

THE PERCEPTIONS OF NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE PARTICIPANTS ON THE
PROGRAMME'S IMPACT IN JOB CREATION IN
NAMIBIA: A CASE OF WINDHOEK YOUTH

A THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN SOCIAL WORK

OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

BY
MARLIZA KARUKUA
201600667

OCTOBER 2025

SUPERVISOR: DR NDUMBA J. KAMWANYAH (UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA)

Abstract

This qualitative study examined the perceptions of participating Youth aged 16-35 on the impact of National Youth Service (NYS) programs on job creation in Namibia. The NYS initiative aims to equip young Namibians with skills and experiences that enhance their employability and entrepreneurial potential. The study is driven by the gap in literature which shows that despite a decade's worth of studies focused on youth, there was a significant deficit in involving them in a participatory manner in order to obtain their views and feelings qualitatively. A qualitative research design was utilized to collect data through an interview guide. Fifteen youth who completed the NYS two-year skills program, participated in semi-structured, audio-recorded interviews. To interpret the data, the researcher applied inductive, thematic data analysis to transcribe and code data to extract themes. Findings revealed that while most participants recognized the NYS programme's positive impact on their professional and personal growth, and valued the opportunity to acquire new skills, there were significant challenges in job opportunities. The alignment of the NYS curriculum with market demands was considered adequate; however, the involvement of stakeholders, particularly the private sector, was deemed crucial for the success and improvement of NYS programs. Participants acknowledged that the programs of NYS has evolved over time, enhancing its effectiveness and participant satisfaction. The study concludes with recommendations to optimize the value of the NYS programme's in fostering sustainable employment for Namibian youth. These include the need for stronger industry linkages, improved mentorship, and continuous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. This study contributes to the broader discourse on youth employment strategies in developing countries and underscores the importance of tailored interventions in addressing youth unemployment.

Key words: Youth, Unemployment, Youth Unemployment in Namibia, National Youth Service (NYS) Programme, Employment Creation, Job Market Needs, Vocational Skills Development, Entrepreneurship, Poverty Alleviation, Youth Perceptions, Human Capital Theory, Structural Functionalism Theory, Qualitative Research, Thematic Analysis, Stakeholder Involvement

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	i
Table of Contents	ii
List of Tables.....	v
List of Abbreviations/Definitions	vi
Acknowledgments.....	vii
Dedication	viii
Declaration.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF STUDY.....	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background of the Study.....	1
1.3 Statement of the Problem	3
1.4 Objectives of the study	4
1.5 Significance of the Study	4
1.6 Scope of the Study.....	6
1.6.1 Limitations of the Study	6
1.6.2 De-limitations of the Study.....	6
1.7 Definition of terms	6
1.7.1 Youth.....	6
1.7.2 Unemployment	7
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	7
2.1 Introduction	7
2.2 Definition of terms	8
2.2.1 Youth.....	8
2.2.2 Unemployment.	8
2.2.3 Drivers of Youth Unemployment.	9
2.2.3.1 Contributions of Youth Unemployment.....	9

2.2.4 Youth unemployment and its global context.	10
2.2.5 Specific challenges of youth unemployment faced in Namibia.	11
2.2.6 Factors influencing effectiveness of youth employment programs	11
2.2.8 Drivers, Challenges, and Success Factors in Youth Employment Initiatives.....	12
2.3 Theoretical Framework	13
2.4 Summary	14
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	14
3.1 Introduction	14
3.2 Research Approach.....	14
3.3 Research Design.....	15
3.4 Population and Sample.....	15
3.5 Research Instruments	16
3.6 Data Analysis Methods: Thematic Analysis.....	17
3.7 Ethical Clearance.....	18
3.8 Study Trustworthiness Strategies	18
3.11 Ethical Considerations.....	19
3.12 Summary	20
CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS	21
4.1 Introduction	21
4.2 Demographic Information.....	21
4.3 Findings.....	24
4.4.1 General Perceptions of the NYS Programme.....	24
4.4.2 Perceived Importance of Youth Employment Creation.....	24
4.4.3 Effectiveness of NYS in Reducing Youth Unemployment	25
4.4.4 Alignment with Job Market Needs.....	25
4.4.5 Entrepreneurship and Vocational Skills Development.....	26
4.4.6 Contribution to Poverty Alleviation	27

4.4 General Experiences of the NYS Programme	27
4.4.1 Meeting Participants’ Needs	27
4.4.2 Inclusivity and User-Friendliness of the Curriculum	28
4.4.3 Impact on Character Building and Leadership Skills.....	28
4.5 Other Perceptions and experiences	28
4.5.1 Resource Sufficiency	29
4.5.2 Participant Welfare	29
4.6 Recommendations for Program Improvement	29
4.7 Critique of the NYS Programmes	31
4.8 Discussion of the Findings	32
4.8.1 Integrating findings with study objectives.....	32
4.8.2 Integrating Findings with Literature.....	35
4.8.3 New Information and Gaps.....	35
4.9 Summary	36
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	36
5.1 Introduction	36
5.2 Summary of Findings	36
5.3 Conclusions	37
5.5 Implications for Future Research	38
5.6 Chapter Conclusion	39
References.....	40
Appendix A: Ethical Clearance Certificate	43
Appendix C: Informed Consent	46
Appendix D: Interview Guide	50

List of Tables

Table 1 - Demographic Information of Participants Table	21
Table 2 - Analysis Frequency of Participant Responses on Each Theme.....	22

List of Abbreviations/Definitions

NYS – National Youth Service

UNFPA- United Nations Population Fund

TIPEEG- Targeted Intervention Program for Employment and Economic Growth

NYCS- Namibia Youth Credit Scheme

NSA- Namibia Statistics Agency

MYNSSC- Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport, and Culture

Acknowledgments

Firstly, I would like to thank the Almighty Father in Heaven for granting me the strength, courage and the hope to complete this mini thesis. He has carried me throughout my academic journey and for that, I show true gratitude. In the same vein, I would like to profoundly thank my supervisor, Dr. Kamwanyah, Ndumba Jonah, for his invaluable and continues guidance throughout the learning transition that took place with the completion of the mini thesis. I also want to acknowledge the important role the youth played in giving their support in making it possible for the research to be fulfilled. Lastly, I would like to thank my family and friends for believing in me and motivating me when I felt the pressure, their words will forever be in my mind and heart to help me through all other journeys of my life.

God's blessing upon you all.

Dedication

To my beloved Mother in heaven,

This dedication goes out to you, for your unconditional love, patience, and support throughout my academic journey. Your encouragement, unwavering belief in me and your constant motivation, even during the most challenging moments has been my strength, you stood by me during my youth unemployment phase and that inspired my research focus.

You have shared in this journey even though you aren't here to see it, and I am proud that you departed this earth with delight, knowing that I was on the right path. You are constantly with me; therefore, I know that your spirit embraces me and that I am never alone.

Thank you for making this achievement possible & may your soul rest in internal peace.

DECLARATIONS

I, Marliza Karukua, hereby declare that this study is my own work and is a true reflection of my research, and that this work, or any part thereof has not been submitted for a degree at any other institution. No part of this thesis/dissertation may be reproduced, stored in any retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, or by means (e.g. electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise) without the prior permission of the author, or The University of Namibia in that behalf.

I, Marliza Karukua, grant The University of Namibia the right to reproduce this thesis in whole or in part, in any

manner or format, which The University of Namibia may deem fit.

Signature: Marliza Karukua

Date: October 2025

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Youth unemployment is a global concern particularly in countries like Namibia characterized by a growing young population. Despite substantial Namibia's efforts to reduce overall unemployment, the country grapples with high levels of youth unemployment, reaching as high as 43.4% in by 2016 (Idris, 2016). A dire prediction by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) during the launch of the 3rd National Youth Policy in July 2021 suggested that Namibia's youth unemployment could soar to 50.30% by the end of 2022 (UNFPA, 2022).

The outline of this chapter begins with the background of the study which introduces the topic and shows that there is a significant gap in understanding youths' perceptions of government-established programmes such as the National Youth Service (NYS), designed to combat unemployment. The statement of the problem highlights the missing link and leads into the objectives which are critical tools to the research topic. The significance of the study outlines the purpose and usefulness of the study to the disciplinary focus; and the limitations of the study highlighting the major weaknesses of the study, which affected its findings, followed by the scope of the study which shows the delimitations, definition of terms and concludes with a summary.

1.2 Background of the Study

Recent years have witnessed an increasing the number of youths entering the labour force, drawing attention from international organizations, researchers, and policymakers. According to Oyedemi and Choung (2020), youth employment is a crucial subject since harnessing this demographic quota has the potential to trigger economic and social prosperity. However, should the labour market fail to accommodate this influx of young workers, concerns arise about what is commonly referred to as the "youth bulge." This concept underscores the uneasiness of having a large group of disenfranchised youth who might engage in disruptive or potentially hazardous activities (Idris, 2016).

The Namibian government created the National Youth Service (NYS) programme to help young people develop their civic, technical, and vocational skills, as well as personal growth (NYS-Strategic-Plan, 2022). The NYS was founded in 2010 as a service organization that focuses on the development of youth ages 18 to 34, NYS operates under the mandate of the National Youth Service Act No. 6 of 2005 and offers a three-phase training programme:

National Service Training, Voluntary Service, and Skills Training. Youth who complete all three phases are expected to be prepared for employment (NYS-Strategic-Plan, 2022).

Namibia experienced an increase in unemployment between 2014 and 2018. According to the 2018 Labour Force Survey, there were 876,908 youth aged 18 to 34 in Namibia, of whom 310,854 (35.4%) were employed, and 265,770 (30.3%) were unemployed (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2019). The overall youth unemployment rate is 46.1% which is an increase of 2.7% compared to the youth unemployment rate of 43.4% reported in the year 2016 (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2019). This challenge is especially complex in Namibia's capital, Windhoek, which attracts many young people from rural areas in search of employment. Notably, research has consistently highlighted the country's alarming overall unemployment rate, estimated at 51.2% (Mwinga, 2012; Namupala, 2016; Shiyukifeni, 2005). These unemployment rates among youth aged 18 to 34, pose a substantial obstacle to the socioeconomic progress of any country.

In response to this unemployment problem, the Namibian government created among other initiatives the National Youth Service (NYS) to develop the civic, technical, and vocational skills, as well as personal growth of youths. The goal of the programme is to contribute to the country's socio-economic progress in a sustainable manner as well as equip the youth for the labour market demands (NYS-Strategic-Plan, 2022). Studies shows that the programs aim at reducing unemployment rates are effective when they are youth-focused, demand-driven, support enterprise growth, backed by strong evaluation, coordinated across national strategies, and tied to lasting job creation and not just temporary relief (APRM-AU, 2021). However, there remains a significant gap in understanding youths' perceptions of government-established programmes such as the National Youth Service (NYS), designed to combat unemployment by improving the youths' employability.

In order to bridge this knowledge gap as stated above, this study draws on prior research, like Namupala (2016), which involved interviews with unemployed youth in Ohangwena and Khomas regions, aiming to capture their lived experiences and views regarding youth unemployment in Namibia. As a result, this study seeks to investigate the perception of youths' who participated in NYS Programs. Examining participating youth's perceptions is crucial to assess the effectiveness of governmental policies and programs targeting youth unemployment. Windhoek, the capital, has a significant youth population who migrate from rural areas in search of jobs, which worsens the issue of youth unemployment.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The Namibian government has implemented a multi-pronged approach to address youth unemployment through both macroeconomic planning and targeted interventions. The Fourth National Development Plan (NDP4) established job creation as a key priority, focusing on labor-intensive sectors like logistics, tourism, and agriculture projected to generate over 90,000 jobs, while the Targeted Intervention Programme for Employment and Economic Growth (TIPEEG) addressed short-term employment needs (Republic of Namibia, 2012). Complementing these efforts, the Namibia Youth Credit Scheme (NYCS) provided microfinance loans and business training for entrepreneurial ventures like poultry farming and salons, creating employment opportunities for some beneficiaries (Sisinyize & Shalyefu, 2015).

However, these initiatives face systemic challenges including policy misalignment, high repayment rates (20%), rural logistical barriers, and inadequate monitoring that have limited their effectiveness (Sisinyize & Shalyefu, 2015; Republic of Namibia, 2012). While vocational training programs and youth employment networks have sought to address skills gaps (Ministry of Youth, 2006), persistent issues of centralized management, funding constraints, and implementation weaknesses underscore the need for comprehensive reforms, stronger private-sector collaboration, and improved accountability mechanisms to translate policy objectives into meaningful youth employment outcomes (Republic of Namibia, 2012; Sisinyize & Shalyefu, 2015).

Namibia has a lot to draw comparisons in terms of the youth employment programmes from countries around the region. In a study conducted in South Africa by Bray (2002) findings revealed a notable gap in the way young people were included in research efforts. Despite a decade's worth of studies focused on youth, there was a significant deficit in involving them in a participatory manner. This limited engagement with young people in research had the effect of lessening the value of the research because it relied on quantitative research data, which primarily relied on numbers and statistics, rather than comprehensively identifying qualitatively all the factors that influence youth experiences and perceptions. As a result, Bray emphasized the critical importance of incorporating insights gained through engaging the youth and understanding their perceptions (Bray, 2002).

It is worth noting that NYS program aims not only to increase employment opportunities for youth, but also to ensure their sustainable contribution to the country's socio-economic development through equipping them for self-employment by using the gained practical skills

(NYS-Strategic-Plan, 2022). This study aims to investigate the youth's perceptions of the NYS programmes to determine whether they are meeting their needs by informing policy and programmatic interventions aimed at reducing youth unemployment in Namibia. Therefore, this is of paramount importance because the huge knowledge gap concerning the effectiveness of these programs. Additionally, the impact and outcomes of TIPEEG and NYCS have not been comprehensively assessed, and their success in reducing youth unemployment remains uncertain, hence necessitating this study.

1.4 Objectives of the study

Main objective of the study

The main objective of this study is to explore the perception of Windhoek's youth on the National Youth Service Programme's employment-creation initiatives in Namibia. The specific objectives are:

1.5.1 To explore Windhoek youth's perceptions and lived experiences of the NYS programme in addressing youth unemployment in Namibia.

1.5.2 To identify any perceived challenges of the NYS programme in creating youth employment opportunities in Namibia.

1.5.3. To identify ways how the NYS programme could increase its effectiveness and efficacy in youth employment opportunities in Namibia.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The proposed study on youth unemployment in Namibia is significant as effects thereof can have adverse effects on social cohesion, economic development, and growth. The perspectives of young people are crucial for NYS to identify practical solutions that bridge the gap between their training programmes and the demands of the job markets, allowing the organisation to develop more effective programs that align with the needs and expectations of the youth.

By actively involving youth participants, the study aims to empower them and promote social and political engagement as a way of promoting social justice and youth advocacy. Moreover, many of the problems that arise due to unemployment also correspond with problem areas that are addressed through social work as a discipline. Therefore, the involvement of social work in responses to youth unemployment is a relevant issue, particularly in filling the gap of scholarly literature on policy responses for unemployed youth as well as the involvement of youth training and labour market actors (Andersson, 2022).

Furthermore, the significance of the research lies in the fact that it underscores the importance of understanding the perceptions and experiences of unemployed youth in crafting effective solutions to enhance NYS programs and address the enduring challenge of high youth unemployment in Windhoek. Also, by shedding light on the experiences and challenges faced by unemployed youth in Namibia, the study aims to inform policy and programmatic interventions capable of reducing youth unemployment rates and promoting greater social and economic inclusion for young people. Importantly, it recognizes that NYS not only focuses on improving youth employment prospects but also emphasizes their sustainable contributions to national socio-economic development in Namibia (NYS-Strategic-Plan-2018-2022, n.d.). As a result, the study will seek to include the opinions of self-employed youths who have harnessed practical skills acquired through NYS programmes.

Understanding the perspectives of young people regarding unemployment holds immense significance for both government officials and policymakers. This wealth of information plays a pivotal role in identifying and addressing policy gaps related to employment within the country.

The insights gathered from the youth provide a unique and crucial vantage point in understanding the complexities of the unemployment issue from the affected population. They shed light on the challenges and opportunities faced by the youths as they seek employment. Furthermore, studies focusing on the real-life experiences and perceptions of the unemployed help to shed light on the psychological and social consequences of unemployment. This extends beyond individual experiences and affects not only the disadvantaged population in general but also young adults growing in a climate where unemployment is rampant. This kind of inquiry gives room for Social Workers to design tailor made interventions to assist those experiencing negative emotions due to the prevailing status quo.

Therefore, by delving into youths' perspectives, this can assist government authorities and policymakers can develop a more nuanced and effective approach to formulate and implement policies geared towards employment generation and youth empowerment. Additionally, these perspectives serve as a valuable resource, with the potential to enable the NYS to adapt its initiatives to the specific needs and concerns of the young workforce. In essence, the voices of the youth serve as a guiding compass, allowing policymakers to create more targeted and impactful strategies for reducing unemployment rates and fostering economic growth.

1.6 Scope of the Study

1.6.1 Limitations of the Study

Limited sample size: The study did not set out to generalise its findings to all youth in Namibia but rather to provide in-depth insights into the perceptions and lived experiences of a specific group of participants who completed the NYS programme in Windhoek. As a qualitative study with a small, purposively selected sample, the findings are context-specific and not statistically generalisable to the wider population. However, they offer valuable insights that can inform programme improvement and policy considerations.

Time constraints: In addition, the research was conducted within a limited time frame, which could have restricted the breadth of data collection and depth of analysis. To minimise the effect of this constraint, the researcher carefully planned the data collection schedule in advance, ensured that interviews were conducted efficiently without compromising depth, and began transcription and preliminary coding immediately after each interview. This concurrent approach allowed emerging patterns to be identified early and guided subsequent interviews, ensuring that key areas of inquiry were fully explored despite time limitations.

1.6.2 De-limitations of the Study

This study focuses exclusively on youth in Windhoek who have participated in, benefited from, and successfully completed any of the programmes offered by the National Youth Service (NYS), regardless of their current employment status. It excludes unemployed youth from other regions and those who have not participated in or completed NYS programmes. Therefore, the study is designed to provide detailed insights into the experiences and perceptions of this specific group, without aiming to generalize the findings to all youth across Namibia.

1.7 Definition of terms

Before attempting to conceptualize Namibia's youth unemployment problem, it is necessary to comprehend the meanings and connotations of the term's 'youth' and 'youth unemployment.'

1.7.1 Youth

The United Nations categorises the 'youth' as 15-24 years, while the Commonwealth uses the age category of 15-29 years (ILO, 2012). This study will use the definition provided Namibia, according to which youth comprise the age-group between 16 and 35 (UNFPA Namibia, 2022).

1.7.2 Unemployment

According to Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA, 2018), unemployment is broadly defined as all those within economically active or working age groups that are without work but available for work and actively or not actively seeking work.

1.8 Summary

This Chapter is an introduction which provides the background of study and highlights the factors in understanding the perceptions of government-established youth programmes designed to combat unemployment. The statement of the problem highlighted the gap and the symbiotic relationship between the youth's perceptions of the NYS programmes and youth unemployment in Namibia. This is followed the main research objective, which is a critical tool to the research topic: *to explore the perception of Windhoek's youth on the National Youth Service Programme's employment-creation initiatives in Namibia*. The significance of the study showed the purpose of the study: both in the field of study and its contributions to national development. The limitations of the study focused on the study weakness in relation to the size of sample which could not be transferable to any youth programmes except for the areas under investigation.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Youth unemployment represents a multifaceted challenge with far-reaching implications for communities and individuals, especially the youth. The youth unemployment problem in Namibia is part of a global trend. Despite being a major issue in developing countries, little research has been conducted on the youth perspectives on specific government employment programs. In Africa, over one in five youth were not employed, trained or educated in 2019,

and the rate has been increasing since 2012 (International Labour Organization, 2020). The World Bank prioritized youth unemployment in 2008 but did not focus on youth perspectives. This literature review delves into various aspects of youth unemployment, focusing on the problem of youth unemployment, its global context, specific challenges faced in Namibia, the role of schemes and government interventions as youth employment creation programmes, the significance of understanding youth perspectives, existing gaps in research and the theoretical framework.

2.2 Definition of terms

2.2.1 Youth

In Namibia the term youth is used to describe a person between the ages 15 to 35 years, although the legal working age is 16 years (Targeted Review Report, 2019). Defining these terms will be important for this research so that the research parameters can be clearly defined, and conceptual definitions are established.

2.2.2 Unemployment.

Chukwuma (2018) suggests that the conventional approach to defining employment typically involves viewing its opposite as unemployment. However, in essence, unemployment can be understood as the condition wherein an individual, who possesses the necessary qualifications and suitability for employment, remains without a job or lacks gainful employment opportunities. Similarly, the International Labour Organization (2020) elaborates that individuals who have not been engaged in any remunerative activity for a period exceeding one hour, yet are capable of working and actively seek employment, fall under the category of unemployed. Put differently, as per the ILO (2020), an unemployed individual is characterized as any member of the economically active population who is not currently employed but demonstrates a willingness to work and makes active efforts to secure employment opportunities. According to Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA, 2022), unemployment is defined as everyone within economically active or working age groups without work but available for work and actively or not actively seeking work, while an employed person is defined as one who has worked for pay, profit, or family gain for at least one hour during the seven days preceding the survey interview (NSA, 2022).

2.2.3 Drivers of Youth Unemployment.

Literature suggests that youth unemployment in Namibia is driven by a range of factors, including limited access to education and training opportunities, a lack of marketable skills, and a mismatch between skills and job requirements (Targeted Review Report, 2019). Considering the above, this research is interested in finding out whether the NYS programs are providing a solution to the real and perceived needs of the Namibian youth.

Studies shows that youth with limited access to education and training opportunities also have a limited social capital network of peers or mentors who can refer them to employers (APRM-AU, 2021). In addition, youth who participate in skills-based program were reported to establish self-employment programs) (APRM-AU, 2021).

Namibia's capital, Windhoek, has an average youth unemployment rate of 43%, while the country has a 33.4% unemployment rate and a 46.1% youth unemployment rate, according to the NLFS Report (2018). This indicates that about 50% of Namibia's working-age population is unemployed which is a huge problem that necessitates government interventions. Baah-Boateng (2016) posits Youth unemployment is driven by a complex interplay of factors including economic conditions, educational systems, and social structures. The author further explains that key drivers include a mismatch between skills and job market demands, limited job creation, and inadequate access to quality education and training. Other contributing factors include a lack of work experience, gender discrimination, and inadequate career guidance (APRM-AU, 2021).

It is important for this research to find out the youths' perceptions on the programmes already running under the NYS so that suggestions and recommendations can be made.

2.2.3.1 Contributions of Youth Unemployment

Namibia has a youthful population and growing at a faster rate, resulting in high levels of unemployment, especially youth unemployment (Denu, Tekeste & Van der Deijl, 2015, Mwinga, 2012). As a result, there is an increase in the number of young people entering the labour force and with the lack opportunities, most of these young people find themselves unemployed.

Another cause of unemployment that is more demanding for this research is the revelation by Denu, Tekeste and Van der Deijl (2015) and Mwinga (2012 that the unemployment rate among youth is especially high and concentrated among those without formal education, primary and secondary education. They also show that a lot of school dropouts enter the workforce unprepared and with expectations that are very different from the realities of the labour market.

As a result, many youths experience longer periods of unemployment when they look for their first job. Unsuccessful attempts to find work in the formal economy often result in discouraged youth who eventually end up in the informal sector, where quality, productivity, and security are low (Mwinga, 2012). This is where NYS steps in, training these youths and giving them the best chance of finding employment because of NYS's initiative to combat youth unemployment. Considering the above causes of unemployment, this research is interested in finding out whether the NYS programmes are providing a solution to the real and perceived needs of the Namibian youth.

2.2.4 Youth unemployment and its global context.

Youth unemployment remains one of the most pressing socioeconomic challenges of our time, disproportionately affecting developing nations in the Global South. Structural inequalities, exacerbated by neoliberal policies such as austerity measures and privatization, have deepened marginalization and social exclusion among young populations (Ben Haman, 2021). Morocco exemplifies this crisis, with youth unemployment reaching 22% in 2018 far surpassing the global average of 12.7% while educated graduates face acute barriers due to mismatches between higher education and labor market needs (ILO, 2018a). Similarly, Namibia's youth unemployment peaked at 67.7% in 2013, with initiatives like the Namibia Youth Credit Scheme (NYCS) struggling under implementation gaps and high repayment burdens (Sisinyize & Shalyefu, 2015). These cases reveal a broader pattern: externally imposed development models often neglect local realities, leaving youth vulnerable to unemployment, underemployment, or forced migration (Republic of Namibia, 2012).

The demographic "youth bulge" in many developing countries presents both an opportunity and a challenge. While a young workforce could drive economic growth, systemic failures in education, gender equity, and policy coherence have led to widespread joblessness and social unrest (Oyedemi & Choung, 2020). Pakistan's situation mirrors this paradox, with 24.4% youth unemployment, 50% underemployment among those aged 15–24, and stark gender disparities in labor participation (Asif et al., 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic further exposed vulnerabilities, such as gaps in digital access and vocational training, underscoring the need for resilient, inclusive policies (World Bank, 2018).

Globally, addressing youth unemployment demands coordinated action. Fergusson and Yeates (2021) advocate for transnational solutions like a "Global Compact for Youth Employment" to

tackle structural inequities. At the national level, targeted investments in education, vocational training, and economic diversification are critical to transforming the youth bulge into a demographic dividend. Without such measures, the cycle of poverty and instability will persist, undermining sustainable development across regions.

2.2.5 Specific challenges of youth unemployment faced in Namibia.

Like many developing countries, Namibia grapples with high levels of youth unemployment, posing significant socioeconomic challenges. Namibia faces significant challenges in addressing youth unemployment, including persistently high rates, which reached 67.7% in 2013 (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2013). Key issues include a lack of skills and education among youth, limited job opportunities, and insufficient access to financial support for entrepreneurship, as traditional banks often reject loan applications due to a lack of collateral (Sisinyize & Shalyefu, 2015). The Namibia Youth Credit Scheme (NYCS), aimed at mitigating unemployment, struggles with implementation challenges such as policy misalignment, inadequate monitoring, and high loan repayment pressures (20% interest), which strain new businesses (Sisinyize & Shalyefu, 2015). Geographic barriers, particularly in rural areas like Zambezi, further hinder program accessibility due to logistical constraints like unreliable transport (Sisinyize & Shalyefu, 2015). These systemic and structural issues underscore the complexity of youth unemployment in Namibia. According to Mwinga (2012) such phenomenon results in major social, political and economic risks, which can produce devastating effects on social exclusion, crime, and economic welfare, erosion of human capital, death, misery and social instability.

2.2.6 Factors influencing effectiveness of youth employment programs

Many countries have successfully established programmes to curb youth unemployment. In Nigeria, the National Youth Service Programme was established to ensure that the graduates of institutions of higher learning (universities and polytechnic) get involved in national service and contribute to the nation-building (Oluwalogbon, 2019). Such youth programmes have also yielded positive results in Rwanda. The Rwanda youth service programme is called “Akazi Kanoze” and there is evidence that youths who took part in it were more likely to secure decent employment after graduation compared to other youths who did not (Chauke, Malatji & Obadire, 2021).

The report further explains that there are several factors that contribute to youth who participate in national programs securing employment. The USAID report (2022) on “*feed the future*” reports that in Rwanda the Akazi service program has partnership agreements with the private sector that annually employs 20 youth out of those who graduate. The Akazi initiative is a 5-year activity designed to facilitate growth leading to inclusive job creation and entrepreneurship in Rwanda’s agri-food system. In addition, Namibia's National Youth Service (NYS) provides opportunities for youth to complete national service training and potentially transition into security-related roles, including those within the Namibian Correctional Service (NCS) (NYS, 2022). Similar trends were also observed in South Africa and indicated that the government initiated the National Youth Service Programme aimed at involving young people in community service activities and increasing youth employability (Targeted Review Report, 2019).

The NYS Act, 2005, outlines the framework for this, emphasizing voluntary service and national development. The Namibian government, through the Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport, and Culture (MYNSSC), has implemented various interventions and programs to promote youth employment and enhance opportunities in the labour market (NYS-Strategic-Plan, 2022). These include the National Youth Policy, National Youth Council, Multiple Purpose Youth Resource Centres and the National Youth Service Programme. The purpose of the NYS programme is to impact young people with skills for employment prospects towards the contribution to sustainable socio-economic development. This research focuses on exploring the perceptions of youth regarding the NYS program and assessing whether the programme has achieved its intended objectives.

Government interventions play a crucial role in addressing youth unemployment by providing training, employment opportunities, and support services. The National Youth Service (NYS) program in Namibia is one such initiative aimed at equipping young people with the skills and resources necessary for employment and personal development. However, the effectiveness of such programmes hinges on their alignment with the needs and aspirations of youth, highlighting the importance of understanding youth perspectives (NYS-Strategic-Plan, 2022).

2.2.8 Drivers, Challenges, and Success Factors in Youth Employment Initiatives

Evidence from recent studies highlights the importance of employment initiatives that simultaneously address employers’ demands for skilled labour and the limited access young people have to meaningful work-based learning opportunities, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Gateway to Opportunity (G2O) program in Maine

exemplifies such an approach, providing paid, project-based placements supported by targeted mentorship and structured youth adult partnerships (Williams & Peoples, 2021).

Developed in response to persistent challenges such as high youth unemployment, declining labour force participation, and systemic inequities including racism and economic marginalisation (Remington, 2020; Ross et al., 2020; US Census Bureau, 2014), G2O builds on national best practices to deliver measurable outcomes. These include the development of core employability skills communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and work readiness alongside enhanced career aspirations and stronger connections between employers and communities (Ross et al., 2020; Williams & Peoples, 2021). Such findings support broader literature that argues for sustained, evidence-based investment in youth employability programmes as a means of cultivating a robust local talent pipeline while fostering equitable access to labour market opportunities.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This study utilized the Human Capital Theory as a framework to explain the relationship between education, training, and economic growth (Hornbeck and Salamon, 1991). The theory suggests that investing in education and training enhances individuals' productivity and earning potential, thereby driving economic development. In the context of the study, this framework was applied to understand how Namibian youth perceive their investment in NYS programmes and whether they believe it yields economic benefits. The theory also assesses whether the youth consider their training adequate for the current job market and improving their employability. Human capital theory posits that investments in education, training, and healthcare enhance an individual's productivity and earning potential, ultimately contributing to economic growth. In view of this, the study will use the research problem to investigate and cover the gap in literature which focus on youth participation in NYS programmes by obtaining their views and feelings qualitatively.

Additionally, the study employed the Structural Functionalism Theory by Davis and Moore (1945) to examine the role of the NYS programme in addressing youth unemployment in Namibia. According to this theory, social institutions have specific functions and must work together to maintain social order. The research explored how the NYS programme contributes to social order by providing opportunities for skills acquisition and community development among young people. Furthermore, it investigated how the programme aligns with other social institutions like the education system and labour market to address youth unemployment.

Governments and parents, for instance, take into account both the direct and opportunity costs of investing in young people. As a result, education and training are viewed as crucial investments in helping young people secure paid employment and are used to identify those with the highest potential for productivity in the workforce.

This study uses both Human Capital Theory and Structural Functionalism because they address different aspects of the research problem. Human Capital Theory explains the economic value of education and training in improving youth productivity and employability, while Structural Functionalism examines the societal role of the NYS programme and its coordination with other institutions to address unemployment. Combined, they offer a holistic view of both individual benefits and systemic functions.

2.4 Summary

In conclusion, youth unemployment is a complex and multifaceted issue that requires a comprehensive understanding of its underlying causes and consequences. By exploring youth perspectives on unemployment, policymakers can develop more targeted and effective interventions that address the root causes of unemployment and promote economic growth and social inclusion. This study aims to contribute to this endeavour by examining Windhoek youth's perceptions of the NYS program and identifying opportunities for improvement.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology used to investigate youth unemployment and the impact of the NYS programmes in Namibia, Windhoek. It details the research approach, design, population, sampling methods, data collection and analysis procedures, and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Approach

This study adopted qualitative approach. According to Clark and Creswell (2015), a qualitative research design is a collection of techniques for gathering, analysing, and reporting text and visual data in order to explore participants' perspectives and provide answers to research

questions. Moreover, the qualitative approach explores the participants' experiences and perspectives. Through qualitative research, there is a provision of a comprehensive and in-depth insight of people's experiences and perspectives (Johnson & Christensen, 2015). Therefore, this approach is ideal for understanding the social reality of youth unemployment and the effects of NYS programmes through in-depth perceptions from the participants.

3.3 Research Design

Phenomenological Research Design

The phenomenological research is an approach to investigation that has roots in philosophy and psychology and wherein the researcher examines the participants' first-hand accounts of a reality that is based on the opinions of participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Hence, the study employed a phenomenological design to capture the essence of participants' experiences with NYS programmes. This design is suitable for obtaining detailed descriptions of individual perceptions and experiences through in-depth interviews.

3.4 Population and Sample

A population, according to Babbie (2016) is the group of subjects from which the sample is drawn, it is a collection of possible participants with shared traits. The target population for this study are youths aged 16-35, who are males and females, that participated in NYS programmes and who reside in Windhoek, regardless of their current employment status (employed, part-time employed and unemployed). This age group was chosen because it represents the youths eligible for NYS programmes. Consequently, their participation in the NYS programmes enabled them to adequately describe how they feel about NYS programme and its impact towards youth employment initiative.

Sample Size and Sampling Method

A total of 15 participants were recruited and participated in the study. Bless et al. (2013) note that the term "sampling" usually entails the coexistence of a population or universe and a sample, which is a smaller portion of the population. The method of choosing the subjects who will contribute the "best-fitting" data for a study is how the researcher defines sampling. Purposive sampling was employed in this study, to select participants as determined by the researcher's judgment and was based on participant's knowledge of the subject and experience (Semasinghe, 2019).

Therefore, purposive sampling was used as part of the non-probability sampling technique, combined with snowball sampling. The researcher initially identified a small group of youth in Windhoek who had successfully completed an NYS programme and met the study criteria. After obtaining their consent, these initial participants were asked to recommend other individuals they personally knew who also met the inclusion criteria and might be willing to participate. Each new participant, once interviewed, was likewise invited to refer further eligible individuals. This chain-referral process (Creswell et al., 2018) continued until a total of 15 participants were recruited. Recruitment ceased when data saturation was reached, meaning that no new information or themes were emerging and responses became repetitive. Interviews were conducted at the various locations in Windhoek during the time which was convenient to the participants, and each interview range in duration between 40-60 minutes.

3.5 Research Instruments

Interview Guide

This study utilised an interview guide consisting of semi-structured and open-ended questions. The guide was developed by the researcher and aligned with the study's objectives to ensure comprehensive data collection. Data were gathered through face-to-face, semi-structured interviews, allowing for direct interaction between the researcher and participants. This format enabled participants to express their opinions in their own words and created opportunities for a two-way dialogue. Such in-person engagement allowed participants to share their personal lived experiences in greater depth, while also enabling the researcher to observe non-verbal cues and better grasp the significance participants placed on those experiences (Bless et al., 2013).

According to Moser and Korstjens (2018), qualitative research interviews aim to capture the significance of key concepts within participants' natural environments. Interviewing is a widely used method for gathering information from individuals or groups, and in this study, data were obtained through in-depth, face-to-face interviews with youth participants selected for their relevance to the research objectives.

An audio recorder was used, with participants' informed consent, to ensure the accuracy of data capture. This was complemented by detailed note-taking during the interviews, which involved recording key points, contextual observations, and non-verbal cues in real time. Such note-taking not only supplements audio recordings but also preserves important nuances and contextual details that may otherwise be lost, thereby enriching the understanding of participants' responses (Moser & Korstjens, 2018).

To safeguard confidentiality, the researcher was the sole custodian of both the interview notes and audio files. These materials were securely stored until the completion of data analysis, after which they were retained in accordance with ethical guidelines. All collected information was used exclusively for research purposes.

In addition, Moser and Korstjens (2018) highlights how interviews as a method have several benefits. One of the benefits being that it gives the researcher more freedom to ask questions than a questionnaire does. Moreover, the interview also gives the interviewer control over the order of the questions, allowing them to make sure that all participants answer them in the same sequence.

3.6 Data Analysis Methods: Thematic Analysis

According to Creswell (2014), data analysis is conducted to simplify, categorize, and interpret data. By locating themes in the research findings, a qualitative, thematic data analysis method was employed to understand the data. The acquired data was first transcribed, after which the researcher immersed herself in the material by repeatedly listening to the audio recordings and reading the verbatim transcripts several times. This immersion process enabled the researcher to become thoroughly familiar with the content, tone, and context of each interview, while also identifying subtle nuances and recurring patterns in the narratives. Such immersion, as Moser and Korstjens (2018) emphasize, is essential in qualitative research because it enhances sensitivity to the data, strengthens the connection between participants' accounts and emerging themes, and increases the credibility of the analysis. Following this stage, the transcripts were coded, with the researcher creating data sections using themes, symbols, descriptive terminology, or category names (Johnson & Christensen, 2015). This method allowed the identification of patterns and relationships within the data, generating insights into youth perceptions of NYS programmes.

According to Ngulube (2020), thematic data analysis is appropriate for analysing qualitative data that is gathered via interview transcripts, audio recordings, and observational notes. Ngulube further states that analysing data necessitates aspects relevant, integration, and analysis of the data while looking for patterns in great depth. In addition, the researcher will accurately transcribe the audio-recorded data from the interview as part of the proposed study. Therefore, this will indicate that the goal of recording the in-person interview is to prevent data loss and to preserve the record of the interview for future use in resolving disputes as the data is analysed (Ngulube, 2020). In accordance with the data that was obtained, this data was

preserved on an external hard drive and on a computer that has a private security code to prevent data loss and to keep it safe.

3.7 Ethical Clearance

The researcher was issued an ethical clearance certificate from the University of Namibia, Decentralized Ethics Committee (DEC), following a research permission letter was obtained from Postgraduate to undertake the study.

3.8 Study Trustworthiness Strategies

According to Neuman (2011), trustworthiness in qualitative research is assessed using the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These criteria are integral to establishing the validity and reliability of the study. To ensure trustworthiness, the researcher sought constructive criticism from the research supervisor. The following concepts were applied to demonstrate the validity and reliability of this research study.

Dependability

This was ensured by providing a detailed description of research methods and procedures to the participants. Dependability involves ensuring the consistency of the research process over time. This can be achieved by cross-checking codes and findings with other researchers (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this study, the researcher included several steps to ensure consistency and engaged another individual to cross-check the codes, achieving inter-coder agreement.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the objectivity of the research findings. Researchers should clarify any biases they bring to the study, ensuring transparency and fostering objectivity (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this study, the researcher examined personal biases and incorporated this awareness into the research. Triangulation was used to minimize bias and explore the phenomenon objectively, applied carefully throughout each stage of the research.

Transferability

The researcher offered a full description of the research context and methods. Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings can be applied to other contexts (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This is enhanced by providing rich, and thick descriptions that allow readers to understand the context and see shared perspectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this study, in-depth interviews and prolonged engagement were used to gather detailed descriptions of participants experiences.

Credibility

To ensure that the research is truthful and trustworthy from the perspective of those involved, credibility refers to the extent to which the findings are believable and accurately reflect the participants' experiences and perspectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Prolonged Engagement

This involves spending sufficient time in the field to understand the context and build rapport with participants, enhancing the credibility of the findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this study, the researcher remained in the field until the material was thoroughly covered, building trust and encouraging participants to provide accurate and complete descriptions of their experiences.

Member Checking

Member checking involves returning to participants with the final report or specific descriptions and themes to verify their accuracy (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). For this study, follow-up interviews were conducted, allowing participants to comment on the findings. Portions of the completed study were presented to participants for their feed-back on the accuracy of the results.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Informed Consent

The participants were provided with written consent forms before continuing with the study in the way described (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Therefore, the participants' informed consent was obtained by fully revealing the proposed methods of the study prior to its execution. This implied that the participants' involvement in the research depended on their willingness to participate voluntarily. All information gathering tools and procedures were disclosed to the informant (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Babbie (2016) argues that when a researcher is able to pinpoint a specific person's response but agrees not to make that information public, confidentiality is assured. Firstly, the participants were treated with respect and dignity, and the researcher treated the information shared as confidential by not disclosing it to a third party. Subsequently, the researcher made sure that the participants' rights were upheld and that they were not coerced into answering questions they did not want to be asked, even if doing so was valuable to the study. Lastly, the study protected participants' anonymity by not linking their names to the data.

Right to withdraw from the study

Participants were able to withdraw from the study at any time because participation was entirely voluntary. Thus, to guarantee that none of the volunteers felt coerced into participating in the research, the researcher openly notified all the participants of their right to withdraw from the study.

Involvement of the Researcher

According to Welman et al. (2010), the researcher should take care not to trick respondents. He or she should thus regard the participants as unique people and not as inanimate objects. These authors contend that unethical interviewing methods and tactics should not be used by researchers. In doing so, the researcher maintained responsibility throughout the interviews and encouraged the dialogue in a welcoming and non-threatening setting. Moreover, throughout the interview, the researcher showed awareness of each participant's individuality.

3.12 Summary

This chapter outlined the methodology used to investigate youth unemployment and the impact of the NYS programmes in Namibia. It details the research approach, design, population, sampling methods, data collection and analysis procedures, and ethical considerations. The next chapter will analyse and show results of the data collected from the participants.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The objective of the study was to explore the experiences and perceptions of the youth in regard to the National Youth Service (NYS) employment programmes. This chapter presents the themes from the qualitative data collected from fifteen participants regarding their experiences and perceptions of the NYS Programme's impact on employment creation for youth in Windhoek, Namibia. The current chapter, therefore, presents the empirical data, research findings and their analysis. It sets forth the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The chapter is organized thematically, focusing on key areas such as the importance of youth employment, the role of the NYS curriculum, training treatment and support, resource provision, participants' welfare, character building and leadership skills, the effectiveness of the NYS in reducing youth unemployment, alignment with job market needs, entrepreneurship and vocational skills development, and recommendations for programme improvement. It further analyses the empirical data collected from the study area and presents the findings in the form of narratives, tables, and charts.

4.2 Demographic Information

The demographic information for the study consists of 15 participants, each of whom has provided details on their age, gender, ethnic group, highest education level, and occupation. The distribution of these demographic factors offers a representative sample of the target population and provides valuable insights into the experiences and perceptions of the NYS program participants.

The ages of participants range from 22 to 36 years, indicating a diverse age group within the young adult category. The gender distribution includes 7 men and 8 women, which shows a balanced representation of both genders. The ethnic groups represented in the study include Oshiwambo, Baster, Damara>Nama, Kavango, and Herero. However, Oshiwambo is the most represented ethnic group, with 6 participants identifying as such. The highest education levels attained by participants range from secondary to post-graduate degrees though most participants have completed university-level education, showing a high educational attainment among the respondents. The occupations of participants vary, but with a significant number of participants (5 out of 15) employed as police officers. This indicates a strong presence of law enforcement personnel in the sample.

This demographic data provides a comprehensive overview of the participants involved in the study as well as context to their responses and insights. It is essential for the study as it helps determine whether the respondents represent the target population accurately. This representation gives credibility to their responses and ensures that the research findings are valid and reliable.

Additionally, the researcher used colours for coding and numbers to ensure the respondents identities remain anonymous. For example, P1 would mean participant number one with a colour code of purple.

Table 4.1 Summarizes the demographic details of the participants.

Table 1 - Demographic Information of Participants Table

Participant	Age	Gender	Ethnic Group	Highest Education	Occupation
1 (Purple)	35	Man	Oshiwambo	University	Police officer
2 (Green)	36	Woman	Oshiwambo	Tertiary	Police officer
3 (Red)	22	Woman	Baster	Secondary	Police officer
4 (Blue)	30	Woman	Oshiwambo	University	Police officer
5 (Black)	31	Woman	Damara>Nama	University	Police officer
6 (Orange)	29	Man	Kavango	Secondary	Electrician
7 (Yellow)	28	Woman	Herero	University	Teacher
8 (Pink)	27	Man	Oshiwambo	Secondary	Farmer
9 (Brown)	33	Woman	Damara	University	Nurse
10 (Teal)	26	Woman	Oshiwambo	University	Social worker
11 (White)	27	Man	Damara	University	Entrepreneur
12 (Cream)	27	Man	Herero	Secondary	Teacher
13 (Coffee)	34	Man	Baster	University	Civil Servant
14 (Peach)	29	Woman	Nama	Post-grad	Engineer
15 (Grey)	30	Man	Oshiwambo	University	Farmer

Source – Research Data June 2024)

4.2.1 Frequency of Responses per theme

Table 2 - Analysis Frequency of Participant Responses on Each Theme

Theme	Frequency
Importance of Youth Employment Creation	15/15
Contribution to Poverty Alleviation	15/15
Participation in NYS Programme	15/15
Inclusivity and User-Friendliness of the Curriculum	13/15
Meeting Participants' Needs	13/15
Provision of Basic Needs	12/15
Resource Sufficiency	11/15
Participant Welfare	11/15
Impact on Character Building and Leadership Skills	11/15
Effectiveness in Reducing Youth Unemployment	10/15
Alignment with Job Market Needs	10/15
Entrepreneurship and Vocational Skills Development	10/15
Recommendations for Program Improvement	9/15
General Positive Perception	14/15

Source – (June 2024)

The above table summarises how many participants contributed to each of the themes in their responses.

4.3 Findings

This section outlines the key themes identified through the interview process from the participants' responses and subsequent data analysis. A total of twelve (12) themes emerged and were divided into two main broad themes or categories, which are perceptions and experiences. These two themes aligned with the research objectives and the literature review conducted. Under perceptions, there were sub-themes like; perceived importance of youth employment creation; effectiveness of NYS in reducing youth unemployment, alignment with job market needs. Under experiences, there were sub-themes like meeting of participants needs and welfare, inclusivity and user-friendliness of the curriculum and training treatment and support. Based on their experiences, participants provided valuable recommendations for enhancing the NYS program.

4.4 Perception of the NYS programme

4.4.1 General Perceptions of the NYS Programme

The general perceptions of the NYS Programme among participants highlight its significance and the multifaceted impact it has on their lives.

4.4.2 Perceived Importance of Youth Employment Creation

Participants consistently emphasized the critical importance of youth employment creation in Namibia which made this one of the most frequent themes, getting a mention by all fifteen (15) respondents. Participant P1(Male) notes that *"It's very important, because the youth forms majority of the population of Namibia and through employment creation the youth get to be employed and they would stay away from crime, drinking and drugs."* This is echoed by participant O6(Male) who states that *"youth employment is crucial for the future of our country. The NYS Programme helps us gain skills and find jobs, which reduces crime and poverty."* This aligns with the study's theoretical framework because according to the Structural Functionalism Theory coined by Davis and Moore, social institutions have specific functions and must work together to maintain social order (Davis and Moore, 1945).

Furthermore, this theme goes in line with findings in the literature review, which highlights the direct link between youth unemployment and various social, economic, and political vices. According to Mwinga (2012), high unemployment rates result in major social, political, and economic risks, which can produce devastating effects on social exclusion, crime, and economic welfare, erosion of human capital, death, misery, and social instability. Participant C12(Male) had this to say, *"Youth employment creation is critical for our community's*

development and the NYS Programme plays a vital role in this.” Therefore, the NYS Programme is seen as a vital initiative for addressing youth unemployment and contributing to social stability in Windhoek. Participant P1(Male) reiterates this view noting that *“employment creation for the youth is extremely important for economic stability and growth.”*

4.4.3 Effectiveness of NYS in Reducing Youth Unemployment

Most participants found the NYS Programme effective in reducing youth unemployment, with many securing jobs post-training. This reflects the program’s success in achieving one of its primary objectives. Participant P1(Male) went on to explain its effectiveness by providing examples of organisations that had recruited NYS graduates revealing that *“It’s very effective, a high number of participants were recruited through NYS at Nampol, NDF, Correctional, Namport, guarding of school buildings, libraries (on contract bases) and different security companies.”* This is supported by participant B9 (Female) who says that *“NYS helped me secure a job as a farmer by providing the necessary training and connections,”* and participant W11 who highlights the NYS’s role in helping the participants get jobs revealing that *“I believe the programme significantly reduces youth unemployment by providing practical skills and job placements.”*

Almost all the participants mentioned that they had gained new skills that prepared them for the job market as a result of participating in the NYS programs with participant B5(Female) stating that *“NYS has been effective in reducing youth unemployment by equipping us with necessary skills.”*

This is a welcome revelation because the Namibian government, through the Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport, and Culture (MYNSSC), implemented such interventions and programs to promote youth employment and enhance opportunities in the labour market (NYS-Strategic-Plan, 2022).

4.4.4 Alignment with Job Market Needs

Participants generally agree that according to their experiences, the NYS curriculum aligns well with the job market needs in Namibia, providing relevant skills that enhance employability. This is what participant P1(Male) had to say, *“Yes, it does align with job market needs because one does not remain idle after completing training, but they are given job placement.”* This represents the perception of (10) out of (15) participants showing that most participants felt that the skills taught aligned well with job market needs, indicating that the programme is responsive to market demands.

This alignment is crucial for the employability of participants. Participant P8(Male) supported this claim stating that *“the skills we learn are directly applicable to the jobs available in the market.”* This aspect is particularly important for this study because it also aligns with the theoretical framework employed in the study. According to Human Capital Theory, there should be a relationship between education, training, and economic growth (Hornbeck and Salamon, 1991). The theory suggests that investing in education and training enhances individuals’ productivity and earning potential, thereby driving economic development. Therefore, this theme aligns well with this study and literature. However, some participants still think the NYS should do more to make sure this alignment benefits its participants. This was voiced by participant C13(Male) who says, *“The programme needs to better align its training with current job market needs to enhance employability.”* He agreed with participant G15(Male) who adds that *“The NYS program needs a more inclusive curriculum that aligns better with current job market demands and technological advancements.”*

Almost all participants demonstrated a desire for improvement in this regard, not because the NYS is not well aligned but mostly because we are living in a fast-changing global village, hence it is easy to get left behind by advancements if you do not stay up to date.

4.4.5 Entrepreneurship and Vocational Skills Development

It was also of paramount importance for this study to assess whether according to the youths’ experiences, the NYS Programme achieves one of its key mandates which is according to the NYS Strategic plan to impact young people with skills for employment prospects towards the contribution to sustainable socio-economic development (NYS-Strategic-Plan, 2022). Findings from the interviews indicate that the program promotes entrepreneurship and vocational skills, enabling participants to start their own businesses or take up vocational roles.

Participant G2(Female) when asked whether they thought the program prepared them for employment answered, *“I would say yes, because they are taught discipline, time management, business management and that includes financial skills and how to manage your finances and how to save up.”* Participant T10(Female) echoed this sentiment stating that, *“NYS provided me with the skills to start my own business, which has been very successful.”* One participant W11(Male) identifies oneself as an entrepreneur and had this to say, *“I am very thankful for the skills I learned from the NYS program. The training helped me start my own furniture business. Before NYS, I wanted to start a business but didn't know how because I did not pass nice my grade 12 results. NYS taught me what I needed to know. Now, my business is doing well. I am grateful for all the help and support I received from NYS.”*

Such a testimony boards well for the NYS because one of their strategic objectives according to their Strategic Plan 2020-2021 states that

“This objective combines the Service’s mandate of training, skills development, and youth voluntary service. The programmes equip youth with the requisite skills, as well as inculcates attributes such as patriotism, national pride, and discipline to enable the youth to become meaningful citizens contributing to the socio-economic development of the country,” (NYS-Strategic-Plan, xxi, 2022).

4.4.6 Contribution to Poverty Alleviation

This theme relates to the aspect of if the youth perceive the NYS programme as contributing to reducing poverty and participants noted that the NYS Programme helps mitigate this issue by providing opportunities for stable employment. According to participant B9(Female), *“By giving us skills and jobs, NYS helps us escape the cycle of poverty.”* This is supported by participant O6(Male) who states that *“youth employment is crucial for the future of our country. The NYS Programme helps us gain skills and find jobs, which reduces crime and poverty,”* and participant G15(Male) who notes that *“Creating employment opportunities for youth is crucial for reducing crime and poverty.”*

This shows the youths perceive that there is a direct link between poverty eradication and employment creation agencies like NYS and the programmes they offer are deemed as a solution. To add, according to ILO (2020), youth unemployment is directly linked to poverty, thus there is need for youth poverty alleviation programs, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa.

4.4 General Experiences of the NYS Programme

4.4.1 Meeting Participants’ Needs

The curriculum of the programme is generally seen as meeting the needs of its participants, equipping them with valuable skills with a frequency of (13) participants agreeing to this. According to the words of participant G2(Female), *“Yes, it does meet the needs of the participants,”* supported by participant P8 who adds that *“the skills I learned are very applicable to my job as a nurse.”* This admission demonstrates that efforts are being made to address some of the range of factors that contribute to youth unemployment in Namibia as noted in the literature review of this study.

The Targeted Review Report (2019) identifies including limited access to education and training opportunities, a lack of marketable skills, and a mismatch between skills and job requirements as big contributing factors to youth unemployment. However, with admissions

such as those from participant P8(Male) and G2(Female), the NYS is making a positive impact and forward strides to meet the needs of participants. Participant C12(Male) weighs in with some balance revealing that *“Welfare support during the programme was adequate, but there is always room for improvement.”*

4.4.2 Inclusivity and User-Friendliness of the Curriculum

Inclusivity is a crucial component in today’s world and most participants shared the same sentiments, especially in relation to their experience of the NYS Programme. The way the curriculum of the NYS Programme is designed is such that it can be inclusive, catering to both literate and illiterate participants. This was an important and dominant theme among the participants. The participants unanimously perceived that this ensures broad accessibility especially for the side-lined.

According to participant P1(Male), *“It is user friendly, because when I joined NYS there where participants from the marginalised community and most of them could not read or write. Therefore, it includes everyone,”* whilst participant B4 feels that *“The curriculum is designed in a way that even those who are not very literate can still follow and learn.”* This meets one of the mandates of the NYS which is to provide inclusive trainings and skills (NYS-Strategic-Plan ,2022). However, participant W11 has a different view and shares that *“The curriculum needs to be more inclusive to cater to the diverse needs of participants.”*

4.4.3 Impact on Character Building and Leadership Skills

According to the participants’ experiences, the NYS Programme significantly impacts character building and the development of leadership skills by assigning responsibilities and promoting discipline. NYS aims to instil discipline and patriotism in their students as part of their objectives (NYS-Strategic-Plan, 2022). This sentiment was echoed by more than half of the participants which means it is a major characteristic of the program. Participant P1(Male) highlights that, *“It has a great impact, during training we are given responsibility of being group leaders and that allows one to lead others and set good examples,”* a sentiment shared by participant O6(Male) who expressed that *“The programme imparts a sense of responsibility and leadership in us.”*

4.5 Other Perceptions and experiences

The respondents also shared information, which was not specifically directed to employment, but their general experiences while participating in the program. This information is, however,

important in shaping their overall perception and general experience of NYS Programmes, therefore making it relevant and crucial for this study.

4.5.1 Resource Sufficiency

While some participants found the resources provided during training sufficient, others noted areas where improvements could be made. According to participant P1(Male), *“In my time there was enough resources and if one finished your toiletries at least the allowance would cover those needs, but we really didn’t lack anything at all.”* On the other hand, participant R3(Female) and W11(Male) hinted that resources were insufficient at times, noting that, *“There was a lack of resources at times, and we had to manage with what we had,”* and *“Resources during training were insufficient, particularly in terms of materials and equipment.”*

4.5.2 Participant Welfare

In terms of welfare, according to the participants, their wellbeing was generally upheld through regular check-ins and support from matrons, though the level of support varied. Participant P1(Male) notes that *“In my opinion the participants’ welfare was upheld, I remember every Friday we used to have one on one with our matrons where they would ask if we were fine and would encourage us to talk to them if we had any issues,”* at the same time, participant B4 reveals that *“there were times when our welfare was not adequately upheld, especially when it came to medical needs.”*

Thus, although many participants felt their welfare was upheld, there were instances of dissatisfaction. Ensuring participant welfare consistently across the board is crucial for the program’s success and participant satisfaction as it contributes significantly to how they perceive the program.

4.6 Recommendations for Program Improvement

Even though the NYS Programmes has seen a lot of changes and improvements as stated by participant B5(Female), *“The NYS Programme has improved significantly, providing better resources and support,”* participants were also given a chance to share several recommendations for improving the NYS Programme. All but one participant shared their recommendations as follows:

Participant R3(Female), *“The programme should ensure that there are always enough resources for all participants,”*

Participant B4(Female), *“There should be more emphasis on medical support and welfare during training.”*

Participant C13(Male) *“It would be great if the NYS programme offered more advanced courses in entrepreneurship. This way, we can build on what we learned and grow our businesses even further.”*

Participant P1(Male), *“When the programme is being introduced, they should specify the different courses offered for better preparation.”*

Participant C12(Male) *“The programme should offer more post-training support and follow-up to ensure participants transition smoothly into employment.”*

Participant G2(Female), *“Improvements could include more stakeholder involvement and clearer communication about the programme.”*

Participant B9(Female), *“Perhaps invest more money to research so that they keep their curriculum updated to move along with the market demands.”*

Participant O6(Male), *“There is a need for better information dissemination and understanding of the programme.”*

Participant B5(Female), *“There is need to provide clearer information and involving more private sectors.”*

Participant Y7(Female), *“No recommendation comes to mind.”*

Participant P8(Male), *“Providing more detailed information about job opportunities post-training could be beneficial.”*

Participant G15(Male) *“The programme should focus more on practical training and establish more partnerships with industries to secure job placements.”*

Participant T10(Female), *“The programme should ensure there is a job for every trained person.”*

Participant W11(Male) *“I recommend increasing the resources provided during training. More materials and better facilities would help us learn even more effectively.”*

Participant P14(Female) *“I suggest including more real-world work experience as part of the training. Practical, hands-on opportunities would prepare us better for starting and running our own businesses.”*

These recommendations are crucial as they show that most participants would want to see the NYS Programmes improve so that more youths can benefit from a positive experience. Addressing the challenges as well as incorporating recommendations provided by the participants will be crucial for the continued success and improvement of the NYS programme, ensuring it better supports future participants.

4.7 Critique of the NYS Programmes

Table 3 – Summary Critique of the NYS Programmes

Critique/Criticism	Number of Responses
Lack of Resources	9/15
Participant Welfare Not Upheld	7/15
Challenges in Job Creation Initiatives	7/15
Barriers to Benefiting from NYS Opportunities	7/15
Suggested Improvements for NYS Programme	7/15
Initial Harshness of Training	5/15
Discrimination Within the Programme	5/15
Lack of Toiletries	2/15
Inconsistent Treatment During Training	2/15
Insufficient Involvement of Private Sector	5/15
Need for Employing NYS Graduates	2/15
Need for Clear Information on Programme	5/15
Employment Opportunities Post-Training Not Guaranteed	8/15
Low Stipend During Training	2/15
Poor Living Conditions	2/15
High Dropout Rate	5/15

Source – Research Data (June 2024)

The analysis of all fifteen (15) participant responses reveals a generally positive perception of the NYS Programme, with high frequencies of agreement on its important impact in curbing unemployment. However, there are areas for improvement as highlighted in the table above,

particularly in resource sufficiency and consistent welfare support. Addressing these concerns can further enhance the program's effectiveness and satisfaction among participants.

4.8 Discussion of the Findings

4.8.1 Integrating findings with study objectives

The research provided rich insights into how the NYS programme is perceived by the youth, the challenges they face, and potential improvements that could enhance the programme's impact on youth employment in Namibia. These results are discussed alongside the first three objectives of this study to demonstrate how they were met in this study.

The first objective of the study was to explore Windhoek youth's perceived views on the NYS programme in reducing youth unemployment in Namibia. According to the research findings, the general perception of the youth is that the NYS programme is a positive initiative with the potential to make a significant impact on reducing unemployment by equipping young people with essential skills. Many respondents view the NYS programme as a valuable opportunity that offers them a structured pathway to gain practical knowledge and competencies that are otherwise difficult to acquire, particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The programme is seen as a stepping stone that not only prepares them for the workforce but also instils a sense of discipline, responsibility, and self-reliance.

Youth participants appreciate the NYS programme's focus on skills development, which they believe can increase their employability and enhance their chances of securing stable jobs. They recognize that the training provided through NYS covers a broad range of practical and vocational skills, which are crucial in today's competitive job market. Additionally, the programme is perceived as a government-backed effort to tackle the pervasive issue of youth unemployment, demonstrating a commitment to improving the socio-economic conditions of young people in Namibia.

Moreover, the youth acknowledge the NYS programme as an initiative that goes beyond just employment, as it also contributes to their personal growth and community involvement. They believe that by participating in the programme, they are not only gaining skills for employment but also becoming more active and responsible citizens who can contribute positively to society. This holistic approach of the NYS programme, which combines skills training with character building, is seen as a key factor in its positive reception among the youth. Thus, the youth participants believe the programme plays a crucial role in helping young people become more employable.

While some youths have successfully gained employment after participating in the NYS programme, others feel that the impact is limited. A few participants expressed concern that the skills provided by the programme do not always match the demands of the current job market, leading to underemployment or continued unemployment. O'Higgins (2017) states that underemployment occurs when a worker is employed in a job that does not match their skills, qualifications, or education level. For example, there was a participant in the research with a college degree and NYS training but working in a low-skilled job as a farmer. This job does not fully utilize their skills and education. Additionally, this perception is consistent with the literature, which highlights the challenges of youth unemployment being exacerbated by a mismatch between skills and job market demands (Targeted Review Report, 2019).

Secondly, the study sought to identify any perceived challenges of the NYS programme in creating youth employment opportunities in Namibia. A significant challenge highlighted from the research findings was the perceived disconnect between the skills taught in the NYS programme and the needs of the labour market. Youth participants expressed that some of the training modules were outdated, making it difficult for them to secure relevant jobs. The youth also reviewed a key challenge being the absence of job placement services or follow-up support after completing the programme. Many youths felt that after acquiring skills, they were left on their own to find employment, which often proved difficult. Another challenge identified was the programmed limited accessibility. The programme's reach was perceived as a big limitation, with some youth pointing out that it is not widely accessible, particularly to those in remote areas or from disadvantaged backgrounds. The challenges completely resonate with the literature, particularly the issues of limited job opportunities and inadequate skills training highlighted by Mwinga (2012) and the UNFPA Namibia (2022). The findings add to the existing knowledge by revealing that these challenges are not only structural but also programmatic, with participants calling for more personalized support and guidance throughout and after their engagement with the NYS program.

Furthermore, the findings from of the research highlight the youth's mixed perceptions of the role of the NYS programme role in addressing unemployment. While some respondents acknowledged the programme's potential to equip them with valuable skills that could enhance their employability, others expressed significant concerns about the mismatch between the training provided and the actual demands of the labour market. Specifically, these respondents felt that the skills and knowledge they gained through the program were not always aligned with the qualifications and competencies sought by employers. This disconnect left them feeling inadequately prepared to secure meaningful employment.

Moreover, some participants pointed out that the training offered was often too generic or outdated, failing to keep pace with the rapidly changing job market, especially in sectors driven by technological advancements. This lack of relevance in the training meant that even though they completed the program, they still faced considerable challenges in finding jobs that matched their aspirations and qualifications. As a result, the programme, while well-intentioned, did not always translate into tangible employment opportunities, leading to frustration and disillusionment among the youth who expected more targeted and market-responsive training from such initiatives. This gap between training and employment outcomes highlights the need for the program to more closely align its courses with current and emerging industry needs to better support the youth in their transition from education to employment. This aligns with the objectives of study in determining Windhoek youth's views on the NYS programme and highlights the necessity for a more targeted approach in aligning NYS training with market needs.

The challenges identified by the youth, including the lack of adequate support for self-employment and the perceived inefficacy of the training programmes, underscore the need for significant improvements in the NYS. These insights are crucial for identifying the perceived challenges of the NYS in creating youth employment opportunities, as outlined in the objectives of the study. This further highlights the significance of this study as it carries the potential to influence policy, and programmatic interventions aimed at reducing youth unemployment in Namibia. By shedding light on the real-life experiences and perceptions of unemployed youth, the research offers a critical perspective that can guide the development of more effective strategies. The insights gained from the youth themselves are invaluable in crafting solutions that not only address unemployment but also promote broader socio-economic inclusion and development. These findings suggest that the NYS programme, while beneficial in theory, has not fully succeeded in reducing youth unemployment from the perspective of the participants. This underscores the need for a more targeted approach that aligns training with the specific needs of the job market.

The third and final objective was to identify ways the NYS program could increase its effectiveness and efficacy in youth employment opportunities in Namibia. Participants suggested several ways to enhance the effectiveness of the NYS programme, including improving the quality of training, ensuring that the skills taught are in line with market demands, and providing better support for job placement. These suggestions align with the Human Capital Theory, which emphasizes the need for relevant and high-quality education and training to enhance economic productivity (Hornbeck & Salamon, 1991). The findings suggest

that the NYS programme could benefit from a more dynamic and responsive approach, one that continuously evolves to meet the changing demands of the labour market. Currently, there is a perceived feeling that the program is stagnant and does not adequately embrace and leverage on new emerging technologies and use of AI (Artificial Intelligence).

4.8.2 Integrating Findings with Literature

Youth unemployment in Namibia, as highlighted in the research findings, is a multifaceted issue driven by factors such as limited access to education and training, a lack of marketable skills, and a mismatch between the skills acquired and the demands of the job market. The findings from this study align with existing insights but mainly sought to provide a more nuanced understanding of how the National Youth Service (NYS) programme is perceived by the youth in Windhoek.

The literature review emphasized the importance of understanding youth perspectives, particularly in developing effective policies and interventions (Andersson, 2022). The findings verify this, revealing that while the NYS programme is well-intentioned and has had a significant impact, it is not entirely meeting the perceived needs of the youth. Participants in the study expressed concerns about the relevance and adequacy of the skills training provided by the NYS, echoing the global challenge of aligning youth employment programmes with market needs (Denu, Tekeste & Van der Deijl, 2015; Mwinga, 2012).

The Human Capital Theory posits that education, and training enhances productivity and economic potential (Hornbeck & Salamon, 1991). However, the findings suggest that many young people do not view their participation in the NYS as significantly improving their employability. This discrepancy indicates a gap between the theoretical expectations of the NYS programme and its practical outcomes. Additionally, the Structural Functionalism Theory by Davis and Moore (1945) was inadvertently referenced by many participants when they gave their views on how they feel the NYS programme should align with other social institutions like the education system and labour market to address youth unemployment.

4.8.3 New Information and Gaps

The findings of this study introduce new information regarding the lived experiences and perceptions of youth participating in the NYS programme. Specifically, gaps were uncovered between the intended outcomes of the program and the actual experiences of the participants. This study highlights specific areas where the NYS programme falls short, such as in its failure

to provide market-aligned training and the lack of post-training support. While the literature identifies the general challenges of youth unemployment.

Another significant gap that emerged is the limited engagement of youth in the design and implementation of the NYS programme. The literature advocates for the inclusion of youth perspectives in policymaking (Andersson, 2022), yet the findings suggest that this is not adequately reflected in the NYS programme. This gap points to the need for a more participatory approach in programme development, where the voices of the youth are not only heard but are central to shaping the interventions designed to benefit them.

4.9 Summary

The NYS Programme plays a pivotal role in addressing youth unemployment in Namibia by providing skills training, employment opportunities, and support mechanisms that enhance participants' employability and personal development. The insights from the fifteen participants highlight the programme's strengths and areas for improvement, offering a comprehensive understanding of its impact on youth in Windhoek. The chapter underscores the need for continuous evaluation and adaptation of the programme to better meet the evolving needs of the job market and the youth it serves.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive summary of the research findings, conclusions drawn from the analysis, and recommendations for policy and practice. The chapter also highlights the implications of the study for addressing youth unemployment, offering insights for future research and policy formulation. The study achieved its objectives in view of the findings made, as the responses were in line with the research objectives as will be demonstrated below in the summary and discussions of findings.

5.2 Summary of Findings

Notwithstanding government strategies and initiatives to address the phenomenon of youth unemployment, it remains one of the biggest challenges confronting countries all over the world and Namibia is no exception. In that regard, this research aimed to explore the perceptions of youth towards Namibia's National Youth Service (NYS) youth employment initiatives, at the same time assessing their impact in reducing youth unemployment. The study involved qualitative interviews with fifteen key informers, the youths who have participated in

the NYS programme and are now in different occupations. Among these occupations were police officers, entrepreneurs, social workers, farmers, and electricians. This shows how diverse the skills imparted by the NYS programme have been.

This research on NYS's programmes specifically addresses the gap left by past researchers by investigating young people's perceptions of the program's effectiveness in decreasing youth unemployment. This approach further reinforces the significance of findings of the study because it is rooted on engaging youth directly to gather insights, a population often overlooked in policy-making processes. By involving youth in the research, the study not only empowers them but also enhances their social and economic engagement, which is critical for developing practical solutions that align with the realities of the job market.

5.3 Conclusions

In conclusion, this study affirms that Windhoek's youth generally hold a positive perception of the National Youth Service (NYS) programme, recognizing it as a valuable initiative aimed at enhancing employability and addressing youth unemployment. However, despite this optimism, concerns remain regarding the programme's alignment with labour market demands and its overall effectiveness in generating sustainable employment. The research further identifies critical challenges, including inadequate resources, limited training scope, and insufficient post-programme support, all of which undermine the programme's potential impact. Moreover, the findings underscore the need for a holistic and strategic approach that not only addresses immediate employment concerns but also targets the root causes of youth unemployment and crime. Addressing these multifaceted challenges requires coordinated efforts and stronger partnerships among government, private sector, and civil society stakeholders. To ensure long-term relevance and effectiveness, the NYS programme must incorporate continuous evaluation and responsive adaptation mechanisms to meet the evolving needs of the youth and the dynamic labour market landscape.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the effectiveness and impact of the National Youth Service (NYS) programmes. The recommendations are grouped according to the thematic areas that emerged from the research.

Programme Design and Curriculum Alignment

- Invest in regular curriculum reviews to ensure training content remains relevant to evolving job market demands, technological advancements, and industry standards.

- Offer more advanced courses in entrepreneurship to allow participants to build on foundational skills acquired during training.
- Introduce clearer specialisation pathways by specifying the different courses available at the outset, enabling participants to prepare adequately.
- Increase focus on practical, hands-on training and integrate real-world work experience into the programme to strengthen job readiness.

Stakeholder Engagement and Partnerships

- Increase private sector involvement to create stronger linkages between NYS graduates and employment opportunities.
- Establish more partnerships with industries to secure post-training job placements for graduates.
- Enhance collaboration with relevant stakeholders to ensure training aligns with current and emerging employment trends.

Participant Support and Welfare

- Improve the provision of resources during training to ensure participants have access to adequate materials, equipment, and facilities.
- Strengthen medical support and welfare services during training to safeguard participants' well-being.
- Provide post-training support, including mentorship and follow-up, to assist participants in transitioning smoothly into employment or entrepreneurship.

Information Dissemination and Outreach

- Improve information sharing about the NYS programme, its objectives, available courses, and potential job opportunities after training.
- Enhance awareness campaigns to ensure potential participants and stakeholders clearly understand the benefits and expectations of the programme.

5.5 Implications for Future Research

This study opens several avenues for future research. One significant direction is to explore the long-term impact of other specific interventions on reducing youth unemployment. While this study focused on the National Youth Service (NYS) program, future research could assess the effectiveness and sustainability of other initiatives like the Namibia Youth Credit Scheme (NYCS) and the Targeted Intervention Programme for Employment and Economic Growth (TIPEEG). Investigating these programs over an extended period could provide insights into

which strategies have been most successful in creating enduring employment opportunities for the youth and what factors contribute to their effectiveness.

Additionally, research could examine the role of digital technology and innovation in creating new employment opportunities for the youth. As the global job market increasingly shifts toward digital platforms, understanding how technology can be leveraged to combat youth unemployment is crucial. Future studies could explore how digital skills training, online marketplaces, and technology driven entrepreneurship are reshaping employment landscapes, especially in areas where traditional job opportunities are scarce. This research could help identify how technology and innovation can be harnessed to create inclusive and sustainable employment opportunities for young people in Namibia and beyond.

5.6 Chapter Conclusion

To conclude, addressing youth unemployment and its associated consequences, such as property crime, requires a holistic approach that encompasses education, economic development, community engagement, and policy reform. By implementing the recommendations outlined in this chapter, stakeholders can work towards creating a safer, more prosperous future for the youth and the broader community.

References

- African Peer Review Mechanism. (2019). *Targeted review report on youth unemployment: Republic of Namibia* (APRM Targeted Review Report No. 4). African Union. <https://www.aprm-au.org>
- Andersson, L. (2022). *Addressing youth unemployment: What role for social work? Policy responses to youth unemployment in Sweden and Europe*. Stockholm Studies in Social Work 43. [Doctoral Thesis in Social Work at Stockholm University]. Stockholm.
- APRM-AU. (2021). Targeted review report on youth employment in the republic of Namibia. Addis Ababa: AU. Retrieved from <https://aprm.au.int/en/documents/2021-08-05/namibia-targeted-review-report-youth-unemployment>
- Asif, M., Khan, M. N., Tiwari, S., Wani, S. K., & Alam, F. (2023). The impact of fintech and digital financial services on financial inclusion in India. *Journal of Risk and Financial Management*, 16(2), 122. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jrfm16020122>
- Baah-Boateng, William (2016). The youth unemployment challenge in Africa: What are the drivers? *The economic labour review*, Vol. 27 (4). Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/10353046166645030>
- Babbie, E. (2016). *The practice of social research*. London, UK: Thomson Learning.
- Ben Haman, O. (2021). The Reality of Youth Unemployment and Unsuitable Development Models in the Global South. *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies*, 16(1), 149–164.
- Bless, C., Higson-Smith, C., & Sithole, S. L. (2013). *Fundamentals of social research methods: An African perspective* (5th ed.). South Africa: Juta & Company Ltd.
- Bray, R. (2002). *Missing links? An examination of contributions made by social surveys to our understanding of child well-being in South Africa*. CSSR Working Paper No. 23, University of Cape Town.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2019). Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 11(4), 589-597.
- Burnett, S. (2014). Unemployed youth: ‘Time bombs’ or engines for growth? *African Security Review*, 23(3), 196–205.

- Chauke, T. A., Malatji, K. S., & Obadire, O. S. (2021). Development of youth capabilities through the National Youth Service Programme. *African Renaissance*, 18(2), 81-102.
- Chukwuma, O. (2018). Youth, unemployment and national security in Nigeria. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 3(21), 1-11.
- Clark, V. J. P., & Creswell, J. W. (2015). *Understanding research: A consumer's guide* (2nd ed.). New York: Pearson Education Inc.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative & mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, D. J. (2018). *Research design, qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods*. United Kingdom: SAGE Publications.
- Davis, K., & Moore, W. E. (1945). Some principles of stratification. *American Sociological Review*, 10(2), 242-249.
- Denu, B., Tekeste, A., & Van der Deijl, H. (2005). Characteristics and determinants of youth unemployment, underemployment, and inadequate employment in Ethiopia. *International Labour Organization (ILO)*.
- Fergusson, R., & Yeates, N. (2021). *Global youth unemployment: History, governance and policy*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Haenssger, M. J. (2019). *Interdisciplinary qualitative research in global development: A concise guide*. Emerald Publishing Limited.
<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=2255570>
- Hammersley, M., & Traianou, A. (2012). *Ethics in qualitative research: Controversies and contexts*. London: Sage Publications Ltd., Inc.
- Hornbeck, D. W., & Salamon, L. M. (1991). *Human capital and America's future: An economic strategy for the '90s*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Idris, I. (2016). *Youth unemployment and violence: Rapid literature review*. University of Birmingham, Birmingham.
- International Labour Organization. (2012). Global employment trends for youth 2012. *Journal of Poverty and Social Justice*, 20(3), 279-286.
<https://doi.org/10.1332/175982712x657154>
- International Labour Organization. (2020). *Global employment trends for youth 2020: Technology and the future of jobs*. International Labour Organization.
- International Labour Organization. (2018). *World Employment and Social Outlook 2018: Greening with jobs* [LIO publications 2018: Autumn]. International Labour Office.

- Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sports and Culture. (2006). Youth Employment Network Plan of Action. Windhoek: Ministry of Youth.
- Msigwa, H., & Kipesha, E. (2013). Determinants of youth unemployment in developing countries. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*, 4(14), 67-76.
- Msigwa, H., & Kipesha, E. (2013). Understanding youth unemployment in Tanzania: A capabilities perspective. *International Journal of Social Economics*, 40(5), 438-452.
- Moser, A., & Korstjens, I. (2018). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 3: Sampling, data collection, and analysis. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375091>
- Mwinga, M. (2012). *Unemployment in Namibia: Measurement problems, causes, and policies*. Namibia Statistics Agency. (2019). *The Namibia labour force survey 2018*. Windhoek, Namibia: Namibia Statistics Agency.
- National Planning Commission. (2011). *Targeted intervention program for employment and economic growth 2011 report*. Windhoek, Namibia: National Planning Commission.
- National Youth Service. (2022). *Strategic plan 2022-2026*. Windhoek: National Youth Service.
- Neuman, W. L. (2011). *Social research methods* (7th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Ngulube, P. (2020). *Handbook of research on connecting research methods for information science*. Hershey: IGI Global.
- NYS Strategic Plan. (2022). *National Youth Service strategic plan 2022-2026*. Government of Namibia.
- Nikki Williams, & Susy Hawes. (2021). Gateway to Opportunity: A promising summer youth employment model to address local workforce needs. *Maine Policy Review*, 30(1).
- O'Higgins, N. (2017). *Rising to the youth employment challenge*. International Labour Office.
- Oluwalogbon, L. A. (2019). The future of Nigeria's National Youth Service Corps programme: Any hope for national integration? *Journal of Public Administration and Governance*, 9(2).
- Oyedemi, T. D., & Choung, J. (2020). Digital inequality and youth unemployment. *Communication*, 46, 68-86.
- Republic of Namibia. (2012). *Namibia's Fourth National Development Plan (NDP4)*. Windhoek: National Planning Commission.
- Shiyukifeni, A. T. (2005). *Youth unemployment in Namibia*. Windhoek, Namibia.
- Sisinyize, N. L., & Shalyefu, R. K. (2015). The effect of the Namibia Youth Credit Scheme on the livelihood of the youth in the Zambezi region. *Apex Journal International, Journal of Business Administration and Management Science Research*, 4(8), 180–188.

Tuffour, I. (2017). A critical overview of interpretative phenomenological analysis: A contemporary qualitative research approach. *Journal of Healthcare Communications*, 2(4).

UNFPA Namibia. (2022, September 9). *UNFPA Namibia annual report 2021*. <https://namibia.unfpa.org/>

UNFPA Namibia. (2022). *Youth employment trends in Namibia: A policy perspective*. United Nations Population Fund

USAID. (2022). Feed the future: hanga Akazi report. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/rwanda/feed-future-rwanda-hanga-akazi>

The World Bank. (2018). *Investing in opportunity: The World Bank annual report 2018*. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) / International Development Association (IDA). <https://www.worldbank.org/en/about/annual-report>

Appendix A: Ethical Clearance Certificate



ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Ethical Clearance Reference Number: SAH53/23

Date: 22/02/2024

This Ethical Clearance Certificate is issued by the University of Namibia Decentralized Ethics Committee (DEC) in accordance with the University of Namibia's Research Ethics Policy and Guidelines. Ethical approval is given in respect of undertakings contained in the Research Project outlined below. This Certificate is issued on the recommendations of the ethical evaluation done by the School of Allied Health Sciences Decentralized Ethics Committee.

Title of Project: The perceptions of National Youth Service participants on the programme's impact in job creation in Namibia: a case of Windhoek youth

Principal Researcher: Marliza Karukua

Student Number: 201600667

Centre for Research Services


Take note of the following:

1. Any significant changes in the conditions or undertakings outlined in the approved Proposal must be communicated to the ethics committee. An application to make amendments may be necessary.
2. Any breaches of ethical undertakings or practices that have an impact on ethical conduct of the research must be reported to the ethics committee
3. The Principal Researcher must report issues of ethical compliance to the ethics committee (through the Chairperson) at the end of the Project or as may be requested by the ethics committee
4. The ethics committee retains the right to:
 - i) Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance if any unethical practices (as outlined in the Research Ethics Policy) have been detected or suspected, ii) Request for an ethical compliance report at any point during the course of the research.

The ethics committee wishes you the best in your research.



Dr T.W. Shumba (Chairperson, Ethics Committee)



Prof. Davis Mumbengegwi (Head, Multidisciplinary Research)

CENTRE FOR RESEARCH SERVICES

Office of the Pro-Vice Chancellor: Research, Innovation & Development

University of Namibia, Private Bag 13301, Windhoek, Namibia

340 * +264 61 206 206 Ndemufayo 4673: E-mail: kmbulu@unam.na; Avenue, Pioneers Park, URL.: Office <http://www.unam.edu.na>
- Fblock, Second Floor



UNAM

UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

RESEARCH PERMISSION LETTER

Date: 04/10/2024

Student Name: Marliza Karukua

Student Number: 201600667

Programme: Master of Arts in Social

Approved Research Title: The perceptions of National Youth Service participants on the programme's impact in job creation in Namibia: A case of Windhoek youth

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I hereby confirm that the above-mentioned student is registered at the University of Namibia for the programme indicated. The proposed study met all the requirements as stipulated in the University guidelines and has been approved by the relevant committees.

The proposal adheres to ethical principles as per attached Ethical Clearance Certificate.

Permission is hereby granted to carry out the research as described in the approved proposal.

Best Regards



Dr. AEE Shikongo

Head: Postgraduate Research Support Services

Tel: +264 61 206 3129

E-mail: aeshikongo@unam.na

CENTRE FOR RESEARCH SERVICES
Office of the Director
2024 -IO- 04
University of Namibia
UNAM

Appendix C: Informed Consent

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM

ANNEX 5



Title: THE PERCEPTIONS OF NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE PARTICIPANTS ON THE PROGRAMME'S IMPACT IN JOB CREATION IN NAMIBIA: A CASE OF WINDHOEK YOUTH.

Principle Investigator: Marliza Karukua

Student Number: 201600667

Supervisor: Dr Kamwanyah Ndumba (University of Namibia)

Key Information

You are kindly requested to participate in this research study. Please take due diligence in reviewing this information. It is important to fully understand what this study is about and the significance of your involvement, therefore, do not hesitate to ask questions to the researcher about aspects you do not fully understand regarding this study. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may choose to decline this request and/or leave at any moment without penalty. Please note that if you decline to participate, you will not be affected negatively in any way shape, or form, however, if you do decide to participate, you will be required to sign on this form.

This study will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the Research and Ethics Committee of the University of Namibia.

Purpose of this study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the youth's perceptions of the NYS programs to determine whether they are meeting their needs by informing policy and programmatic interventions aimed at reducing youth unemployment in Namibia. The researcher will be asking you questions regarding your views on the National Youth Service Programme's employment-creation initiatives in Windhoek, Namibia. Please note that your answers will be voice-recorded, with your permission.

Why have I been requested to participate?

As previous NYS program participants, the researcher is interested in knowing what your experience and understanding is regarding the program.

What will I do if I choose to participate in this study?

You will be interviewed by the researcher, and this will be done individually.

How long will the interview take?

You will be interviewed for approximately forty-five (45) to sixty (60) minutes.

Are there any potential benefits in the participation of this study?

This information will be used to help the efficiency of the NYS program and how it is useful for the youth in part taking in the program for the opportunity to secure employment or self-employment.

What are the possible risks and discomfort?

There might be some personal information you might not be willing to disclose. Please note that the researcher will not force you to disclose information you are not comfortable sharing. Please also note that you are free to leave the interview at any time despite the time allocated above, with no penalty.

Will I be paid to be in this study?

You will not be paid to participate in this study.

Will my information and participation be kept confidential?

Your identifiable information will not be disclosed to any person. Your feedback will be kept confidential; however, note that it may be reviewed by my supervisors and the board responsible for research regulations at the University of Namibia. The information you provide will be kept on the password-protected personal computer of the researcher. At no point will your identity be linked to the data you provide. The researcher will transcribe the interview and delete the digital recording of the interview immediately upon completion of the transcription.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or, if you agree to participate, you can withdraw your participation at any time without penalty.

Who can I contact if I have questions about the study?

If you have questions, comments, or concerns about this research project, please contact:

Principal Investigator:

Marliza Karukua

University of Namibia

Email: marlizkarukua@gmail.com

Appendix D: Interview Guide

The NYS programme's impact on job creation for youth.

Research Interview Guide

Introduction:

- Greet the participant and explain the purpose of the interview: To understand your perceptions and experiences with the National Youth Service (NYS) Programme's impact on job creation for youth in Windhoek, Namibia.

Section 1: Demographic Information

- Collect basic demographic information:

1) Age:

2) What is your gender? (Check all that apply)

- Man
- Woman
- Transgender, Male-to-Female (MTF)
- Transgender, Female-to-Male (FTM)
- Transgender, do not identify as man or woman
- Not sure
- Decline to state

3) In what part of Namibia do you live for most of the year?

4) Ethnic group:

5) Religion

6) Highest Education (circle):

Primary

Secondary

University

Post-graduate

7) Occupation:

8) If you attended university, did you attend university in Namibia?

Yes No

10) Do you live by yourself?

Yes No

11) Do you live with family (circle)?

Yes No

12) Where did you grow up?

13) When growing up, did you live with your biological parents?

Yes No

14) If not, with whom did you live while growing up?

22) Do you have any children?

Yes No

23) If you have children, how many do you have?

24) If you have children, how many of them live with you?

Section 2: General Perceptions

1. In your opinion, how important is the issue of youth employment creation in Windhoek, Namibia?
2. How does youth unemployment contribute to poverty among the youth in Windhoek?
3. When did you part-take in the NYS Programme and what qualification did you obtain through the programme?

Section 3: Objectives

Main Objective: To explore the perception of Windhoek's youth on the National Youth Service Programme's employment-creation initiatives.

- ✓ How would you describe the NYS Programme's curriculum, is it user friendly (e.g. for literate & illiterate), does it meet the needs of its participants?
- ✓ How the treatment of the NYS Programme facilitates/assist towards the participant during the training?
- ✓ Is there enough resource while in training at the training centres?
- ✓ In your opinion to what extend is the participant's welfare upheld?
- ✓ What is the impact of the NYS Programme on youth character building and the development of leadership skills?

Objective 1.4.1: To determine Windhoek youth's perceived views on the NYS programme in reducing youth unemployment.

- ✓ In your opinion, how effective has the NYS Programme been in reducing youth unemployment? Motivate your answer
- ✓ Are the NYS Programme curriculum in line with the job market in Windhoek, Namibia? Motivate your answer
- ✓ Does the NYS Programme help youth to develop entrepreneurship mind-set and attain vocational skills that would help them to participate in the mainstream economy? Motivate your answer
- ✓ Would you recommend other youth in the similar situation to participate in the NYS Programme? Motivate your answer.

Objective 1.4.2: To identify any perceived challenges of the NYS programme in creating youth employment opportunities.

- ✓ Have you encountered any challenges or obstacles related to the NYS Programme's job creation initiatives? If so, please describe them.

- ✓ What, in your opinion, are the main barriers that prevent some youth from benefiting from NYS employment opportunities?

Objective 1.4.3: To identify ways how the NYS programme could increase its effectiveness and efficacy in youth employment opportunities.

- ✓ Based on your experience, what improvements or changes do you believe could enhance the NYS Programme's impact on youth job creation?
- ✓ In your opinion is there an adequate involvement of stakeholders in the initiation of youth employment –creation through the NYS Programme?

Section 4: Conclusion

- Give the participant an opportunity to share any additional comments or insights related to the NYS Programme and youth employment.
- Thank the participant for their time and valuable input.