CHAPTER 6

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

6.1   INTRODUCTION

The researcher motivated the purpose of this study by specifying the goal and objectives. It was highlighted that, on investigating the emergence of Youth work and its future status, the researcher would establish the perspectives of the currently recognised social service professionals, i.e., Educators, Social workers, and Child and youth care workers in South Africa by describing their perceptions, opinions, and experiences. To this end, the study was intended to: (i) identify and describe factors that contributed to emergence of Youth work practice; (ii) explore and analyse the current status of Youth work practice; (iii) determine the extent of South Africa's social service professionals' involvement in Youth work; and (iv) determine the future status of Youth work, including the benefits of recognising it as an area of specialisation and/or a profession.

From Chapters 2 to 4, relevant literature was reviewed and in Chapter 5, the research methodology followed in conducting the investigation was outlined. In this chapter, the empirical findings are presented and analysed. Since the researcher followed mixed-methods research, the empirical findings are presented in two parts, namely, qualitative and quantitative findings (Delport & Fouché, 2011:435; Ivankova, Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007:15; Vogt, 1999:176). For both parts of the study, the researcher begins by presenting demographic information, followed by presentation and analysis of variables related to the research topic. The reporting is based on the responses received pertaining to each of the variables, i.e., observable cases. Data and findings are presented according to themes specified in the interviewing schedule and the measuring instrument for the qualitative and quantitative parts of the study respectively.

6.2   QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

As already mentioned in Chapter 5, data on which qualitative findings are based was collected from four focus group discussions consisting of recognised and

unrecognised social service professionals, i.e., Social workers, Child and youth care workers, Youth workers, and Community development workers. The focus groups provided insight into the study through exploring the participants' multitude of perceptions on the research topic. The researcher used the findings to develop a measuring instrument and to explain and elaborate quantitative evidence (Flick, 2008:16; Nyamathi & Schuler, 1990 in Greeff, 2011:361).

The focus group participants were purposively selected from four (4) of South Africa's nine (9) provinces, namely: KwaZulu-Natal, Northern Cape, North West, and Gauteng. The researcher served as a facilitator for all focus groups. As mentioned by Alasuutari, Bickman & Brannen (2008:358); Creswell and Plano Clark (2011:414); Nieuwenhuis (2007:91), the interviewing schedule included in this report as *Annexure G,* was used as reference to guide the researcher in facilitating focus groups.

The researcher identified the following five themes as a basis for qualitative discussion:

- Theme 1: Factors contributing to emergence of Youth work practice;
- Theme 2: The nature of activities and scope of Youth work practice;
- Theme 3: The benefits and non-benefits of Youth work;
- Theme 4: The challenges faced by different social service professions as a result of emergence of Youth work; and
- Theme 5: Strategies to address the identified challenges.

Qualitative data was then gathered through focus group discussions that were tape recorded and later transcribed. Transcribed data, including the researcher's field notes, were then analysed (Argyrous, 2011:261; Flick, 2008:77; Greeff, 2011:359, 371; Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011:410-411).

Below is a detailed presentation and discussion of qualitative research findings.

6.2.1 Demographic profile of focus group participants

Each focus group participant was asked to complete a profile form (A*nnexure F*) consisting of standard demographic questions on gender, race, age range,

education, home language, employment status, professional position, sphere of employment, employment sector, employment region as well as duration of service in own field of service and also in youth development field.

Table 6.1 below summarises the findings on the demographic characteristics of the focus group participants:

Table 6.1:   Summary of demographic characteristics of focus group participants

Variables	Frequency (%=100)	Frequency (N=35)
***Gender*:**		
Female	71	25
Male	29	10
Race:		
Black	69	24
White	11	4
Coloured	11	4
Indian	9	3
***Age Range*:**		
22-25	3	1
26-29	8	3
30-33	17	6
34-37	29	10
38-41	6	2
42-45	17	6
46-49	3	1
50-53	8	3
54-57	6	2
58-60	3	1
***Home Language*:**		
Tswana	34	12
Afrikaans	20	7
English	14	5
Xhosa	11	4
Zulu	11	4
S. Sotho	9	3
***Region*:**		
North West	20	7
Gauteng	31	11
KwaZulu-Natal	23	8
Northern Cape	26	9
***Professional position*:**		
Social Worker	37	13
Child and youth care worker	26	9
Community development worker	26	9
Youth worker	11	4

Variables	Frequency (%=100)	Frequency (N=35)
Level of Education:		
Post-graduate degree	57	20
Undergraduate degree	17	6
Post-graduate diploma	11	4
Undergraduate diploma	9	3
Undergraduate certificate	3	1
Matric	3	1
Employment status:		
Full Time	94	33
Part Time	6	2
Sphere of employment:		
National	31	11
Local/ District	29	10
Provincial	23	8
Regional	17	6
Employment sector:		
Government	83	29
Non- Government	17	6
Number of years in own field of service:		
1-3 years	11	4
3-5 years	14	5
5-7 years	9	3
7-9 years	17	6
9-12 years	11	4
12-15 years	9	3
15 years and above	29	10
Number of years in youth development field:		
0-1 year	17	6
1-3 years	14	5
3-5 years	14	5
5-7 years	9	3
7-9 years	14	5
9-12 years	20	7
12-15 years	3	1
15 years and above	9	3

The following selected demographic characteristics are described:

(i)   Gender division:

Of the 35 focus group participants, the majority of them (71%) were females and the remainder (29%) were males. The following figure shows gender composition of the focus group participants:
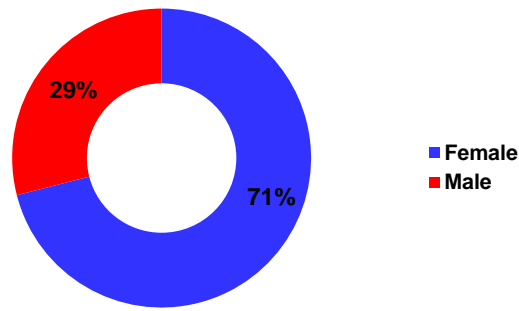
Figure 6.1: Focus group participants by gender

(ii) Racial composition and Region:

On racial characteristics and geographic region from which the focus group participants reside, 69% of them were Blacks, followed by same percentage, i.e., 11% of Whites and 11% of Coloureds and then followed by Indians at 9%. Most focus group participants (31%) were from Gauteng, followed by Northern Cape at 26%, and then KwaZulu-Natal and North West at 23% and 20% respectively. The home language of focus group participants was predominantly Tswana at 34%, Afrikaans at 20%, English at 14%, Zulu and Xhosa at 11% each, and South Sotho at 9%.

(iii) Professional position:

The social service professionals represented in the sample were Social workers at 37%, Child and youth care workers at 26%, Community development workers also 26%, and Youth workers at 11%.

The figure below highlights the breakdown of the focus group participants' responses by their professional positions:
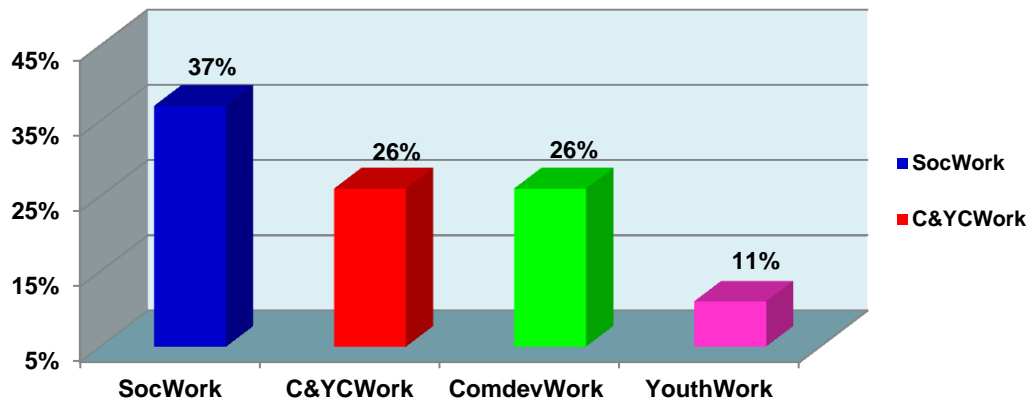
Figure 6.2: Focus group participants by professional group

(iv) **Nature and sphere of employment:**

A large percentage (94%) of focus group participants reported to be full-time employees, whilst 6% mentioned that they are employed on a part time basis. Many focus group participants (31%) reported to be employed at national level, followed by 29% at local or district level, 23% at provincial level, and 17% at regional level.

Further analysis showed that there was an overwhelming majority of focus group participants (83%) in government and only 17% reported to be employed by the non-government sector.

(v) **Experience of focus group participants:**

The focus group participants' duration of service in their own field of practice was on average 5 years whilst their duration of service in youth development was on average 4 years and 4 months. With regard to the latter, 20% of the focus group participants indicated to be having 9-12 years of service, 17% reported that they had 0-1 year of service, 14% indicated that they had 1-3 years of service, another 14% said they had 3-5 years of service, followed by 14% who indicated to be having 7-9 years of service, followed by 9% who said they have 5-7 years of service, another 9% reported to be having more than 15 years of service, and finally only 3% said they had 12-15 years of service.

159

(vi) **Level of education:**

The other striking characteristic that was important to this study was the level of education. In this case, 57% of the focus group participants have post graduate degree and 17% has undergraduate degree. This was followed by post graduate diploma at 11%, undergraduate diploma at 9%, and then both undergraduate certificate and matric at 3% each. The graph presented below reveals the level of education for the focus group participants:
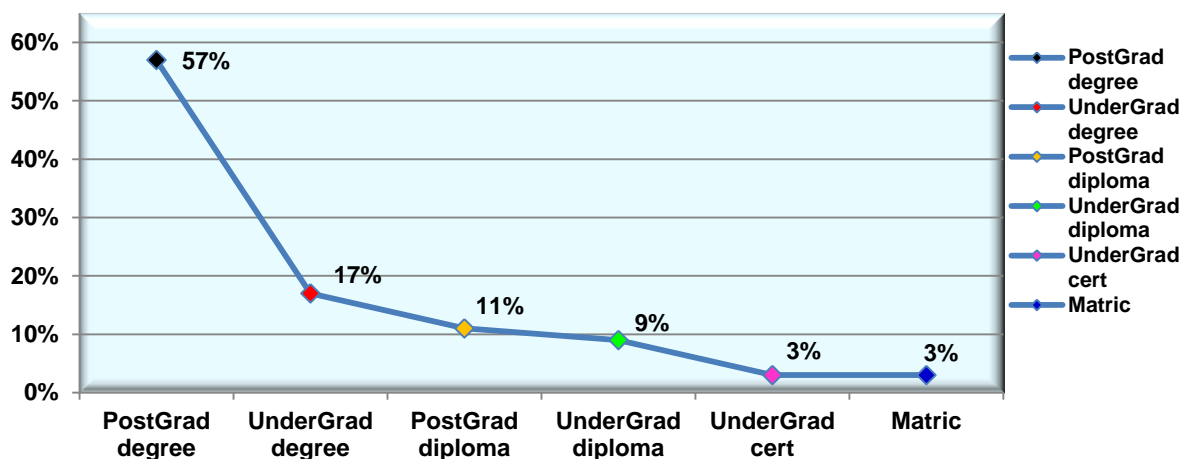

Figure 6.3: Level of education for the focus group participants

6.2.2 Themes

In presenting qualitative findings, the researcher firstly presents descriptive profile of the focus group participants, followed by summary of empirical findings on each of the research themes. In doing that, not all variables were analysed, because the researcher focused only on key measures useful in answering the research questions.

The qualitative findings are presented in accordance with the following identified themes that were based on research objectives and questions of the study:

6.2.2.1 Theme 1: Factors contributing to emergence of Youth work practice

The focus group participants were asked to give their opinions about factors that contributed to emergence of Youth work in South Africa. The majority of focus group participants linked the emergence of Youth work to the history of Apartheid in the

country and perceived it to have been an effort to address the problem of neglected youth. In this case, a Community development focus group participant in KwaZulu-Natal echoed that:

> ...as far back as the past regime is concerned, youth were neglected and they were considered as people that will have to go to the streets and fight...as a result, we have this programme today that is called youth development. Something has to be done to ensure that youth do not go back to where they were, to past regime, to actually give them time to rehabilitate themselves and stuff, to changing their mind set towards development.

Also supporting this view another focus group participant in the same group mentioned that:

> Understanding back from the times when there was oppression that. A lot of young people seem astray and there was a lot of disadvantages in term of them being kept in places of detention...and if you consider our country now, it prioritises and sees their needs as being of paramount importance.

There was consensus among focus group participants and between groups that another contributory factor behind evolution of Youth work in South Africa was related to the need to address social problems such as crime, child-headed households, unemployment, substance abuse, violence and HIV and AIDS. One focus group participant from the Northern Cape said:

> The world we live in has so many challenges for youth and they are not being able to face these challenges, because they don't have the necessary life skills. That is why I think the youth development thing came about, because people realised that we are going to lose the whole generation. So we must focus on youth development programmes to teach them skills on how to survive in the current situation that they are faced with.

Another viewpoint of a Youth work focus group participant in Northern Cape was related to Youth work's emergence as a response to exclusion of young people from decision making processes and their discrimination on the basis of age. That focus group participant's view was that: "*Youngsters are facing challenges and are discriminated against on the basis of their age with so many decisions being taken for them by adults.*" It was further suggested that Youth work emerged as a "*platform*" to get youth more organised and provide them an opportunity to vent their frustrations, occupy them with constructive activities, enable them to come up with solutions, and provide them with opportunities. Supporting this notion, another focus group

participant in Northern Cape mentioned that: "*Young people are very much disorganised...you go to them today...they are red, tomorrow you go there...they are green. So, you need to create a platform with the resources that you are having, when they get organised, they raise their challenges, their frustrations and they also provide resolutions.*" A focus group participant from the Northwest added that Youth work is crucial given that "*the youth are confused*".

Additionally, most of the focus group participants in North West agreed that young people "*need guidance and support system*". This was corroborated by focus group participants in Gauteng and Northern Cape when they specified that young people would require guidance and support when they transit from childhood to adulthood and also when they deal with crisis situations. Advice in the form of accurate information provision would also be needed to offset misinformation by, amongst others, the media.

The focus group participants from the North West and Northern Cape highlighted that Youth workers are deemed as an important support system for young people, especially in the absence of traditional support systems such as extended families and churches which previously existed in communities. The reason is that some of these structures have become irrelevant since they no longer address the pressing concerns of young people such as sexuality and also due to changed family structures that now include child headed households.

In relation to that, a focus group participant in the Northern Cape asserted that:

> *...most of us grew up in a house, a home where you at least have one parent who was responsible and now you have child headed households and all this kind of things where a child is responsible to take care of other children, but they are still only a child and they don't necessarily have the support that we had. They are expected to go and get the job sooner, because they have to take care of their siblings, they leave school at an earlier age, so the whole support is not there anymore...,so there is a whole vacuum and it must be filled by someone.*

Social work and Community development work focus group participants in Northern Cape, North West and Gauteng saw emergence of Youth work practice as a commitment to young people who are regarded as leaders of tomorrow and future

procreators. According to a focus group participant in North West, "*...one thing is that: youth are the future, so if you do not develop the youth you will end up not having the future, because we are hoping that they are our future leaders*." Another focus group participant in the Northern Cape supported this assertion by linking it to enhancement of community life and said: "*If youngsters are better prepared for the future, you'll have solid families within communities. So I think that also solves in the future a lot of our problems. If we can sort them, prepare them now; build them before the future...*"

Slightly different, was the view that Youth work emerged to increase the literacy level of young people. In that regard, a focus group participant in North West said: "*I mean if the youth have a programme or people who encourage them, they will be more interested in learning. So, the literacy level of society or the country will be high.*"

6.2.2.2 Theme 2: Nature of activities and scope of Youth work practice

The focus group participants from KwaZulu-Natal acknowledged having difficulties in differentiating between Child and youth care work and Youth work. The following statement clearly described the sentiment: "*I always had a challenge ukuthi, how does it (referring to Youth work) differ from the existing professions that are already on the ground?*" Similar question was also raised by a Community development work focus group participant in North West who said: "*As youth developers, what are they doing exactly, their core functions?*"

The challenge of role confusion seems to be stemming from serving the same target group, because a Social work focus group participant in KwaZulu-Natal said: *"I think the area of concern is that ... in terms of age category, children above 18 or those below 18 are considered youth and small (the latter implying children)".* Another similar sentiment illustrating role confusion was echoed by a Child and youth care work focus group participant who said: "W*e have just received a funding proposal from NACCW. Youth is falling on Radesh and Nokulunga (Social worker and Child and youth care worker respectively). Now I am children* (a Social work participant referring to the fact that she is dealing with children), *it also touches on me you know."*

In what seems to be a response to the question raised above, a Child and youth care work focus group participant in North West responded that the differences between Child and youth care work and Youth work is in target groups they serve. She said: "*I think what differentiates us, is that Youth workers focus on adolescents from 13 years up to ...I think 23 or 24 years.*" Others were of the view that Youth work is not only an intervention for young people, but it was also seen as an intervention that will lead to special focus of children.

Another difference between Child and youth care work and Youth work cited by a focus group participant in KwaZulu-Natal is that: "*Child and youth care work is mainly referring to children at risk or youth at risk and those in residential facilities, but for the youth, you are referring mainly to the communities, churches and those in schools looking at equipping them economically and socially.*" A focus group participant from KwaZulu-Natal was of the view that: *"At the moment youth is divided in terms of development and social crime prevention."*

On Youth workers' roles, data gathered pointed the roles of Youth workers being that of a: problem solver, supporter, educator, advocate, lobbyist, catalyst, broker, coordinator, facilitator, mentor, role model, financial manager and programme evaluator. In summarising most of the above stated roles, a Social work focus group participant in KwaZulu-Natal said:

> *I think they* (referring to Youth workers) *should be able to act as change agents, they should be catalysts, to identify essential services...there is a lot of young people left in the cold, they cannot go to school. What do you do with their needs? The Youth worker is the one who will identify that this is a problem and to actually maybe network with other resources, lobbying for money, lobbying with stakeholders to make that happen...initiation, coordinating and networking...so you know there's a whole lot of things that's coming to play, I don't think there is only one thing. Youth work is further intended to provide youth with developmental opportunities and encourage them to be independent and self-reliant.*

Furthermore, a focus group participant in KwaZulu-Natal suggested that "*We have got to clarify really what they* (referring to Youth workers) *are going to be doing, to know as youth development workers, what is their responsibility, because as I mentioned early that youth development cut across all of us in terms of our*

responsibilities." Additionally, another focus group participant in KwaZulu-Natal also expressed the need for a coordinator due to overlapping ages of children and youth. Supporting this view, another focus group participant indicated that: "*Youth development is not the only objective that I do, it is just part of my job description, but I never gave it full attention.*"

The overemphasis of the Youth worker's role as the coordinator was further echoed clearly in KwaZulu-Natal when a focus group participant said: "*Even though other professionals service youth, the Youth workers have an added responsibility of coordinating the efforts of all service providers.*" Again, justification for performance of this role was highlighted by a Social work focus group participant in Northern Cape who said:

> *...because you will have a child, maybe involved in conflict with a Development worker and a regular Social worker and now here comes the Youth development worker. It means there's another person that needs to be included in that multi-disciplinary team. Who must decide what services are going to be in the best interest of the child?*

The role of financial manager was raised in the context of a concern on funds regularly being spent on awareness programmes rather than on interventions with direct visible impact. In this regard, a focus group participant in Northern Cape said:

> *…because most funds are expected to be used for big functions and for great big events. In the end you have most children who don't even know who the speakers are. They just came for the T-shirts and food parcels. We can have impact if we can use money to nurture discussions in camps, life skills training where you have a smaller group that would really change these children's lives.*

There was general agreement that the following are activities performed by Youth workers: encouraging and guiding youth to be responsible and independent, skills development, life skills programmes, income generating projects, career guidance in communities, information giving, awareness programmes (e.g., on rights), crime prevention programmes, after care services for children and youth, intergenerational activities, self-development, moral regeneration.

Backing some of the above listed activities, a focus group participant in Northern Cape said: "*We must focus on youth development programmes to teach them*

(referring to youth) *skills on how to survive in the current situation that they are faced with.*" Another focus group participant from the same group said: "*...people smoking, people drinking, people not having the right information. I think that makes youth development necessary.*" Other activities that were mentioned, but not backed up included: "*care services*", "*spiritual development*", and "*wilderness programmes.*"

The focus group participants saw the outcome of youth development being empowered and skilled youth, personal growth as well as job satisfaction for the Youth workers. Other issues raised were related to the views of focus group participants on characteristics of a Youth worker. In this regard, consistency and flexibility were identified as the main characteristics. A Child and youth care work focus group participant in KwaZulu-Natal identified additional characteristics when saying: "*It is important as a Youth worker to be somebody who is able to communicate and listen to the youth*". Over and above that, another Social work focus group participant in KwaZulu-Natal also highlighted that "*some of the Youth development workers are gambling with the children they are supposed to guide and that could not be acceptable.*"

6.2.2.3 Theme 3: The benefits and non-benefits of Youth work as an area of specialisation and/or an autonomous profession

There was a discussion on the benefits of having Youth work as an area of specialisation and or a profession. Most focus group participants mentioned that having Youth work professionalised will result in accountability, coordinated youth services, adequate funding for youth development initiatives, sustainability and continuity of services, elimination and/or reduction of social problems such as crime, increased youth literacy, employment opportunities for those who are trained in the field, reduction of staff turnover, increased work force, commitment to youth service delivery, and increased self-esteem.

The discussion further highlighted that professional recognition would provide an opportunity for registration, development of a curriculum, and Youth work formal education and training. With regard to this, a Child and youth care work focus group participant in Gauteng indicated that: "*The benefit will be that if we are recognised*

and they know that they there is a body that they can register with, then it would even go as far as universities being prepared to offer training to Youth workers."

Other benefits included diversifying social service professions, facilitating its transformation from being an informal work run by volunteers to formal one run by qualified personnel, augmentation of skills in view of shortage of Social workers, promoting commitment to youth service, and regulating the practice. A view from a Youth work focus group participant in Gauteng highlighted the latter by eloquently saying that: "*When you professionalise you create a gate for people to enter and if they don't have a key, they will not enter.*"

Another contrary view on skills shortage was mentioned by a Social work focus group participant in Gauteng who saw the benefit of professionalising Youth work as also benefiting institutions of higher learning offering Social work education and training, because there is a threat of closing Social work departments due to shortage of students. Instead of closing Social work departments, this focus group participant suggested that: "*Youth development workers can be trained to try to create a balance between variety of professionals and the emerging*". Another opinion by a focus group participant in KwaZulu-Natal was expressed as follows: "*...it is unfair to even mention that Youth work should be a Para-profession, since they have already been trained and have a four year degree.*"

In full support of professionalisation was also a Social work focus group participant in KwaZulu-Natal expressed who shock at the suggestion of this topic. The comment by that focus group participant by saying that: "W*e cannot be debating on whether Youth work must be a profession or not, we already have qualified Youth workers in the country, what must they be doing with their degrees?*" Another strong view was: "*if you are saying at this point, should it be a standalone profession? What does the person with a four year degree do at the moment if we are now asking should it be a standalone profession? I am a little bit puzzled by that question!*"

Overall, there was support for Youth work to be recognised as a profession. The reason advanced by most focus group participants was the fact that there are already qualified Youth workers.

167

At the same time, it was observed that some focus group participants had doubts regarding having Youth work as a profession. A focus group participant in Northern Cape suggested that:

> *We need to introduce this new youth development thing, so that people have an opportunity to clarify things, overcome fears, and have an understanding of what is coming our way. I think sometimes people reject and refuse things, not because they want to, but because there's not enough information on it…and I think if this development in terms of Youth work can be communicated, can be clarified, I think we will be able to overcome the fears.*

Supporting the need for awareness creation of this field another focus group participant in North West group also suggested "*the need to communicate the developments regarding emergence of Youth work to other existing social service professions in order to allay fears.*" It was further mentioned that rejection of Youth work as an emerging field of practice may be due to lack of information.

There was another divergent view which suggested that professionalisation was not a priority. Instead, research on the needs of youth as well as Youth work service coordination were seen to be priorities with the former serving as a basis for conceptualisation of Youth work activities. This view was echoed by a Youth work focus group participant who said: "*there should be coordination rather than professionalisation*". That participant was supported by a Social work participant who stressed that: "*There is no need to professionalise, instead we need coordination.*"

Lack of accountability was cited as a non-benefit of lack of professionalisation. In this case, a Youth work focus group participant in Gauteng said: "*It is quite difficult, but now if we go for professionalisation I think it will be quite easier. Now these youth organisations are not professionalised they just operate as they please, they get other opportunities they quit.*" On the other hand, a Child and youth care work focus group participant in North West made her strong views known when she said: "*I don't see any disadvantages of professionalising, because there are a lot of advantages which will benefit the community at large. The chances of having disadvantages are unknown.*"

Closely related to professionalisation, was a discussion about another option on recognising Youth work as an area of specialisation. The motivation for having Youth work as an area of specialisation was given by a focus group participant in KwaZulu-Natal who said: "*There is no way or it won't be possible that Social workers and Probation officers cannot work with youth, because their nature of work is that they do work for youth.*" This assertion was corroborated further by a focus group participant who stated that, "*Social workers need to be multi-skilled and have the ability to work with a wide range of clients including youth and professionalisation will disempower them as the youth as a target group will be taken away from them.*"

To confirm the foregoing assertion, the view from the KwaZulu-Natal Child and youth care workers' group argued that: "*Yes, we* (referring to Child and youth care workers) *want to do everything, because we don't want to lose them after we have done so much work with them (referring to young people).*" This concern was also backed by Community development work focus group participants in North West who mentioned that the existing competition between Community development workers and Youth workers is another negative effect of professionalising.

Despite the concerns raised, there was also support for specialisation. A Social work focus group participant in Gauteng felt that Youth work should become an area of specialisation, because "*rather than sticking to traditional professions in the field of humanities, people should be offered a choice in terms of whatever specialisation they want to do.*" In support of this view, some focus group participants specified that it should be an area of specialisation for Community development or Child and youth care work or Social work or all of these social service professions. In all these cases, it was argued that Youth work will provide a career path for the professionals involved. Interestingly a Youth work focus group participant said: "*For me the other broader discussion is reconfiguring the whole social services kind of professions ... just streamlining all professions and making them Community development work and the specialisation would either be in Social work, or Youth work, or Child and youth care work.*"

In what appeared to be doubt over specialisation and also a non-benefit, a Community development focus group participant in Gauteng asked: "*I just want to*

know what will happen in this case ... stuck in the one area of specialisation? Or will they have to change then their specialisation to Social work profession if they want to go to the next level?" In response to that, other focus group participants argued that there are possibilities of a specialist reverting back to become a generalist. Another non-benefit of specialisation mentioned was lack of career path for Youth workers.

6.2.2.4 Theme 4: The challenges faced by different social service professionals

There was general agreement that Youth work is not being prioritised by government. This was said in the context of inadequate resource allocation, lack of budget structure for youth development, and inadequacy of Youth workers in the employ of government structures such as municipalities. A Youth work focus group participant in Northern Cape said:

> *...there's the Municipal Structures Act that provides in the Constitution that municipalities have the obligation towards young people, women and the disabled in terms of the leadership programmes. You will find that there are few municipalities within the country that have appointed Youth development officers and what about the others*?

Another challenge was that the focus group participants in all groups acknowledged that they are not prioritising youth development. In one of the groups, a comment was made that, "*even though Social workers deal with youth they are not so focused (referring to delivery of services to youth*)." This statement was supported in other discussion sessions by a Social work focus group participant who confirmed that, their focus was on children and not youth. Another view which appeared to be downplaying role difference was primarily from the Social work participants who acknowledged that youth development is not a priority of Social work. They indicated that their only interface with youth is only when rendering statutory services.

Closely related to the above was the challenge of overlapping roles. A Social work focus group participant in KwaZulu-Natal mentioned that "S*ocial workers must be multi-skilled including in rendering services to the youth*," whilst another said: "*there is no way in which Social workers cannot work with youth.*" A Community development work focus group participant in North West strongly felt that other professionals may think Youth workers are "*taking over their work.*"

A focus group participant in North West identified another challenge being "*that people tend to be too independent. They like to do their own things without collaborating or consulting with other stakeholders who can bring about maybe better service delivery.*" A Youth work focus group participant also raised a challenge regarding employment of Youth workers and suggested that there is a need to conduct research on Youth work employment opportunities. In response to that, other focus group participants identified government, communities, churches, Youth Commissions; youth focused structures such as the UYF, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), and municipalities as possible employment settings for Youth workers.

Another challenge raised was lack of supervision of Youth workers. A Social work participant voiced this out and said:

> *If you are a Social worker like I am, and you've got different kinds of people on board, Social workers, Youth care, Child and youth care. In terms of supervision, I am supervising social auxiliary workers, but the youth and child care workers; I don't really know who is supervising them.*

Furthermore, most of the focus group participants appeared to be having limited knowledge about Youth work or youth development. Some Social work focus group participants acknowledged not to have worked with Youth workers, but indicated to be having knowledge of youth structures such as the Youth Commission. Regarding the latter, it is worth noting and was interesting that a Youth work focus group participant demonstrated lack of knowledge when he said: "*What is the role of South African Youth Commission in terms of development*?"

The researcher observed that some focus group participants were confusing youth and Youth workers. There was a tendency of diverting the discussions to focus on young people even in instances where the discussion was supposed to be about Youth workers. For example, when discussing the role of Youth workers, a focus group participant in Northern Cape responded that "*youth development workers should be role models, you can't just take any youth from the community.*"

6.2.2.5 Theme 5: Strategies to address the identified challenges

The focus group participants suggested that the following strategies would deal with problems and challenges identified on Youth work. On the cross cutting nature of Youth work, a focus group participant said that: "*There is a need for many qualified people in the field of development in the country*". Another in Gauteng focus group specifically suggested that "*there is a need to harmonise whatever it is that we are doing as professionals dealing with one family, focusing on a child".* Regarding the latter, a focus group participant in North West specifically mentioned that: "*The important thing is that there should be role clarification, because we have community liaison officers working with youth and we also have people like sister Mpopi* (referring to Child and youth care workers), *even Probation officers ... so that we don't get our youth confused*."

Emphasising the foregoing, a focus group participant in the same group and others in KwaZulu-Natal and Northern Cape echoed the following sentiments respectively, "*I think what can assist us if there is proper role clarification, so that we do not confuse our communities*"; another said "*I think the only real challenge will be role clarification and definition. If that's sorted out, I don't think we will have real problems."* It was then emphasised that "*...demarcation is very important."* Finally, in an effort to clarify roles pertaining to the target group, it was suggested that: "*If Youth work is professionalised ... we will be able to give support and after care to those young people that live in places like children's homes after 18 years of age*."

Related to the above, was the strategy to resolve the problem of duplication of services. This was mentioned by a focus group participant in North West who said: "*I think if there is proper communication between all other people who are offering services ... there must be communication at the end, because Mmadineo should not say I cannot go to the municipality, because the community liaison officers are there*." The importance of communication amongst professionals and in particular with Youth workers was "*because the Youth development worker has more expert knowledge on youth*." The other strategy that was emphasised as part of addressing the challenges experiences was coordination of services. In this instance the Youth workers' role was seen as being that of a coordinator. This was clearly articulated by a KwaZulu-Natal focus group participant who motivated the coordinating role of a Youth workers

by saying that: "*Someone must coordinate, because if you leave it to all these people, it is not your primary responsibility.*"

Responding to the view on possible loss of experienced Youth workers in the short term owing to lack of required qualifications, another Social work focus group participant in the same group refuted this by saying that: "*RPL will be applicable to the ones with experience.*" This will be used as a strategy to give credit to workers who are already in the field, but are without formal qualifications.

Other proposals made included the need to: conduct research on youth development. The proposed areas of investigation included determination of the needs of youth, creation of Youth work qualification levels including up to PhD level and impact studies on Youth work. With regard to the former, a Social work focus group participant in Gauteng saw the need for "*having several qualification levels of Youth work as a strategy to beef up Youth work as a discipline whilst limiting the movements of professionals.*" On the latter, a Youth work focus group participant in Northern Cape emphasised that: "*There need to be systems in place to evaluate and assess the impact and/or the difference that these type of programmes have made on the youngsters themselves.*" According to this focus group participant, this would improve the quality of programmes and serve to inform further planning of interventions.

Critically, a focus group participant in the Northern Cape acknowledged to be having limited knowledge about Youth work and said: "*What impacts on Youth work? Why working with youngsters?*" Another Social work focus group participant in KwaZulu-Natal said: "*I wasn't aware that there is a youth development degree. If we can see what is the content of the degree, what is the curriculum, and compare it to our curricula in terms of Community development, Social workers....*" On the question of regulation of Youth work, there was an expressed view by a Social work focus group participant in KwaZulu-Natal that the Youth Commission is already a recognised regulatory body. On the basis of these views another focus group participant said: "*Yes, they will face the challenges because truly communities do not know them presently. So, some people will ask themselves, who are they?*"

6.2.3 Discussion of qualitative findings

The researcher followed the process described by Babbie and Mouton (2010:493-495); Creswell and Plano Clark (2007:129); Flick (2008:1); Schurink, Fouché and De Vos (2011:403-404) in Chapter 5, section 5.6.2 when analysing qualitative data. Of importance to note is that the researcher predominantly followed content analysis approach when validating and interpreting qualitative data.

A closer look at the demographic characteristics of the focus group participants showed that even though all social service professions (i.e., Social work, Child and youth care, Community development work, and Youth work) were represented, the qualitative sample was dominated by female focus group participants. The Social workers were the most represented whilst Youth workers were the least represented. The concern of non-participation of Youth workers was also raised in an earlier research conducted by Makofane in 2007, where the Youth workers did not participate in a research on demarcation of social service professions (Department of Social Development, 2007:58).

The level of qualification for the focus group participants revealed that the majority of them (83%) have at least a degree as the minimum qualification (i.e., postgraduate degree–57%, postgraduate diploma–17%, and degree–9%). Of interest is that almost all focus group participants were employed on full time basis by government and non-government sectors. Those in government were in majority at 83% compared to 17% of those in non-government sector. Additionally, as a value add on to this study, the findings showed that the focus group participants have experience in their own profession and also in youth development, thus making their contribution to this study to also be based on their practical experience.

Like historical evolution of Youth work in developed and developing countries, which was preceded by events such as industrial revolution, colonial rule and breakdown of neo-colonial structures, the findings of this study confirmed that emergence of Youth work in South Africa was preceded by the struggle against Apartheid (Carter, 2010; Commonwealth Secretariat, 2001a:5; Richter et al., 2005 in African Union Commission & United Nations Population Fund Agency, 2011:39; Sercombe,

2010:21; Wilkins, 1997). As alluded to in a review of literature, qualitative evidence also indicated that Youth work emerged to address the problem of neglected, marginalised, vulnerable, uncontrolled, deviant and socially excluded youth (Charles, 2006:8; Jack, 2006:80; Sercombe, 2010:24). A focus group participant in KwaZulu-Natal confirmed these views and said:

> *Coming to the reason why there has to be a programme that talks to youth development, I am dating back as the past regime is concerned…you know youth were neglected and they were considered as people that will have to go to the streets and fight. Through all those discrepancies of the past, youth got into social crime, substance abuse and all these other things that are not socially acceptable.*

The above analysis links the image of young people as a positive and a negative concept. Positively, young people inspire hope and change and negatively, they are problematic and cause instability (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2001a:6). The findings confirmed the presence of both scenarios since emergence of Youth work was positively seen as a "*reward*" for the contribution made by the youth in liberating their country and therefore geared towards addressing the problems of young people who have been robbed of their youth due to their participation and involvement in the struggle. On the negative side, the youth were seen as being *"confused and loose"*, thus requiring to be organised, guided, and supported so that they do not get out of control. The Youth workers will continue addressing the emerging problems of young people on the basis of their own conception of young people (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2001a:30; Sercombe, 2010:24).

Another key contributory factor is the one that sees Youth work "*as an adjunct to home, school, work in facilitating young people's transition*" into adulthood and preparing them for future leadership roles (Alexis, 2007:88; Charles, 2006:48; Sercombe, 2010:24). In this regard, the findings showed Youth workers to be playing the role which was traditionally played by socialization agents such as families, schools, communities. That role entailed, supporting the youth through the transition period and guiding them into the adult world of independence, so that they can become socially responsible citizens who contribute meaningfully to their own development and that of their communities (Charles, 2006:48; Christian, 2007:91; Wheeler, 2000:11). The role of Youth workers as possible agents of socialization was

justified in this study to be emanating from the lack of support traditionally offered to individuals due to changed family structures, which now include child headed households and irrelevant role played by institutions such as churches in addressing young people's concerns (Christian, 2007:93; Jack, 2006:85; Sercombe, 2010:20).

In line with the theories such as the social systems and community youth development, it is clear from the above that there is a need to close the gap caused by lack of support from traditional socialization agents. This is important since young people cannot be divorced from their social situations (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2001b:23). As the future leaders and key decision makers, there must be deliberate efforts to invest in them (Alexis, 2007:81-82; Shah 2007:62; Youth Development Network, 2008:7-8).

On the scope of Youth work practice, qualitative findings revealed consensus among focus group participants that the youth are the primary target clients for Youth workers (Jack, 2006:81; Merton & Payne, 2000:8-9; Sercombe, 2010:26), because as a vulnerable group, the youth need "*special attention*". However, there was also confusion over the age of target population being served owing to overlapping age categories. This attested to the fact that although a necessary characteristic, age cannot be regarded as a sufficient characteristic for defining young people. In South Africa, there is overlapping age between children and youth with children being defined as those aged between 0 - 18 years, whilst the youth are defined in the National Youth Policy as those aged between 14 and 35 years (Children's Act 38 of 2005; The Presidency, 2009b:11). It was on this basis that the focus group participants in other groups highlighted the need for Youth workers to focus on both children and youth.

There was also general agreement on the diverse range of activities and roles performed by Youth workers. The activities identified by focus group participants fit the description of those identified by numerous studies. They cover amongst others, counselling, information giving, crisis intervention, education, discipline, community development and skills development (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2001a:18-19; Coulshed & Orme, 2006:113; Sercombe, 2010:18). It is essential to mention that all these activities target young people in different circumstances such as priority youth

groups specified in the NYP. Those include: young women, youth in rural area, youth abusing dependency creating substances, unemployed and out of school youth (The Presidency, 2009b:13-27).

A closer look at the identified activities of Youth work, show that they are informed by values and practices implicit in a wide range of theories and ideologies within which the practice operates (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2001a:22). The theories and ideologies discussed in Chapter 2 have relevance for identified activities (Chess & Norlin, 1991:49; De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2011:508). Therefore, in contrast with a concern raised by the CYP suggesting that Youth work is centred on a social welfare approach (Joseph, 2006:93), the researcher argues that it is not the nature of problems which the intervention seeks to address that defines its approach, but it is the manner in which such problems are addressed that defines the nature of the approach.

The focus group participants also highlighted that Youth work activities predominantly target youth groups in communities as opposed to individual young people, thus confirming the assertion by Wong (in Maunders, 2006:30) where an argument for a move from individually based to structurally based Youth work is made. Emphasising the point mentioned earlier, a focus group participant in Gauteng said: "*I presume that youth development in that sense of the word that people would be less individual and more community based. I don't think they will be able to handle it if they go with the person.*"

This study also helped identify alignment of the roles and responsibilities of Youth workers as cited by several authors such as enabler, catalyst, coordinator, problem solver (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2001a:3-7; Coulshed & Orme, 2006:113; Kawaiski & Randall, 2005 in Krauss & Suandi, 2008:3). In the context of youth development being a cross cutting area and a responsibility of various professionals as evidenced by this study and confirmed by literature (South African Youth Workers Association, 2001:13; South African Qualification Authority, 2009b; The Presidency, 2009b:32), there is a need to clarify the roles and responsibilities in order to avoid service duplication and to ensure provision of coordinated services.

Explaining the above stated view, a focus group participant in North West said:

I think what can assist us, is if there is proper role clarification, so that we do not confuse communities. They will see a Community liaison officer coming to the community today, a Child care worker, then a Social worker. I mean there must be role clarification.

The analysis of qualitative findings further demonstrated that whilst it is important to have youth development services primarily rendered by Youth workers committed to servicing young people, it is equally essential that there is realisation of the significance of other service providers as contributors towards youth development, albeit at a secondary level (Sercombe, 2010:18). In this regard, the qualitative findings emphasised the importance of Youth workers as coordinators of youth services and there was also suggestion of having them as leaders of the team. This is important in light of the assertion by Sercombe (2010:83) that by virtue of their working relationship with young people "*Youth workers have a responsibility for the on-going efficacy of the now broader set of relationships.*" Therefore, in acknowledging the difficulties surrounding liaison and interaction between different orientations, the role played by each team member becomes crucial since it would contribute to teamwork by making referral and interaction possible (Jones & Pritchardt, 1980:3; Nandan, 1997:250).

On the benefits and non-benefits of Youth work as a profession, the researcher observed strong support for professionalisation demonstrated by easy identification of benefits as opposed to non-benefits. The benefits of Youth work specified by focus group participants included, but were not limited to: registration of Youth workers, standardised practice, formal education and training, and regulation of practice. On the other hand, non-benefits included lack of accountability. The identified benefits resonate with those previously identified by other authors and "*represent the highest level of competence in a society*" whereas non-benefits are different.

Like reviews of literature that show supportive and opposing views to professionalisation (Beker, 2001a:345), the qualitative findings also showed focus group participants who were in support of Youth work as a profession and those who were opposed to it. Those in support cited commitment to young people and recognition of already qualified Youth workers as their reasons. In this case, a focus

178

group participant in North West said: "*I feel that if they do have that four year degree qualification...I think they have every right to request to be recognised.*" On the other hand, lack of support was illustrated when some Social work and Child and youth care work focus group participants appeared reluctant to accept Youth work as an emerging field of practice, because they regarded Youth work as a threat to their professions.

A Social work focus group participant in Gauteng responded to another participant who said: "*Youth work will lead to diversification of humanities, thereby offering professionals an opportunity of specialising*" by saying that: "*How do we not contribute to the death of other disciplines and professions, but diversify*?" Since the confrontation was between two Social work focus group participants in the same professional category, it was possibly an indication of tension (Grossman, 2002 in Department of Social Development, 2007:15). It is, therefore, important in the interest of Youth work that the tension which is perceived to be existing between Youth workers and other closely related social service professionals is well managed (Department of Social Development, 2007:59; Singh, 2007:63). This could be achieved by measuring the value which is added by Youth work to the lives of young people as service recipients.

The benefits and non-benefits of Youth work as an area of specialisation were also discussed. Like professionalisation, there were also strong views supporting this course of action. As mentioned in Chapter 1, specialisation is defined as a special branch of focus within existing professions such as Teaching, Nursing, Social work (*Oxford English Minidictionary*, 1999:496; *Random House Webster Dictionary*, 1992:1284). The findings suggested that Youth work should become an area of specialisation for Social work or Child and Youth care work or Community Development work.

The reason given by the focus group participants for the choice of specialisation included: provision of career path opportunity for professionals involved. Interestingly as a non-benefit of specialisation is what casted doubt in the mind of one focus group participant - of a specialist becoming "*stuck*" in Youth work practice. This confirmed what Grossman (2002) cited in Department of Social Development (2007:15) as

"*jurisdictional tensions within and between professions.*" The researcher sensed the tension when one focus group participant strongly said: "*We don't want to lose them* (referring to working with youth)."

Another challenge identified included: lack of service integration. This amounted to many service providers rendering services to youth, with the impact of such services being minimal. According to the South African Youth Workers Association (2001:22), true client-centred services should be delivered in an integrated manner in such a way that service providers involved are in contact with each other, information is shared, and links between services are maintained. This assertion was confirmed by qualitative evidence where one focus group participant in North West said: "*There must be...I feel integration. I mean we are working for the same government and we are serving the South African community...*"

Lack of permanent employment opportunities evidenced by predominant employment of Youth workers as activists, volunteers, and part time workers in temporary jobs such as the NYS and EPWP was also cited as another problem. The discussion in Northern Cape revealed an assertion by a focus group participant who spoke in support of a well-resourced youth development machinery when suggesting that:

> *South Africa needs to move to a level where we employ experts or rather qualified people in whatever we do. Sometimes you get someone deployed to a position, only to find the person is negligent or doesn't know how to go about doing the work, because he is so active in political manner, they'll say go and take the youth position. At the end of the day he doesn't have the necessary qualifications, the necessary ideas, ending up doing not what he is supposed to do or he is being sort of bullied by his own peers, diverting this thing into another angle.*

The finding above supports the continuous call by various multilateral systems such as the Commonwealth, AU and UN where governments are expected to accord youth development greater priority in their national agenda by creating an environment which harness and encourage development and empowerment of young people (Alexis, 2007:86-88; Charles, 2006:49).

In relation to the finding on lack of prioritisation of Youth work by government, was a concern regarding allocation of financial resources. The findings showed that there

was lack of adequate financial resources allocated to Youth work. This translates into lack of political and administrative commitment in support of Youth workers and youth development initiatives. This does not adhere to the suggestion by previous authors highlighting the support of increased allocation of resources for Youth work (Jeffs & Smith, 1990:16; Maunders, 2006:21). Coupled with financial resource allocation, was the need to hire personnel who will be in a position to manage allocated funds effectively and efficiently rather than using them mainly for awareness programmes with minimal impact. This requires that there be Youth workers at management level employed to render supervision services to their subordinates and management services.

In relation to what has been alluded to above, a focus group participant that:

> *If someone is working as a Youth worker, they should be properly qualified and working under proper supervision ... they must be properly trained to ensure that they don't do any more harm to this task, because sometimes people have the greatest of the intensions, but they miss the issue.*

Another point to note is the general lack of knowledge by focus group participants of Youth work as a field of practice. This is essential, given that the public's knowledge of the expertise of workers and the clients' belief of their superior knowledge makes them to have monopoly of judgement over their clients and to do intellectual work requiring a high standard of responsibility (De Vos & Schulze, 2002:8; Hahn & Raley, 1998:393). As part of the public, it is worrying that social service professionals have limited knowledge about Youth work. Limited knowledge of this field was also evidenced by confusion of Youth work and youth. This could hinder acceptance of Youth work and consequently delay its recognition as a profession.

When the researcher asked the focus group participants to mention the challenges faced by Youth workers, a focus group participant in North West irrelevantly answered as if the question being asked was regarding the challenges faced by the youth. That focus group participant said: "*Reluctance of the youth to participate in projects.*" Another focus group participant in KwaZulu-Natal also demonstrated similar lack of understanding when asked the same question and responded that: "*...there was this understanding that let us capacitate these people, especially youth,*

give them capacity, technical skills especially so that they can increase their level of employability." As mentioned above, given the fact that social service professionals are also part of the public, their general knowledge about Youth work field is also important, particularly in the professionalisation process.

Having broadly discussed the past and present status of Youth work, the focus group participants in all groups proposed strategies to help address the identified challenges. The proposed strategies included: the need to have qualified people rendering Youth work services, determining the qualification levels for Youth work education and training, using the RPL method to credit Youth workers with experience, clarifying the roles and specifying the target client served, fostering communication between various professionals rendering services for the youth, coordinating youth development services, and conducting research to determine the impact of Youth work. It is worth noting that the strategies mentioned, although linked to the challenges identified; they do not address them all. It is therefore, safe to conclude that thorough analysis of all the challenges will have to be done and proposed strategies should be informed by research.

6.3   QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

The researcher created themes in the form of variables/ items/ statements measuring the following dimensions of the research phenomenon:

- Factors contributing to emergence of Youth work practice;
- The nature of activities and scope of Youth work practice;
- Involvement in Youth work;
- Perceptions on the future of Youth work; and
- Benefits and non-benefits of having Youth work as an area of specialisation and/or a profession.

The identified variables were grouped under each theme to form a scale and then coded in a measuring instrument constructed to collect quantitative data. Consistent with the literature, the measuring instrument was finalised in consultation with the research team (Greeff, 2011:359; Singh, 2007:68, 82). The analysis of the variables

and construction of the scales mainly included theoretical provisions as none of the scales have ever been used as a composite measure within the target population.

Quantitative data was gathered from a completed measuring instrument and then captured using Microsoft Word. The preliminary analyses were then performed with Statistical Analysis Software (*SAS)* and *IBM SPSS* Statistics 19 as recommended by Singh (2007:83)*.*

Finally, the researcher presented the quantitative findings, analysed, discussed, and made conclusions as well as recommendations based on a thorough review of literature and on qualitative evidence produced earlier by this study. As supported by many authors, the researcher further used own reasoning to make sense of the data by identifying recurring patterns and then reaching conclusions (Alasuutari, Bickman & Brannen, 2008:362-363; Argyrous, 2011:261; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007:35; Flick, 2008:16; Nieuwenhuis, 2007:111; Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011:417). The most recurring and emphasised variables and those that warranted to be explored further were selected.

6.3.1 Descriptive analysis of quantitative results

The researcher computed descriptive statistics of the following:

- Factors contributing to the emergence of Youth work;
- The current status of Youth work;
- Involvement in Youth work; and
- Perceptions regarding the future status of Youth work.

A full analysis of the descriptive statistics of the above stated dimensions was conducted and only took into account observed data. The analysis comprises of the presentation of quantitative descriptive findings in narrative, table, as well as in graphic forms and the interpretation thereof. However, it should be noted that like in qualitative analysis, not all measures included in the measuring instrument were analysed. The researcher focused only on key measures, particularly the ones that were useful in answering the research questions.

The first part of the results comprised of summaries obtained through calculation of the frequencies, means and the modes in respect of each of the measures within the scales (Sapsford & Jupp, 2006:211-212; Vogt, 1999:177). To obtain the frequencies, a new binary scale was developed through collapsing the original four-point rating scale into a new binary coding system that used only two digits, thus overwriting the original scale (Argyrous, 2011:518; Vogt, 1999:25). The calculation for the modes was included to identify the level of frequencies in the original four-point rating scale. The means were also calculated on the original four-point rating scale as the "*centre of gravity*" to enable the researcher to rank the responses in order of their magnitude.

The second part of the results focused on assessing the reliability and validity of the scales used to measure various dimensions of the research phenomenon. The analysis of the variables within the scales was conducted by way of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). The aim of EFA was to explore and summarise data on the scales of measures that can be ranked by exploring the underlying structure of a collection of observed variables and also identifying group of items or variables which are relatively correlated (Argyrous, 2011:175; Vogt, 1999:197; Wikiversity, 2011).

The researcher then determined the feasibility of factor analysis using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity. The KMO measure of sampling adequacy tests whether the partial correlations among variables are small and should be greater than 0.5 for a satisfactory factor analysis solution. Bartlett's test of sphericity as a statistical test for the overall significance of all correlations within a correlation matrix (Wikiversity, 2011) was used as a measure of sampling adequacy to test whether the correlation matrix is an identity matrix that would indicate if the factor model is inappropriate (cf. SPSS Help function). The factors in each of the EFAs were then rotated to facilitate interpretation using the oblique Harris-Kaiser rotation, because the original factors were believed to be oblique or correlated (Vogt, 1999:109).

The tests of internal consistency were also performed in all the scales, because they were new and the researcher had to determine their reliability and validity. This was achieved by evaluating each item in relation to the overall scale, thus determining the extent to which each of the measures within the scale were correlated with one

another and thus measuring the same construct (Vogt, 1999:142; Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005:147). It was aimed at determining the degree to which the results can be generalised across the items within the measurement or test.

Given the fact that all the measurements performed in this study have never been used before, an EFA was further conducted to estimate the factor loadings of selected data items. In the EFA, the researcher proceeded without stating any hypothesis about the number of factors and the relationship between them. The factor loadings are the correlation coefficients between the variables (Wikiversity, 2011). Finally, the researcher compiled and analysed descriptive statistics where a summary of each of the identified factors was highlighted. In this regard, the means and modes of the factors identified after rotation were specified, interpreted and then analysed.

It is important to note that the same process outlined above was applied and conducted with all appropriate measurements in the study. Below is a presentation and analysis of quantitative results.

6.3.1.1 Demographic profile of respondents

The respondents were asked standard demographic questions about their gender, race, professional position, region, level of education, and sphere of employment. Below is a summary describing the sample's demographic characteristics depicted in Table 6.2:

Table 6.2: **Summary of demographic characteristics of respondents**

Variables	Frequency (%)	Frequency (N)
Gender		
Female	78	464
Male	22	129
Race		
Black	75	445
White	18	107
Coloured	3	20
Indian	3	19

Variables	Frequency (%)	Frequency (N)
Professional position		
Social Worker	60	354
Child and youth care worker	30	176
Educator	10	62
Level of Education		
Degree	35	202
Post graduate degree	29	177
Matric	19	109
Post graduate diploma	6	33
Post graduate certificate	4	24
Under graduate diploma	4	22
Undergraduate certificate	3	18
Region		
Limpopo	32	188
Gauteng	14	85
KwaZulu-Natal	13	74
Western Cape	12	70
Mpumalanga	9	53
North West	6	38
National	6	38
Eastern Cape	5	31
Northern Cape	2	11
Free State	1	4
Sphere of Employment		
Provincial	64	373
National	23	133
National Institution of Higher Learning	13	77

The following selected demographic characteristics of the respondents are described:

(i)   Gender division:

Of the 593 respondents who completed the measuring instrument, the majority (78%) of them were females and the remainder (22%) were males. Figure 6.4 below displays composition of the respondents by gender:
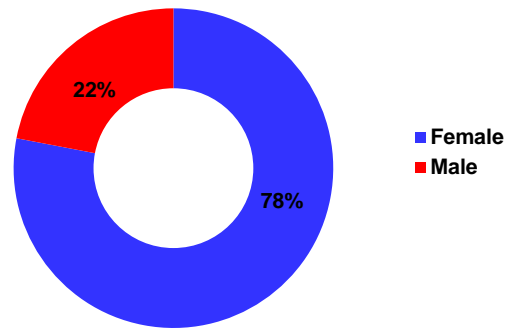
Figure 6.4: Respondents by gender

(ii)   **Racial characteristic and Home language spoken:**

On racial characteristics and geographic region from which the respondents reside, 75% of the respondents were Blacks, followed by Whites at 18% and then Coloureds and Indians at 3% each. The majority of the respondents (32%) were from Limpopo with Sepedi being the most dominant language spoken at home. Of interest was that, less than 1% of the respondents speak at least two languages at home, e.g., English and Afrikaans, IsiNdebele and English, and Sepedi and Xhosa. In addition, less than 1% of the respondents specified foreign languages such as German, Guajarati and Shona as their home language.

(iii)   **Professional position:**

The next characteristic which was crucial in sample selection was the professional position of the respondents. Almost two thirds (60%) of the respondents in the study indicated Social work as their current professional position, 30% reported to be currently employed as Child and youth care workers, and only few (10%) reported to be employed as Educators.

Figure 6.5 below illustrates the breakdown of respondents by professional positions:
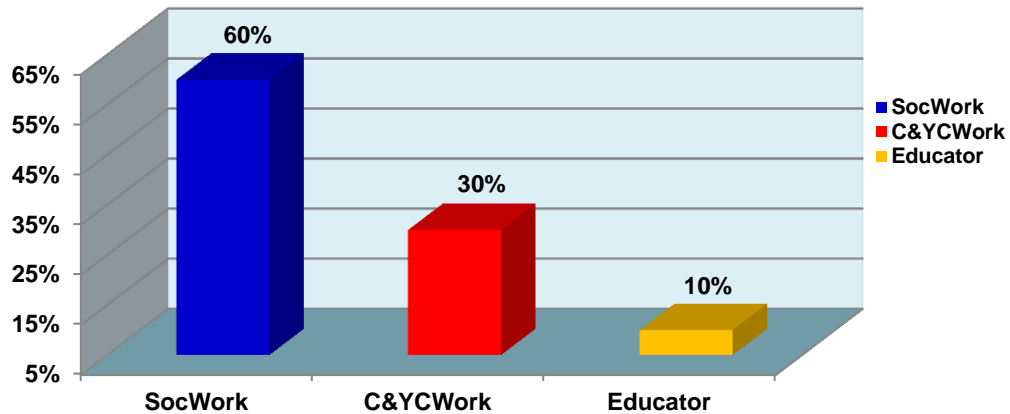
Figure 6.5: Respondents by professional group

(iv)   Sphere of employment and Region:

Further analysis showed that at national level, 14% of the respondents were Social workers, 9% were Child and youth care workers and there were no Educators. At provincial level, 45% were Social workers, followed by Child and youth care workers at 18% and then Educators at 1%. Finally, at institutions of higher learning, there was an equal percentage (2%) of Social workers and Child and youth care workers, followed by 9% of Educators. Overall, there were 23% of respondents employed at national level, slightly over two thirds of them (64%) at provincial level and 13% at institutions of higher learning.

Figure 6.6 below highlights the respondents by professional position and sphere of their employment:
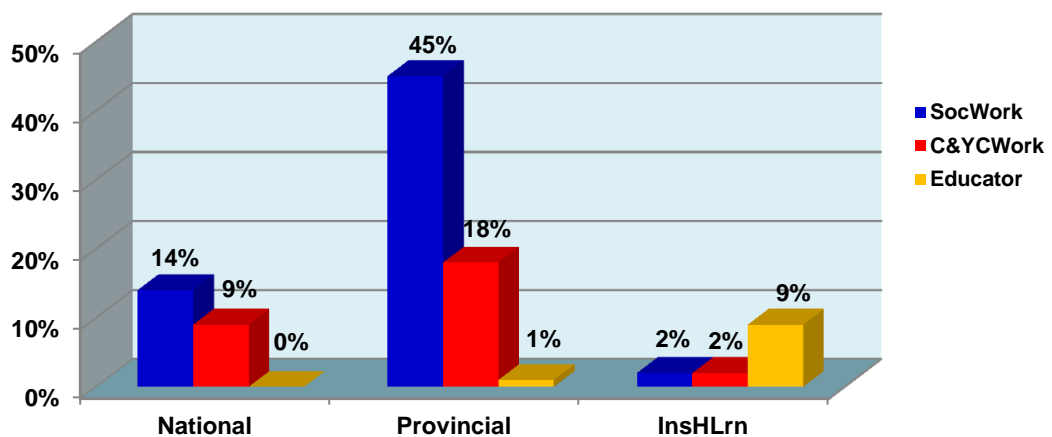
Figure 6.6   Respondents by professional group and sphere of employment

Additionally, the respondents came from nine of South Africa's provinces with Limpopo and Free State as the most and least represented, at 32% and 1% respectively.

(v)   Level of education:

Another striking feature was noticed regarding the respondents' level of education analysed per professional group. Data represented in Figure 6.7 below revealed that over a third of the respondents (35%) have a degree and of that percentage, 33% were Social workers and 2% were Child and youth care workers. Another 29% of these respondents have a post-graduate degree and 19% of these respondents were Social workers, 9% Educators and 1% Child and youth care workers.

Additionally, the respondents with matric constituted 19% of which 1% were Social workers, 17% were Child and youth care workers and another 1% were Educators. Of those with a post graduate diploma, 4% were Social workers and 2% were Child and youth care workers. Of the respondents with post graduate certificate, 3% were Social workers and 1% were Child and youth care workers. The respondents with undergraduate diploma constituted 4%, with Social workers at 1%, and Child and youth care workers at 3%. Those with undergraduate certificate were all Child and youth care workers at 3%.

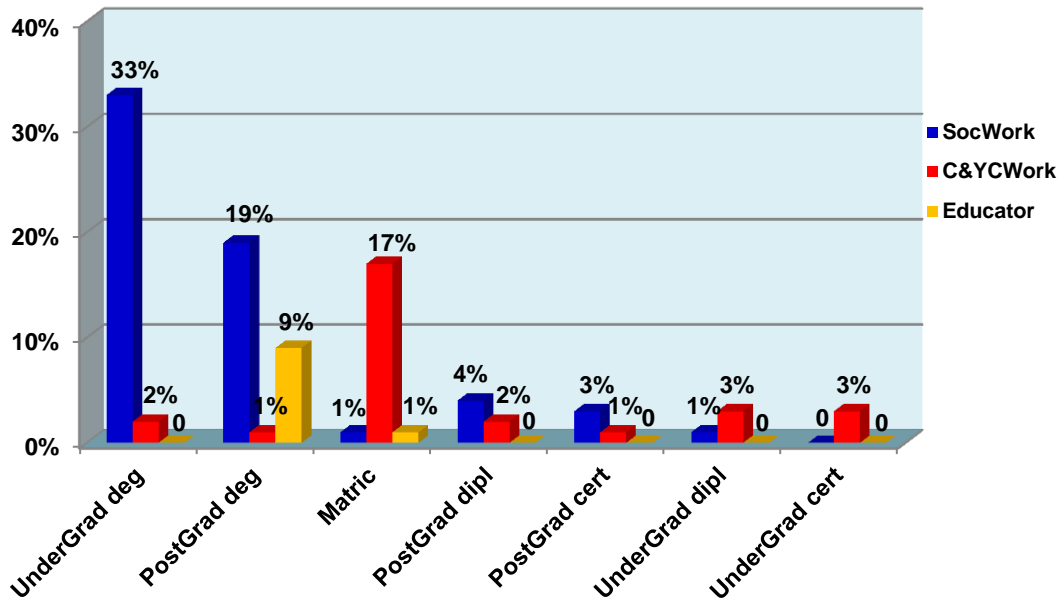Figure 6.7 below shows the respondents' level of education per professional group:

Figure 6.7: Respondents by level of education and professional group

In a nutshell, 74% of the respondents reported to have at least a degree as the minimum qualification (i.e., undergraduate degree, post graduate degree, post graduate diploma and post graduate certificate) whilst slightly above a quarter of the respondents (26%) have qualifications below a degree level (i.e., matric, undergraduate certificate and undergraduate diploma).

6.3.1.2 Contributory factors to emergence of Youth work practice

The respondents were asked to complete a 10 item, four point-Likert rating scale. In this study, the scale assessing factors contributing to emergence of Youth work practice had indices ranging from 1 to 4 with 1 representing "*strongly disagree*", 2 representing "*disagree*", 3 representing "*agree*" and 4 representing "*strongly agree*". An item analysis of the components of the factors identified was conducted. The ratings of 1 and 2 representing strongly disagree and disagree respectively were combined into a new rating of 1 (representing disagree) and the ratings of 3 and 4 were combined into a new rating of 2 (representing agree).

Table 6.3 below reflects the respondents' responses to statements measuring contributory factors to the emergence of Youth work practice in South Africa:

Table 6.3: **Contributory factors to emergence of Youth work practice**

Factors/ Statements/ Items/ Variables	Frequencies (%)		Modes	Means
	Agree	**Disagree**		
Addressing new challenges facing youth such as HIV and AIDS, substance abuse etc.	97	3	4	3.749
Guiding youth to become responsible adults	97	3	4	3.730
Involving youth in their own development	97	3	4	3.705
Developing young people holistically	96	4	4	3.672
Introducing youth focused interventions	95	5	4	3.578
Addressing the problem of "marginalised" youth	91	9	3	3.304
Keeping youth preoccupied with extra-mural activities	79	21	4	3.081
Increasing the number of social service professionals	73	27	4	3.056
Creating jobs for Youth work practitioners	75	25	4	3.015
Diverting youth from politics	41	59	2	2.295

The analysis of the ratings represented in Table 6.3 above shows that an equal percentage of the respondents (97%) in the study attribute the emergence of Youth work practice to be driven by the need to address new challenges facing young people such as HIV and AIDS, substance abuse, the need to guide youth to become responsible adults, and involving youth in their own development. Even though these variables had the same frequency of 97%, their means of 3.749, 3.730 and 3.705 respectively vary, albeit by a small margin.

Of those who strongly agreed with the first variable (i.e., addressing new challenges facing young people such as HIV and AIDS and substance abuse), 58% were Social workers, 29% were Child and youth care workers, and 10% were Educators. On the other hand, of those who disagreed with the statement, 2% of them were Social workers, followed by Child and youth care workers and Educators, both constituting less than 1%. Figure 6.8 below highlights a breakdown of the responses to the statement on addressing new challenges facing the youth by professional group:
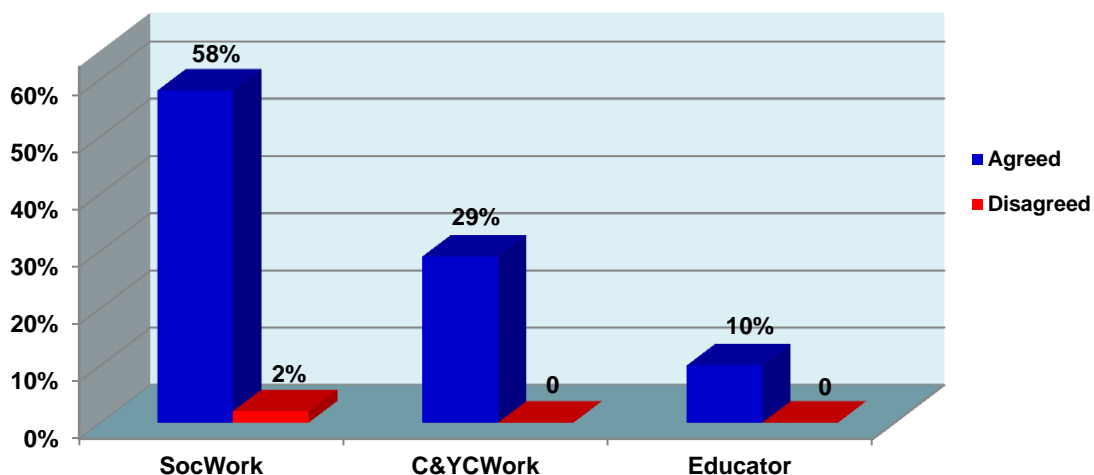
Figure 6.8: **Responses of respondents by professional group to the statement on addressing new challenges facing young people**

Other key contributory factors included the need to develop youth holistically at 96%; followed by introducing youth focused interventions at 95%; and then addressing the needs of marginalised youth at 91%. It is worth mentioning that the respondents strongly agreed that the need to develop the youth holistically and introducing youth focused interventions were some of the key contributory factors, because the mode was 4. However, they only sufficiently agreed that addressing the needs of marginalised youth was a contributory factor, because the mode was 3.

A relatively lower percentage of respondents (79%) considered the emergence of Youth work to be a result of the need to keep the youth preoccupied with extra-mural activities; 75% said it was due to creation of jobs for Youth workers; and 73% related it to increasing the number of social service professionals. Regarding the latter variable, it is important to note that despite its lower frequency of 73%, this variable (i.e., increasing the number of social service professionals) ranked higher, because of its mean of 3.056 compared to the former variable (i.e., creation of jobs for Youth workers) which ranked lower, i.e., despite its higher frequency of 75%, but due to its lower mean of 3.015.

The last contributory factor was diverting the youth from politics with the lowest frequency (41%) and lowest mean of 2.295 implying that this factor contributed less than all of the above listed factors measuring this dimension. The modal category for

this factor was 2, showing that the respondents sufficiently disagreed rather than strongly disagreed with the statement.

A breakdown of the responses per professional group show that, out of 41% of the total respondents who agreed with the statement, 23% were Social workers, followed by 16% of Child and youth care workers, and 2% were Educators. On the other hand, out of 59% of respondents who disagreed with the statement, 37% were Social workers, 13% were Child and youth care workers, and 9% were Educators. Overall, 41% of the respondents disagreed with the statement whilst 59% of the respondents agreed.

Figure 6.9 below shows the responses of different professional groups to the statement on diverting the youth from politics:
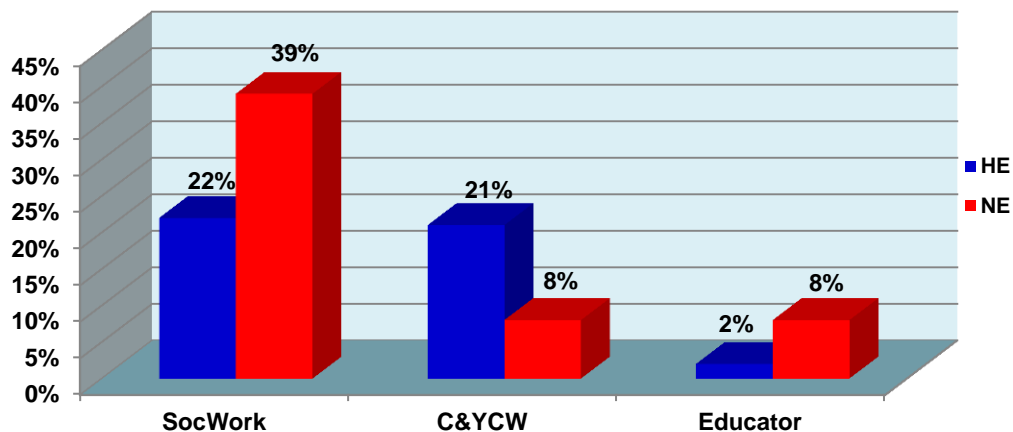
Figure 6.9:   **Responses of respondents by professional group to the statement on diverting youth from politics**

A further breakdown of the responses by the various professional group and sphere of employment show that 9% of Social workers at national level disagreed with the statement, followed by 27% at provincial level and then 1% at institutions of higher learning. With regard to Child and youth care workers who disagreed with the statement, 3% of those respondents were at national level, 9% at provincial level and 1% at institutions of higher learning. An assessment of the Educators showed that there was no one at national level, but 1% and 8% of those respondents were at provincial level and institutions of higher learning respectively.

On the other hand, of those who agreed with the statement, there were 4% of the Social workers at national level, followed by 19% of Social workers at provincial level and then 1% at institution of higher learning. With regard to Child and youth care workers, there was 6% at national level, 9% at provincial level and then 1% at institutions of higher learning. An assessment of the Educators showed that there was no one at both the national and provincial levels, but 1% of those respondents were at institutions of higher learning. Figure 6.9 below shows the responses of different professional groups to the statement on diverting the youth from politics by the various professional groups and by the sphere of their employment.
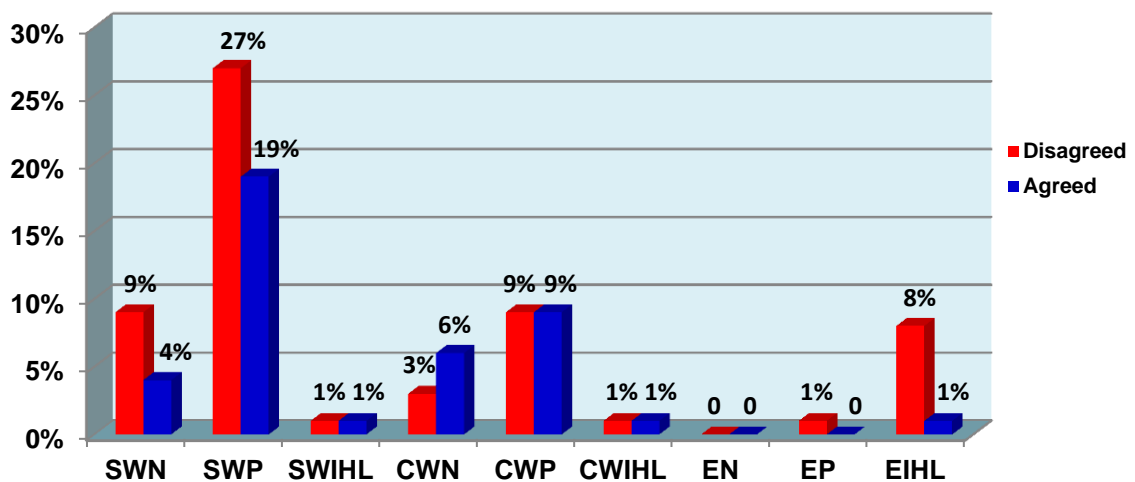

Figure 6.10: **Responses of respondents by professional group and sphere of employment to the statement on diverting youth from politics**

A closer look of the responses given in Figure 6.10 above reveals that, in total, of those who disagreed, 12% were at national level, 37% were at provincial level, and 10% were at institutions of higher learning. On the other hand, of those who agreed, 10% were at national level, followed by 28% at provincial level and then 3% were at institutions of higher learning.

6.3.1.3 Exploratory Factor Analysis of factors contributing to emergence of Youth work practice

The first EFA was conducted on the 10 items measuring contributory factors to the emergence of Youth work practice. The KMO measure of sampling adequacy was calculated and Bartlett's test was performed to assess the feasibility of the factor analysis. The relatively high KMO measure of sampling adequacy (0.794) and

Bartlett's test of sphericity (χ^2 =1212.548, df = 45, p<0.001), confirmed that the factor analysis was appropriate. The two factors were identified using the eigenvalue criterion of eigenvalues greater than 1. Factor 1 accounted for 32.50% of the variance and factor 2 for a further 17.53%, combined explaining 50% of the variance.

Therefore, the two factor-solution yielded by the exploratory analysis was regarded as an adequate representation of the data. Inspection of the two rotated factors resulted in factor 1 being labelled, Social development contributory factor and factor 2 being labelled, Human resources and diversion contributory factor. The results of the internal consistency test of items within the scale measuring contributory factors to the emergence of Youth work are represented in Table 6.4 below:

Table 6.4: **Reliability analysis of items within the scale measuring contributory factors to the emergence of Youth work practice**

Factors and Items/ Variables/ Statements	Loadings of Factor 1	Loadings of Factor 2	Cronbach' Alpha (α)
Factor 1: Social development contributory factor			*0.73*
Involving youth in their own development	*0.769*		
Developing young people holistically	*0.736*		
Guiding youth to become responsible adults	*0.710*		
Introducing youth focused interventions	*0.704*		
Addressing new challenges facing youth such as HIV and AIDS, substance abuse etc.	*0.497*		
Addressing the problem of "marginalised" youth	*0.410*		
Factor 2: Human resources and diversion contributory factor			*0.75*
Creating jobs for Youth work practitioners		*0.818*	
Increasing the number of social service professionals		*0.815*	
Diverting youth from politics		*0.712*	
Keeping youth preoccupied with extra-mural activities		*0.661*	

The analysis of data represented in Table 6.4 above illustrates that the results of an internal consistency test of the sub scale measuring Social development contributory factor had an acceptable Cronbach's alpha of 0.73 (α = 0.73). Similarly, the results of

an internal consistency test of another sub-scale measuring Human resources and diversion contributory factor also had an acceptable Cronbach's alpha of 0.75 (α = 0.75). The item-total correlations of Social development contributory factor and that of Human resources and diversion contributory factor are attached hereto as A*nnexures I* and *J* respectively. It is necessary to note that even though the measurement properties of these two sub scales were not established prior to this study, an acceptable Chronbach's alpha for both factors confirmed reliability of the sub scales for the target population.

Further analysis showed that the first factor (i.e., Social development contributory factor) contained six items. Four of the six items had the factor loadings above 0.70 and the other two items had the factor loading above 0.40. This factor was mostly saturated with items that referred to social development of young people (i.e., involving youth in their own development; developing young people holistically; guiding youth to become responsible adults; introducing youth focused interventions; addressing new challenges facing young people such as HIV and AIDS, substance abuse, and addressing the problem of "*marginalised*" youth).

The second factor (i.e., Human resources and diversion contributory factor) was saturated with items that referred to human resources capacity and diversion of young people's attention. This factor contained four items with factor loadings above 0.65 (i.e., creating jobs for Youth work practitioners; increasing the number of social service professionals; diverting youth's attention from politics; and keeping youth preoccupied with extra-mural activities).

6.3.1.4 Current status of Youth work

A 13 item, two-choice scale measuring the respondents' opinions on the current status of Youth work in South Africa was administered to the respondents. The respondents were asked to indicate whether they agree with each statement by circling 1 (representing "*yes*") or circling 0 (representing "*no*") as an indication of disagreeing with the statement.

The responses obtained on individual items within the scale used to measure the current status of Youth work in South Africa are reported in Table 6.5 below:

Table 6.5: Current status of Youth work practice

Items/ Statements/ Variables	Frequencies (%)	
	Yes	No
Youth work is a responsibility of a multi-disciplinary team (Teachers, Nurses, Social workers, Child and youth care workers, Religious leaders)	94	6
Youth work is an occupation focusing on young people	93	7
The roles and functions of Youth work practitioners and Child and youth care workers overlap	79	21
Youth work practitioners are largely employed by Non-government organisations, Community based organisations and churches	78	22
Items/ Statements/ Variables	**Frequencies (%)**	
	Yes	No
The roles and functions of Youth work practitioners and social workers overlap	73	27
There are Institutions of Higher Learning offering youth work training in South Africa	71	29
Youth work practitioners are sufficiently skilled to render youth work services	71	29
Child and youth care workers are sufficiently skilled to render youth work services	63	37
Social workers are sufficiently skilled to render youth work services	60	40
There is extensive research on youth issues in South Africa	49	51
There is competition between Child and youth care workers and Youth workers in delivery of youth services	43	57
There is competition between Social workers and Youth workers in delivery of youth services	41	59
Youth work practitioners are largely employed by government	28	72

The analysis of the responses received shown in Table 6.5 above reveal that an overwhelming majority of the respondents (94%) agreed that Youth work is a responsibility of a multi-disciplinary team (Teachers, Nurses, Social workers, Child and youth care workers, Religious leaders). Of those who agreed with the previous statement, 56% were Social workers, 29% were Child and youth care workers and 9% were Educators. On the other hand, of those who disagreed with it, 4% were Social workers and an equal percentage (1%) was Child and youth care workers and Educators.

The responses to this statement by each professional group are represented in Figure 6.11 below:
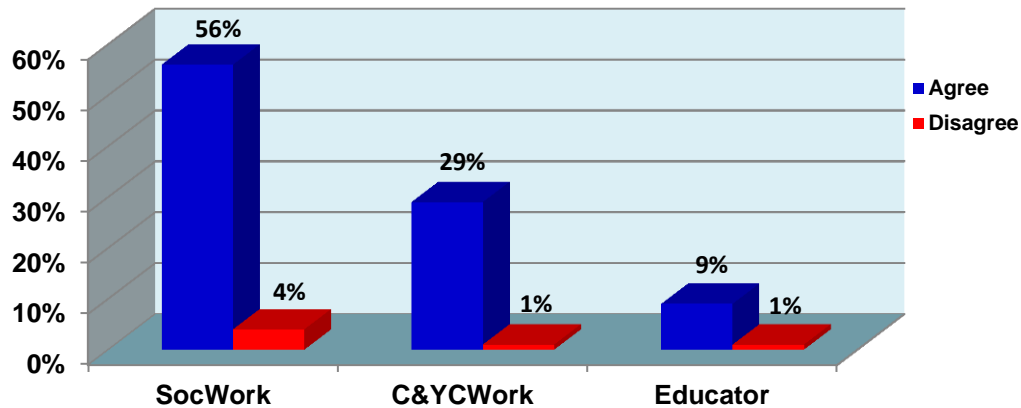
Figure 6.11: Responses of respondents by professional group to the statement on Youth work being the responsibility of the multi-disciplinary team

The analysis of other variables show that 93% of respondents indicated that Youth work is an occupation focusing on young people. This was then followed by 79% of the respondents who mentioned that the roles and functions of Youth work practitioners and Child and youth care workers overlap, 78% of the respondents also agreed that Youth work practitioners are largely employed by non-government organisations, community based organisations and churches. Of those who agreed with this previous statement, 45% were Social workers, 27% were Child and youth care workers, and 7% were Educators. Of those disagreeing with the statement, 16% were Social workers, followed by 3% of Child and youth care workers and then another 3% of Educators.

Further analysis revealed that 73% of respondents mentioned that the roles and functions of Youth workers and Social workers overlap. This was followed by 71% of respondents who mentioned their knowledge of South Africa's institutions of higher learning offering Youth work education and training. Interestingly, another 71% of respondents specified that Youth work practitioners are sufficiently skilled to render Youth work services. Of those who agreed with this statement, 41% were Social workers, 26% were Child and youth care workers and 5% were Educators. Of those who disagreed with this statement, 19% were Social workers, 4% were Child and youth care workers and 5% were Educators.

Figure 6.12 below specifies the responses to a statement on Youth work practitioners being sufficiently skilled to render Youth work services:
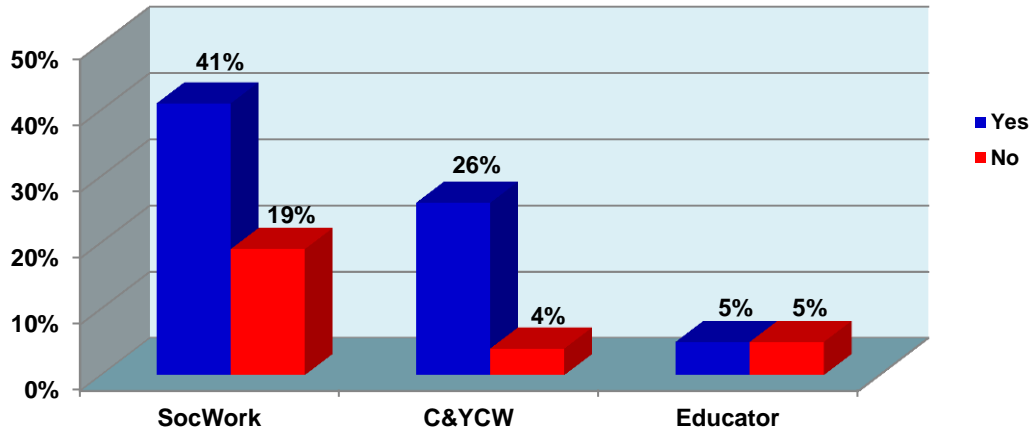
Figure 6.12: **Responses of respondents by professional group to the statement on Youth work practitioners being sufficiently skilled to render Youth work services**

The analysis show that 63% of the respondents said Child and youth care workers were sufficiently skilled to render Youth work services whilst 60% of the respondents believed that Social workers were sufficiently skilled to render Youth work services. Additionally, less than half of the respondents (49%) said that there is extensive research on important issues about the youth in South Africa, 43% said there is competition between Child and youth care workers and Youth workers in delivery of youth services; 41% said there is competition between Social workers and Youth workers in delivery of youth services. Finally, very few respondents (28%) believed that Youth work practitioners were largely employed by government.

Of those who agreed that Youth workers are sufficiently skilled to render Youth work services, 19% were Social workers, 7% were Child and youth care workers, and 2% were Educators. On the other hand, of those who disagreed with it, 42% were Social workers, 23% were Child and youth care workers, and 7% were Educators.

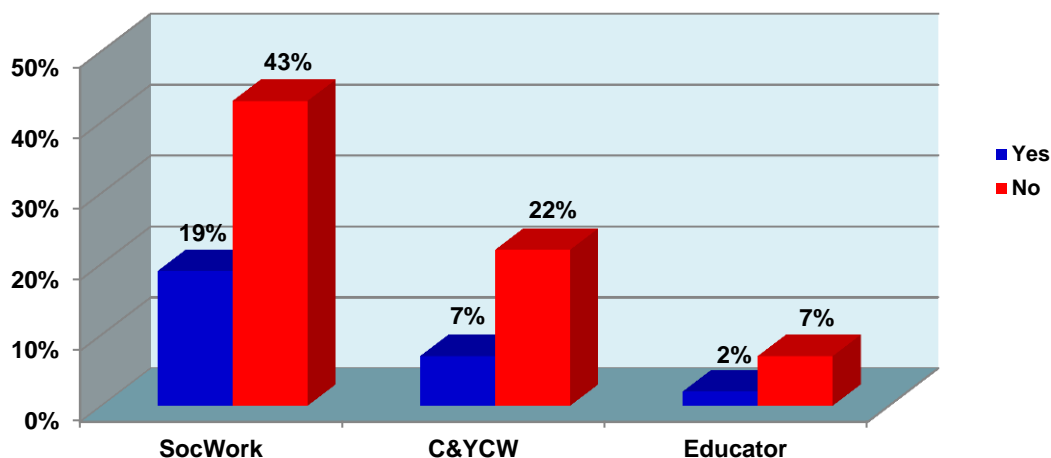Figure 6.13 shows the responses of various professional groups to this statement:

Figure 6.13: **Responses of respondents by professional group to the statement on Youth workers being largely employed by government**

The responses of various professional groups by sphere of employment indicates that of those who agreed that Youth workers were largely employed by government, there was 4% Social workers at national level, 15% at provincial level and there was none at institutions of higher learning. In the case of Child and youth care workers, there was 2% at national level, 5% at provincial level, and 1% at institutions of higher learning. Finally, there were no responses from Educators at national and provincial levels, but there was 2% at institutions of higher learning.

On the hand, of those who disagreed with the statement, 10% were Social workers based at national level, followed by 31% at provincial level and 2% at institutions of higher learning. Regarding the Child and youth care workers, there was 7% at national level, 5% at provincial level and 2% at institutions of higher learning. There were no responses from Educators at national level, but there was 1% at provincial level and 6% at institutions of higher learning.

Below is Figure 6.14 illustrating the respondents' responses by professional group and the sphere of employment:
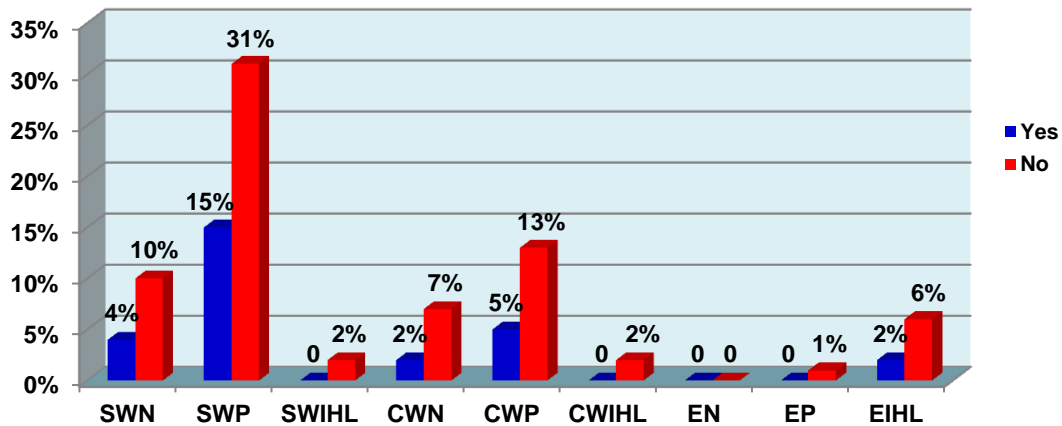
Figure 6.14: Responses of respondents by professional group and sphere of employment to the statement on Youth workers being largely employed by government

6.3.1.5 Involvement in Youth Work

The researcher included in the measuring instrument, 6 items on the scale used to assess the extent of the respondents' involvement in Youth work. The assessment was conducted through completion of the four-point Likert rating scale with indices ranging from 1, representing "*no extent*" to 4, representing "*higher extent*". When analysing, the researcher converted the original four-point rating scale into a binary scale through combining the ratings of 1 (no extent) with that of 2 (lesser extent) to become a new rating of *1 or "no extent*" and combining the rating of 3 or medium extent with that of 4 or higher extent to become a new rating of 2 or "*higher extent*".

The responses on the extent of social service professionals' involvement in specified areas of Youth work are illustrated in Table 6.6 below:

Table 6.6:   Involvement of social service professionals in Youth work

Items/ Variables/ Statements	Frequencies (%)		Modes	Means
	Higher Extent	**No Extent**		
Collaboration with other professionals in the social service sector when rendering youth work services	76	24	3	3.027
Direct delivery of youth work services	70	30	4	2.955
Collaboration with other professionals in the social service sector when teaching youth work	56	44	4	2.637
Research on youth issues	55	45	3	2.592
Teaching youth work	54	46	4	2.544
Policy development that promote youth work	45	55	1	2.364

A quick glance at the information represented in Table 6.6 above shows that over two thirds of the respondents (76%) mentioned they are involved to a higher extent in collaborating with other professionals within the social service sector when rendering Youth work services, whilst 24% of the respondents said they are involved to no extent. Of those involved, their involvement was to a medium rather than higher extent, because the mode is 3. It is important to indicate that the extent of the respondents' involvement in collaboration with other professionals within the social service sector when rendering Youth work services was the highest in relation to all areas listed in Table 6.6 above, because this item had the highest mean of 3.027. In order of magnitude of the responses, this variable was therefore ranked the highest.

A further analysis of the responses by various professional groups shows that of those who said they were involved to a higher extent, 44% were Social workers, 27% were Child and youth care workers and 5% were Educators. On the other hand, of those who said they were involved to no extent, 15% were Social workers, 3% were Child and youth care workers and 6% were Educators. Figure 6.15 below illustrates the responses given to this statement by various professional groups:
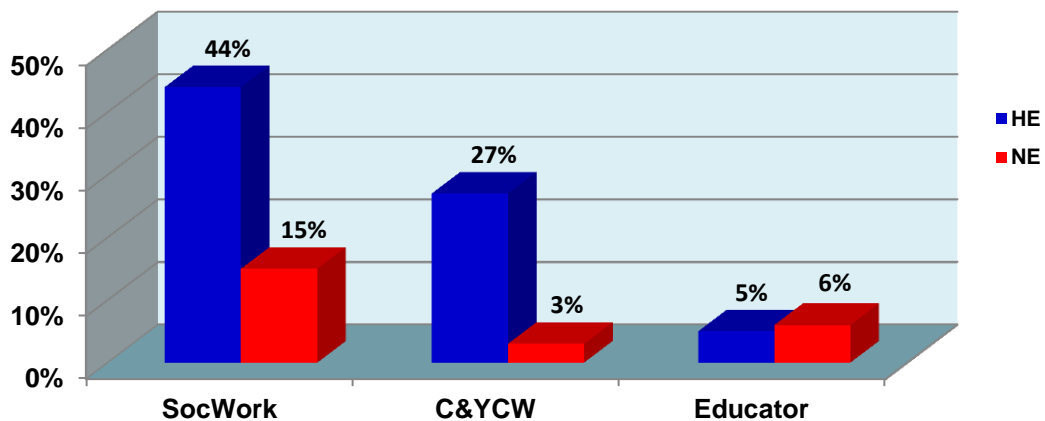

Figure 6.15: Responses of respondents by professional group to the statement on collaboration with other professionals within the social service sector when rendering Youth work services

The analysis of the responses for those who agreed with the previous statement by sphere of employment showed that 18% of the respondents were at national level, 51% were at provincial level and 7% were at institutions of higher learning. On the other hand, of those who disagreed, 6% were at national level, 12% were at provincial level and another 6% were at institutions of higher learning.

Additionally, 70% of respondents indicated that they are directly involved in the delivery of Youth work services; 56% said they were in collaboration with other professionals when teaching Youth work; 55% are involved in conducting research on important youth issues; 54% mentioned that they are involved in teaching Youth work. Looking at the means of all these variables listed in Table 6.6, the researcher observed that they follow the same pattern and sequence of frequencies. Perusal of the modes for these items indicated that all the variables had the modal scores of 3 and 4, implying that the respondents were involved to a higher and medium extent in these areas.

A relatively small percentage of the respondents constituting less than half of the respondents (45%), mentioned that they were involved in policy development promoting Youth work to a higher extent whilst 55% said they were involved in policy development to no extent. Interestingly, this was the only variable with 1 as the modal score, implying that the most frequent score was to no extent. Of those involved to a higher extent, 22% were Social workers, 21% were Child and youth care workers, and 2% were Educators. However, of those involved to no extent in policy development, 39% were Social workers, 8% were Child and youth care workers, and another 8% were Educators. Figure 6.16 below displays a breakdown of the respondents by various professional groups:
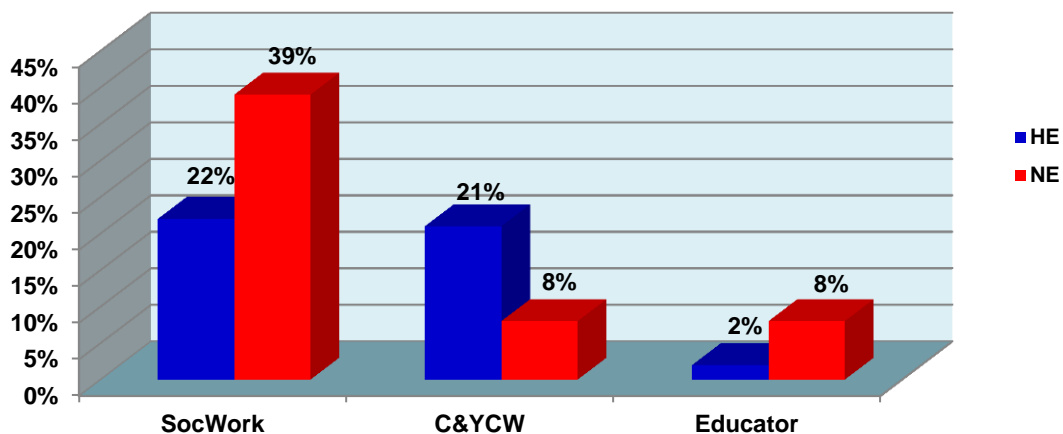

Figure 6.16: Responses of respondents by professional group to the statement on involvement in policy development

A further breakdown of the responses by various professional groups and sphere of employment indicate that out of the total 45% of the respondents who said they were involved in policy development to a higher extent, 4% of Social workers were at

national level, 17% were at provincial level and 1% at institutions of higher learning. With regard to Child and youth care workers, 8% were at national level, 11% at provincial level and 2% at institutions of higher learning.

Of the Educators involved in policy development, there were no respondents based at national level, there was 1% at provincial and 2% at institutions of higher learning. Again, out of 55% of the respondents who said their involvement is to no extent, 10% were Social workers at national level, 28% were Social workers employed at provincial level, followed by 1% of Social workers at institutions of higher learning. With regard to Child and youth care workers, there was 1% at national level, 7% at provincial level and there was none at institutions of higher learning. Of the Educators involved to no extent in policy development, there were no respondents based at national level, but there was 1% at provincial and 8% based at institutions of higher learning.

Figure 6.17 below illustrates a breakdown of the responses by professional category and sphere of employment:
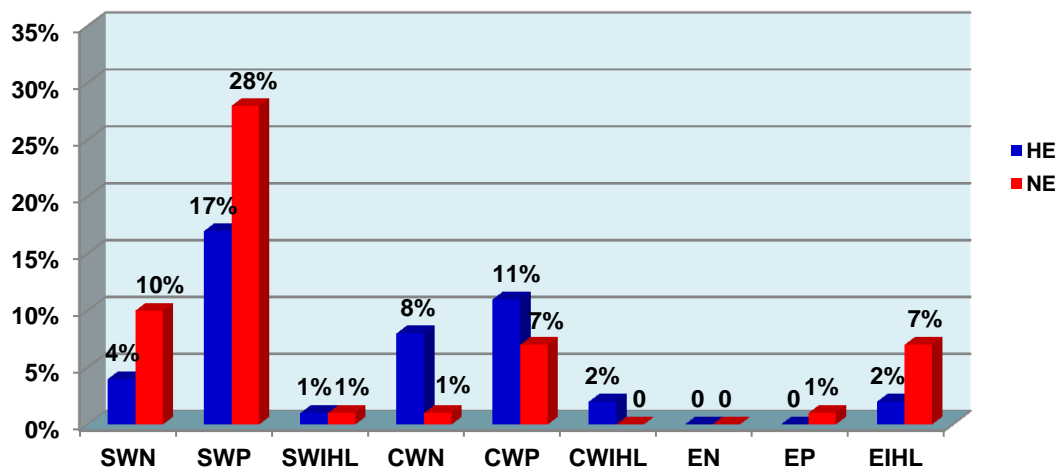

Figure 6.17: **Responses of respondents by professional group and sphere of employment to the statement on involvement in policy development**

6.3.1.6 Exploratory Factor Analysis on involvement in Youth work

The second EFA was conducted on the 6 item scale measuring involvement in Youth work. In this regard, the KMO measure of sampling adequacy was also calculated and Bartlett's Test was performed to assess feasibility of the factor analysis. All items

had a relatively high KMO measure of sampling adequacy (0.831) and Bartlett's test of sphericity ($\chi 2$ =1796.256, df = 15, p<0.001) confirming that the factor analysis was appropriate.

There was only one factor with eigenvalue greater than 1 identified and it accounted for 63% of the variance. Therefore, with the exploratory analysis being most interpretable, the one factor solution was regarded as an adequate representation of the data. The identified factor was labelled, Involvement in Youth work.

The analysis to assess the internal consistency of items within the scale measuring the respondents' involvement in Youth work is reported below in Table 6.7:

Table 6.7: **Reliability analysis of items on the scale measuring involvement in Youth Work**

Factor and Items/ Variables/ Statements	Factor loadings	Cronbach's Alpha (α)
Factor: Involvement in Youth work		*0.88*
Teaching Youth work	*0.836*	
Collaboration with other professionals in the social service sector when teaching Youth work	*0.826*	
Policy development that promote Youth work	*0.797*	
Research on youth issues	*0.786*	
Collaboration with other professionals in the social service sector when rendering Youth work services	*0.782*	
Direct delivery of Youth work services	*0.751*	

Table 6.7 shows the factor loadings of individual items on the scale measuring the involvement of social service professionals in Youth work. The internal consistency for the scale measuring Involvement in Youth work was very high with Cronbach's α= 0.88. The item-total correlations for the factor on Involvement in Youth work are displayed in the attached *Annexure K*. Even with this particular scale, the measurement properties were not established prior to this study. Therefore, the high Chronbach's α confirmed reliability of this scale for the target population. It is also worth mentioning that rotation was not possible, since only one factor emerged.

A further analysis showed that all the items contained in this scale had the factor loadings above 0.75. This factor was saturated with items that referred to areas of involvement in Youth work, i.e., teaching Youth work; collaborating with other professionals in the social service sector when teaching Youth work; policy development to promote Youth work; research on youth issues; collaborating with other professionals in the social service sector when rendering Youth work services; and direct delivery of Youth work services.

6.3.1.7 Perceptions on the future status of Youth work

In this section, the researcher divided the questions regarding the future status of Youth work into four sub-sections. Firstly, the researcher conducted an investigation on the respondents' opinions regarding the classification of Youth work. The respondents were asked to select the category classifying Youth work by selecting one of the options provided.

Table 6.8 shows the five (5) options from which they were requested to make a choice:

Table 6.8:   Classification of Youth work

Items	Frequencies	
	Percentage (%)	**Number (N)**
Area of Specialisation in Social Work and Child and youth care work	32	184
Area of Specialisation in Child and youth care work	22	130
Area of Specialisation in Social work	21	121
Occupation	17	100
Autonomous Profession	8	47
Total:	**100**	**582**

The message conveyed by data illustrated in Table 6.8 above is that, a total of 32% of the respondents classified Youth work as an area of specialisation for both Social work and Child and youth care work, 22% said it should be an area of specialisation for Child and youth care work, 21% indicated that it should be an area of

specialisation for Social work, 17% stated that it should remain as an occupation, and only 8% said it should be an autonomous profession.

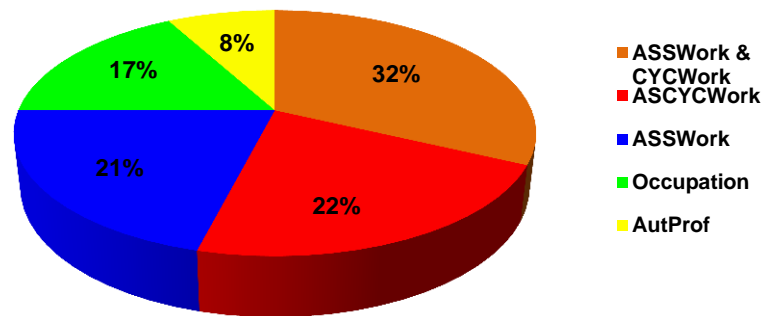The graphic presentation of the responses is displayed in Figure 6.18 below:

Figure 6.18: Classification of Youth work

A further analysis was also conducted by way of analysing the responses of various professional groups regarding classification of Youth work. In this regard, of those who said Youth work should be an area of specialisation for both Social work and Child and youth care work, 21% were Social workers, 8% were Child and youth care workers, and 3% were Educators. Of those who said it should be an area of specialisation for Child and youth care work, 10% were Social workers, 11% were Child and youth care workers, and 1% was Educators.

Additionally, of those who said it should be an area of specialisation for Social work, 17% were Social workers, 1% of the respondents were Child and youth care workers, and 3% were Educators. For those who stated that it should remain as an occupation, 9% were Social workers, 7% were Child and youth care workers and 1% was Educators. Finally, of those who said it should be an autonomous profession, 3% were Social workers, 4% were Child and youth care workers and 1% was Educators. The responses per professional group are graphically presented in Figure 6.19:
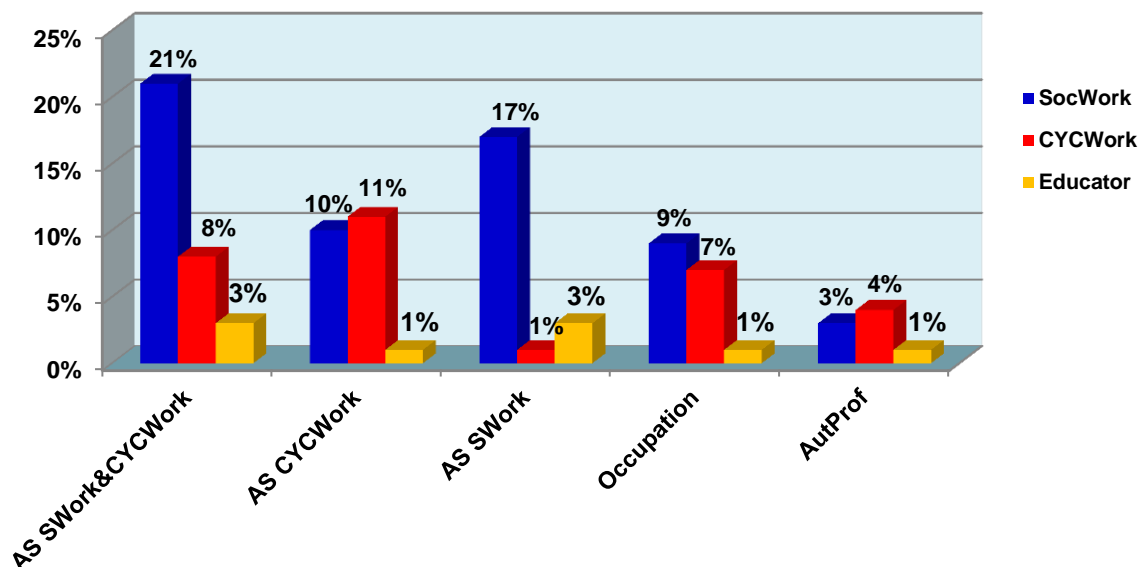
207

Figure 6.19: Classification of Youth work by professional group

The researcher then re-coded the responses into three categories, namely: an occupation, area of specialisation and an autonomous profession. The category classifying Youth work as an area of specialisation was reconceptualised by collapsing the first three classifications on the areas of specialisation specified in Table 6.10 into a new variable labelled, Area of specialisation for Social work and/or Child and youth care work.

The results of the re-coded variables used to measure future classification of Youth work are shown in Figure 6.20 below:
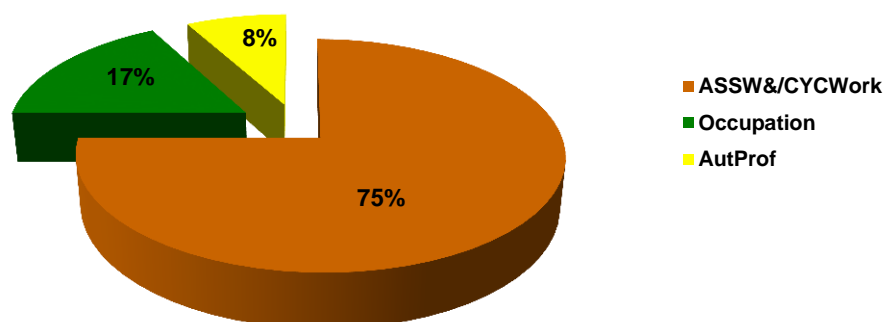

Figure 6.20: Re-coded values on classification of Youth work

The analysis of the responses of the re-coded combined values show that 75% of the respondents believed that Youth work should become an area of specialisation, followed by 17% who had the opinion that it should remain as an occupation and only 8% said it should become an autonomous profession. Of those who said Youth work should be an area of specialisation for Social work and/or Child and youth care work, 48% were Social workers, 20% were Child and youth care workers and 7% were Educators. Of those who said Youth work should be an occupation, 9% were Social workers, 7% were Child and youth care workers and 1% was constituted by Educators. On the other hand, of those saying that Youth work should be an autonomous profession, 3% were Social workers, followed by 4% of Child and youth care workers, and then 1% of Educators.

Figure 6.21 below displays the re-coded values on classification of Youth work by professional group:
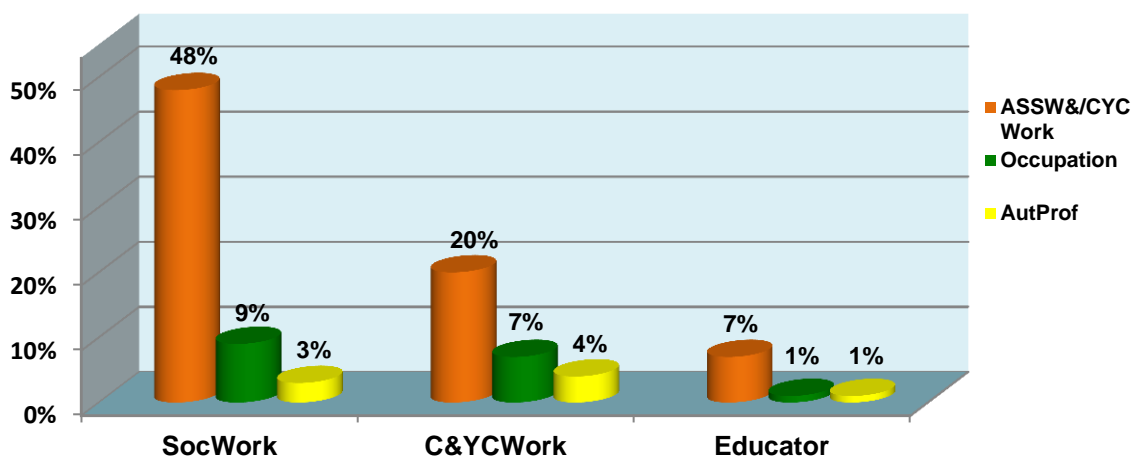

Figure 6.21: Re-coded values on classification of Youth work by professional group

In conclusion, it should be noted that all respondents who indicated that Youth work should remain as an occupation were asked to stop completing the measuring instrument, because it meant that the status quo will be retained. Those who said it should become an area of specialisation or a profession were asked to continue completing subsequent sections where further questions related to additional requirements of an area of specialisation or a profession were asked.

Secondly, the researcher enquired about the respondents' opinions on the statutory body that is supposed to recognise Youth work practice if it is recognised as an area of specialisation and/or a profession. The respondents were asked to select one option from a list of statutory bodies provided or to identify and specify any other additional option deemed appropriate. The respondents' responses on the statutory bodies deemed appropriate to recognise Youth work if it becomes an area of specialisation or a profession, are highlighted in Table 6.9 below:

Table 6.9: Statutory bodies that may recognise Youth work as a profession

Variables/ Items	Frequencies	
	Percentages (%)	Numbers (N)
South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP)	88	413
Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA)	5	22
South African Law Society (SALS)	2	8
South African Nursing Council (SANC)	2	5
Own Regulatory body e.g. South African Council for Youth work practitioners	1	6
South African Council for Educators (SACE)	1	3
None	1	3
All predetermined bodies	0	2
Child and youth care professional council	0	2
Social work specialist council	0	1
Total:	**100**	**465**

An overwhelming majority of respondents (88%) indicated that the SACSSP is the statutory body which should recognise Youth work. This was followed by 5% of the respondents who saw HPCSA being the relevant body, and then an equal percentage of respondents (2%) who believed that Youth work should be recognised by SALS or SANC. Another equal percentage (1%) of the respondents cited a newly established regulatory body for Youth workers, which could be named the South African Council for Youth Work Practitioners or SACE as the relevant bodies. There was an insignificant less than 1% (rounded to 0 in Table 6.9 above) of the respondents who mentioned the yet to be established Child and Youth Care Professional Council, Social work specialist council, and all of the predetermined statutory bodies as their responses.

Thirdly, the researcher asked the respondents about their views on the minimum qualification requirements for practising Youth work. The respondents were asked to make a selection from the list of options provided. Table 6.10 shows the responses given in that regard:

Table 6.10: Minimum qualification requirements for practising Youth work

Items/ Variables	Frequencies	
	Percentages (%)	Numbers (N)
Undergraduate Degree	41	191
Undergraduate Diploma	24	111
Undergraduate Certificate	17	77
Post-graduate Degree	8	39
Post-graduate Diploma	6	26
Post-graduate Certificate	4	20
Total:	**100**	**464**

Of the 464 responses received, 41% of the respondents said an undergraduate degree is the appropriate minimum entry requirement, whereas 24% believed that an undergraduate diploma is the appropriate minimum requirement, 17% chose an undergraduate certificate as the appropriate requirement. A small percentage of respondents (8%) said that the minimum entry qualification for practising Youth work should be a post-graduate degree, followed by 6% of the respondents who selected a post-graduate diploma and then 4 % who said a post-graduate certificate should be the entry qualification.

The researcher then re-coded the levels of the minimum entry requirements for practicing Youth work into two categories, namely, degreed and non-degreed. The first category of degreed refers to qualifications equal to a degree and above, i.e., degree, post-graduate degree, post-graduate diploma and post-graduate certificate. The second category of non-degreed refers to qualifications below a degree level, i.e., undergraduate diploma and undergraduate certificate.

Figure 6.22 below shows a breakdown of qualification requirements in terms of the two recoded values:
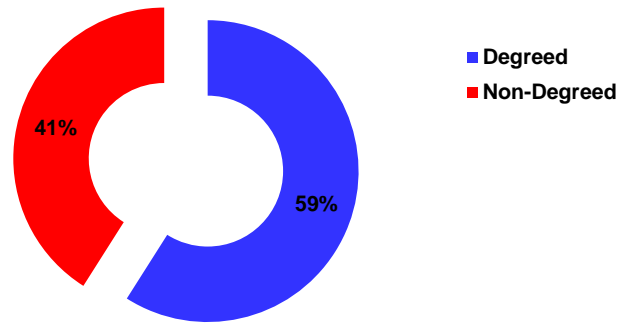
Figure 6.22: **Re-coded categories displaying minimum required entry qualifications for practising Youth work**

From Figure: 6.22 exhibited above, it is thus concluded that, 59% believed that the minimum qualification requirements must at least be a degree whilst 41% of the respondents were of the opinion that the minimum qualification requirements for Youth work must be below a degree level.

The breakdown of the re-coded values on minimum entry requirements for practicing Youth work by professional group show that of those who said a degree must be the minimum qualification, 37% were Social workers, 15% were Child and youth care workers, and 6% were Educators. On the other hand, of those who said qualifications below a degree should become minimum qualification, 23% were Social workers, 14% were Child and youth care workers, and 4% were Educators.

Figure: 6.23 below highlights the responses to a statement on minimum entry qualification for recoded values of degreed and non-degreed by professional group:
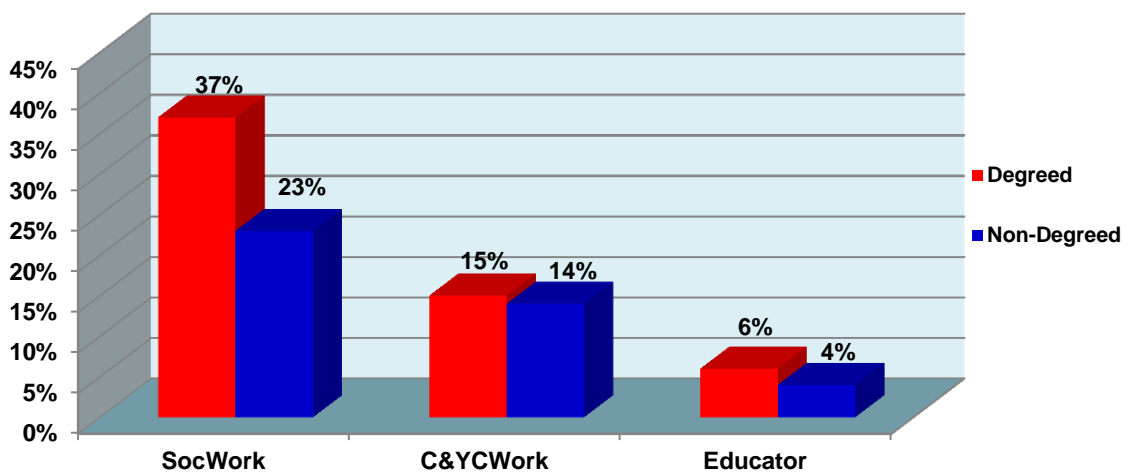

Figure: 6.23: **Responses of respondents by professional group to the statement on minimum entry qualification for the coded values of degreed and non-degreed**

212

Finally, the respondents were asked to complete a four point Likert rating scale with indices ranging from 1 (representing "*strongly agree*") to 4 (representing "*strongly disagree*"). The items were used to measure the high and low benefits of having Youth work as an area of specialisation or a profession. The ratings of 1 and 2 which represented strongly disagree and disagree respectively, were combined into a new rating of 1 (representing "*disagree*") and the ratings of 3 and 4 representing agree and strongly agree respectively, were combined into a new rating of 2 (representing "*agree*"). The high ranking of items was interpreted as high benefits and low ranking was interpreted as low benefits of recognising Youth work as an area of specialisation or a profession.

Table 6.11 below contains the overall responses to each of the statements reflecting the respondents' perceptions and opinions:

Table 6.11: Benefits of Youth work as an area of specialisation or an autonomous profession

Items/ Variables/ Statements	Frequencies (%)		Modes	Means
	Agree	Disagree		
Increased involvement in development processes	95	5	4	3.559
Protect young people's interests	95	5	4	3.532
Standardised Youth work education and training	96	4	4	3.525
Increased Youth work research activity	95	5	4	3.525
Regulated Youth work practice	96	4	4	3.508
Protect Youth work practitioners' interests	96	4	4	3.451
Prioritisation of Youth work by policy makers	91	9	4	3.410
Greater sense of identity	92	8	3	3.369
Additional cadre of personnel	89	11	3	3.276
Dedicated financial resources	87	13	3	3.245
Reduced competition among service providers	82	18	4	3.211
Equal status with comparable professions	81	19	3	3.194
Reduced turnover of Youth workers	75	25	3	2.935

The responses to the statements measuring recognition of Youth work as an area of specialisation or a profession showed that an equal percentage (96%) of respondents believed that it will result in standardisation of Youth work education and training, regulated practice, and protection of Youth workers' interests. A slightly lower equal percentage (95%) of respondents said it will lead to increased involvement in development processes, protection of young people's interests, and increased research activity on youth issues. Additionally, 89% of respondents said it will lead to employment of Youth workers as an additional cadre of personnel and 87% said it will result in dedication of financial resources to Youth work practice. Almost equal percentages of respondents (81% and 82% respectively) said it will reduce competition among service providers rendering youth services and also lead to equal status with comparable professions. Finally, 75% of the respondents stated that it will lead to reduced turnover of Youth workers.

Of significance to note is that even though the majority of respondents (96%) mentioned that recognition of Youth work as an area of specialisation or a profession will result in standardisation of Youth work education and training, their ranking of this statement was lower with the mean of 3.525, compared to the higher rating of increased involvement in development processes and protection of young people's interests with the highest means of 3.559 and 3.532 respectively. Similarly, even though an equal majority of respondents (96%) said recognition of Youth work will lead to regulated practice and protection of Youth work practitioners' interests. The means for these variables were lower at 3.508 and 3.451 respectively.

On the other hand, an item on increased research activities on youth issues with a lower frequency of 95% ranked higher than regulated youth practice and protect Youth work practitioners' interests with higher frequencies of 96% each, because of its higher mean of 3.525 compared to the means for the two latter variables of 3.508 and 3.451 respectively. Finally, despite a lower frequency of 91%, prioritisation of Youth work by policy makers ranked higher than fostering a greater sense of identity, because the former had a higher mean of 3.410 whilst the latter had a lower mean of 3.369. It is interesting to note that, relative to other variables, recognition of Youth work was perceived to be least likely to help reduce high turn-over of Youth work practitioners, since only 75% of the respondents agreed with the statement. Out of

the 75% of the respondents, 47% were Social workers, 20% were Child and youth care workers and 8% were Educators. Figure 6.24 below displays responses to the statement regarding a high turnover of Youth work practitioners as the lowest benefit of Youth work as an area of specialisation and/or a profession:
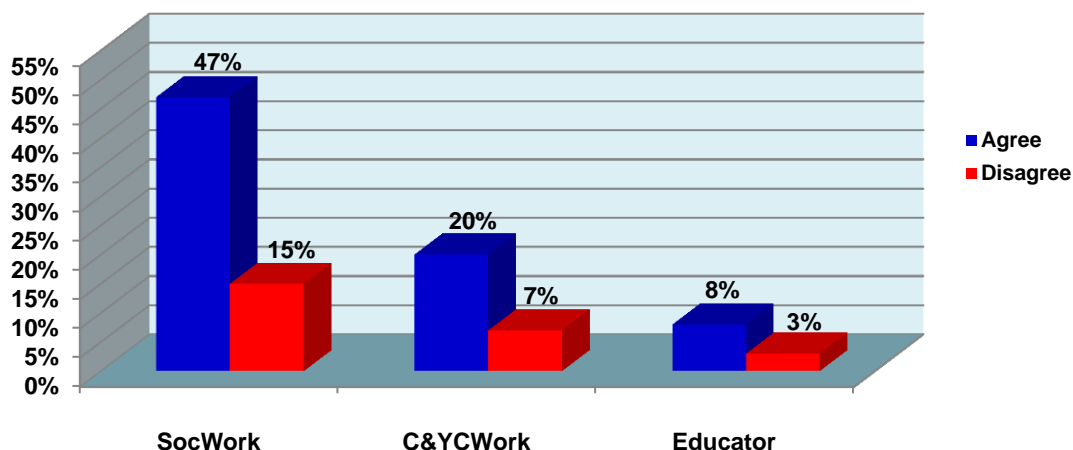

Figure 6.24: **Responses of respondents by professional group to the statement on reducing the high turn-over of Youth work practitioners**

A further analysis of the responses by various professional groups and the sphere of employment show that those agreeing that recognition of Youth work will help in reducing high turn-over of Youth work practitioners were constituted as follows: of the Social work group, 10% were at national level, 37% were at provincial level and 2% were at institutions of higher learning. Regarding the Child and youth care workers, 6% were at national level, 11% at provincial level and 2% at institutions of higher learning. There were, however, no responses from Educators at national and provincial levels, but there were 7% at institutions of higher learning. On the other hand, of those who disagreed with the statement, the Social work group had 5% at national level, 10% at provincial level and none at institutions of higher learning. Regarding the Child and youth care workers, 1% was at national level, 6% at provincial level and none at institutions of higher learning. Finally, there were no Educators at national and provincial levels, but 3% were at institutions of higher learning.

Figure 6.25 below shows the responses given to a statement indicating that recognition of Youth work as an area of specialisation or a profession will reduce a high turn-over of Youth work practitioners:
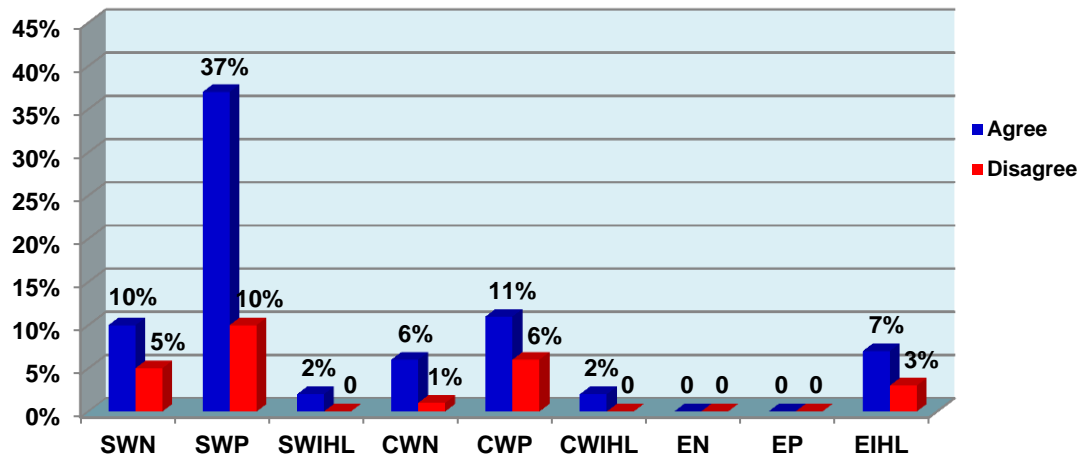

Figure 6.25: **Responses of respondents by professional groups and sphere of employment to the statement on reducing the high turn-over of Youth work practitioners**

Overall, it is also important to note that there were no respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed with each of the statements specified in Table 6.12, because there was no modal score of either 1 or 2. A closer look at the modes for these measurements shows that they were bimodal, because the modes were 3 and 4. Given the fact that after recoding, 3 and 4 were merged into one category, it also showed that all respondents unanimously agreed with all the statements and that their responses tilted towards the strongly agree category.

6.3.1.8 Exploratory Factor Analysis on the benefits of recognising Youth work as an area of specialisation or a profession

The third EFA was conducted on the 13 items measuring benefits of Youth work as an area of specialisation or a profession. The KMO measure of sampling adequacy was calculated and Bartlett's test was also performed to assess the feasibility of the factor analysis. The very high KMO measure of sampling adequacy (0.90) and Bartlett's test of sphericity ($\chi2 =1783.47$, df = 78, p<0.000) confirmed that the factor analysis was appropriate. The EFA using the eigenvalue criterion of eigenvalues greater than 1 yielded two factors. Factor 1 accounted for 39.52% of the variance and factor 2 accounting for a further 9.41%, combined explaining 49% of the

variance. Therefore, the two factor-solution yielded by the exploratory analysis was regarded as an adequate representation of the data.

Inspection of the two rotated factors resulted in factor 1 being labelled, Regulatory and quality promotion benefits and factor 2 being labelled, Capacity creation and cohesion building benefits. The outcomes of internal consistency tests of the items within the sub-scales measuring Regulatory and quality promotion benefits as well as Capacity creation and cohesion building benefits is reported next in Table 6.12:

Table 6.12: Reliability analysis of the items on a scale measuring the benefits of Youth work as an area of specialisation or a profession

Factors/Items	Loadings of Factor 1	Loadings of Factor 2	Chronbach' Alpha (α)
Factor 1: Regulatory and quality promotion benefits			*0.85*
Protect youth' interests	*0.890*		
Regulated youth work practice	*0.838*		
Standardised youth work education and training	*0.830*		
Protect youth practitioners' interests	*0.778*		
Increased youth work research activity	*0.613*		
Prioritisation of youth work by policy makers	*0.600*		
Equal status with comparable professions	*0.507*		
Increased involvement in development processes	*0.354*		
Reduced competition among service providers	*0.348*		
Factor 2: Capacity creation and cohesion building benefits			*0.62*
Reduced high turnover of youth work practitioners		*0846*	
Dedicated financial resources		*0.629*	
Greater sense of identity		*0.611*	
Additional cadre of personnel		*0.599*	

The internal consistency for the identified factors show that factor 1 (i.e. Regulatory and quality promotion benefits) had a high Cronbach's alpha of 0.85 ($\alpha = 0.85$) and factor 2 (i.e., Capacity creation and cohesion building benefits) had moderate Cronbach's alpha of 0.62 ($\alpha = 0.62$). Even though the measurement properties of these sub-scales were not established prior to this study, the high Chronbach's alpha for the sub-scale on Regulatory and quality promotion benefits confirms reliability of the scale for the target population, whereas the moderate Chronbach's alpha for the sub-scale on Capacity creation and cohesion building benefits confirms moderate reliability of the scale for the target population. The item-total correlations for factor 1 (i.e., Regulatory and quality promotion benefits) and factor 2 (i.e., Capacity creation and cohesion building benefits) are displayed and attached as A*nnexures L and M* respectively.

A further analysis showed that the first factor (i.e., Regulatory and quality promotion benefits) contained nine items. Seven of those items have factor loadings above 0.50 whilst the other two items have the loadings above 0.30. The factor loadings above 0.50 implied strong correlation whereas the loadings below 0.30 implied weak correlation. This factor was mostly saturated with items referring to regulation and quality promotion of Youth work namely, protecting the youth' interests; regulating Youth work practice; standardising Youth work education and training; protecting youth practitioners' interests; increasing Youth work research activity; prioritisation of Youth work by policy makers; leading to equal status with comparable professions; increasing involvement of youth in development processes; and reducing competition among service providers.

On the other hand, analysis of the second factor (i.e., Capacity creation and cohesion building benefits) contained four items with factor loadings above 0.55. The correlation between these items was strong. This factor was mostly saturated with items that referred to creation of capacity as well as cohesion building and those items were: reducing a high turnover of Youth work practitioners; dedicating financial resources; fostering greater sense of identity; and leading to employment of additional cadre of personnel.

6.3.1.9 Descriptive statistics

Having conducted factor analysis, the researcher was interested in descriptive statistics illustrating the means and the modes of the identified factors.

Table 6.13 below displays data in that regard:

Table 6.13: The frequencies, means and modes of factors measuring the perspectives of social service professionals in South Africa on the emergence of Youth work

Factors	Frequencies (N)	Means	Modes
Social development contributory factor	591	3.623	4
Regulatory and quality promotion benefits factor	467	3.433	4
Capacity creation and cohesion building benefits factor	464	3.195	4
Human resources and diversion contributory factor	590	2.875	4
Involvement in Youth work factor	587	2.703	4

A quick glance at the data represented in Table 6.13 reveals that the mean score for the variables within the measure of social development contributory factor was the highest at 3.62; followed by the mean score for the measure of regulatory and quality promotion benefits at 3.43; and then the measure of capacity creation and cohesion building benefits at 3.19. Additionally, the two last factors had relatively low mean scores, i.e., Human resources and diversion contributory factor with the mean score of 2.875 and Involvement in Youth work factor with the mean score of 2.703.

Of further interest is the fact that all identified factors had the modal score of 4.

6.3.2 Discussion of quantitative results

The quantitative results showed that female respondents were in majority as compared to male respondents. This could be attributable to the fact that Social work and Child and youth care work are categorised under helping and caring professions which were traditionally performed by female workers. The same trend was also observed and confirmed by qualitative results which showed similar gender dispersion with female focus group participants being the dominant group.

Unlike the qualitative sample which consisted of all social service professions, i.e., those recognised and not yet recognised, the quantitative sample only had Social workers and Child and youth care workers. Like the qualitative sample, the quantitative sample group was also dominated by Social workers who represented 60% of the total sample. This meant that the findings of this study were more biased towards Social workers than any other sample group. The dominance of Social workers could also be related to the fact that Social work is one of the first recognised social service professions and it was, therefore, more feasible to study this group than any other, since they are organised and registered with the SACSSP. Therefore, the researcher exercised caution and only generalised the findings within and not across different professional groups.

The concentration of the majority (64%) of social service professionals at provincial level was due to the fact that service delivery which benefits most people directly happens at provincial level, hence the high concentration of personnel, whereas indirect services such as policy making, research and teaching are national competencies with lesser personnel. It was on that basis that the latter group of respondents at national level only constituted 23% of the total sample and institutions of higher learning had 13% of the sample. This finding resonated well with the nature of functions rendered by different spheres of government in South Africa.

On contributory factors, this study made it clear that evolution of Youth work practice is more heavily influenced by Social development contributory factors than Human resources and diversion contributory factor, thus confirming evidence from other studies suggesting the primary sphere of intervention in addressing young people's problems being the social context (Sercombe, 2010:27, 88). The need for social development of young people should therefore be seen as a response to conditions that make the youth vulnerable to conditions such as changes in family structures, changing role of socialization agents like churches, and lack of response by the state in addressing problems (Maunders, 2006:48). Therefore, Youth work evolved primarily in response to the social problems encountered by the youth (Charles, 2006:8; Jack, 2006:80; Sercombe, 2010:24) not due to human resources needs and the need to divert the attention of youth.

It is also worth noting that whereas political situations such as Apartheid and industrial revolution as suggested by the qualitative part of this study and several studies across the globe also contributed to emergence of Youth work, it is the social problems experienced as a consequence of all these which necessitated the emergence of Youth work (Carter, 2010; Commonwealth Secretariat, 2001a:5; Richter et al., 2005 in African Union Commission & United Nations Population Fund Agency, 2011:39; Sercombe, 2010:21). On that basis, various service providers in the youth development space should first and foremost address young people's concerns and aspirations within their social contexts by applying a combination of social theories discussed in Chapter 2 as well as others relevant ones not discussed in this study.

There is undisputed evidence gathered on the current status of Youth work and a review of most studies showing that Youth work has the youth as the primary targeted clients (Sercombe, 2010:26). This sentiment was also reflected during the qualitative investigation where an explanation was made that other social service professionals target young people as part of their clientele population, but not primarily so. It implies that young people are not the only target group served by other social service professionals, but are the only target group for Youth workers. This is consistent with the review of literature where an observation has been made regarding service providers who proactively engage in a relationship with a young person as their primary client and not in response to their problems (Sercombe, 2010:16; Sercombe, 2004:12; Spence, 2004:265).

However, despite Youth workers' monopoly over young people as their client system, there was overwhelming quantitative evidence suggesting that youth development is the responsibility of a multi-disciplinary team. This was corroborated by qualitative evidence which also emphasised the contribution of different professionals in delivering youth service. Theoretically, this finding is linked to the social systems theory which identifies the impact of various systems on young people. By involving multidisciplinary team, the youth will be afforded an opportunity to utilise various support systems around him or her which include the family, different professional agencies, and other institutions of socialization (Gilbert & Specht, 1981:410). As an advantage, this study already revealed that there is little competition between

professionals in delivery of Youth work services. The fact that social service professionals collaborate rather than compete with each other when rendering youth services is also a reflection of a professional approach to service delivery (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2001a:19).

However, as cautioned by Sercombe (2004:66), even though teamwork is important, it must not be done at the expense of professionally marginalising Youth workers. Therefore, one of the challenges which ought to be addressed to avoid marginalising Youth workers, would be to ensure that the working conditions of Youth workers including the incentives, are comparable to those of other team members (Krueger, 1987:452; Krueger, 1988:14; Spence, 2004:267). Qualitative evidence suggested that there is currently lack of comparable working conditions whilst quantitative evidence confirmed that recognising Youth work as a profession or an area of specialisation will lead to equal status with comparable professions.

Further evidence produced through this study acknowledged that Youth workers are sufficiently skilled to provide services to young people compared to Social workers and Child and youth care workers. This finding is important, given that one of the approaches to youth development includes recognition of Youth workers as knowledgeable partners rather than mere experts in their work with young people (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2001a:19). This fact repositions Youth workers as important partners in youth development space and further confirms their role as coordinators or case managers charged with the responsibility of synchronising, harmonising and integrating services rendered by different professionals to the youth. This coordinating role has clearly been supported by qualitative evidence from this study where focus group participants mentioned the need for a Youth worker to play the role of a coordinator and team leader. This was also confirmed by a review of literature where the need to monitor or track progress on a wide range of youth development programmes and projects was emphasised (South African Youth Workers Association, 2001:15; Sercombe, 2010:83; The Presidency, 2009b:32).

On the contrary, this evidence was not supported by the review of literature, because according to the study conducted by the South African Youth Workers Association (2001:14), one of the reasons Youth work is not taken seriously as a career or a

profession in South Africa is due to large numbers of unqualified and unskilled workers dominating this field. On that basis, other studies emphasised the importance of formal education and training of Youth workers as well as other service providers in the life space of the youth as a means to create required capacity to enable them to render services to the youth efficiently and effectively (Beker, 2001b:364; South African Youth Workers Association, 2001:16, 19). By so doing, there could be an enabling environment for team work.

This study further showed that even though social service professionals are somewhat involved in youth development, their involvement is predominantly in collaborating with other professionals in rendering youth services and in direct service delivery. Other indirect services such as policy development appear not to be receiving enough attention. This is a concern especially since a review of literature showed that Youth workers have a role to play in both direct and indirect service provision with the latter including developing and influencing policies that affect young people (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2001a:20). It is therefore of serious concern that social service professionals are not involved enough in policy making, especially given that the interventions used by proponents of the advocacy theory stressed the importance of the service providers being that of a compass that would help direct youth to gain control of their lives by creating opportunities for them, empowering them, advocating for responsive systems, and helping them to become socially responsible persons (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2001b:13). Social service professionals would be in a better position of playing an advocacy role if they are involved in policy making.

The lack of social service professionals' involvement in policy development is again made worse by the finding from this study showing that there are only few Youth workers who are employed by the government and that many are in the employ of non-government organisations. This finding was confirmed by Maunders (2003:9) and South African Youth Workers Association (2001:17) where it is mentioned that most Youth workers in the employ of non-government sector are predominantly volunteers and activists. It therefore implies that social service professionals and Youth workers alike are not involved in policy making.

It was also interesting to note that in relation to all other identified factors of this study, involvement in Youth work was the lowest ranked factor. This finding further strengthens more, the case to have collaboration between service providers in non-government sector, business sector and organisational development agencies in rendering youth development services, thus according youth development even greater priority (Charles, 2006:52; South African Youth Workers Association, 2001:17).

Additional convincing quantitative evidence gathered from this study on the future status of youth indicates that Youth work should be considered an area of specialisation for Social work and/or Child and youth care work. This finding is supported by earlier qualitative evidence obtained through this study and other studies that have established youth development as a cross cutting issue which requires attention of a multi-disciplinary team and is already practised by professionals such as Social workers, Teachers, Nurses, Child and youth care workers (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2001a:19; Department of Social Development, 2007:56). In support of specialisation, a conclusion can therefore be reached that social service professionals as well as other professionals involved in rendering youth development services would benefit a great deal if Youth work is considered as an area of specialisation since they will be provided with "career path opportunities" as explained by qualitative evidence. Specialisation would also lead to provision of specialised services and afford social service professionals an opportunity to acquire additional knowledge and skills to discharge their youth development mandate skilfully.

Finally, specialisation also implies an opportunity to stimulate growth and development of Youth work as a field of practice. This could be seen as an acceptance by social service professionals to want to focus on Youth work as a special branch of their work - a move to embrace Youth work as one of their core functions. This finding may possibly be interpreted negatively as lack of support by social service professionals for Youth work as an autonomous profession, a symptom of possible tensions and/or power struggle between professional groups largely caused by "p*rotection of own turf*", a human phenomenon which causes resistance (Airhihenbuwa, 2007 in Department of Social Development, 2007:12, 68). In this

regard, professionalisation could guarantee some control over the field of practice whilst specialisation could perceived as loss of control. However, in this study, this claim has been refuted by an overwhelming support and overall positive ranking of the benefits for Youth work as an area of specialisation or a profession.

On the option of having Youth work as an occupation, there was no backing from the qualitative part of the study yet this option was supported by a relatively small percentage of the quantitative part of this study. The lack of support for Youth work to remain as an occupation was supported in recent research conducted by Makofane (Department of Social Development, 2007:57).

The last option called for the classification of Youth work as a profession. Although qualitative evidence supported recognition of Youth work as a profession, quantitative evidence revealed minimal support in this regard. Even though extensive review of most studies showed consistency with the qualitative part of this study in supporting Youth work as a profession (Department of Social Development, 2007:56-57; Hahn & Raley; 1998:393; Maunders, 2006:24; Sercombe: 2010:7), the key reason advanced by those who are in support of professionalisation is that attention ought to be given to professional development of those working with the youth in order to accord them equal status with other comparable professionals in a team and thereby ensuring successful team work. The support for specialisation as shown in this study would in fact accord those specialising in the field, a status of experts compared to generalist practitioners.

The fact that majority of respondents said the SACSSP should be a regulatory body for Youth work can possibly be linked to the respondents' professional groups since all of the respondents are currently recognised as the social service professions by the SACSSP. It can also possibly be related to the choice of area of specialisation as future classification of Youth work, because if Youth work is to become an area of specialisation it should be recognised and regulated by the same body of which the existing profession is a member. Of interest, even though insignificant, is that there were responses suggesting establishment of a new regulatory body for Youth work.

Concerning the minimum entry requirements for practicing Youth work, both quantitative and qualitative evidence of this study suggested a degree as the minimum entry requirement for practicing Youth work. Further recoded values suggested that the entry points for practicing Youth work could be at a degree or non-degree levels. The finding, which suggests that undergraduate qualifications be considered as the minimum requirement for practicing Youth work does not seem to be supported by earlier evidence which purported Youth work being an area of specialisation. In this regard, only few respondents (17%) suggested post graduate qualifications as minimum entry requirements for practising Youth work. This does not correspond with the high proportion of responses (75%) received regarding Youth work becoming an area of specialisation.

However, in terms of the SAQA Act No. 58 of 1995 as well as the NQF Act No. 67 of 2008, it is possible that, if Youth work is recognised as an area of specialisation for Social work and/or Child and youth care work, its educational structure could be such that it is offered at post-graduate qualification level (South African Youth Workers Association, 2001:14; South African Qualification Authority, 2009a; South African Qualification Authority, 2009b). However, the importance of having appropriate qualifications to practice will result in a "*professional Youth work force*" as highlighted by Shah (2007:61-62). This is essential in ensuring that Youth workers discharge their mandate skilfully and society has confidence in their ability to render services effectively. The value of education and training of Youth workers is given prominence as one of the strategic areas of the Commonwealth Youth Programme and there is diploma which is offered by many member states (Christian, 2007:93; Maunders, 2006:31).

Finally, analysis of the benefits showed that there was generally strong consensus among respondents of having Youth work as an area of specialisation or a profession. The benefits which are regulatory and quality promoting ranked relatively higher than capacity building and cohesion building that ranked low. It showed commitment to young people as service recipients or clients and the need to render effective services. The implication produced by this evidence illustrates that the debate on the future status of Youth work should primarily be guided and directed

first and foremost by – the commitment to pursue what is in the best interest of the youth.

Therefore, as with the profession, the foundation upon which the pursuit for Youth work as an area of specialisation is made should primarily rest on commitment to improve the quality of life for the young person (Beker, 2001b:365; Charles, 2006:31; South African Youth Workers Association, 2001:17, 37; Sercombe, 2004:73).

6.4   CONCLUDING REMARKS

The empirical findings provided essential information on the evolution of Youth work practice in the South African context by specifying the contributory factors, nature and scope of Youth work activities, the extent of social service professionals' involvement in Youth work and their opinions on the future status of Youth work.

The evidence gathered through this study revealed that Social development contributory factors have contributed more to the emergence of Youth work rather than Human resources and diversion contributory factors. Further explaining the influence of Social development contributory factors, a focus group participant in Northern Cape explained that "*the family of the young person must also be involved, so that they also understand the route that's going to be taken by the specific young person.*" It is also undisputed that in as much as Youth work practice primarily targets the youth as its clientele population, it must equally be seen as a practice which takes into account the impact of various factors affecting the youth.

Furthermore, the finding on collaboration between various professionals was positive, given that the other related evidence suggested that there was little competition between professionals despite their overlapping roles and functions. If implemented, team approach could lead to effective quality programmes and services as well as greater satisfaction and commitment among workers (Botha, 1995:205; Krueger, 1990:123).

Overwhelming evidence on the future status of Youth work, suggested that Youth work should become an area of specialisation for Social work and/or Child and youth care work. This assertion was made despite contrary evidence showing that Youth

workers are more skilled in rendering services to young people compared to Child and youth care workers and Social workers. This divergent interpretation was also reflected in the qualitative evidence where focus group members highlighted the need to have Youth work as an area of specialisation, but equally expressed strong views on having it recognised as an autonomous profession.

In light of developments towards professionalisation of Youth work, although not supported by the quantitative findings of this study, the move to have Youth recognised as a profession should be considered by future researchers through exploring the reasons for or against this option. This is necessary, given South Africa's two pronged approach to youth development with specialisation fully supporting the mainstreaming wing and professionalisation as an option that could possibly support the other wing of dedicated service provision.

The unanimous positive ranking of benefits of Youth work as an area of specialisation or a profession is indicative of the benefits far outweighing non-benefits. This fact cannot be discounted because it was also explained by qualitative evidence where focus group members found it difficult to identify and mention non-benefits, even after the researcher repeatedly asked them to so.

Finally, the modal score of 4 on all factors illustrates strong and general consensus on views held regarding the emergence of Youth work practice in South Africa.