and attitudes to, these institutions, alongside interventions seeking to improve access, transition through post school education and training institutions, and eventual entry into the labour market.

Using subjective attitudinal data alongside objective data on individual employment trends allows for a more complete understanding of the interaction between experience, behaviour and opportunity.

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APPENDIX 1



SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIAL ATTITUDES SURVEY Questionnaire 1: October/November 2013

WORK AND UNEMPLOYMENT MODULE

I am now going to ask you some questions about work and unemployment.

1. What do you think are the **THREE MAIN** reasons why there are so many people who are unemployed in South Africa?

INTERVIEWER: Please write down the answer of the respondent in the space provided below.
Please probe and write down the *three main reasons* mentioned.

2. How important do *you personally* think each of the following is in a job?

INTERVIEWER: Please note that *all respondents* must be asked Questions 2–10.

How important is/are:	Very important	Important	Neither important nor not important	Not Important	Not important at all	(Can't choose)
job security?	1	2	3	4	5	8
high income?	1	2	3	4	5	8
good opportunities for advancement?	1	2	3	4	5	8
an interesting job?	1	2	3	4	5	8
a job that is useful to society?	1	2	3	4	5	8

3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? [Showcard 1]

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	(Can't choose)
In South Africa, being more qualified improves one's chances of getting employment.	1	2	3	4	5	8
In South Africa, the children of a professional and of a factory worker have an equal chance of getting ahead in life.	1	2	3	4	5	8

4. What is your current occupation (the name or title of your main job)?

INTERVIEWER: Write down response. If not currently employed, ask for most recent job.

(Refused to answer)	97
(Don't know; inadequately described)	98
(Not applicable – never had a job)	99

5. What is your current employment status? (Which of the following best describes your present work situation?)

Employed full-time	01	→ Ask Q. 11–30
Employed part-time	02	
Employed less than part-time (casual work/piecework)	03	
Temporarily sick	04	→ Skip to Q. 14
Unemployed; not looking for work	05	
Unemployed; looking for work	06	
Pensioner (aged/retired)	07	
Permanently sick or disabled	08	
Housewife; not working at all; not looking for work	09	
Housewife; looking for work	10	
Student/learner	11	
Other (specify)	12	

INTERVIEWER: Please note that questions 6–13 are to be asked *only* of those *who are currently working for pay*.

IF YOU ARE CURRENTLY WORKING FOR PAY, PLEASE ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR MAIN JOB.

6. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your (main) job? [Showcard 1]

NOTE: The question refers to the Person's *main job* if he or she has multiple Jobs.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	(Can't choose)
My job is secure.	1	2	3	4	5	8
My income is high.	1	2	3	4	5	8
My opportunities for advancement are good/high	1	2	3	4	5	8
My job is interesting.	1	2	3	4	5	8
My job is useful to society.	1	2	3	4	5	8
My job gives me a chance to improve my skills.	1	2	3	4	5	8
The work that I do makes full use of my knowledge and skills.	1	2	3	4	5	8
The pay and benefits I receive are fair for the work I do.	1	2	3	4	5	8

7. How satisfied are you in your (main) job? [Showcard 14]

NOTE: The question refers to the Person's *main job* if he or she has multiple Jobs.

Completely satisfied	1
Very satisfied	2
Fairly satisfied	3
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4
Fairly dissatisfied	5
Very dissatisfied	6
Completely dissatisfied	7
(Can't choose)	8

8. How difficult or easy do you think it would be for you to find a job at least as good as your current one?

Very easy	1
Fairly easy	2
Neither easy nor difficult	3
Fairly difficult	4
Very difficult	5
(Can't choose)	8

9. What do you think should be the minimum level of education required to perform your job?

None – no schooling required	1
Primary education	2
Some secondary education	3
Matric/Grade 12 certificate	4
Certificate or diploma	5
University degree	6
University degree with a higher qualification	7

10. To what extent is your expertise relevant to what you do in your job every day?

Interviewer: This refers to both formal and informal training.

Completely relevant	1
To a great extent	2
To some extent	3
Not at all relevant	4
(Have not received any training or qualification)	5
(Do not know)	8

11. Since you began working in your current job, have the overall skill requirements of the position: increased, stayed the same or decreased

Increased a lot	1
Increased	2
Stayed the same	3
Decreased	4
Decreased a lot	5
(Do not know)	8

12. Over the past 12 months, have you had any training to improve your job skills (either 8.at the workplace or somewhere else)?

INTERVIEWER: This refers to both formal and informal training.

Yes	1
No	2

13. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? In order to avoid unemployment, would you be willing to accept: [Showcard 1]

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	(Can't choose)
a job that requires skills for which you have not been trained?	1	2	3	4	5	8
a job for which you are overqualified?	1	2	3	4	5	8
a job that will require you to relocate to another town?	1	2	3	4	5	8
any temporary job?	1	2	3	4	5	8
a job with lower pay than your current or last salary payment?	1	2	3	4	5	8
a job where your employer is not sympathetic to employee/worker unions?	1	2	3	4	5	8

INTERVIEWER: Please note that questions 14–16 are to be asked *only* of those who are *not* currently working for pay (codes 4–12 in q. 10).
If the respondent is working for pay (codes 1–3 in q. 5), Skip.

14. Would you like to have a paid job, either now or in the future?

Yes	1
No	2

15. How likely do you think it is that you would find a job?

Very likely	1
Likely	2
Unlikely	3
Very unlikely	4
(Do not know)	8

16. Thinking about the last 12 months, have you done any of the following in order to find a job?

	No	Yes, once or twice	Yes, more than once
Talked to relatives, friends, or colleagues about finding a job	1	2	3
Answered advertisements for jobs in newspapers	1	2	3
Looked for a job on the Internet	1	2	3
Applied directly to employers/made enquiries with prospective employers	1	2	3
Gone for a job interview	1	2	3
Advertised for a job in newspapers or journals	1	2	3
Registered at a public labour centre	1	2	3
Registered at a private employment agency	1	2	3
Waited on the side of the road	1	2	3

Public Attitudes to Work in South Africa

This research project investigated public perceptions of the labour market: for the employed, about the quality of employment, and for the unemployed, about prospects of labour market participation and work-seeking behaviour. The research is important as it is the very first attempt at understanding South African labour market perceptions and values. Individual and group perceptions and attitudes around work are an often neglected area of investigation, but as the findings of this study show, they clearly have a bearing on the nature and extent of labour market participation.

About the LMIP

The Labour Market Intelligence Partnership (LMIP) is a collaboration between the Department of Higher Education and Training, and a Human Sciences Research Council-led national research consortium. It aims to provide research to support the development of a credible institutional mechanism for skills planning in South Africa. For further information and resources on skills planning and the South African post-school sector and labour market, visit <http://www.lmip.org.za>.