

# **A PRE-EMPLOYMENT CORE SKILLS PROGRAMME FOR YOUNG ADULTS**

**By**

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## DEDICATED TO:

My loving husband **JANNIE COETZEE** for his continuous encouragement and support

AND

the late **ROB BROTHERS** who introduced me to **KINGDOM BOARDROOM** and all the young adults I met at KINGDOM BOARDROOM who inspired me to develop this programme.

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## DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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### Declaration

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## ABSTRACT

### A pre-employment core skills programme for young adults

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This study focussed on the development and pilot testing of a research based pre-employment core skills programme for young adults in order to equip them for the open labour market, to improve the young adults' knowledge and application of employment core skills, which in turn could increase the likelihood of securing employment. This programme can also help to alleviate unemployment and poverty by contributing to the social development of young adults, enhancing human capital development, increasing opportunities to reach full educational potential, enhancing economic development and increasing the opportunity to be self-sufficient and raising the quality of life.

The motivation for this study is based on the high unemployment amongst young adults, the lack of intervention programmes that address core skills for employment for young adults that are making the transition from school to work in South Africa and the apparent lack of core skills support for young adults at places of employment. The study was conducted from an ecological systems perspective which is relevant for the social work profession and to the "help professional" who engages with young adults.

The applied research was used and a quantitative research approach was undertaken by using self-administered and group-administered questionnaires to collect data in a standardised way under controlled circumstances with procedures planned prior to the commencement of the study in order to test a hypothesis. The study was conducted in two phases namely (A) an exploration of core employment skills needed by young adults by using a quantitative descriptive survey research design and (B) the development and pilot testing of a pre-employment core skills programme for young adults by using a one-group pretest-posttest design to assess the change in knowledge of core skills of young adults through the deployment of an intervention of the programme.

The discussion of young adulthood as a life phase highlighted the nature of human development. The discussion of the different development theories gave a good indication of what development tasks are of importance during young adulthood and especially in terms of preparation for entering into the labour market (career). Unemployment has various impacts on the young adult who in turn has an effect on the social system and the economy of South Africa.

From the empirical findings of phase A and combining the literature study it became apparent that young adults who can communicate well, solve problems and work with others are more employable as they can assume an active, adaptive and responsible role in the workplace and society. This information was used to develop a pre-employment core skills programme for young adults. The conceptual programme model, the experiential learning approach and problem-based learning were used for the basis of the core skills programme. The aim of the core skills programme was to enhance the young adults' knowledge and application of core skills necessary for employment and their employment opportunities. The findings from phase B indicate that the developed programme did enhance the young adults' knowledge of core skills necessary for employment and that the developed programme can be implemented with young adults between the ages of 18-25 years.

## KEY WORDS:

- Core skills
- Ecological systems perspective
- Pre-employment
- Pre-employment core skills programme
- Training programme
- Unemployment
- Young adults

## Opsomming

### **‘n Voor-indiensneming kernvaardighede program vir jong volwassenes**

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Hierdie studie het gefokus op die ontwikkeling en die loodsing van 'n voortoets van 'n navorsingsgebaseerde voor-indiensneming kernvaardighede program vir jong volwassenes om hulle toe te rus vir die ope arbeidsmark, die jong volwassenes se kennis en toepassing van indiensneming kernvaardighede te verbeter, wat op sy beurt die waarskynlikheid van die verkryging van indiensneming kan verhoog. Hierdie program kan help om werkloosheid en armoede te verlig deur by te dra tot die maatskaplike ontwikkeling van jong volwassenes, verbeterde ontwikkeling van menslike kapitaal, die verhoging van geleenthede om volle opvoedkundige potensiaal te bereik, verbeterde ekonomiese ontwikkeling, die verhoging van geleenthede om selfonderhoudend te wees en die verhoging van gehalte van lewe van jong volwassenes.

Die motivering vir hierdie studie is gebaseer op die hoë werkloosheid onder jong volwassenes, die gebrek aan kernvaardighede intervensie programme vir indiensneming vir jong volwassenes wat die oorgang van skool na werk in Suid-Afrika maak en die oënskynlike gebrek aan ondersteuning in kernvaardighede vir jong volwassenes by plekke van indiensneming. Die studie is gedoen vanuit 'n ekologiese sisteem perspektief wat relevant is vir die maatskaplike werk professie en die "hulp vakkundige" wat by jong volwassenes betrokke is.

Toegepaste navorsing is gebruik en 'n kwantitatiewe navorsingsbenadering is onderneem deur die gebruik van self-geadministreerde en groep-geadministreerde vraelyste in 'n gestandaardiseerde manier en onder beheerde omstandighede. Prosedures is voor die aanvang van die studie beplan ten einde data in te samel en om 'n hipotese te toets. Die studie is uitgevoer in twee fases, naamlik (A) 'n eksplorاسie van die kern indiensneming vaardighede wat die jong volwassenes benodig en (B) die ontwikkeling en voortoets van 'n voor-indiensneming kernvaardighede program vir jong volwassenes. Fase A se inligting is deur die gebruik van 'n kwantitatiewe beskrywende opname navorsingsontwerp gedoen en fase B is uitgevoer deur gebruik te maak van 'n een-groep voortoets-natoets ontwerp om die verandering in kennis van kern vaardighede van jong volwassenes deur die ontplooiing van die program te bepaal.

Die bespreking van jong volwassenheid as 'n lewensfase beklemtoon die aard van menslike ontwikkeling. Die bespreking van die verskillende ontwikkelingsteorieë het 'n goeie aanduiding gegee van watter ontwikkelingstake tydens die lewensfase van jong volwassenheid van belang is veral in terme van voorbereiding vir die toetrede tot die arbeidsmark en vestiging van 'n loopbaan. Werkloosheid het verskeie invloede op die jong volwassene wat op sy beurt weer 'n uitwerking op die welsynsstelsel en die ekonomie van Suid-Afrika het.

Vanuit die empiriese bevindinge van fase A en vanuit die literatuurstudie het dit duidelik geblyk dat jong volwassenes wat goed kan kommunikeer, probleme kan oplos en suksesvol saam met ander kan werk, meer geskik is vir werk en dat hulle 'n aktiewe, aanpasbare en verantwoordelike rol in die werkplek en die samelewing kan vervul. Hierdie inligting is gebruik om 'n voor-indiensneming kernvaardighede program vir jong volwassenes te ontwikkel. Die konseptuele model program, die ervaringsleer benadering en die probleem-gebaseerde leer is gebruik as die basis van die kernvaardighede program. Die doel van die kernvaardighede program was om die jong volwassenes se kennis en toepassing van die kernvaardighede wat nodig is vir indiensneming te verbeter asook om die toegang tot werksgeleenthede te verbeter. Die bevindinge van fase B dui aan dat die ontwikkelde program die jong

volwassenes se kennis van die kernvaardighede wat nodig is vir indiensneming verbeter het en dat die ontwikkelde program geïmplementeer kan word met jong volwassenes tussen die ouderdomme van 18-25 jaar.

## **SLEUTELTERME**

- Kernvaardighede
- Ekologiese sisteem perspektief
- Voor-indiensneming
- Voor-indiensneming kernvaardighede program
- Opleidingsprogram
- Werkloosheid
- Jong volwassenes

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## CHAPTER ONE

### GENERAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Freud selected work and love as two of the most important elements of a healthy and well-adjusted person (Du Toit, 2003:1). Work has a psychological dimension, as it is an essential source of identity and provides views on self-esteem (Du Toit, 2003:2; Goldsmith, Veum & Darity, 1997:134).

Work is differently described and characterised by changes in economies, the knowledge required for work, and working lives, as the world has become more globalised (Farrell & Fenwick, 2007:xv). The authors also mention that emphasis on knowledge in economic development requires an adapted and “new” worker that can manage the demands of the new economy, a “knowledge-based economy.” The requirement for a knowledge worker brought new challenges to the education sector to provide these knowledge workers (Farrell & Fenwick, 2007:xv; 1). Leader (2003:361) refers to a “knowledge-driven society” that has grown from these initiatives and development. The debate is now about what constitutes knowledge and what the best practice is to increase literate work force in developing countries.

Farrell and Fenwick (2007:6) pose the question “what knowledge is required in the workplaces of a global economy?” It seems that consensus has been reached that the emphasis should be on more “soft skills”, that is the application of knowledge in practice (21<sup>st</sup> – Century Workforce, 2009; Cox & King, 2006:264; Dench, 1997:191; Fallows & Steven, 2000:75; Farrell & Fenwick, 2007:20; Thompson & Guile, 1994:3,6). According to Brothers (2007), Heuer (2007) and Esterhuizen (2008) there has been a shift from employing a candidate with technical and intellectual knowledge to employing someone with more “core-“, “key-” or “soft skills” and someone who can think “out of the box”, and who is motivated and has the right attitude towards work.

Core skills are not new to society. Since the earliest days, skills have been categorised as basic skills, soft skills and technical skills (Bingham & Drew, 1999:vii;

Gibbons-Wood & Lange, 2000:28; Welsh & Canning, 2003:5). Various terms are used in literature such as application of soft skills, generic skills, key skills, personal skills or transferable skills (Cox & King, 2006:26; Dench, 1997:191; Johnston & Watson, 2004: 53; Welsh & Canning, 2003:3). Core skills refer to the broad transferable skills that help young adults to unlock the potential of successful employment, to be full, active and responsible employees. Core skills consist of communication skills, numeracy, information communication technology, problem solving skills and working with others. Core skills address the application of basic skills in a working environment (Welsh & Canning, 2003:8-13).

As the environment of work and life has rapidly changed over the decades from production orientated to a more service orientated industry, core skills have become more important (Gibbons-Wood & Lange, 2000:24; Welsh & Canning, 2003:5). The developed countries such as Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, Scotland and The United Kingdom started looking at the changing demands and how to incorporate the teaching of core skills into the educational system. Subsequently these European countries have developed several programmes that address the need and are constantly evaluating the programmes (Buchmann, 2002:217-223; Gibson-Wood & Lange, 2000:24-32; Johnston & Watson, 2004:53-62; Thomas & Grimes, 2003:383-391; Thompson & Guile, 1994:9; Welsh & Canning, 2003:29;). Other countries such as Portugal (Tome, 2007:342) and Ghana (Palmer, 2007:397-420) have also evaluated the introduction of core skills programmes. Several authors are of the opinion that the existing core skills modules or programmes have not delivered on all the expected outcomes (Gibbons-Wood & Lange, 2000:24; Palmer, 2007:409; Tomé, 2007:355; Welsh & Canning, 2003:11, 13;). The reasons vary greatly, but one common aspect is that the partnership between education and businesses plays an important role in creating success (Gibbons-Wood & Lange, 2000:30; Palmer, 2007:409; Thompson & Guile, 1994:9; Tomé, 2007:354-356; Welsh & Canning, 2003:13).

In the South African context, apartheid left many consequences for different population groups in South Africa. One of the consequences of separate education for different race groups is that human capital is underdeveloped (Bird, 2003:2). These underdevelopments lead to large disparities in income and levels of education. The democratic government of South Africa endeavours to minimise the

gap by investing in adult education and training and to lessen the social exclusion of people from disadvantaged groups and communities (Dyson & Keating, 2005:17). In this regard, The White Paper for Social Welfare (Republic of South Africa, Ministry for Welfare and Population Development, 1997:68) states for example that welfare departments should avail preventative measures for “opportunities to reach their [youth] full educational and human potential.”

Pretorius, Nieman and Van Vuuren (2005:414) mention that education is a precondition for enhancing economic growth. Farrell and Fenwick (2007:14) agree that mental labour replaced physical labour and that education is thus the “primary driver of economic transformation.” The World Bank (2003:xvii-xviii) argues that developing countries are enticed into reforming their educational system to reduce marginalisation and to remain globally competitive in the job market. In the light of the aforementioned Farrell and Fenwick (2007:15) believe that “education” has become “work-related education.”

Against this background, the focus of this study will be on educating and coaching young adults regarding the necessary core skills, in order to develop and equip them for the open labour market. Dyson and Keating (2005:iii) and Indabawa and Mpofo (2006:11) argue that an individual with lesser education is amongst the vulnerable in securing adequate employment. Esterhuizen (2008) and Heuer (2007) have confirmed this and postulate that they would rather employ a person with a higher education level. This confirms what Tomé (2007:353, 354) stated that high levels of education seemed to increase employability. Young adult in the context of this study refers to a person between the age of 18 and 25 years, who has completed schooling and who is seeking employment or has just entered the labour market (Nolte, 2002:23; RSA, Ministry for Welfare and Population Development, 1997:53). During the young adult phase that Erikson refers to as the intimacy versus isolation crisis stage, the young adult builds work connections and work and social life becomes an issue (Meyer & Viljoen, 2003:202). A transition is typical of the social and emotional developmental phases of “identity versus role confusion” and “intimacy versus isolation.” The adolescent leaves school and enters the labour market and the individual becomes independent and leaves the family to form their own family (Nolte, 2002:45; Hammer, 2007:250). The developmental tasks during the young adult phase as mentioned by Louw, Van Ede and Louw (2004:474) are to

achieve independence and responsibility, to stabilise own identity, to define own values, to develop intimacy and commitment, to become established in a career and to find a place in the community and contribute towards it.

The focus of this study will therefore be on the development and pilot testing of a pre-employment core skills programme for young adults in order to equip them for the open labour market. Such a pre-employment core skills programme for young adults has the potential to improve the young adults' knowledge and application of employment core skills, which in turn could increase the likelihood of securing employment. Such a programme will also help to alleviate unemployment and poverty by contributing to the social development of young adults, enhancing human capital development, increasing opportunities to reach full educational potential, enhancing economic development and increasing the opportunity to be self-sufficient and raising the quality of life.

## **1.2 PROBLEM FORMULATION**

Maree and Van der Westhuizen (2007:28) state that the rationale of research explains how interest arose in the specific subject and why it is important to do this research. Mouton (2001:48) says that an idea needs to be converted into a "researchable" problem. Fouché and De Vos (2005a:91) refer to six areas where a research problem can originate from. The six areas are daily practice, autobiographical elements, intuition, observation of reality, theory and previous research. The researcher used both observation and daily practice to identify and formulate the problem.

The estimation by 2010 is that globally 700 million young people will be seeking work (Du Toit, 2003:4). Linders (2001:1) says in her paper delivered to the Nedlac Annual Summit in 2001 that even after seven years in a democratic South Africa the country is still experiencing low levels of economic growth, which impact on rising levels of unemployment and poverty. According to the Labour Force Survey (Department of Statistics, 2014:v) the unemployment rate in South Africa as at June 2014 was 25.5%, whilst the labour force grew by 0.6%. During the second quarter of 2014, the

unemployment rate rose among the Coloured and White population, but it declined amongst the African/Black and Indian population (Department of Statistics, 2014:vi).

This high unemployment rate has repercussions for the youth as daily a substantial portion of the population is seeking employment and this results in a longer time for searching and securing a job (McLintok-Rudnick, 2001:viii). The length of time that a person is seeking for a job has an impact on the success of obtaining a job, especially in a country where the social grant system is restricted or non-existent (Department of Statistics, 2008:viii). Hammer (2007:249) is of the opinion that unemployment among youth does not mean that unemployment leads to being on the periphery of society and socially excluded. The author says that long-term effects of unemployment depend upon the way that youths manage unemployment, the duration of the unemployment period, their mental health status and educational qualifications. Add to this the knowledge driven society that emerged because of a “knowledge economy”, then the possibilities of youth from a disadvantaged area are even slimmer to being successful in securing employment.

The economy has changed to a knowledge economy and this requires that knowledge and skills are essential to ensure employment. Indabawa and Mpofo (2006:144) argue that it is necessary to ensure that the people of Africa (and specifically South Africa) acquire the necessary skills and values which will equip them to participate effectively in the global labour market. With South Africa becoming a democratic country in 1994 the economy has been exposed to the global economy and more opportunities arose for strengthening the economy of the country and indirectly more opportunities for employment (Patel, 2005:16). Currently a down turn is experienced in the global economy and this has spilled over into South Africa and the South African economy is possibly heading for a recession (Hogg, 2009:1; Le Roux, 2009:1; Murray & Roberts Unaudited Interim Results, 2009:7; RSA, Budget Speech, 2009; Ryan, 2009:10; Ryan & O'Donnell, 2009:16). The down turn in the South African economy is affecting the labour market and employees are retrenched (Cokayne, 2009:3; Sapa & Bloomberg, 2009:3). Visser (2009:1) mentions that the fall in production in the manufacturing sector will lead to large-scale job losses. The expectancy in the manufacturing sector of the economy is that 100 000 workers will lose their job and that one out of every 100 workers will be without an income. The mining sector in South Africa has been affected by the

decline in the gold price in 2013 as well as long strikes during the first half of 2014 resulting in the loss of fifteen thousand jobs and mines being closed or sold to smaller consortiums (Burkhardt, 2013; Miners gather at Amplats..., 2013; Mining, manufacturing sector..., 2013; Mitchley, 2014). The researcher agrees with De Lange (2009:1) that there will be more people with appropriate skills and experience that will seek employment. The young adult who has no experience in the labour market will be at a disadvantage and the chance to be employed will be minimal.

One of the consequences of the apartheid dispensation in South Africa is that different population groups were exposed to different education opportunities (RSA, Ministry of Education, 1995:3, 5-6; RSA, Ministry for Welfare and Population Development, 1997:10). Bird (2003:2) says that one of the consequences of separate education for different race groups is that human capital is underdeveloped. Lack of skills and marginalization brought along the social exclusion of people and made them more susceptible to social risk factors and the way they look at the self (Patel, 2005:16, 17). Lombard (2005:211) argues that life skills development and empowerment enhances human development as human development is linked to investment in human capacity. The national budget for 2007 allocated the majority of its funds to the educational sector, which includes skills development (Wray, 2007:1). In the 2009 budget, Finance Minister Trevor Manuel (Manuel spends to fight slowdown, 2009:1; Budget in a nutshell, 2009:2) allocated R45 billion more to improve education, health and rural development and R12 billion more for social grants. This means an increase of 17% on the previous year's budget in the education sector. In the 2014 budget, Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan stated that over R100 billion was spend on employment programmes from 2008 to 2014 (Republic of South Africa, Budget speech, 2014:10). The National Skills Fund has also announced that they will be spending R1,2 billion to provide skills development for the unemployed during 2009 (Skills fund spending money again, 2009:2). The Public Works Minister Geoff Doidge mentioned that R5 billion has been allocated to upgrade the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) to create more "...jobs for the poor and unemployed people in South Africa so as to contribute to halving unemployment by 2014" (Ndawonde, 2009:1). In the 2014 budget speech, Minister Pravin Gordhan mentioned that the EPWP will continue to be promoted and expanded so that more jobs can be created (Republic of South Africa, Budget

speech, 2014:7). This shows that government is serious about reducing poverty by equipping its people with better education and skills.

The South African government recognised the shortage of skilled employees and established the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGI-SA) to address the required economic growth rate of 4.5%. ASGI-SA recognised if the skills shortage in South Africa is not addressed the required growth rate would not be reached (Mohamed, 2006:1). The Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority (HWSETA) will be supporting the Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP) of the Department of Labour by developing and implementing a Health and Social Development support programme for grade 11 and grade 12 learners to improve the transition from school to University, allocating more financial assistance to students of Further Education and Training Colleges to develop scarce skills and to link the unemployed with economic opportunities (Smit, 2009:7). Palmer (2007:397, 400) is of the opinion that skills development in developing countries need to receive more attention to help alleviate un/under-employment and ultimately reduce poverty. McIntock-Rudnick (2001:viii) says that essential life skills of becoming employable and gaining employment are neglected in society. Vulnerable people have limited resources to their disposal and this hinders their access to sustainable income.

According to the *Integrated Service Delivery Model* (ISDM) (RSA, Department of Social Development, 2006:29, 31) primary prevention aims to prevent problematic stress and maladjustment and to promote adaptive functioning and positive development. The ISDM mentions that education programmes are part of prevention services that needs to be rendered to the youth (Department of Social Development, 2006:37). This aspect is also emphasised in the White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, Ministry for Welfare and Population Development, 1997:69). Services to the young adult need to strengthen the capability of the family, help to improve financial resources and improve supportive services to enhance human relations and the identity of self (Patel, 2005:167; RSA, Ministry for Welfare and Population Development, 1997:69).

Based on the high unemployment amongst young adults and the lack of intervention programmes that address core skills for employment for young adults in South



Africa, the researcher is interested in developing a pre-employment core skills programme for young adults that are making the transition from school to work. The researcher is thus of the opinion that a pre-employment core skills programme for young adults will increase the investment in human capital, increase employability, strengthen financial resources and enhance the quality of life of young adults in disadvantaged communities in South Africa. In order to make a contribution in this regard, this study will therefore focus on the development and pilot testing of a pre-employment core skills programme for young adults in the South African context.

### **1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study is embedded in the ecological systems perspective. The ecological systems perspective provides a view of the human being in continuous interaction with its environment, which can be used in different conditions (Germain & Gitterman, 1980:28, Gitterman & Germain, 2008:51). The ecological systems perspective assists the “help professional” to fulfil their “social purpose of helping people” resulting in growth, improved well-being and better social functioning (Gitterman & Germain, 2008:51). Bronfenbrenner (in Gitterman & Germain, 2008:51) mentioned that there are four interrelated components to the ecological systems perspective, namely:

- The relationship between the individual and his/her context,
- The person's collection of biological, cognitive, emotional and behavioural experiences and their impact on the person's development,
- The background or environment in which the human develops, and
- The multiple dimensions of transitory changes across the person's life span.

The researcher agrees with Bronfenbrenner (in Gitterman & Germain, 2008:51) that to be able to understand people and their environment in totality it has to be from within a context of connections and effect on each other and between each other. It is not a simple linear causation but rather a “continuous loop of reciprocal relation” or a network of relations (Gitterman & Germain, 2008:53).

The ecological systems perspective will be discussed in detail in chapter two.



## **1.4 GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The goal and objectives of this study were the following:

### **1.4.1 Goal of proposed study**

The goal of this study was to develop and pilot test a pre-employment core skills training programme for young adults between ages of 18 and 25 years.

### **1.4.2 Objectives of the study**

The objectives formulated to achieve the goal of this study were the following:

- To conceptualise theoretically unemployment and the impact thereof on young adults, the phase of young adulthood and the core skills needed by young adults to be employable.
- To identify empirically the core employment skills needed for young adults from an employer's perspective.
- To empirically explore the employment core skills needed from young adults' perspective.
- To empirically explore the employment core skills needed for young adults from skills training providers' perspective.
- To develop a pre-employment core skills programme for young adults.
- To pilot test the pre-employment core skills programme for young adults.
- To make recommendations to enhance the content of the newly developed pre-employment core skills programme for young adults.

## **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTION AND HYPOTHESIS**

Maree and Van der Westhuizen (2007:30) express that the research question must be linked to the goal or purpose and it must be clear to "outside readers." Research studies on core skills programmes in South Africa are scarce and this impeded on the formulation of a research question. In this regard Kumar (2005:73) states that "Hypotheses bring clarity, specificity and focus to a research problem...."

This study consisted of two phases, namely an exploration phase (phase A) to explore the nature of employment core skills needed for young adults and a pilot test phase (phase B) focussing on pilot testing the newly developed pre-employment

core skills programme for young adults. For phase A, a research question was formulated and for phase B, a hypothesis was developed.

The research question for phase A of this study is:

*What are the core employment skills needed to develop a pre-employment core skills programme for young adults?*

Based on the outcome of the research question of phase A the following hypothesis for phase B will be:

*If a pre-employment core skills programme is implemented with young adults, the young adult's knowledge and application of core employment skills would be enhanced.*

The findings of this study could lead to improved employment opportunities for young adults by enhancing the young adult's knowledge and practical application of the necessary core skills for employment.

## 1.6 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The type of research used for the purpose of this study was **applied research** as the researcher attempted to understand a social problem in practice and finally developed a programme to induce change and improve human conditions, namely, a pre-employment core skills programme for young adults that would make young adults more employable (De Vos, 2005:394; Fouché & De Vos, 2005b:106, 109).

The broader theoretical perspective of the research process is referred to as the research approach (Creswell, 1994:4). According to Fouché and Delport (2005:73) there are two approaches to research, namely the qualitative and quantitative approaches. Quantitative research is more prescribed and controlled, procedures are planned prior to the commencement of the study, data collection is done in a

standardised way, the hypothesis is tested and the correlation between variables is explained. The approach in this study was a **quantitative approach** by using **self-administered and group-administered questionnaires** to collect data in a standardised way under controlled circumstances with procedures planned prior to the commencement of the study in order to test a hypothesis (Fouché & Delport, 2005:73, 74; Ivankova, Creswell, & Plano Clark, 2007:255).

The study was conducted in two phases namely (A) an exploration of core employment skills needed by young adults and (B) the development and pilot testing of a pre-employment core skills programme for young adults by using the following designs:

#### **Phase A:**

For the purpose of phase A the **quantitative survey research design** was used to explore and review which core employment skills were needed to develop a core skills programmes for young adults from an employer's perspective, from young adults' perspective and from training providers' perspective (Fouché & De Vos, 2005c:137; Kumar, 2005:282).

#### **Phase B:**

According to Kumar (2005:95) the advantage of the pretest-posttest design is that it measures the effect of transformation or the way of thinking of the same population at two different points in time. The **one-group pretest-posttest design** was used during **phase B** to assess the change in knowledge of core skills of young adults through the deployment of an intervention, namely the pre-employment core skills programme for young adults (Fouché & De Vos, 2005c:139). The pre-test measurement in this design was the young adults' level of knowledge of core skills before the training programme was present. Subsequently the training programme was introduced, followed by a repeated assessment (post-test) consisting of the same questions from the pre-test measurement instrument on knowledge as well as a section on the application of the core skills through a practical case study in written format and using unstructured observation.

In the context of this study, the researcher chose the **population** for phase A and phase B as follows:

### **Phase A:**

The population for phase A of this study consisted of:

- All employers that employed young adults in Pretoria and Johannesburg areas,
- All training service providers registered at SETA who offered skills programmes for young adults and who were in Pretoria and Johannesburg, and
- All young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 years who had completed their schooling, were unemployed and were registered at Child Welfare Tshwane.

**Phase B:** The population for phase B of this study consisted of all young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 years who had completed their schooling, were unemployed and were registered at Child Welfare Tshwane.

The researcher used a sample to reduce the overall time and cost of the research study and to have easier access to the subjects. The **sample** for phase A and phase B were:

- **Phase A:**

- Eight employers who employed young adults in the Pretoria and Johannesburg area,
- Seven training providers who offered skills courses or learnerships to young adults and/or post matriculants in the Pretoria and Johannesburg area and who are registered at SETA, and
- Twenty one young adults, who were unemployed, completed their schooling and were registered at Child Welfare Tshwane.

- **Phase B:** The sample for this phase consisted of one group of ten young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 years (female and male), who were unemployed, had completed their schooling and were registered at Child Welfare Tshwane.

The researcher used a combination of sampling techniques to select the **employers** and **training service providers** namely the purposive and availability sampling method. The different sampling techniques that the researcher used to select **young**

**adults** for both phases A and B of this study were a combination of non-probability sampling techniques, namely availability and purposive sampling, as well as a probability sampling technique, namely systematic sampling.

The quantitative data was collected through a measuring instrument which in this study consisted of group administered questionnaires and self-administered questionnaires during phase A and group administered questionnaire for phase B. The questionnaires were pilot tested with two employers, two training service providers and four young adults who were not part of the main study. The questionnaires were then administered to the sample respondents. The data collected from phase A was described, analysed and interpreted by using Microsoft Excel 2013 and Microsoft Word 2013 as the volume of data was relatively small. The empirical results from phase A were used to develop the training programme which was **pilot tested** in phase B.

A comparison between the results of the pre- and post-tests in phase B assisted the researcher to appraise the possible changes regarding the dependant variable (knowledge of core skills of young adults) that occurred during the study. These findings are presented and discussed in chapter eight (8) of this research report. The young adults' application of the core skills was a limitation in this study. The application of core skills was only assessed after the introduction of the training programme. The researcher used a practical case study to assess the young adults' application of core skills for employment as well as unstructured observation as a technique to assess the respondents' participation during the application of the core skills for employment.

A more detailed discussion of the research methodology and ethical aspects of this study is presented in chapter five (5).

## **1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study attempted to develop and pilot test a pre-employment core skills programme for young adults. During this study the following limitations were identified and are discussed below:

- Due to the nature of the pre-employment core skills programme and the difficulty of testing application of skills before knowledge development, a limitation of this study was the difficulty of prior assessment of the young adults' application of the core skills for employment in phase B. The young adults' application of the core skills for employment was only assessed during the post-test and it was in the form of a practical case study which the young adults had to complete in a written format. As there was no assessment of application during the pre-test, the hypothesis for this study namely, *If a pre-employment core skills programme is implemented with young adults, the young adult's knowledge and application of core employment skills would be enhanced* could only be partially tested.
- The scope of this research extended over various disciplines including social work, psychology, education, economics, human resource management and business management and the literature review tried to include aspects from all these disciplines. South Africa is relatively young when it comes to the development of young adults and especially in terms of core skills for employment and training programmes that are specifically designed for this purpose. The gathering of the knowledge base was challenging and time consuming as there was a limited number of applicable literature available or the literature that was available was from old or original sources.
- The identification and access to employers and training service providers registered with SETA proved to be quite difficult as their database was not very accessible and limited. The researcher then made use of availability sampling method and eight employers and seven training service providers responded.
- The sample of young adults were from a low socio-economic Coloured community. If young adults from other communities with a different ethnicity and different socio-economic level would have been included, the possibility exists that those young adults would have identified different core skills needed for employment. This study is thus limited to Coloureds and cannot be generalised across all ethnic groups of young adults in South Africa.
- During the analysis and interpretation of the data collected through the measuring instrument for the employers and training service providers, it was noted that with some questions data was omitted. This could have been due to certain concepts not being very clear to the respondent and the fact that the researcher was not

present whilst completing the measuring instrument to provide immediate clarification.

- The training programme was pilot tested over four days due to time constraints. This limited the extent to which the respondents could practice the application of the core skills learned. The impact was also noticed when analysing the extent to which the young adult's application of core skills was enhanced.
- Another limitation that was identified during the pilot test of the training programme was the limited access experienced to electronic equipment. It is recommended that when presenting the training programme that funding or donors are found who would sponsor or donate a computer or laptop per participant.
- The size of the group could be a limitation. The reason being that if the group size is too large (more than 12) it would not be conducive for an optimum learning experience and for practical application of skills. The group dynamics, attention level, suitability of venue and learning environment will be compromised. The researcher found the group size of 8-12 to be an optimal size for this training programme.

## **1.8 KEY CONCEPTS**

This section contains definitions of fundamental concepts used in the study.

### **Core skills**

Bingham and Drew (1999:3) define key (core) skills as “those skills which are relevant in any work situation” and that add value to activities of a company.

Core skills refer to the broad transferable skills that help young adults to unlock the potential of successful employment, to be full, active and responsible employees. Core skills consist of communication skills, numeracy, information communication technology, problem solving skills and working with others (Welsh & Canning, 2003:3).

The researcher defines core skills as key skills that are necessary for any work situation, transferable to any situation, that help young adults towards successful

employment and that include communication skills, numeracy, information communication technology, problem solving skills and people skills.

### **Pre-employment**

Employment is seen as a process where a person is placed to do work or carry out activities, tasks or duties that produce something of economic value or a service to others (Peterson & Gonzalez, 2000:3).

According to Smith (2009) pre-employment refers to “getting ready for a job.”

The *Reference Dictionary* (2009) defines pre-employment as the “period before start of employment.”

In the context of this study, pre-employment is seen as the stage or period immediately prior to being employed or entering the labour market.

### **Pre-employment core skills programme**

An educational programme is a series of organised learning activities and resources aimed to help people make improvements in their lives (Taylor-Powel & Henert, 2008:4).

According to *The Free Dictionary* (2009) a training programme is a programme that is designed for educating, teaching and guiding in particular skills.

In the context of this study a pre-employment core skills programme is an organised learning programme by instruction or by a teaching channel that addresses core skills and helps the young adult to understand and apply core skills in any work situation and to prepare the young adult for employment.

### **Young adults**

The White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997:53) defines youth as people between 16 and 30 years of age. According to Nolte (2002:22, 23) the concept “young adult” is not clearly defined in literature and that different cultures and ethnic groups assign diverse nuances to the term. Nolte (2002:45) defines a young adult as an individual between the age of



approximately 18 – 25 years that has completed his schooling or is about to complete it and has improved himself or has entered the labour market.

In the context of this study, the concept young adult can be described as an individual between the age of 18 and 25 years, who has completed his or her schooling and who is in the process of becoming an adult.

## **1.9 CONTENTS OF THE RESEARCH REPORT**

Henning, Gravett and Van Rensburg (2006:xvi) mention that once the researcher has read extensively on the topic, has gathered sufficient data or information and has comprehended the knowledge, then the researcher is ready to put the understanding into words or a report that can be shared with others. The report needs to be systematic and chronological so that the reader can track the conduct, understand the reasons for research, trust the findings and read an eloquent script (Henning et al., 2006:99). Strydom (2005b:247) is of the opinion that the report is the only chance the researcher gets to convey and convince his reader that the study is of importance for further usage.

**Chapter 1** entailed the general introduction of the study and a brief description of motivation of the choice of research; problem formulation; goal and objectives of the study; research question and hypothesis; a brief summary of the research methods used in conducting the study; limitations experienced during the research study; and definitions of key concepts.

**Chapter 2** will focus on the theoretical framework that underpins this study. The general systems theory, systems theory and the ecological systems perspective will be described to show the continuous interaction of the human being with its environment and that adequate resources and positive interactions are necessary to address the impediments that the young adult faces for successful employment.

**Chapter 3** will focus on a discussion of young adulthood as a life phase with specific reference to adult learning and preparation for entering into the labour market (career). The chapter will describe the different developmental tasks applicable to

the young adults and how the phenomenon of unemployment impacts on the young adult's attainment of successful employment.

**Chapter 4** will focus on the concept of core skills and those skills necessary for successful employment of the young adult.

**Chapter 5** will describe the research methodology in terms of problem formulation; goal and objectives of the study; research question and hypothesis; research approach; type of research; research design and methodology; research population, sample and sampling method; data collection method, pilot study; reliability and validity of questionnaires, data analysis and ethical considerations.

**Chapter 6** will describe the empirical findings of the study for phase A.

**Chapter 7** will describe the pre-employment core skills programme for young adults with specific reference to the development of the training programme in the South African context, and the contents of the pre-employment core skills training programme for young adults.

**Chapter 8** will focus on the empirical findings of phase B of the study.

**Chapter 9** will concentrate on conclusions and recommendations based on empirical findings.

## **1.10 SUMMARY**

This chapter provided an overview of the study by discussing the general background to this study, the motivation for this study, the theoretical framework, the goal and objectives of the study, the research question and hypothesis, a summary of the research methodology used in this study, the limitations of this study, the key concepts for this study and the outline of the research report. The dialogues provided in this chapter and the literature review displayed the importance and relevance of the research topic as well as the current situation that young adults are facing in South Africa.

In the following chapter the theoretical context for this study will be discussed, namely a review on how the ecological systems perspective developed and why it is applicable to this study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: THE ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Scientific theories explain the construction and parameters of a discipline and provide a basis on which accountable practice is built (Edwards & Hopps, 1995a:2258; Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2002:24). Practitioners use theories to assess the resources and strong points of people, situations and their environments to give meaning to concepts (Edwards & Hopps, 1995a:2259).

Human behaviour and development is very multifaceted and intricate. Human behaviour and development is viewed from different angles, context or “viewpoints”. These viewpoints are rooted in a historical period and are called a paradigm (Avis, Pauw & van der Spuy; 1999:7-8). Within a specific paradigm, different theories can exist as theories refer to the assumptions made by different people (Avis et al., 1999:8; Edwards & Hopps, 1995a:2258). The ecological systems perspective is part of the general systems paradigm.

In the late 1950's the scientific world began to realise that modernism and specifically reductionism did not provide adequate answers concerning human behaviour and development. The realisation came that different elements of a phenomenon were interconnected and that the understanding of the separate elements did not lead to understanding the phenomenon as a whole. The general systems theory was developed and provided a holistic view (Moore, 2003:465). The assumption was made that the “whole is more than the sum of the parts” (Avis et al., 1999:13; Davies, 2000:342; Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2002:149; Hepworth, Rooney, Rooney, Strom-Gottfried & Larsen, 2006:244; Meyer, Moore & Viljoen, 2003:15; Potgieter, 1998:54; Zastrow, 2009:39). The general systems paradigm has several postulations, which are:

- the focus is on organised and patterned wholes,

- the wholes can be called systems which are made up of interconnected elements or subsystems, and
- systems are connected to other systems (Hepworth et al., 2006:244; Potgieter, 1998:54,55).

The emphasis of the systems paradigm or interactional viewpoint is that the person cannot be segregated from his or her world.

Within this broader systems theory the ecological systems perspective focuses on the person in the environment and that the person is part of systems where ecological and cybernetic principles apply. The human being is thus a subsystem, which is part of a hierarchy of larger systems such as the community (Hepworth et al., 2006:16; Nilsson, 2003; Moore, 2003:470; Potgieter, 1998:54; Singal, 2006:240; Weyers, 2011:21).

The systems theory and the ecological systems approach will now be discussed in more detail to provide a theoretical framework for critical understanding for the research to be conducted. To understand the place of the ecological systems approach the researcher will first discuss the systems theory as this forms the overarching theory from which the ecological systems perspective developed further.

## **2.2 SYSTEMS THEORY**

Potgieter (1998:54) describes a social system as “a unit of people who are connected through some form of relationship with one another in a particular context, space and time”.

In the context of the social sciences and human services professions, the systems theory has developed from an objective helping professional observing, describing, assessing, hypothesizing and treating human behaviour to the helping professional being part of the system and helping the client interpret their interactive processes in a situation to find coping mechanisms that are acceptable to the client (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2002:24). The theory highlights the fact that a person is part of many

subsystems that influence each other and the whole or context. Davies (2000:342) refers to the theory as helping to understand the various relationships between systems and the impact thereof on “here” in relation to “there”. Hepworth et al. (2006:244) are of the opinion that the systems approach analyses and evaluates the context of the ongoing interaction and dynamics of the family as well as the outside influences on the family. Sholevar (2003:69) is of the opinion that the helping professional is neutral because of the equal attention and respect shown to all the members in a system. The purpose of the systems approach is an assessment tool for the helping professional when working with an individual or a family to explore and understand the interconnected dimensions of the interactions within a family (and other systems) and specifically the communication networks (Moore, 2003:464; Shulman, 2009:7; Weyers, 2011:20).

### **2.2.1 Basic assumptions of the systems theory**

The researcher is of the opinion that a system is an arrangement of orderly units or schemas that influence each other and that influence the way the greater whole functions and interacts to maintain balance (homeostasis). In the context of this study the system would be the shared context or reality in which the young adult functions.

The researcher is of the opinion that the systems approach differs from the general systems approach in the manner that the helping professional is not standing outside the observed system. The helping professional is actively involved through various skills such as active listening, observing, empathizing, exploring, questioning and linking. Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2002:43) refer to this as “engaging in a collaborative dialogue.” This implies that the helping professional is subjective but through professional training, he/she remains neutral. Moore (2003:467) states that the helping professional does not have an “independent, objective meaning, but takes on the meaning that the observer attributes to it.”

Moore (2003:474) is of the opinion that the organisation and structure of the system determines the functioning of a system or also called self-determinism. The system has autonomy and communicates. The autonomy refers to the ability to be self-determined. Autonomy consists of organisation and structure. The researcher

understands autonomy to be the coping or survival part of the system, the actions to maintain balance even if it is not socially acceptable. Autonomy refers to the self-regulation of the system. Sholevar (2003:38) defines structure as “invisible set of functional demands that organises interaction.” The helping professional cannot instruct the client (system) or label the client (system). The client (system) determines its own reaction to the professional intervention input. The client operates from its own reality or worldview.

Circular causation is another assumption of the systems approach. Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2002:25) describe circular causality as forces that do not only move in one direction but “become part of a causal chain.” The researcher understands causal circularity as being a loop of contributory, linked shackles. It is a loop of output or a message from the client and an input or feedback from the helping professional. It represents a cyclical or reciprocal pattern. The aim of the loop is to understand the interrelated processes and context of the client. Circular causation is not a linear process where a direct assumption can be made from a specific action. Neither can a prediction be made for every situation. The outcome will not be the same for every interaction. Moore (2003:468) mentions that the co-construction of reality has to “fit” with how the client (system) views themselves, others, the problem and the world in general.

Another assumption about systems approach is that the system behaves according to the needs and its desire to survive. The process is referred to as stability or change (Moore, 2003:476). The system is in constant communication, verbally or non-verbally with other subsystems. The process of communication is an important aspect to understand the reality that is pursued by the system and subsystems. Stability is necessary for the system to function and to sustain, to continue to “live”. The researcher is of the opinion that if this communication is distorted, then the system can move to a state of dysfunction. It is preferable that the system is in balance and to achieve this, change is needed. The helping professional addresses this by negotiating change.

According to Sholevar (2003:38), the system theory has three basic assumptions. The assumptions are circular causation, equipotentiality and complementarity.

Equipotentiality refers to the original position or potential which remains the same, whilst the final conditions or effects will differ (Moore, 2003:476). Sholevar (2003:38) describes complementarity as “every behaviour is the complement to every other.” The researcher is of the opinion that this is similar to circular causation as described by Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2002:25). The one interaction is influenced by the other and linked to each other.

### **2.2.2 Application of the systems theory**

The researcher is of the opinion that the systems approach helps the helping professional to understand the client’s world by being part of the client’s system during intervention. This conforms to the developmental approach (Republic of South Africa [RSA], Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, White Paper, 1997:4) of the social work profession as the person is viewed as part of an interconnected system and empowered to be self-determined. The young adult is seeking to enter and establish his career in the system of the labour market and to become financially independent, yet he is part of a reality where unemployment has an effect on his position to establish himself in a career and to become financially independent (Lifecourse Development, [sa]; RSA, Department of Social Development, 2007:69,70).

Through input from the helping professional, the system (client) can reject the information or make choices either to change or to remain the same. The organisation of the client remains the same, but the structure can change and therefore the client can change their actions and dysfunction. The researcher comprehends the application of structure (actions, behaviour or functions) to be the challenging of the inflexible structure, to “break it up” and rebuilt so that it is much more flexible and adaptable. Through the shift to being more flexible, the system is more self-regulating and healthier.

Through circular causation, the helping professional explores together with the client the effects of the system on the client’s behaviour and communication (the event). The event also has an effect on the links of a system. The client sees how the behaviour has an influence on the subsystem and how the subsystem responds. Potgieter (1998:58) describes this as a “systemic dance.” The client can be



challenged by the helping professional through this circular causation to change that which causes the imbalance in the system. The helping professional not only focuses on the client, but also on the ideas or thoughts of others relatively to the person(s) in the system or contexts. Through the reciprocal process the helping professional can give direction, but not instruct the client what to do. The decision making process refers to the client's autonomy. The input from the helping professional is possible because of the access to theory, knowledge and skills gained. The input is done in a respectful manner. The client obtains new insight and can change the stability or coping mechanism. The client changes when a benefit is perceived.

### **2.3 ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE**

In the early days of studying the human being, the tendency was to study the person and the environment separately from each other (Germain & Gitterman, 1980:2). In their first attempt to produce an integrated practice method Germain and Gitterman (1980:3) reason that the anthropocentric orientation started influencing the idea that the human being is at the center of the universe and at the pinnacle of terrestrial life. This initiated the interest in finding out how to control the power and influence of nature. Logic and reason (rational thought) was used to achieve this. The sciences used this first and the biological and social sciences followed. During the nineteenth century, the person-in-environment did not view the person in a holistic context and its interdependence with its environment. Freud's theories in the 1920s and 1930s concentrated on ego psychology and this paved the way for systems theory but mainly focusing on the person and the helping professional not being part of the system (Hepworth et al., 2006:16). The Eastern thought did view the person as one with nature and striving for harmony with the forces of nature. Scientists and humanists worked towards this idea of interdependency and the ecological systems perspectives started supplanting the medical model (Germain & Gitterman, 1980:3-5; Hepworth et al., 2006:16; Zastrow, 2009:42).

According to Edwards and Hopps (1995b:816), the ecological perspective is defined as "a simultaneous focus on person and environment and on reciprocal relationship." Chawla and Heft (2002:206) and Zastrow (2009:42) add that the relationship is also

dynamic. Hepworth et al. (2006:16) and Weyers (2011:20) state that the ecological perspective recognises the individual's ability to influence the environment. The person does not simply react to the natural forces, but reacts on their environment and shapes the other elements' responses. Edwards and Hopps (1995b:816) and Chawla and Heft (2002:206) state that the environment and the individual (unitary system) are within a certain cultural and historical context and this relationship can either be positive, negative or neutral. The relationship shapes, influences or changes both the elements over time.

The ecological perspective is interested in the outcomes of the relationships and based on the outcomes to help modify maladaptive relationships (Collins, Jordan & Coleman, 2010:14; Germain & Gitterman, 1980:6; Hepworth et al., 2006:17; Zastrow, 2009:42, 43). Collins et al. (2010:15) point out that often the helping professional focuses on the negative and this limits the success of this approach. A healthy person living in a depressing or unsupportive environment will eventually show signs of impairment (Collins et al., 2010:15; Hepworth et al., 2006:17). The helping professional must also consider the strengths and resources in the environment available to the person and the "fit" between the two. Social work's perspective on the ecological perspective is from a strength or empowerment perspective versus a deficit and dependency perspective (Collins et al., 2010:17; Nilsson, 2003).

### **2.3.1 Basic assumptions of the ecological systems perspective**

Although the ecological systems perspective is embedded in the systems theory, it differs from the systems theory as it is a particular way of thinking or knowing with underlying assumptions and principles that are rooted in ecology and cybernetics (Coleman & Webber, 2002:135; Hepworth et al., 2006:16; Moore, 2003:463). The following basic assumptions of the ecological systems perspective are relevant:

- The premise of the person is one possible understanding of "reality" and this premise is shaped by the historical and cultural context of the helping professional and the person (Moore, 2003:470).

- The ecological systems perspective sees the person at the centre of a subsystem within a hierarchical structure of systems (Hepworth et al., 2006:17; Moore, 2003:470; Potgieter, 1998:54; Weyers, 2001:15; Weyers, 2011: 21). The subsystems include physiological, intrapersonal, cognitive and spiritual dimensions.
- The ecological systems perspective goes out from the viewpoint that a person “assigns meaning to everything he or she comes into contact with” (Moore, 2003:470). The ecological systems perspective acknowledges that different “realities” exist along each other (Hepworth et al., 2006:17; Moore, 2003:470; Shulman, 2009:13). Meaning and reality are constructed through language, both verbal and non-verbal language. The needs, wishes, values, ideas, priorities and beliefs of both the person and the environment (system) are expressed through the meaning. Human growth and development must also be seen in context of the meaning assigned (Moore, 2003:470,471).
- The ecological systems perspective assumes that the human system is **autonomous** as the meaning constructs the action (Moore, 2003:471). These realities can be passed on to the next generation in the form of beliefs and myths. The system endeavours to exist and preserve its autonomy. The human system alone can determine how it wants to respond to distress (Moore, 2003:475). The human system wants to enhance the effectiveness as a whole.
- Edwards and Hopps (1995b:817) describe more concepts that are particular to the ecological systems perspective. The **person:environment fit** is unique to the ecological systems perspective. This fit refers to the match between the individual's or the communal group's needs, goals and capacities and qualities of their physical and social environment within the cultural and historical context (Edwards & Hopps, 1995b:817; Gitterman & Germain, 2008: 51; Hepworth et al., 2006:17; Moore, 2003:470; Weyers, 2011:21). The match can be favourable, minimally adequate or unfavourable. The first two

levels infer a state of general “adaptedness” which promotes ongoing development and effecting desired social functioning.

- **Adaptations** is another concept of the ecological systems perspective, which a person uses to sustain or raise the “level of fit.” This is achieved through continuous change-oriented processes to induce change of the environment, the person self or both (Edwards & Hopps, 1995b:817).
- **Life stressors** originate when a person believes that issues constructed by critical life events exceed their management of personal and environmental resources. These events include social or developmental transitions, traumatic adversities and any other life issue that affects the existing match such as poverty and oppression. The stressor symbolises serious harm or loss. The stress is associated with “being in danger” (Edwards & Hopps, 1995b:817; Gitterman & Germain, 2008:60, 63). Prolonged stress and concurrent ineffective coping leads to physiological, emotional and social dysfunctioning. **Coping measures**, which are special behaviours, are devised to handle the outcomes of the life stressor (Edwards & Hopps, 1995b:817; Gitterman & Germain, 2008:61, 63; Hepworth et al., 2006:17).
- **Relatedness** is another concept of the ecological perspective. It refers to attachments, friendships, positive kin relationships and a sense of belonging. A supportive social network strengthens the “relatedness” (Edwards & Hopps, 1995b:817; Weyers, 2001:16). Weyers (2001:16) explains this concept with the use of a basic eco-map. An eco-map is a diagrammatic representation of the interconnectedness of the person and its broader environment and it emphasises the social strengths and deficits to enable the person to identify possible challenges and harmonious areas within their environment (Cournoyer, 2008:51). Weyers (2001:16) divides the environment into two domains, namely the “nurturing environment” and the “sustaining environment”. The “nurturing environment” is that domain with which the person is in regular contact and it contributes to its social well-being for example the family or friends of the person. The “sustaining environment” is

that domain which is often referred to as the “community” for example the work environment, the religious environment, for example church or the physical environment (water, sanitation and trees). According to Weyers (2001:16) the “sustaining environment” can either assist, improve or impair the social well-being of the person. Unemployment can impair the young adult’s social well-being where successful employment is more likely to improve the young adult’s social well-being.

- **“Effectance”** is the innate motivation by a human being to affect their environment. Opportunities for this competence must be available throughout the life span of the person. The helping professional together with the person can develop opportunities for purposive interaction to improve the environment. Motivation can be stimulated even if circumstances are adverse (Edwards & Hopps, 1995b:818; *Psychology Dictionary*, 2014:1). The end goal of **effectance** is personal competence, it is to improve the sense of self by completing a difficult task or by working to please the self rather than another person (Historical Overview of the Field of Motivation, 2014:3, Motivation, [sa]:1; What is effectance motivation?, 2014:1).
- **Self-esteem** and **self-direction** are two important concepts that are integral to the person to function optimally and to cope effectively with life’s adversities. According to Mynhardt (2004:31) and Santrock (2009:384) self-esteem is described as the “self-evaluation made by each individual towards oneself and others along a positive-negative dimension”. Low self-esteem, which is the result of a huge difference between the perception of self and the ideal self, and threatened self-directions lead to the person being more susceptible to life stressors, poor social skills and loneliness (Edwards & Hopps, 1995b:818; Mynhardt, 2004:31, 33). **Self-direction** is about “learning from experience and mistakes” and to adjust to the self by becoming more true to you, and to life (Taibbi, 2012:1). It is about purposeful learning from within throughout life (Self-direction in learning, [sa]:1; Self-Direction in Learning Chapter Seven, 2014:133; Taibbi, 2012:1). The author of Self-Direction in Learning Chapter Seven (2014:123, 125) mentions that there is a

definite relationship between positive self-esteem and self-direction and both are very important for the further development of the person during their life.

- **Habitat** and **niche** are of importance to the social helping professional. The habitat refers to the place where the person resides and consists of the physical and social settings within a cultural context (Edwards & Hopps, 1995b:818; Hepworth et al., 2006:16). Spatial and temporal behaviours that regulate interrelationships are prompted by the human habitat. If the habitat is rich in resources, people have a tendency to prosper. When vital resources in the habitat are scarce or inaccessible the holistic development of the person may be adversely affected (Hepworth et al., 2006:17).
- **Niche** is defined as “statuses or roles” that a person engages in. Opportunities congruent with the needs, human rights and aspirations of the person or society need to exist to foster a favourable niche and to foster equality and to promote social justice (Edwards & Hopps, 1995b:818; Hepworth et al., 2006:17). Equality is also emphasised in the White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997).
- **Life course** regards biopsychosocial development as pathways of lifelong development (from birth to death) that do not follow a specific sequence or order (Edwards & Hopps, 1995b:819). Within life course there is **individual time** (continuity and meaning of life experiences over the life course), **historical time** (impact of historical and social change on the developmental pathways of people born in the same period) and **social time** (timing of individual and family transitions and life events altered by biological, economic, social and demographic aspects) (Edwards & Hopps, 1995b:819-821). **Equifinality** means that the same outcomes are achievable with different starting points. Similarly, when beginning from the same starting point different outcomes may be attained and this is referred to as **multifinality** (Hepworth et al., 2006:19).

### **2.3.2 Applications of the ecological systems perspective**

In social work practice, applying an ecological systems perspective can be best understood when using a holistic thinking to explain how the interactions between systems preserve human behaviour (Ecological Perspectives and Social Work Practice, [sa]). The strengths and weaknesses in the transactional processes between the systems such as persons, families, cultures, communities, and policies need to be identified to develop an intervention.

The human being functions in an ecosystem that consists of several subsystems within a larger system. In the context of this study the researcher will look at the systems of work or the labour market, the employer, the education system in terms of lifelong learning and the training service provider, as well as at the life phase of the young adult in terms of his development and developmental tasks during this life phase. All existing elements in the ecosystem play an equal role to sustain stability (Ecological Perspectives..., [sa]). The system is viewed as synergistic (Moore, 2003:472; Potgieter, 1998:57). Information about the sub systems cannot be added together to obtain or provide information about the larger system. Information flows from one system to the other and in this way, the systems influence each other continuously. The energy can be created from within the system resulting in a strong cohesion (Potgieter, 1998:57). If no new inflow of energy is experienced the system will disintegrate.

The helping professional focuses on a specific interactional pattern between systems and this process is referred to as punctuation. Punctuation is an important concept in the ecological systems perspective (Moore, 2003:473). Hepworth et al. (2006:17) reiterate that the reciprocal interaction within the ecological framework must be considered when planning an assessment and an action plan or contract to address the impending “problem”.

The interactions between systems take the shape of a “feedback loop” (Moore, 2003:476; Potgieter, 1998:56). The feedback can either be positive when changes occur in the system, negative when the feedback brings no change or maintains the status quo (homeostasis). People make decisions on their place of occupancy, their living arrangements, where they work and education. The physical environment and



institutions also interact with the person in return and the helping professional must consider these interactions when assessing the client's situation. In the context of this study the interaction of work, education (knowledge of core skills necessary for employment) and the young adult will be considered when assessing the situation of improving employment opportunities.

The main application of the ecological systems perspective is found in a therapeutic context either with the family, community or an individual (Moore, 2003:479; Shulman, 2009:5). The approach was applied in psychotherapy incorporating the first order cybernetics and later the second-order cybernetics. The helping professional took on the role as "participant facilitator". The helping professional attempts to create a context for change by attempting to change the assumptions that motivate behaviour instead of changing the behaviour (Moore, 2003:485). This links with the assumption that there is more than one reality and autonomy. Later, the emphasis was on co-constructing ideas or meanings through dialogue and narratives. The phenomena need to be viewed within context (Moore, 2003:488). Collins et al. (2010:14) claim that the ecological systems perspective is useful when intervening with people who are marginalised or disadvantaged as their social context holds both risks and opportunities.

Shulman (2009:5) and Hepworth et al. (2006:18) maintain that the helping professional indirectly applies the steps of the medical model by studying the person-in-environment, developing the preferred intervention and evaluating the outcome. The first step correlates with observing the person in its multifaceted environment and the interactions between the subsystems such as family, educational systems, health, law enforcement agencies, labour market and physical environment. When deciding on the appropriate intervention it must be aimed at the crucial systems within the problematic system (Collins et al., 2010:17; Hepworth et al., 2006:18). Within these systems there is the target system "that which needs to be changed" and the client system, "that or who will benefit" (Hepworth et al., 2006:18; Potgieter, 1998:61). These two systems can overlap for example when a person requests help on a personal level.



The Integrated Service Delivery Model (ISDM) emphasises early intervention as the preferred method and the ecological systems perspective lends itself to early interventions as the interactions of person-in-environment are studied and maladaptive interactions can be identified early (RSA, Department of Social Development, 2006:26). Interventions can now collectively be planned early in the life cycle and early in the problem (Collins et al., 2010:17).

The social system can be either open or closed depending on the permeability of its boundaries (Hepworth et al., 2006:19; Potgieter, 1998:56). Open systems allow new exchange of information whereas closed systems do not. All systems lie on a continuum of exchange of information. Challenges experienced in the application of the ecological systems perspective are:

- the increasing complexity of the social system,
- the continuous changing of beliefs and values,
- the divergent interests of people and the systems that matter to them, and
- interpersonal communication as indirect communication is on the increase, as globalisation becomes more prominent and demanding faster exchange of more information (Shulman, 2009:16-20).

The ecological systems perspective helps the helping professional to truly understand the person's interactions within the context (Shulman, 2009:10).

Another area of application is using the ecological systems perspective to understand the relationship between the person and the social environments that influence the development of the person (Benokraitis, 2005:35). Bronfenbrenner as cited by Benokraitis (2005:35) suggested four interconnecting systems that shape developmental growth. The systems are the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem and the macrosystem (Benokraitis, 2005:35; Ecological Perspectives, [sa]). The microsystem is the most basic system, which comprises of the person's immediate environment or daily life. The mesosystem is more generalised and comprises of the interaction between microsystems for example the school or the clinic. The exosystem consists of settings that have an indirect effect on the micro- and mesosystem level such as a spouse's employment. The macrosystem consists

of the most remote forces or ideological systems that affect the person of family structure such as beliefs and values. Later, a fifth system was added namely the chronosystem, which refers to the patterning of environmental events and transitions over the course of life for example divorce (Ecological Perspectives..., [sa]; Paquette & Ryan, 2001).

## **2.4 SUMMARY**

In summary, various literature and authors' viewpoints on the subject of general systems theory, systems theory and ecological systems perspective were explored. The ecological systems perspective provides a view of the human being in continuous interaction with its environment, which can be used in different conditions (Germain & Gitterman, 1980:28). The imbalance of these interactions provide social work with metaphors and opportunities to strengthen the capacity of the individual to promote growth and development within the environment (Collins et al., 2010:17; Germain & Gitterman, 1980:28; Gitterman & Germain, 2008: 71, 72; Hepworth et al., 2006:19; Nilsson, 2003).

Bronfenbrenner used the ecological systems perspective to explain human development where he combined the "environmental forces within multilevel systems" (Coleman & Webber, 2002:136; Paquette & Ryan, 2001). From an ecological systems perspective, it is apparent that the needs and the developmental tasks of the young adult can be satisfied only when adequate resources and positive interactions are present. The ecological systems perspective is useful when assessing the origin of the problem and planning the intervention to address these impediments.

In order to understand the young adult (person-in-environment) it is important to describe the development of the person with specific reference to the subsystems (cognitive, emotional, behavioural and biophysical) of the young adult as a life phase (interpersonal system) and his/her developmental tasks within the life span. The following chapter explores the human development in terms of the young adult's life span.

## CHAPTER THREE

### YOUNG ADULTHOOD AS A LIFE PHASE

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

A person develops through a process and over time in form, thought and behaviour. Development involves a continuous interaction between biological and environmental elements (Rice, 1995:4; Santrock, 2009:28; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:51; Specht & Craig, 1987:2). The ecological systems theory explains human development by describing human behaviour in the context within which the person lives (Benokraitis, 2005:35; Coleman & Webber, 2002:134; Collins et al., 2010:14).

Human development is influenced by social and economic factors of the specific time period (Collins et al., 2010:15; Specht & Craig, 1987:150). Gitterman and Germain (2008:97) are of the opinion that a holistic view of the human and its environment is necessary to fully understand the person and that this understanding can only be if the relationship to each other is understood in context. Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979) in Coleman and Webber (2002:136) argues that the growth and development of a person is shaped by the interaction between the person's biological attributes and his/her immediate and distant environmental forces. The environment is divided into "layers" or systems namely the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem (Benokraitis, 2005:35; Coleman & Webber, 2002:136; Hepworth et al., 2006:231; Santrock, 2009:28; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:7). These layers or systems represent the distance away from daily contact with the person. A person is both the product and the producer of his/her environment (Coleman & Webber, 2002:136). Before one can understand the developing person in the environment it is necessary to understand the development or movement of a person from conception to death (Santrock, 2009:8; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:2). Development, whether cognitive, physical, or psychosocial, not only happens during childhood and then ends at adolescence, but it continues through adulthood (Sigelman & Rider, 2009:3). A person interacts with his caregiver, family, friends, peers, colleagues and institutions or organisations throughout his life. The more a person can learn about interactions with another and within its context, the better the person can adapt and cope with his or her environment.

This chapter will provide an overview of human development from the life span perspective with specific reference to the nature of human development, the different theories of development namely the psychoanalytic theory of development, the cognitive theories of development, Vygotsky's socio-historical view, the behavioural and social cognitive theories as well as the ethological and ecological development theories. Furthermore, the life phase of the young adult in terms of cognitive, social, personality and physical development and the importance of the developmental tasks of the young adult for learning and preparing for the open labour market, will be discussed.

### **3.2 LIFE-SPAN PERSPECTIVE**

The development of an individual is an uninterrupted succession of changes from conception to death on a physical, intellectual, social, spiritual and emotional level and these levels are interdependent (McGoldrick & Carter, 1989:36; Rebok, 1987:16; Rice, 1995:4, 9; Santrock, 2009:7; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:2, 3; Specht & Craig, 1987:2). Human development in terms of change and adaptation does not stop at adolescence as believed previously, but continues throughout the life span and at different pace (Rice, 1995:10, 14; Santrock, 2009:7; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:3).

The Life-Span perspective accentuates that developmental change takes place throughout childhood and adulthood (Santrock, 2009:8). The *New Dictionary of Social Work* (1995:37) describes the concept "life span" similar to "life phase" and "life cycle". Life span is described as a moment or "a period in a specific age group" during which physical, psychological and emotional features are exhibited, during which certain tasks are learned and behaviour patterns are acquired. According to Rebok (1987:16) the difference between life-span developmental approach and traditional biological growth models of development is that the life-span approach views that cognitive development can take place at every age phase of the life cycle whereas the traditional models view cognitive development along a fixed path towards maturity.

According to the Life-Span perspective development is a lifelong process and has certain characteristics, namely it is multidimensional, multidirectional, mandatory, multidisciplinary and contextual (Santrock, 2009:8). Baltes (2009) in Santrock (2009:8) is of the opinion that development is shaped through biological, sociocultural and individual factors that complement each other. The aforementioned characteristics and factors also helped constructing the ecological systems perspective (Edwards, 1995b:816) as discussed in chapter two.

The characteristics of the Life-Span perspective are:

- *Development is lifelong* (Santrock, 2009:8; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:12).

Development not only happens during childhood, but continuous through adolescence to adulthood. This development will be described later both according to age periods as well as systematic changes. An application would be to understand a young adult's employment choice and the understanding thereof would be deepened if the formative influences in childhood would be considered. The consideration of the adaptive interactions are also in line with the ecological systems perspective (Germain & Gitterman, 1980:6, 7, 79).

- *Development is multidimensional* (Santrock, 2009:8; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:12).

Different dimensions affect development namely biological, cognitive and socio-emotional dimensions with sub-components or aspects under each dimension. Sub-aspects for the biological dimension are height and weight; gross and fine motor development with walking and standing as sub-aspects of gross motor skills; and sensory development with its sub-aspects of hearing and visual development (Santrock, 2008:73, 75, 83, 89, 91). Memory, abstract thinking, language, thoughts, intelligence, decision-making and judgments are some of the sub-aspects of the cognitive dimension (Santrock, 2008:73, 102; Santrock, 2009:8). On a socio-emotional level a sub-aspect is the changes in relationships with others such as a mother at infancy versus at adolescence or the changes in relationships during adolescence when dating and romantic relationships (Santrock, 2009:384, 396).

- *Development is multidirectional* (Louw & Louw, 2009:16; Santrock, 2009:9; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:12).

Different dimensions or attributes such as cognitive or socio-emotional dimensions converse differently, some increase and some lessen. For example when young adults establish romantic relationships then they spend less time with their parents and the socio-emotional dimension associated with the parent lessens and the socio-emotional dimension of romantic relationship increases (Santrock, 2009:396).

- *Development is plastic* (Louw & Louw, 2009:16; Santrock, 2009:9; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:12).

Plasticity refers to the capacity to transform in response to environmental stimuli, e.g. mentally stimulating exercises such as crossword puzzles can help prevent dementia in the elderly.

- *Development is multidisciplinary* (Louw & Louw, 2009:17; Santrock, 2009:9; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:13).

It means that social workers, psychologists, economists, educationists and medical professionals contribute collectively to the understanding of human development. In the context of this study the economist, educationist and medical professional can give different views on the effects of unemployment on the socio-emotional development of a young adult.

- *Development is contextual* (Louw & Louw, 2009:17; Santrock, 2009:9; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:12).

Development happens within a context (cultural, economic, historical and social) such as family, schools, neighbourhoods, countries and labour market. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model supports this characteristic strongly (Sigelman & Rider, 2009:12; Bronfenbrenner, 1979:3). For the purpose of this study it is implied that the skills for employment can change as societies or environments change.

- *Development involves growth, maintenance and regulation of loss* (Louw & Louw, 2009:16; Santrock, 2009:10; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:12).

The ability to remember information increases from childhood to adulthood. For example exploration of meaning of life is initiated during adolescence but during middle adulthood the exploration of meaning of life is increased due to

being faced with death of older relatives (Santrock, 2009:496). Another example is in the biological dimension of development as physical strength, agility and speed is at its highest during the chronological age of 20s, but during middle and late adulthood a person is unlikely to run 100 meters in under 10 seconds. Signs of ageing are also apparent in the greying and loss of hair as a person grows older. (Santrock, 2009: 10; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:148-149).

- *Development is co-construction of biology, culture and the individual* (Louw & Louw, 2009:17; Santrock, 2009:10; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:12).

The person authors his or her developmental course by his “reality” and that which benefits his or her life (Santrock, 2009:10; Bronfenbrenner, 1979:4). For instance, the eastern countries such as China have placed more emphasis on a person being community orientated than individualistic, but with increasing capitalism, the emphasis has changed to being more individualistic orientated. For example in China the father would have stayed lifelong within one company and worked his way up in the company due to the experiences gained over the time rather than job hopping from one company to another to gain more experience and to increase his earnings or to obtain a higher position in his career. Job hopping is more acceptable in the current western countries to gain experience and to increase earnings than to stay lifelong with one company.

It is clear from the above that there are many aspects relevant to the development of the human being. The human being engages in interactions with its environment that are reciprocal and lead to adaptations (Sigelman & Rider, 2009:3; Zastrow, 2009:42; Edwards & Hopps, 1995b:816). The researcher agrees with Sigelman and Rider (2009:5) that the development of the human being must be viewed from a holistic perspective within a specific context. In the next subsection the disposition of human development will be explored more in depth.

### **3.2.1 Nature of human development**

Bronfenbrenner (1979:3) defined human development as “...a lasting change in the way in which a person perceives and deals with his environment”. Santrock (2009:15) and Sigelman and Rider (2009:2) are of the opinion that these changes



occur in a systematic way and identified three domains or processes. The processes are physical or biological processes, cognitive processes and socio-emotional processes.

Another framework for describing and understanding development is according to periods of development (Louw, & Louw, 2009:4; Santrock, 2009:15; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:3). The life span or life cycle includes different stages that are distinguished by certain characteristics and skills that need to be accomplished (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989:1; Louw et al., 2004:13; Republic of South Africa, Ministry for Welfare and Population Development, 1997:95). The different periods or stages of the life span according to age grade consist of the prenatal stage, the neonatal and infancy stage, the early childhood, the middle childhood, the adolescence, early and middle adulthood and lastly late adulthood (Louw & Louw, 2009:4; Rice, 1995:5-8; Santrock, 2009:17; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:4). These stages can be briefly described as follows:

- *The prenatal period* is defined by Santrock (2009:17) being from conception to birth. During this nine-month period vast growth is experienced, from a single cell to an organism with capabilities to life outside its host.
- *The infancy stage* refers to the period from birth to 24 months (Santrock, 2009:17; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:4). The infant is hugely dependent on the adult or caregiver. Many psychological activities start to develop such as language, sensorimotor coordination and social learning (Santrock, 2009:17).
- *Early childhood* is from the age range of two to five or six years (Santrock, 2009:17). Sigelman and Rider (2009:4) refer to this stage as the preschool period and the child is called a toddler. The young child becomes more self-sufficient and starts caring for himself. The child develops school readiness skills and engages with peers (Santrock, 2009:17).
- The next developmental period is *middle childhood*, which is from six to eleven or twelve years of age (Santrock, 2009:17; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:4). These years



are characterised by the elementary school years and fundamental skills like making friends, problem-solving, abstract thinking, inductive reasoning which is from the specific to the general and self-awareness are developed. Self-control increases and the child is exposed to the society and culture (Cherry, 2014:1; Santrock, 2009:17).

- *Adolescence* is the transition period from childhood to early adulthood. The age period is from approximately 12 years to 20 years of age or when the person becomes relatively independent of parents (Santrock, 2009:17; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:4). During this period the person experiences vigorous physical changes. An important and prominent developmental task is the establishment of identity and independence. The adolescent spends lots of time outside the family and peers play an important role (Santrock, 2009:17).
- *Early adulthood* is from the age of 20 to 40 years (Santrock, 2009:17; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:4). During this age period the person develops personal and financial independence, develops a career, establishes intimate relationships, selects a mate and starts a family.
- *Middle adulthood* follows and is from 40 to 60 or 65 years of age (Santrock, 2009:17; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:4). During this period, advancement of personal and social involvement is experienced, responsibilities increase, satisfaction in a career is reached and the next generation is assisted to become competent.
- The last age period is *late adulthood*, which starts in the sixties and continues until death. This developmental period has the longest duration. This period is a time for reflection of life, time for retirement and adjustment to new social roles and decrease in health (Santrock, 2009:17; Sigelman & Rider 2009:4).

Human development cannot only be viewed from disposition, but also needs to be described in a narrative way and theories help to provide this “narrative” or explanation. In the subsection that follows different theories of human development will be described.

### **3.2.2 Theories of development**

Theories are “interrelated, coherent set of ideas” used to explain some aspect or phenomena of reality and they provide a framework for understanding people and their important environments and systems (Edwards & Hopps, 1995a:2258; Santrock, 2009:22; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:30). Sigelman and Rider (2009:30) state that a theory also helps “to guide the compilation of new truths or observations”.

Five theories of development will be briefly reviewed to understand the different assumptions of human development. The theories are the psychoanalytic, cognitive, behavioural and social cognitive, ethological and ecological developmental theories (Santrock, 2009:22).

#### **3.2.2.1 Psychoanalytic theory of development**

Freud was the most well-known theorist in this category. Freud argued that people are driven by motives and emotional conflicts and that development is mainly unconscious (Santrock, 2009:22; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:34). Freud also maintained that a person’s earliest experiences helped to mould development. Freud believed that a person has basic biological instincts or drives that are unconsciously motivated resulting in behaviour (Santrock, 2009:22; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:34). Freud claimed that the drives or energy consisted of three components, the id, the ego and the superego. The id conveys the basic needs, the ego inhibits the id to find realistic ways to satisfy the needs and the superego decides whether these realistic ways are morally acceptable (Sigelman & Rider, 2009:35). Freud identified five psychosexual stages of development. They are the oral stage (pleasure is centred on the mouth), the anal stage (libido is focussed on the anus), the phallic stage (libido centres on the genitals), the latency stage (libido is quiet and child develops social and intellectual skills), and the genital stage (sexual awakening and establish mature, sexual relationships). The age range of the Freudian stages are from birth to puberty and onward (Santrock, 2009:23; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:36).

Erik Erikson emphasised the psychosocial development of the human being and these changes occur throughout the life span. The primary motivator of Erikson’s theory for behaviour is social and the desire to bond with other people (Santrock,

2009:23; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:38). The social influences are from peers, teachers, schools and broader culture. These influences correlate with the microsystem level of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (Coleman & Webber, 2002:136; Santrock, 2009:28). Erikson's psychosocial theory identified eight stages of development typified by a crisis or turning point (Santrock, 2009:23) namely:

- Stage 1: Learning basic trust versus basic mistrust (hope),
- Stage 2: Learning autonomy vs shame (will),
- Stage 3: Learning initiative vs guilt (purpose),
- Stage 4: Industry vs inferiority (competence),
- Stage 5: Learning identity vs identity diffusion (fidelity),
- Stage 6: Learning intimacy vs isolation (love),
- Stage 7: Learning generativity vs self-absorption (care), and
- Stage 8: Integrity vs despair (wisdom).

During the first stage the infant learns to trust the primary caregiver by being dependent on the caregiver for food, warmth and affection. If this attachment is positive then the infant will trust the environment in general in later life (Schoeman, 2005:133).

During stage 2 the toddler learns to walk, to talk and to master self-control and do things for themselves. It is important that the primary caregiver encourages the child for taking initiative and reassures when a mistake is made. The positive outcome of this stage is that the child will be confident to make choices and be independent (Schoeman, 2005:134).

During stage 3 the child develops more refined motor skills and becomes involved in social activities with other people in his environment. This stage is important as it is here where the child learns to balance adventure and responsibilities. Consistent discipline is of the essence during this stage so that the child will accept without guilt feelings that certain actions are not allowed (Schoeman, 2005:135).

During stage 4 school is an important part of the child's life. During this stage the child learns to produce objects and acquires skills which will be used whilst being a worker and provider. The child moves from the home environment to the world of peers. Play becomes more formal and structured by rules, thus preparing the child for formal labour (Santrock, 2009:23; Schoeman, 2005:136). The child wants to make things and wants to make them well, they want to explore more to understand the world around them (Santrock, 2009:279). This stage is important as it lays the foundation for the person to be productive, trusting, taking initiative and wanting to be successful and having a sense of competence (Erikson, 1987:74-75; Santrock, 2009: 321; Schoeman, 2005:136). When the opposite namely inability to acquire technical skills is prevalent, then the child who is mistrusting will be filled with guilt and develop a feeling of uselessness and inferiority (Erikson, 1987:75; Santrock, 2009:23, 322; Schoeman, 2005:136).

The fifth and sixth stages are of importance for this study as the young adult falls within this age range, namely the adolescent and early adulthood. The fifth developmental stage (adolescence) is the identity versus identity (role) confusion stage. This stage is of importance as the person attempts to define who he or she is in terms of career, sexual identity and religion; the course of their life, and where they belong in society (Santrock, 2009:23; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:39). The fifth stage is a culmination of successfully mastering all the previous conflicts. Adolescents who have successfully mastered the previous conflicts are prepared for the single most important conflict the person may encounter, namely "identity crisis" (Erikson, 1987:72; Santrock, 2009:386; Schoeman, 2005:137). Finding their "identity" at first is no guarantee that this identity will last throughout the life span of the person (Santrock, 2009:387). A person with a healthy "identity" shows flexibility and adjusts to changes in society, in relationships and in their employment (Santrock, 2009:387).

The sixth stage (early adulthood), intimacy versus isolation is also of importance to this study. Erikson is of the opinion that during early adulthood the individual is seeking intimate or long-term relationships (Erikson, 1987:70; Santrock, 2009:24, 386, 450). The young adult needs to find an equilibrium between intimacy and commitment as well as independence and freedom when engaging in close

relationships whether at work or when seeking a life partner (Erikson, 1987:71; Santrock, 2009:451). If the young adult cannot master this conflict, then the young adult regresses to “isolation” and can feel rejected by self, peers and society, lead to mistrust of others and experience depression (Erikson, 1987:71; Santrock, 2009:450). With identifying this sixth stage, Erikson moved beyond Freud’s adolescent age and Erikson paved the way for lifelong learning (Santrock, 2009:450; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:39).

Erikson’s theory denotes the importance of biological maturation and the social environmental impact on the person’s developmental progress (Sigelman & Rider, 2009:39). This can be compared with the ecological systems theory of development, which will be referred to later.

### **3.2.2.2 Cognitive theories of development**

In contrast to psychoanalytical theories, cognitive theories accentuate conscious thoughts (Santrock, 2009:24). Jean Piaget is regarded as the pioneer of cognitive developmental theories (Sigelman & Rider, 2009:45). According to Louw and Louw (2009:132) and Santrock (2009:24) two processes, namely organisation and adaptation, underlie Piaget’s cognitive theory. During organisation, the person separates essential ideas from less essential ideas and connects different ideas with each other. Adaptations refer to adjusting to new exigencies of the environment (Louw & Louw, 2009:132; Santrock, 2009:24; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:188).

Piaget’s theory maintains that a person progresses through four stages to understand the world. The four stages are the sensorimotor, the preoperational, concrete operational and the formal operational stage (Louw & Louw, 2009:132; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:25). The benefit of this grouping helps a person to understand the difference in thinking or reasoning amongst different age groups (Louw & Louw, 2009:132). During the sensorimotor stage (birth to 2 years of age) the infant comprehends the world by coordinating physical actions with sensory experiences (observations). The preoperational stage (2 to 7 years of age) is when the child begins to use symbols such as words and images. The child begins to form conclusions and uses phrases such as “here” and “now”. Language develops extensively and memory and imagination develop (Schoeman, 2005:81). The next

stage is the concrete operational stage (from 7 to 11 years of age). In this stage, the child can reason logically and conceptualise concrete events. The child can order objects in logical sequence and perform concrete problem solving. The child starts to view the world from someone else's perspective (Schoeman, 2005:86, 88). The fourth stage is the formal operational stage (11 years of age through adulthood) (Louw & Louw, 2009:133; Santrock, 2009:25). The person can now think more logical and in abstract terms. The young adult considers a problem from various angles as he has established that there is no right or wrong answer. This is especially achieved when the young adult is well educated and advances from the operational to the post operational mode and specifically the relativistic thinking (Louw & Louw, 2009:134; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:206). The person starts to develop an image of the epitome condition, it is the future or the possible condition (Cognition and Development, [sa]:1; Hemmelgarn, 2011:1; Santrock, 2009:25). The person can "see beyond" and hypothesise about a problem or issue (Hemmelgarn, 2011:1; Santrock, 2009:25). Long-term memory increases, realistic pragmatic thinking emerges and creativity reaches its peak (Santrock, 2009:440).

Piaget's theory is helpful to create learning opportunities where knowledge can be gained such as in the working environment. The shortfall in Piaget's theory is that there is no description of cognitive development for adults, as he believed adult "thinking" was similar to that of adolescence (Louw et al., 2004:82; Rice, 1995:46). Rice (1995:47) gives credit to the Piagetian approach as Piaget showed that children think differently to adults, but Piaget neglected the environmental influences on cognitive development, the role of unconscious emotions and the influence of emotional conflict on behaviour.

### **3.2.2.3 Vygotsky's socio-historical view**

Another theory on cognitive development is that of Vygotsky. Vygotsky's socio-historical view of cognitive development has its roots in social interaction and culture (Berk, 2003:12; Blanck, 1993:44; Santrock, 2009:25; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:48). Vygotsky also believed that the society in which a person grew up and his immediate environment, helps to shape the experiences and thought patterns of that person. The social interaction with a more skilled adult and cohort is vital to the cognitive development of the child (Santrock, 2009:26; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:48, 210). At

the heart of Vygotsky's theory is that internalisation is important to social determination (Blanck, 1993:47). Vygotsky also mentioned that if the needs of the person are ignored, there is no motivation to do something and the chance of advancing to the next life phase is hampered. The progress to the next life phase is linked to change in motives, preferences and incentives (Rosa & Montero, 1993:80). Vygotsky maintained that adults pass thinking and problem solving on to their children by various tools such as language, writing and memory strategies (Sigelman & Rider, 2009:211).

Vygotsky maintained that as young adults become more proficient in a specific context, they develop a larger knowledge base and become more efficient in retrieving and using knowledge. The accomplishments of young adults are partially determined in the life phases before adulthood and the developmental tasks that have been successfully achieved (Sigelman & Rider, 2009:274).

The benefit of Vygotsky's theory is the understanding of cognitive skills in diverse cultures and the importance of interaction with proficient mentors (Louw et al., 2004:89; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:213,215).

#### **3.2.2.4 Behavioural and social cognitive theories**

The behavioural and social cognitive theory claims that development does not progress in segments but unremittingly (Santrock, 2009:26). Skinner's operant conditioning and Bandura's social cognitive theory are two examples of behavioural and social cognitive theories. Skinner maintained that by rewarding behaviour it is more likely that the behaviour will occur again. The opposite is also true, that when a negative reward is offered the likelihood of the behaviour reoccurring is less (Santrock, 2009:26). The main notion of Skinner's theory is that development is determined by behaviour and not thoughts and feelings. Bandura augmented that environment and cognition also have an influence on development (Santrock, 2009:27). He introduced modelling as a form of learning and then the person internalises this behaviour as his own. Bandura's social cognitive theory can be presented as a triangle with reciprocal interaction. Behaviour, environment and person or cognitive are placed on each corner of the triangle (Santrock, 2009:27).



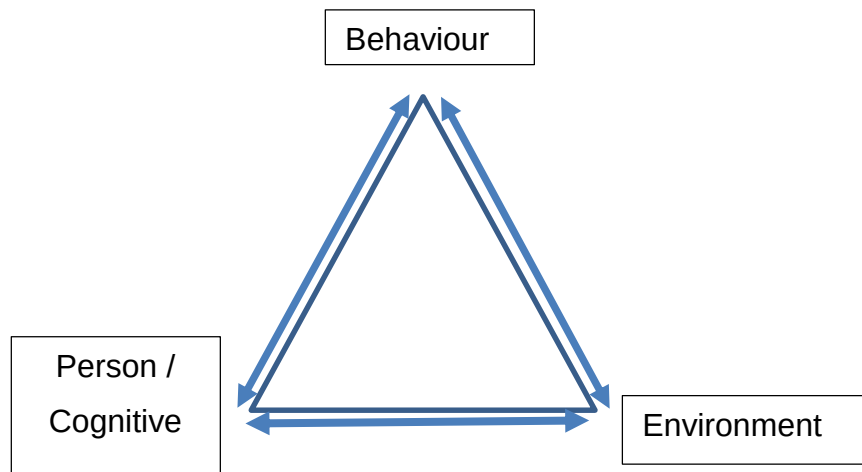


**Figure 3.1: Bandura's Social Cognitive Model** (Santrock, 2009:27)

### 3.2.2.5 Ethological and ecological systems developmental theories

Ethology refers to “the study of behaviour in the natural environment” (Santrock, 2009:27; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:49). Bowlby was of the opinion that attachment in the early stage of life is important for optimal development at a later stage in life and he developed the attachment theory (Santrock, 2009:27; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:406). “Internal working models” form an important concept of the attachment theory and this is important in establishing relationships in adolescence and adulthood. “Internal working models” are a model or representation which the person develops or constructs inside themselves of previous experiences they have experienced or other people have experienced in earlier relationships (Sigelman & Rider, 2009:431).

Ecological theories accentuate the importance of environmental factors in the development of the human (Coleman & Webber, 2002:136; Collins et al., 2010:14; Santrock, 2009:28). The ecological systems developmental theory is embedded in the systems theory of development.

The systems theory maintains that changes in the person constructs changes in the environment and changes in the environment constructs changes in the person (bi-directional). The interaction between the individual and the physical and social context are interconnected to each other and are part of a larger system (Collins et al., 2010:15; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:48; Singal, 2006:240).



Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory of development presupposes that a person's biological attributes together with environmental forces shape development. This environment can be immediate namely parents, friends, or distant, namely cultural norms or government (Coleman & Webber, 2002:136). Development takes place in five environmental systems, namely the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, the macrosystem and the chronosystem (Coleman & Webber, 2002:137; Santrock, 2009:28).

In the *microsystem* direct interaction takes place with people close to the person – with friends, teachers or siblings for example (Coleman & Webber, 2002:136; Santrock, 2009:28). The second level, the *mesosystem*, comprises of interactions amongst those in the *microsystem* – family experiences to peer experiences where the parents are critical of the child's friends and the parents will verbally criticise the friend's parents. The *exosystem* consists of contexts which impacts on the development of the person, but does not interact directly with the person, e.g. there might be a tavern next to a child's home and the child might engage in excessive alcohol consumption during adolescence. The fourth level is the *macrosystem*, which has bearing on the beliefs, customs, values and laws of a specific culture or generation or policies of a government. The fifth level is the *chronosystem* that refers to the delineation of environmental occurrences and transitions over the life course – timing of the death of a parent or physiological changes within a person (Paquette & Ryan, 2001; Santrock, 2009:28). The ecological systems developmental theory helps to understand an individual's interactions within context as development does not always proceed in one direction and can take on many forms depending on the interchange between biological and environmental forces (Santrock, 2009:29; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:48). Hepworth et al. (2006:17) mentions that mastery of human development and developmental tasks are dependent on adequate resources and positive interactions between people.

Against this theoretical overview of human development, the researcher will specifically focus on young adulthood as a life phase, bearing in mind what Collins et al. (2010:227) highlight namely that each stage in the life-span presents unique developmental issues, tasks, demands for change and associated stress.

### 3.3 YOUNG ADULTHOOD AS A LIFE PHASE

Young adult can be defined as “humans between the ages of 13 to 19 years” (Edwards & Hopps, 1995a:2562). It is further stated that “childhood is separated from adulthood by the actual physiological process” (Edwards & Hopps, 1995a:2562). The White Paper for Social Welfare (Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997:53) defines young adult as “people between 16 and 30 years of age”. Various authors (Louw & Louw, 2009:4; Santrock, 2009:17; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:4) define the age period of early adulthood as ranging from 19 or 20 years to 39 or 40 years of age. Santrock (2009:417) goes one step further and assigns the term of emerging adulthood to “the transition period from adolescence to adulthood with the age range of 18 to 25 years”. In the context of this study, the concept young adult refers to an individual between the age of 18 and 25 years, who has completed his or her schooling and who is in the process of becoming an adult.

The developmental tasks during the young adult phase as mentioned by Louw and Louw (2009:153) and Rice (1995:471) are to achieve independence and responsibility, to stabilise own identity, to define own values, to develop intimacy and commitment, to become established in a career and to find a place in the community and contribute towards it. Malekoff (2004:6, 12, 16) adds that the young adult prepares for the future by developing skills that will aid these developmental tasks. The young adult must know how to use support systems that are available to him and believe in a favourable future with genuine prospects. The young adult learns to answer the questions of “Who am I?”, “What do I want to become?” and “What is life about?”.

On a personal developmental level the young adult has a more abstract and integrated self-concept. Identity is still important as the person is continuing to define it. The young adult moves towards a “post conventional” moral reasoning and is confronted with a crisis in intimacy versus isolation (Malekoff, 2004:7; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:384).

The young adult experiences during physical development a growth spurt in the brain, growth and sexual maturity. During the later stage of young adulthood, it is a

time of “peak functioning” (Sigelman & Rider, 2009:127,148; Specht & Craig, 1987:177).

The young adult not only has to deal with physical changes, intellectual and emotional development but also need to consolidate and plan for the future (Malekoff, 2004:6; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:148; Statistics South Africa, 2005:67). According to Statistics South Africa (2005:67), the young adults have multiple roles and responsibilities they engage in such as education, become economically active, experience unemployment, form new relationships, start a family of their own or even devote time to childcare.

Hammer (2007:249) is of the opinion that social change has an impact on the tasks or development during the life span as each life phase is associated by “...the cultural definition of needs, competencies, tasks and behaviours thought to be appropriate for individuals belonging to a given age group”. During young adulthood, the social development consists of an increase in social networking, more romantic relationships are established, career options are explored, launched and changed (Sigelman & Rider, 2009:430; Specht & Craig, 1987:149). The young adult period is thus characterised by many life changes.

As previously mentioned, development is multidimensional, comprising of many processes and changes (Louw & Louw, 2009:24; Santrock, 2009:8). In order to understand these “life changes” it is important to understand the following distinct and unique domains of adult development:

- Cognitive development (mental functioning),
- Social development,
- Personality development, and
- Physical development (biological systems and structures of the body) (Louw & Louw, 2009:24; Santrock, 2009:15).

Although all four domains are important and will be briefly discussed, in the context of this study the component of cognitive development and social development are of

primary importance as the purpose of the study is to educate and coach young adults regarding essential core skills, in order to develop and equip them for the open labour market by developing a pre-employment core skills programme. Such a pre-employment core skills programme for young adults has the potential to improve the young adults' knowledge and application of employment core skills. Personality development is also an important component but with a lesser priority for the purpose of this study. Likewise physical development has very little importance in the context of this study.

The researcher will thus briefly discuss the four components emphasising the cognitive and social development domains.

### **3.3.1 Cognitive development of the young adult**

Cognitive development can be described as “the changes that happen in the mind’s processes of thinking, learning, symbolising, remembering, categorising, judging, problem solving and communication” (Louw & Louw, 2009:24, 89; Santrock, 2009:15; Schoeman, 2005:79; Rice, 1995:10). Cognition is defined by Rebok (1987:19) as “A process that acquires the organism to know and be aware”. Sigelman and Rider (2009:187) agree with Rebok’s definition of cognition and add that “knowledge is acquired and problems are solved”.

The most significant change in cognition occurs in the executive functioning (reasoning, decision making and monitoring) during the adolescent phase (Santrock, 2009:374). The adolescent’s thought is often utopian of nature and “what could be” or fantasies (Santrock, 2009:372). Concurrently the adolescent develops a hypothetical-deductive reasoning to come up with the best option to solve a problem (Santrock, 2009:372). Critical thinking is also developed during the adolescent phase which enables the person to use strategies such as planning, considering alternatives and cognitive monitoring (Santrock, 2009:375). The formal operational thinking, as identified by Piaget, becomes more systematic and advanced during young adulthood (Santrock, 2009:433). Additional cognitive development takes place during young adulthood. A change towards more realistic and pragmatic thinking develops especially when engaging in formal work. The young adult becomes aware of diverse opinions and numerous viewpoints. This phenomenon is

known as reflective and relativistic thinking or possibly a fifth stage to Piaget's theory, the postformal stage (Louw & Louw, 2009:134; Santrock, 2009:433).

Another approach to cognitive development was identified by Schaie (in Schaie & Willis, 2002). Schaie identified six stages of cognitive development during adulthood. The six stages are achieving, responsible, executive, re-organisational, re-integrative and legacy creating stage. The achieving stage is applicable to this study as this stage culminates during young adulthood. Louw and Louw (2009:136) explain this stage when the young adult focuses on the utilisation of knowledge especially attaining long-term goals. This stage requires careful attention giving to impending consequences of the problem-solving process.

Several factors influence the person's cognitive development such as age, exercising cognitive abilities, the speed of processing cognitive information, health, physical exercises, lifestyle, educational level, context in which an individual functions and culture (Louw & Louw, 2009:129; Santrock, 2009:433). Louw and Louw (2009:130) mention that socio-demographic, social and lifestyle factors such as education, an intelligent partner, a stimulating work environment, healthy eating and being actively involved in the community, impacts on cognitive functioning. Rebok (1987:16) and Louw and Louw (2009:113) state that during young adulthood cognitive development reaches a phase of stability and then declines parallel to the biological decline of the body. This implies that cognitive change and development extends throughout life. The practical or functional cognitive abilities escalate from early adulthood to middle adulthood (Louw & Louw, 2009:115).

### **3.3.2 Social development of the young adult**

Social development refers to the incitation of social interaction or relationships with other people (Louw & Louw, 2009:187; Santrock, 2009:181). The initial milieu in which social development takes place is within the family. This milieu changes during adolescence and even more during young adulthood as the person engages with other social networks.

Adolescents spend more time with peers (cliques) and prepare for relationships that are more intimate during young adulthood when seeking for a life partner. A polarity

between establishing a committed relationship and remaining independent is present during adolescence. This polarity can cause withdrawal or loneliness during adolescence and early adulthood (Louw & Louw, 2009:189; Newman & Newman, 2009:339). This corresponds with Erikson's fifth stage of intimacy versus isolation and during early adulthood with the sixth stage of intimacy versus independence. Other relationships that develop during young adulthood are those within the labour market, church, sports and political ideology (Louw & Louw, 2009:187; Newman & Newman, 2009:407; Santrock, 2009:387; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:430).

Attachment plays an important role in any relationship. Bowlby's attachment theory refers to the "strong affectional ties" that glue people together but is also a behavioural system for managing emotional anguish (Louw & Louw, 2009:194; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:406). The experience during infancy construct the engagement in social interactions or relationships during adolescence and adulthood (Louw & Louw, 2009:194; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:431). Internal working models which are the cognitive depictions of self and others, guide the managing of social relationships (Louw & Louw, 2009:195; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:407). Taking the ecological systems perspective into consideration, the researcher is of the opinion that the early experience of attachment and the internal working models will determine the young adult's quality of relationships that are formed during interaction in the labour market. Sigelman and Rider (2009:434,435) mention that the quality of a relationship determines a person's well-being and is important to normal cognitive development.

### **3.3.3 Personality development of the young adult**

According to Louw and Louw (2009:143) personality is defined as "the core of a person. Personality is the distinguishable and the soul of a person. Personality consists of behaviours, thoughts, emotions, values and interests". These elements are unique in the way that a person adjusts to coping with life's circumstances.

Stage models such as Erikson's psychosocial development model describe personality development (see 3.2.2.1 Psychoanalytic theory of development). Erikson's epigenetic principle is applicable in the development of personality in the young adult. Epigenetic means that the next development stage unfurls or follows

after the previous stage according to a specific order (Louw & Louw, 2009: 146). However, it is interesting that all other crisis stages appear during young adulthood concurrently with the intimacy versus isolation crisis stage and do not follow one after the other one (Louw & Louw, 2009:146, 147). It is clear that personality develops throughout adulthood.

Levinson's life structure and life transitions theory attempts to explain personality changes within a framework called "life structure" (Louw & Louw, 2009:152). Levinson argued that life structures are formed according to relationships and religion. Levinson mentioned that ethnicity and leisure activities help to shape personality (Louw & Louw, 2009:152). The researcher is of the opinion that this is similar to the ecological systems approach where other systems (religion, ethnicity, leisure activities) have an impact on the young adult and the young adult helps to shape these sub-systems.

The developmental stage or era of Levinson that is applicable to this study is the early adulthood (17 to 45 years) era (Louw & Louw, 2009:153). In this era there are two transition periods that are of importance to this study, namely the early adulthood transition entering adulthood (novice phase) and the age thirty transition (28 to 30 years). During the novice phase, the young adult becomes emotionally and financially independent. During the second transition stage, the person re-evaluates his earlier choices (Louw & Louw, 2009:153).

Another theory that is used to describe personality development is the trait models of adult personality (Louw & Louw, 2009:158). A personality trait is defined as "a relatively stable, consistent and enduring characteristic that distinguishes one person from another" (Louw & Louw, 2009:158). Personality traits are deduced from the person's behaviour patterns, feelings, attitudes and habits. It was found that personality traits change with age but that there were characteristics that remained the same.

The researcher is of the opinion that it is worth briefly discussing the African perspective on personality development as this research includes young adults from previously disadvantaged areas. From an African perspective personality refers to "the result of interaction between the self, owing to social bonds, and the conscious



being” (Louw & Louw, 2009:181). The self or personality development consists of three phases namely social selfhood, ancestral selfhood and spiritual selfhood (Louw & Louw, 2009:182). Both the ancestral and spiritual selves shape the social self. The ancestor or “living dead” is someone who lived a high moral life and after death occupies an important part in the life of the living person (Louw & Louw, 2009:183).

In African culture, the self is defined in terms of the person’s relationships with others and can be understood in relation to others (Lundin & Nelson, 2010:26). The researcher is of the opinion that this links with the ecological systems perspective where the social context influences the self (person) and in turn the self influences the social context. From the African perspective personhood is earned through rites of passage (rituals) of which one is the ritual of passage at the end of childhood into adulthood commonly known as “bush school” or “initiation” for young boys (Kometsi, 2004:49).

It is clear from the above that personality development varies from one life phase to another in terms of life roles, life events and the ageing process.

### **3.3.4 Physical development of the young adult**

During adolescence, vast physical changes take place. The “adolescent growth spurt” is due to an increase in the hormonal levels. Sexual development also happens during this phase of adolescence (Sigelman & Rider, 2009:143-145). During young adulthood, sexuality and emotional intimacy are closely associated and mature with increased personal identity (Louw & Louw, 2009:72; Santrock, 2009:361). Environmental factors such as nutrition and medical improvement contribute to physical and sexual maturation (Sigelman & Rider, 2009:146). Physical changes during adolescence influence the psychology of the adolescent and are manifested in the awareness of appearance, interpersonal relationship, behaviour and belief systems (Sigelman & Rider, 2009:145). The physical changes in appearance in young adulthood are minor and unnoticeable (Louw & Louw, 2009:57).

The physical development peaks during adulthood (Louw & Louw, 2009:56; Santrock, 2009:420; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:148). Changes are visible in



appearance, physical functioning, reproductive system and motor responses. Rapid muscle development contributes to optimal physical performance during young adulthood and it declines with up to 40% in late adulthood (Louw & Louw, 2009:56). Regular exercises can counteract this decline. Gender socialisation influences the type of activity engaged in by females and males.

The reproductive system also develops further and contributes to psychological effects such as increased libido amongst men and menstrual distress together with somatic changes such as bloatedness (Sigelman & Rider, 2009:150). Individual differences play a role in the physical development of people (Louw & Louw, 2009:46; Santrock, 2009:420).

The brain and senses (vision, hearing, taste, smell and touch) reach optimum development during young adulthood (Louw & Louw, 2009:52, 53; Newman & Newman, 2009:320). Young adults enjoy in general excellent or very good health and wellbeing. Louw and Louw (2009:61) mention that socio-economic and cultural factors influence health status. Eminent examples are HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis and malnutrition and these can lead to mental disorders such as depression and alcohol abuse (Louw & Louw, 2009:65; Newman & Newman, 2009:331).

From the above discussions it is clear that development is multifaceted and induces the self-changes in various formats. The young adult has several developmental tasks to complete before moving from one stage to the next.

### **3.4 DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS OF THE YOUNG ADULT**

The young adult falls into the adolescent and young adult life stage or the “identity versus role confusion” and “intimacy versus isolation” stages of Erikson’s Psychosocial Theory (Louw & Louw, 2009:147; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:332; Rice, 1995:34). Adolescence is a vital time in the lifelong process of forming an identity, as he needs to define whom he is, where he is going and where he fits into society and then integrate it into a coherent self (Sigelman & Rider, 2009:332). According to Sigelman and Rider (2009:332), identity realisation occurs closer to the age of 18. Identity formation depends on four factors, namely cognitive development,

relationship with parents, experiences outside the home and the broader cultural context (Sigelman & Rider, 2009:335). During adolescence, the adolescent builds relationships with peers, groups and other influences to resolve identity and direction and “becoming” an adult. Relationship building is of importance to fit into society, as a person is not isolated in society. Erikson (1987:71) mentions that the counterforce to this “intimacy” is “isolation” or as he refers to it during adolescence experienced as exclusivity and in adulthood as rejection.

Malekoff (2004:6-11) mentions that the developmental tasks of adolescence are preparing for the future (skills development and desire for durable relationships), developing a moral value system (set of values, ethical system, socially acceptable and responsible behaviour), facing social and educational demands through cognitive flexibility and initial choice of career or work, establishing a healthy sexual identity through acceptance of physical body and appearance and being worthy. Preto (1989:257) agrees that sexual maturation is one of the developmental tasks of the adolescent. More developmental tasks described by Preto (1989:262-264) are establishing an identity of the self, autonomy or self-reliance and separation from the nuclear family. During late adolescence the person entrenches his choices concerning career, politics, religion and relationships (intimate and casual), but the need for adult attachment, caring and support is still essential (Aylmer, 1989:192; Lifecourse Development, [sa]; Malekoff, 2004:12; Preto, 1989:257).

During late adolescence and young adulthood the person finishes school and either furthers their education, travels or enters the formal labour market. Young adults will strive to become independent from parents, take responsibility for themselves, make their own decisions, establish long-term intimate relationships, marriage and child rearing, and learn value in both tangible and intangible objects (Aylmer, 1989:193,195; Lifecourse Development, [sa]; Young Adult Psychology, [sa]).

During the young adult phase that Erikson refers to as the “intimacy versus isolation” crisis stage, the young adult builds work connections and work and social life becomes an issue (Child Development, [sa]; Erikson, 1987:70; Meyer & Viljoen,

2003:202). A transition is typical of the social and emotional developmental phases of “identity versus role confusion” and “intimacy versus isolation”. The late adolescent or young adult leaves school and enters the labour market and the individual becomes independent and leaves the family to form their own family and to become economically independent (Child Development, [sa]; Erikson, 1987:70; Hammer, 2007:250; Nolte, 2002:45). The young adult is now faced with new roles and responsibilities. Levinson in Louw and Louw (2009:153) and Aylmer (1989:203) are of the opinion that a mentor can help new employees to adjust to these new developmental roles and responsibilities. According to Eli Ginzberg’s vocational choice theory, the young adult would progress through the tentative stage into the realistic stage (Louw & Louw, 2009:245; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:336). This can only be achieved if the young adult has developed a strong and realistic identity. The young adult seeks a suitable match between self and occupation and this results in engaging in an exploration and questioning of what the ideal career is before settling down (Sigelman & Rider, 2009:335). The process involves an in depth examining of the self and of various career options. Young adults are still developing their needs, interests and values and often the young adult will change his choice (Louw et al., 2004:435-436; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:335).

Phillips and Pittman (2003:3,115) mention that adolescents from low socio-economic families that have limited opportunities and are exposed to stigmatisation would lower their career dreams towards what they think they can get rather than what they want. Erikson (1987:71) is of the opinion that such regression leads to the experiencing again of the identity discord in earlier stages. Erikson (1987:71) states that a person that comes from a disparate background needs to find a common ground or a balance amongst his customary ways to form a new milieu for himself and his descendants.

One of the developmental tasks of the young adult as mentioned previously is to establish a career or entering the formal labour market (Lifecourse Development: [sa]). According to the Bloomberg Indices (South Africa Unemployment Rate; 2014) the percentage of the labour force that is unemployed rose from 23.5% in 2009 to 25% in October 2011 and peaking in July 2011 at 25.7%. The average unemployment figure between 2000 and 2014 is 25.26% (South Africa

Unemployment rate, 2014). In 2009, South Africa had the third highest unemployment rate of 48.2% amongst young adults aged between 15-24 in the world (Unemployment - youth..., 2010). According to the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (Statistics SA, 2014:xv) the unemployment rate amongst young adults (15-35 years of age) has increased to 68%. Jones (2011:1) states that according to the South Africa Survey "...the average job created by a government programme lasted just 46 days". The researcher is of the opinion that the current economic situation in South Africa is providing a challenging environment for employment opportunities for young adults and increasing their vulnerability to becoming financially independent. The magnitude of unemployment created an interest in the researcher to develop a programme that would enhance the young adult's opportunities for successful employment and thus help reduce unemployment amongst young adults. Unemployment among young adults will be discussed with special reference to unemployment in the South African context.

### **3.5 THE YOUNG ADULT IN THE FORMAL LABOUR MARKET**

From the earliest day, the human being was involved with work. Work has changed over the decades from the nomad age to an agricultural age, to a manufacturing age and eventually to an information or knowledge age (Branden, 1998:4, 5).

Competition in the labour market increased through the explosion of available information (Branden, 1998:8-16). Globalisation and economic changes have brought along on the one hand an uneven and unequal distribution of resources so that the gap between the rich and the poor has grown because of political and economic struggles such as during the Apartheid era in South Africa (Lombard, 2000:130; Macro-Social Report, 2006:3; Patel, 2005:11). Patel (2005:11) says that less focus is placed on the community interest and a highly skilled workforce is required that is mobile.

Involvement in the labour market is dependent on acquiring a first job. This can be difficult and having a matric is not necessarily a guarantee for entrance into the labour market anymore (Banerjee Galiani, Levinsohn, McLaren & Woolard, 2007:50-55). The authors mention that once a person has entered the formal labour market it

is more likely that the person will remain in it. Compulsory schooling has helped to increase the number of years of formal education and to reduce early drop out of school. Higher enrolment into tertiary education has helped to increase the employment ratio and to reduce unemployment in the labour force (Biagi & Lucifora, 2008:1098).

### **3.5.1 Employment**

To be able to understand unemployment it is necessary to briefly review the concept of employment. Employment is seen as “a process where a person is placed to do work or carry out activities, tasks or duties that produce something of economic value or a service to others” (Peterson & Gonzalez, 2000:3).

From the earliest day, the human being was involved with work. People used to forage, gather and hunt to survive. Men did the hunting and women did the foraging and gathering. The nomad existence changed to the agricultural age when people established small villages and obtained their sustenance from the earth. Strength, stamina, agility and speed were necessary for work, not mental work (Branden, 1998:4, 5). In a South African context, this form of sustenance is still observable in the rural areas (Patel, 2005:47).

The Industrial Revolution introduced machinery and production grew. The capitalist system developed and goods were produced for profit, labour was remunerated and private individuals owned the means of production. The Industrial Age developed and obedience and reliability were characteristic of this era. Resourcefulness was not required. Technology advanced and a greater demand was placed on skills and greater education. The shift from manufacturing to information economy brought along a greater demand for knowledge and creativity, self-responsibility and interpersonal competence is of high importance (Rasool, 2010).

During 2003, a special Presidential Programme was launched to attend to the excessive unemployment rate amongst young adults (ASGI-SA, 2008:23). The National Youth Service Programme (NYSP) was developed to create possibilities for voluntary service and skills development for young adults through supporting community and national development, employment and income generation. Another

initiative that was created by the South African government was the Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition (Jipsa) to retain people in skilled employment and to ensure access to social security interventions such as relief distress and unemployment insurance fund (UIF) (ASGI-SA, 2008:27, 75). In 2009 the National Youth Development Agency was established and during the State President's State of the Nation Address (2010:7) Mr. Jacob Zuma mentioned that more learnerships for youth between 16 and 25 years of age will be created. Mr. Zuma stated, "We need to invest in our youth to ensure a skilled and capable workforce to support growth and job creation" (State of the Nation Address, 2010:7). Mr. Zuma (State of the Nation Address, 2010:5) also mentioned that proposals would be called for to accommodate inexperienced youth in employment by giving subsidy to the employer. Mr. Gordhan, Minister of Finances, mentioned in his National Budget Speech (2014) that youth employment will be actively promoted and that joblessness among young people will be reduced.

However, internal attributes such as personal qualities, attitude and abilities are of great importance when entering the labour market (Behrens & Evans, 2002:25). Behrens and Evans (2002:26) confirmed that internal attributes were of greater significance than external factors such as area and locality when securing work. Franzén and Kassman (2005:413) found that if parents were part of a higher income level the likelihood of being economically inactive was noticeably lesser than if the parent(s) were in a lower income level.

Employment is dependent on the growth of the economy (Bhorat & Oosthuizen, 2008:51). Bhorat and Oosthuizen (2008:52) dispute the "jobless growth" thesis in post-apartheid South Africa and say that within individual industrial sectors there has been growth in employment since the mid-1990s. The authors state that the employment rate in South Africa increased by 29% from 1995 to 2005. A low carbon economy, meaning an economy with few carbon dioxide emissions into the environment or a climate that is unaffected by these emissions, will create more jobs for the poor, marginalised, exploited and ignored people in society (McClelland, [sa]:1; Rasool, 2010). According to Rasool (2010), a low carbon economy with green jobs, meaning "any job that contributes to a more sustainable world" (What is a green job, 2014:1), displays three labour market trends. The first trend calls for

high specialist environmental skills and enforcing “green” laws, the second trend requires more traditional STEM skills (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) and the third trend is about logistics management where decisions will be based on carbon implications (McClelland, [sa]:1; Rasool, 2010). Carbon implications refer to the effects or consequences that the chemical substance carbon and specifically carbon dioxide has on the sustainability of the environment and the economy and the integration with developmental objectives of the economy (United Nations General Assembly, 2013:5). The skills needed to work in an environmentally friendly way will ensure a more sustainable development as well as reducing poverty and hunger in the world (United Nations General Assembly, 2013:5).

### **3.5.2 Unemployment**

According to the Labour Force Survey (2002), the unemployed are those people within the economically active population who:

- (a) *did not work during the seven days prior to the interview,*
- (b) *want to work and are available to start work within a week of the interview,*  
*and*
- (c) *have taken active steps to look for work or to start some form of self-employment in the four weeks prior to the interview.*

Economics has to do with efficient allocation of resources and according to Duffy (2009:2) unemployment is a by-product of the process of achieving this efficiency. Duffy (2009:1) is of the opinion that the economy can never achieve a satiated labour market due to the real global economy being dynamic. There is always someone who gains entrance, someone who exits the labour market, searching for employment, filling in application forms and someone who stays outside the labour market for a longer period when raising children, or improving educational level. Thus, it is all about demand and supply of labour as a commodity, which is also known as Keynesianism (Duffy, 2009:3).

Aggregate unemployment has an effect on the social well-being of people (Clark, Knabe & Rätzel, 2010: 52). Aggregate unemployment refers to the sum of single



units of unemployment, collective or the combined effect of individual unemployment (Clark et al., 2010:52). The authors mention that aggregate unemployment can reduce the chances of finding employment for a specific person, lower the satisfaction with life but on the other side the unemployed person does not feel that he is “out of the norm” (Clark et al., 2010:53). The researcher is of the opinion that the young adult will be discouraged if his chances for employment are extensively reduced and he will not be able to successfully complete the developmental task of finding employment which in turn will lead to re-examining his purpose and identity. If many young adults experience this phenomenon then the individual will not feel unaccepted but rather feel part of a group that is struggling to find employment (Clark et al., 2010:53).

### **3.5.2.1 Worldwide extent of unemployment**

Unemployment is not only a social factor amongst young workers in South Africa, but also in the rest of the West (Farrell & Fenwick, 2007:1; Palmer, 2007:398, 399; Tomé, 2007:337). During the 1990s Sweden experienced an economic recession and a high rate of unemployment (Bergmark & Palme, 2003:108; Franzén & Kassman, 2005:402). The unemployment rate rose from 1.7% to 8.3% between 1990 and 1993. Duffy (2009:2) mentions that during 2003 youth unemployment were double that of adult unemployment. The estimation by 2010 is that globally 700 million young people will be seeking work (Du Toit, 2008:4). Behrens and Evans (2002:17) mention that Europe had the target of reducing youth unemployment between 1997 and 2002 by 50%. The levels of youth unemployment were at 4.3% in Derby (England) and as high as 20% in Leipzig (Germany).

Biagi and Lucifora (2008:1080) mention that there is a difference in unemployment rate between youth unemployment and adult unemployment, as well as between the northern and southern regions in Europe, during the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Youth unemployment rose in both regions in comparison to adult unemployment (Biagi & Lucifora, 2008:1081). Shimer (2001) as cited by Biagi and Lucifora (2008:1082) disagrees with this statement as Shimer found that the increase in youth unemployment also affected the adult unemployment negatively, by way of increased adult unemployment, in the United States of America during the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.



Both England and Germany's education and training systems were involved in providing programmes to address the reduction of youth unemployment levels during the late 1990s. The programmes concentrated on improving the opportunities of unemployed youth for learning and working by first obtaining vocational qualifications and then to progress from "training" into the labour market (Behrens & Evans, 2002:19, 20). Likewise Biagi and Lucifora (2008:1087) found in their research in Europe that the change in educational achievements and change in demographics had an impact on young adult unemployment. As the education levels of the youth improved the unemployment rate decreased (Biagi & Lucifora, 2008:1077, 1078). During the late 1990s the number of young adults in comparison to adults increased which also impacted on more young adults searching for employment and competing for employment in relation to the number of adults entering the labour market (Biagi & Lucifora, 2008:1078). Franzén and Kassman (2005:405) caution that longer educational training does not necessarily lead to better employment opportunities.

Education plays an important role in obtaining and keeping a position in the labour market in Europe (Biagi & Lucifora, 2008:1077). The authors mention that those with lower education are three times more likely to be unemployed. However, Behrens and Evans (2002:23) point out that youth with "good school leaving certificates" or a degree often struggle to establish a secure position in the labour market immediately. This phenomenon is not confined only to the very poor or disadvantaged anymore but is now an acceptable phenomenon amongst middle class as well. This is similar to the experience of South African youth (Department of Statistics, 2008: viii). Franzén and Kassman (2005:404) also refer to the "economically inactive" young adults that are finding it more difficult to enter the labour market and therefore establish themselves at a much later age in the labour market. Due to this phenomenon the period of unemployment or being economically inactive in Sweden, is thus much longer than before the 1990s. Macroeconomic deterioration has also contributed to this prolonged period. In a study conducted in England and Germany by Behrens and Evans (2002:24) it was found that families played a significant role in their children entering the labour market. Many parents did not support their children psychologically and socially as the parents were struggling to cope with their own problems and to survive. Other parents showed a

lack of interest in the child by letting them make their own decision about entering the labour market.

Some of the challenges created by a knowledge-based economy are that it requires high-skilled workers as well as enough work placements by companies (Biagi & Lucifora, 2008:1098). One of the phenomena is structural unemployment. Structural unemployment is the “falling away” of products and services that are then replaced by substitute products or automation (Duffy, 2009:1). Complete industries can disappear when there is no demand for a specific product or service anymore (Duffy, 2009:1). This has a major impact on the unemployment ratio unless the unemployed have skills that can be used in other industries or they are willing to retrain.

### **3.5.2.2 Unemployment in South Africa**

The White Paper for Social Welfare (Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997:3) cites that nearly 33% of unemployed people in South Africa were under the age of 24. Furthermore, the South African economy has not sufficiently provided for employment opportunities and this has increased the vulnerability of households and poverty (Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997:3). According to the World Economic Forum Global Risk 2014 Report (SA youth unemployment..., 2014) South Africa has the third highest unemployment rate in the world and that more than 50% of unemployed South Africans are between the ages of 15 and 24 years.

Linders (2001:1) says in her paper delivered to the Nedlac Annual Summit in 2001 that even after seven years in a democratic South Africa the country is still experiencing low levels of economic growth, which impact on rising levels of unemployment and poverty. During 2001, the unemployment rate was 40.9% (Department of Statistics, 2002:2). This high unemployment rate has repercussion for the youth as daily nearly half of the population is seeking employment and this results in a longer time for searching and securing a job (McLintok-Rudnick, 2001:viii). The government realised the increase in unemployment amongst young adults in South Africa and The National Youth Service Programme (NYSP) was created in 2003. The purpose of this programme was to enhance the second-

economy by addressing the high levels of youth unemployment (ASGI-SA Annual Report, 2008:23).

According to the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (Department of Statistics, 2014:v) the unemployment rate in South Africa as at June 2014 was 25.5%, whilst the labour force grew 0.2%. During the second quarter of 2014, the unemployment rate rose among the Coloured and White population, but it declined amongst the African/Black and Indian population. Banerjee et al., (2007:16) mention that unemployment amongst young adults is of concern. This could be due to the change in the composition of the labour force and the education level of the labour force. According to Banerjee et al., (2007:4) and Altman (2004:176) the effects of the control over the right to education, especially African education, has an impact on post-apartheid employment as African young adults' level of education is lower than the other populations' level of education. Many African young adults were forced to leave the formal education system before completing all levels. This educational problem of not completing all levels and inferior quality of education is also cited by Altman (2004:176).

According to Banerjee et al., (2007:18) labour demand played a role in unemployment in South Africa. Furthermore Banerjee et al., (2007:19) argue that the structural change of the labour market contributed to unemployment as many employees from the Mining and Agricultural sector could not make the transition to the Retail, Wholesale and Finance segment of the labour market due to lack of skills. Duffy (2009:1) refers to structured unemployment, which can result in whole businesses disappearing, or even industries due to product substitution or automation of services. In South Africa this phenomenon happened after the election of a democratic government and the businesses that were setup in the then called "homelands" disintegrated as labour became too expensive. De-industrialisation resulted in higher unemployment (Davies, 2009:1). One initiative in South Africa concerning structural unemployment is the skills development initiative of the SETAs where they are offering retraining of unemployed staff such as the textile industry in the Western Cape area (State of the Nation Address, 2010:7).

The South African government recognised the shortage of skilled employees and established the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa during 2006 (ASGI-SA) to address the required economic growth rate of 4.5% between 2004 and 2009, 6% between 2010 and 2014 and to halve poverty and unemployment by 2014. ASGI-SA recognised if the skills shortage in the South Africa is not addressed, the required growth rate would not be reached (Mohamed, 2006:1). ASGI-SA's Annual Report for 2008 mentions that many second economy programmes failed to address reduction of poverty and unemployment amongst the youth and women and that the government failed to achieve successful market outcomes at the marginalised economic context (ASGI-SA, 2008:11).

Banerjee et al. (2007:51) did a research amongst people between the ages of 15-69 about reasons why people are not working. Young adults between 20 and 24 were the third highest group at 7.43% that cited lack of skills as the reason for not working. Another possibility mentioned by Banerjee et al. (2007:51) is that employers may be more particular with regards to other attributes such as experience and this places the young adult or currently unemployed at a greater disadvantage. Another factor that increased the unemployment rate was the increase in African female labour in the "new" South Africa (Banerjee et al., 2007:53). Mr. Gordhan (National Budget Speech, 2010) who stated that school leavers lack basic work place competencies confirmed this.

The Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE) stated during 2008 that the Job-creation programmes in the major metropolitan areas in South Africa are not delivering and have no major impact on alleviating unemployment amongst young adults. The Chief Executive Officer of the CDE, Mrs Bernstein said that "youth unemployment in South Africa is extensive...and amongst the highest in the world." (Report: Youth Job-creation programmes are failing, 2008). Mr. Zuma in his State of the Nation Address (2010) mentioned that the unemployment rate amongst youth is above average. The current State President of South Africa has committed himself and government to ensure that the unemployment rate amongst young adults decreases by promoting learnerships, proposing subsidies to employers to employ young and inexperienced people and hasten the skills development programme for youth (State of the Nation Address, 2010).

The researcher is of the opinion that macroeconomic deterioration and longer elapsed time between formal education and entering into the labour market are also contributing factors to the higher unemployment rate amongst youth in South Africa. During the Budget Speech by Trevor Manuel (2009:2), he highlighted that the budget was based on five enduring principles of which one was “Sustaining employment growth and expanding training opportunities”. Manuel has allocated R25 billion, mainly for education and skills development which were seen as a priority in creating employment (Budget Speech, 2009:8). The current South African president, Mr. Jacob Zuma, mentioned in his State of the Nation Address (2010:4) that 900 000 jobs were lost due to the current economic situation and that this is affecting the youth, as the unemployment rate amongst youth is higher than average. In June 2014 the unemployment rate amongst youth is 66% (Statistics SA, 2014:xv). Mr. Pravin Gordhan (National Budget Speech, 2010) confirmed that unemployment is amongst the highest in the world especially amongst the South African youth.

Palmer (2007:397, 400) is of the opinion that skills development in developing countries need to receive more attention to help alleviate un/under-employment and ultimately reduce poverty. ASGI-SA (2008:20) recognised that the second economy strategy needs to provide an “employment safety net” by building the youth’s capacity to work through providing opportunities for experience and income resulting in enhanced dignity and social inclusion. Mr. Gordhan (National Budget Speech, 2010) emphasised that the South African government will endeavour to invest in further skills development for the young adult by increasing the budget to the FETs and by establishing a vocational subsidy to employ inexperienced young adults.

As the economy, environment, globalisation and institutions are failing to provide adequate opportunities for employment, it is important that the individual takes responsibility for its destiny (Cripe & Mansfield, 2002:3). The global economy has experienced difficult times since 2008, this has resulted in developing economies growing slower than anticipated, and achieving the growth rate of 6% is unlikely (ASGI-SA, 2008:4). An individual has thus the responsibility to become more valuable or employable by improving their skills, knowledge and attitude (Cripe & Mansfield, 2002:ix).

### **3.5.3 Impact of unemployment on young adults**

Different researchers (Fergusson, Horwood & Woodward, 2001:306) studied and clearly described the tremendous impact of unemployment on people and specifically on the young adult. As early as 1930 during the Great Depression interest was shown in the etiological factors of health and unemployment (Fergusson et al., 2001:306). Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld (1938:359) as cited by Fergusson et al. (2001:306) state that “unemployment tends to make people more emotionally unstable than they were previous to unemployment”. In the research conducted by Fergusson et al. (2001:310) the authors concluded that the period of exposure to unemployment correlates with increased risks in mental health problems, substance abuse, crime and pregnancy. The authors found that young adults that were exposed to unemployment for longer than six months were between 1.4 to 8.1 times more prone to mental health problems, criminal offending, substance use disorders and suicidal behaviours than their “non unemployed” peers.

Bergmark and Palme’s (2003:117) research revealed that young adults’ circumstances were detrimentally affected by unemployment, particularly in respect to their economic circumstance and gaining entrance into or remaining in the labour market. Franzén and Kassman (2005:403) state that if young adults were inactive in the labour market between the ages of 20-24 it is highly likely that at age 27-31 they would still be unemployed. Further, they conclude that this was particularly true in Sweden among foreign-borns and the lower-education level young adults.

Fergusson et al. (2001:310) point out that there is a linkage between unemployment and personal adjustment, unemployment and psychosocial disorders such as crime, substance abuse and juvenile offending and unemployment and health. Louw and Louw (2009:244), Santrock (2009:437) and Sadava, O’Connor and McCreary (2000:550) agree that unemployment does have an adverse effect on physical problems (heart attack), health problems, marital difficulties and psychological problems. Duffy (2009:4) mentions that anxiety, depression and low self-esteem were evident amongst the unemployed in the U.S. Unemployed people showed aimlessness, boredom, loneliness and emotional support systems were lacking. The “sense of belonging” was greatly lacking. Santrock (2009:437) mentions that mental problems and homicide were associated with unemployment.

Bezuidenhout (2008:209) speaks of wasted workforce where someone who is able to work cannot find employment and this has consequences such as poverty. Poverty is also related to engaging in criminal activities, substance abuse, intercultural and interracial tension, inferior living conditions and unsafe and unhealthy living environment (Bezuidenhout, 2008:204-209). Franzén and Kassman (2005:405, 406) are of the same opinion that longer periods of unemployment can lead to receiving care for substance abuse and other related social and psychological problems. The authors also mention that the suicidal rate amongst unemployed young adults did increase.

Both Bezuidenhout (2008:209) and Fergusson et al. (2001:317) agree that unemployment could lead to crime. Fergusson et al. (2001:317) found that several factors combined, such as low income, lots of free time and association with deviant peers increases the risk for young adults to resort to crime. Inactivity leads to marginalisation and people give up hope of being employed. Social-psychological aspects of inactivity affect the formation of identity capital and the development of deviant routine activities (Bergmark & Palme, 2003:118).

Hammer (2007:249) is of the opinion that unemployment among youth does not mean that unemployment leads to being on the periphery of society and socially excluded. The author says that long-term effects of unemployment depend upon the way that young adults manage unemployment, the duration of the unemployment period, their mental health status and educational qualifications. Add to this the knowledge driven society that emerged because of a “knowledge economy”, then the possibilities of youth from a disadvantaged area are even slimmer to being successful in securing employment. Franzén and Kassman (2005:407) caution that there is not enough long-term empirical evidence to conclude absolutely that unemployment leads to social marginalisation. They state that in literature there is evidence that unemployment does have detrimental effects on young adults’ lives such as recurring unemployment and lower income levels. The authors also mention wasted production potential, and lower tax revenues. Sadava et al. (2000:558) cite that unemployment can lead to an inadequate financial position resulting in stress. Bergmark and Palme (2003:108, 115) agree that unemployment has an effect on the disposable income of young adults.



Unemployment is not only associated with loss of income but also with loss of social status, reduced contact with other people than the family and a lack of purpose in life (Clark et al., 2010:52; Duffy, 2009:3; Louw & Louw, 2009:244). Franzen and Kassman (2005:422) agree that inactive young adults have fewer opportunities to engage with potential employers, their daily routines fade and a life with lesser contacts with conventional society is initiated.

Fergusson et al. (2001:317) caution that unemployment was not the sole contributing factor to psychological disorders and personal maladjustments. The authors stress that unemployment is only one of many risk factors for disorder. Sadava et al. (2000:558) agree that unemployment is not the only prognosticator for health behaviours. The impact of unemployment on young adults must be considered in a much broader context that includes social disadvantage, family dysfunction, individual characteristics and peer association.

Unemployment also has an effect on the children of the unemployed person in such a way that it can lead to deviant behaviour and socio-emotional problems. The authors Bergmark and Palme (2003:116) further argue that unemployment reduces finding employment and re-employment prospects. People with lower re-employment prospects are more susceptible to the “social-norm” effect of unemployment (Bergmark and Palme, 2003:116; Clark et al., 2010:53,60). The “social-norm” effect refers to the degree of deviation from the socially accepted norm of unemployment. The paradox of this “social-norm” effect is that as the percentage of unemployment increases the well-being of the already unemployed could improve, as there are more “alike” people in the community to associate with (Clark et al., 2010:54). The escalation in unemployment has an effect on the “value” that is attached by poor-prospect unemployed and the ratio has the possibility of hysteresis in unemployment. For good-prospect unemployed the opposite applies (Clark et al., 2010:60). Louw and Louw (2009:244) agree that some individuals can change unemployment into new opportunities that can lead to personal growth.

According to a research done by Behrens and Evans (2002:21) the unemployed youth in England and Germany cited personal and family problems (29% and 21%) and health problems (31% and 18%) as the main problems for successful integration



into the labour market. Behrens and Evans (2002:23) state that youth learn from their parents which route to follow as preparation for employment. Bergmark and Palme (2003:116) mentioned that disadvantages in social structure are passed on from one generation to the next one. If these observations are compared to the South African situation, then youth will also follow their parent's example and traditionally the African population entered into mining and agricultural industries (Banerjee et al., 2007:19). These industries have greatly reduced the job availability due to the global economic crisis and this resulted in more unemployed youth (ASGI-SA, 2008:32; Pieterse & Van Wyk, 2005:77-79).

Patel (2005:166) mentions that youth in the 18-35 age group experience a higher rate of unemployment than other age groups. The author contributes this amongst other things to a lack of vocational skills and employment opportunities (Patel, 2005:166). Reynecke (2006:31) also mentions that long periods of unemployment lead to apathy and this has an impact on self-esteem. Franzén and Kassman (2005:419) agree that longer periods of unemployment lead to apathy and it becomes more difficult to re-enter the labour market. Lack of skills and marginalization brought along the social exclusion of people and made them more susceptible to social risk factors and the way they look at the self (Patel, 2005:16,17).

According to Banerjee et al. (2007:32) many young adults have not had any labour market experience and are more likely to remain unemployed. The authors raise the concern that this inability to find a first job could be due to the disparity between skills taught at educational institutions and skills needed in the workplace. Banerjee et al., (2007:36) also mentioned that "unobservable characteristics" such as quality of education and access to resources play a crucial role in finding work.

It is clear that from the literature consulted that unemployment has many different effects on young adults. The effects range from psychological disorders, personal maladjustment and social marginalisation to disparity in necessary skills for successful employment. Johnston and Watson (2004:55) mention that modern-day organisations require employees to be more self-reliant, risk taking and responsible. The emphasis should be on more "soft skills", that is the application of knowledge in

practice (21<sup>st</sup>-Century Workforce, 2009: Farrell & Fenwick, 2007:20; Cox & King, 2006:264). The researcher agrees with Mr. Gordhan (National Budget Speech, 2010) that something different needs to be done to meet peoples basic needs concerning employment.

### **3.5.4 Conclusion**

Over the decades, the work environment has changed. Rasool (2010) is of the opinion that the knowledge of climate change will have an effect on the labour market and a possible “green” age or climate change management would ensure a sustainable business and result in a low carbon economy. This will have an impact on occupational and employment patterns.

The change in the global economy and the context in which work is conducted has affected the employability of young adults. Various programmes, world-wide and in the South African context, have been initiated to address the disparities with varying successes. Socio-economic factors, education, family attributes and access to employment opportunities have contributed to young adults being economically inactive and unproductive. There is a clear indication that a different approach to skills development is required to decrease unemployment and to increase employment amongst young adults.

## **3.6 SUMMARY**

In chapter three young adulthood as a life phase was explored. The researcher described the various developmental theories such as the psychoanalytic, cognitive theories of Piaget, Vygotsky’s socio-historical view, the behavioural and social cognitive theories and the ethological and ecological systems developmental theories. The researcher also described the young adult with reference to his physical development, personality development, social development and cognitive development.

The young adult has to complete certain developmental tasks to successfully progress through life. One of these tasks is to establish a career and to become financially independent. This task was further explored within the current economic

situation in South Africa with special reference to unemployment, and the effect of unemployment on the young adult. Skills development of young adults needs to be considered from a different angle to ensure more opportunities for being more employable. The core skills for employment will play a greater role in securing employment, and the next chapter will thoroughly discuss these core skills.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CORE SKILLS

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

A skilled workforce is essential for work efficiency (Confederation of British Industry, 2008:1). Workforce communicates with other people, works with other individuals or in a team, solves problems, uses communication and is able to work with numbers (Guide to assessing work place core skills, 2008:1).

Farrell and Fenwick (2007:6) pose the question “what knowledge is required in the workplaces of a global economy”? It seems that consensus has been reached that the emphasis should be on more “soft skills”, that is the application of knowledge in practice (Thompson & Guile, 1994:3, 6; Dench, 1997:191; Fallows & Steven, 2000:75; Cox & King, 2006:264; Farrell & Fenwick, 2007:20; 21<sup>st</sup> –Century Workforce, 2009). According to Brothers (2007), Heuer (2007) and Esterhuizen (2008) there has been a shift from employing a candidate with technical and intellectual knowledge to employing someone with more “core-“, “key-” or “soft skills” and someone who can think “out of the box”, and who is motivated and has the right attitude towards work. The Confederation of British Industry (2008:3, 5) found from their research that the basic and generic skills are the key weaknesses in unemployment in London. The research also indicated that businesses require a workforce that is pre-equipped with generic and basic skills. Basic skills refer to foundational skills such as reading, writing, speaking and mathematics which are necessary to succeed in a goal (California Community College, 2008:3). Callan (2003:10) defines generic skills as literacy, numeracy, problem-solving skills, information technology skills and systems thinking. Callan (2003:11) uses basic, core and generic skills as interchangeable terminology. According to Gregory, (2006:8) core skills such as teamwork and communication are amongst the skills that improve employability.

Core skills are not new to society. Since the earliest days, skills have been categorised as basic skills, soft skills and technical skills (Bingham & Drew, 1999:vii; Gibbons-Wood & Lange, 2000:28; Welsh & Canning, 2003:5). Various terms are

used in literature such as application of soft skills, generic skills, key skills, personal skills or transferable skills (Dench, 1997:191; Welsh & Canning, 2003:3; Johnston & Watson, 2004:53; Cox & King, 2006:26). For the purpose of this study the researcher has decided to use the term core skills. Core skills refer to the broad transferable skills that help young adults to unlock the potential of successful employment, to be full, active and responsible employees. Core skills consist of communication skills, numeracy, information communication technology, problem solving skills and working with others. Core skills address the application of basic skills in a working environment (Cumbernauld College, 2006:2; Welsh & Canning, 2003:8-13). The Scottish Qualifications Authority view core skills to be life and work skills that are used on a daily basis in general applications in the home, community and work (Guide to assessing..., 2008:15).

As the environment of work and life has rapidly changed over the decades from production orientated to a more service orientated industry, core skills have become more important (Skills for Success, 2006:1; Welsh & Canning, 2003:5; Gibbons-Wood & Lange, 2000:24). According to the Confederation of British Industry's Rethinking Skills Agenda (2006:11) the changes in the Scottish labour market required businesses to have a greater focus on core skills such as teamwork. The Skills for Growth report (U.K. Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 2009:3) is of the opinion that an increase in social mobility will depend on enabling the potential workforce to acquire transferable or core skills that are appropriate for the changing globalised knowledge economy. Skilled people earn more, have more satisfying jobs and their well-being is improved (U.K. Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 2009:3).

The Confederation of British Industry (2008:8, 14) stated that employability skills are of the essence for youth and identified the following skills:

- self-management
- team working
- problem solving
- communication
- application of literacy

- business awareness
- customer care
- application of numeracy
- Information Technology Competence

Cripe and Mansfield (2002:11) mention that an employee that adds value to an organisation must have four fundamental qualities namely commitment, competency, clarity about his or her purpose in the organisation and customer-focus. Customer in this context refers to both external customers and internal customers (fellow colleagues). The authors identified self-image, skills, thought processes and behaviours as important components of competency. The researcher is of the opinion that the transferable competency skill of dealing with people is an important component as it is part of the employability skills of teamwork, self-assessment, customer care and problem solving identified by Confederation of British Industry (2008:8) and Skills for Success (2006:1).

## **4.2 DESCRIPTION OF CORE SKILLS**

Core skills are an important trait for people who want to be well equipped and play an active and flexible role in modern workplaces and society and reduce unemployment (Palmer, 2006:399, 402; Tomé, 2007:340). Core skills help people to communicate well, identify and solve problems, use information technology well and work with others to accomplish goals (Scottish Qualifications Authority - Core skills, 2006). For the purpose of this study the core skills, namely numeracy, information technology, competencies dealing with people, problem solving and working with others will be described more in detail.

### **4.2.1 Numeracy skills**

Numeracy can be defined as the skill to think logically and infer with numbers and mathematical notions in everyday life (Queensland Government: Department of Education and Training, [sa]:2). Numeracy includes concepts such as basic numbers, orders of magnitude, geometry, algebra, probabilities, graphical

information and measurement (Pierce, 2012a; Scottish Qualifications Authority - Core Skills, 2006).

Mathematics is often described as the “science of numbers” or the study of patterns, quantity, structure, space and change (*Oxford Dictionary*, 2014; Pierce, 2012b). In the earlier days the meaning of mathematics was derived around depicting patterns of relationships, assigning symbols and grammatical rules from common experiences (Gilfeather & del Regato, 1999:2). Mathematical concepts are part of everyday life and can be found in virtually everything around us such as shapes of buildings, buying goods, budgets, travelling from one point to another, cooking and throwing cricket balls. Mathematical skills can be used in problem solving, communication, data handling and with analytical abilities (Gilfeather & del Regato, 1999:3; Creating choices, [sa]; Pierce, 2012b). These transferable skills can be used in any work situation, as the person will have a foundation in how to do thorough investigations. Music has mathematical patterns to it, structural engineers use mathematics to calculate force distribution in for example bridges, and three-dimensional objects such as virtual landscapes in computer games.

#### **4.2.2 Information technology**

The information era has brought about greater awareness of information and the need for quick accessibility of information (A very short..., 2013:2; Martin, 1995:42). In an information society living standards, work and leisure patterns, the education system and the macroeconomic environment are influenced and shaped by the advances of information and knowledge (A very short..., 2013:1, 2; Saracevic, 1999:1053; Martin, 1995:42, 43). Martin (1995:45) mentions that information technology has an impact on the development of the society and on the well-being of the person, thus on all the levels of the ecosystems theory.

According to the Australian National Training Authority (Kenny, English & Kilmartin, 2007:5) the ability to work with new technology and to demonstrate proficiency with computers is a prerequisite skill for employment. The acquisition of this proficiency starts at school (Saracevic, 1999:1061; Meadows, 1989:118). According to Davis and Olson (1985:234) the most critical component of information technology and the management thereof is the interchange between the system (computer) and the user

(employee). Singarella (1998:10) and Epstein (2011) point out that being successful in modern days will rely on the storage, the retrieval and the rapid transfer of accurate information. The authors state that the socioeconomically disadvantaged will be at greater risk if they are not technologically skilled (Epstein, 2011; Singarella, 1998:10). The researcher agrees with this statement and it is therefore even more important to make the technological skills more accessible to disadvantaged youth through a pre-employment core skills programme.

#### **4.2.3 Competencies dealing with people**

Cripe and Mansfield (2002:134,137) identified two clusters in dealing with people. The two clusters are “The Leading Others” and “Communication and Influencing” cluster. The Leading Others cluster consists of establishing focus, providing motivational support, fostering teamwork, empowering others, managing change, developing others and managing performance. The common characteristic in this cluster is to know one self, fellow colleagues and sub-ordinates; and knowing how to support, encourage, develop and lead (Cripe & Mansfield, 2002:134-137).

The Communication and Influencing cluster consists of skills such as disseminating information to key people, expressing oneself clearly in verbal and written format (literacy), being credible, being perceptive, building relationships and people orientated (Cripe & Mansfield, 2002:137-140). The common characteristics in this cluster are communication, observation and persuasion. Communication is a process used to exchange ideas, needs and desires (Owens, 2005:11). Language and speech are important parts of communication as language is used to express thoughts, needs and desires (Owens, 2005:11; Foley & Thompson, 2003:2).

##### **4.2.3.1 Language**

Language is natural to people and children grasp linguistics swiftly at a young age. The understanding and application of language is not so rapidly acquired and takes place more during adulthood (Foster-Cohen, 1999:1, 35, 95; Meadows, 1989:32). To be able to understand language and the importance of communication, children need a lot of pointers and comments (Owens, 2005:33; Foster-Cohen, 1999:2, 96; Meadows, 1989:35). Language is a complex system and consists of interrelated structures that create meaning (Owens, 2005:7, 13, 15; Foley & Thompson, 2003:2,



3, 18). The reading and writing of a language is often connected with formal learning institutions, as it is a form of cognitive contest and abstract reasoning whereas the speaking of a language is often learned in an informal environment (Owens, 2005:51, 384; Foley & Thompson, 2003:15). Literacy consists of speech, reading and writing skills and these are of utmost importance in public, political, educational and work situations (Beitchmann & Brownlie, 2010:1; Owens, 2005:381; Foley & Thompson, 2003:3, 173).

Jean Piaget contributed widely to the knowledge of how children learn a language and divided the process into five stages (Owens, 2005:123; Foley & Thompson, 2003:29). The stages are from birth to two years, from two to seven years of age, from seven to 11 years of age and the formal operations stage from 11 to 16 years of age (Foley & Thompson, 2003:30, 31). Piaget distinguished between two stages in the development of speech, namely “ego-centric speech” (stage 2) and “social speech” (stage 1) (Owens, 2005:123). According to the *Psychology Dictionary* (2014) and *Three stages of Speech* (2014) “social speech” refers to external or outward speech which is “used to bring across an idea to others” or to “control behavior of others”. This type of speech is used to voice thoughts and feelings (Three Stages of Speech, 2014). The second stage in speech development, namely “ego-centric speech” is a voluble dialogue that the person has with themselves and often is characterised by making remarks (Three Stages of Speech, 2014). Both stage 1 and 2 are mainly present during childhood development. A third stage of speech development which is found mainly during adulthood is the “inner speech” stage (Three Stages of Speech, 2014). This stage is characterised by a quiet inner dialogue that directs a person’s thinking and behavior.

Lev Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist, viewed the learning of language from an environmental context where cognitive development and social development interact (Owens, 2005:123; Foley & Thompson, 2003:58). He suggested that humans use sign systems to fulfill their needs. The society in which the person lives and the interaction with society determines these signs (Foley & Thompson, 2003:58, 59, 260).

Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory can be linked to the development or learning of language within the four levels of contexts that he identified, namely the micro system, the ecosystem, the exosystem and the macro system (Foley & Thompson, 2003:255). In the micro system, the child is actively involved with the primary caregiver where the child learns the cultural and linguistic norms of that society (Owens, 2005:141; Foley & Thompson, 2003:256). The home of the child and family or friends is the primary socialising influence on how the child learns to communicate competently (Owens, 2005:148; Foley & Thompson, 2003:256). On a mesosystem level, the child will interact with other institutions in the environment such as the nursery school and the play area where roles are learned (Foley & Thompson, 2003:257). On an exosystem level the child may be influenced by spontaneous connections such as the radio, television, electronic media and more formal educational institutions (pre-school to postgraduate) where the child will learn roles and etiquette of communication (Foley & Thompson, 2003:257). On a macro system level the sub-culture of the society determines the learning of the individual. These include the language and ideologies of the society (Foley & Thompson, 2003:258). The ecological systems theory concept applied to learning of language accentuates that learning is dynamic and that the immediate environment and societal structures have bearing on human development (Foley & Thompson, 2003:258, 259). The researcher is of the opinion that language development is related to the milieu, the environment, social situation and the life experiences of the person during their development.

In addition, each piece of a person's development is affected by other facet(s) and these facets cannot be compartmentalised into separate categories of development. For instance, if a child's physical state is affected by being malnourished, he or she is unable to learn (Wilson, 2002). According to a survey conducted in 2007 (South Africa in literacy, numeracy crisis, 2008) the literacy skills of grade pupils in South Africa were alarmingly low at 36%. The then Minister of Education said that the low literacy level reduces the chances of further success in education. Wilson (2002) mentions that literacy and especially reading determines later success in a person's educational career. Beitchman and Brownlie (2010:1) agree that language development is crucial for success in later life. The authors mention that language skills impairment can lead to juvenile delinquency, social problems and behavioural

problems (Beitchman & Brownlie, 2010:1, 2). Bisseker (2013:1) mentions that young “township” adults who were part of a job creation project funded by the Jobs Fund in South Africa showed that given proper exposure to good teaching, their learning and literature potential had increased vastly and that they could be made more employable and in the context of this study an important core skill to improve the opportunities for employment. These concepts also strengthen the use of the ecological systems theory as a theoretical framework for this research.

#### **4.2.4 Problem solving**

On a daily basis, humans are exposed to a wide range of choices and decisions have to be made. These decisions may be easy or pose challenges or problems. The options may not be obvious and may seem unsolvable (Problem Solving Strategies, 2010).

A problem can be defined as an “unpleasant situation” or a “difficulty” or as “an opportunity to make a difference” (Problem-Solving Skills in Education & Life, 2010). According to Hardin (2002:230) and Mayer and Wittrock ([sa]:1) problem solving can be defined as “a mental process that includes problem finding and problem shaping” and that requires thinking skills, critical thinking skills, analysing skills and decision-making skills. Mayer and Wittrock ([sa]:1) elaborate further on the definition by stating that “problem solving is when the problem solver needs to achieve a goal and has no noticeable solution to the stated problem”. The authors Mayer and Wittrock ([sa]:1) are of the opinion that problem solving is in the mind of the problem solver, it is a process which is guided by the problem solver’s goals and is personal as it depends on the knowledge and skills of the problem solver. Problem solving entails changing an actual current situation into a desired future situation, it is a “now” state into a “goal” state (Problem-solving skills..., 2010; Frensch & Funke, 2005:4). Regarding problem solving, Frensch and Funke (2005:4) mention that problem solving uses inductive and deductive processes. Deductive refers to a conclusion or derivation of an answer from the general or the broader to more specifics whereas inductive means deriving at a general conclusion by starting at the specific and finding patterns and ending at a general assumption (Shuttleworth, 2008). Problem solving can thus be a tool, a skill or a process.

Problem solving entails several steps namely (Problem Solving Strategies, 2010; 4 Steps to Problem solving, 2010):

- Understanding or defining the problem
- Analysing the problem and solutions and then devising a plan
- Implementing the plan
- Looking back or evaluate the outcome

Problem solving is a valuable asset and a skill that will sustain a person throughout life (Problem solving Strategies, 2010) and in the context of this study an important core skill in the working environment.

#### **4.2.5 Working with others**

On a daily basis, we engage with other people in a work context, forming a team to work towards a shared vision, mission and goals. Teamwork can be defined as “work performed by a team” and having a common goal in mind towards improving the enterprise (Guest, 2008:340). Coakly in Guest (2008:342) refers to the meaning of teamwork as “loyalty and productivity under the direction of a leader coach”. Guest (2008:345) mentions that teamwork helps with the shift from “I” to “we” and this requires social understanding of the people involved and the situation. Teamwork is dynamic and the environment, the task, individual preferences and perceived workload influences the performance and effectiveness of the team (Salas, Sims & Burke, 2005:587; Kiffin-Peterson & Cordery, 2003:99, 100). The process of teamwork can be measured in terms of communication, coordination, contributions, support, effort and cohesion.

The purpose of teamwork is to create a framework for employees or people to be able to participate in planning, problem solving and decision making to accomplish the organisation’s goals and mission. Teamwork creates better understanding of decisions, more support in implementing plans, increase contributions in the processes and more command of processes and buy in into decisions (Team Purpose, 2010; Salas et al., 2005:558). Teamwork helps a system grow stronger, achieve great heights and foster collective well-being (Keys to Teambuilding success, 2010; Guest, 2008:343; Maxwell, 2001:4).

In working with others (team) it is important to understand one's own shortfalls and strengths and those of the other people in the team so that each person can complement the other person to achieve success (Salas et al., 2005:562, 565; Maxwell, 2001:5). Teamwork requires adaptability and above all **trust** (in self, management and co-workers), but teamwork also has the potential to provide increased productivity and creativity in solving problems (Salas et al., 2005:555, 556; Kiffin-Peterson & Cordery, 2003:94). Salas et al. (2005:564) argue that if teams and or team members receive training in performance monitoring, adaptation and facilitative leadership, then the team would perform better. The team members need to understand their roles and the resources available to them to work effectively together (Salas et al., 2005:565; Kiffin-Peterson & Cordery, 2003:99). Communication is essential to the process and the team must ensure that enough information is provided to the right individuals at the proper time for effective usage (Salas et al., 2005:568).

The core skills of numeracy, information technology, competencies dealing with people, problem solving and working with others were described more in detail to give a better understanding of what each core skill entails. In the next session the researcher will look at specifically how these core skills are incorporated in the development tasks of the young adult.

#### **4.3 CORE SKILLS FOR YOUNG ADULTS**

Adolescence is a vital time in the lifelong process of forming an identity, as the adolescent needs to define whom he is, where he is going and where he fits into society and then integrate it into a coherent self (Sigelman & Rider, 2009:332). Malekoff (2004:6-11) mentions that two of the developmental tasks of adolescence are: preparing for the future (skills development and desire for durable relationships) and facing social and educational demands. These tasks are realised through cognitive flexibility and initial choice of career or work. Louw and Louw (2009:153) and Rice (1995:471) mention that the developmental tasks of a young adult are to achieve independence and responsibility, to stabilise own identity, to define own values, to develop intimacy and commitment, to become established in a career and to find a place in the community and contribute towards it. During late adolescence,

the person entrenches its choices concerning career (Child Development, [sa]). The late adolescent or young adult that leaves school and enters the labour market is faced with new roles and responsibilities (Child Development, [sa]). Levinson in Louw and Louw (2009:153) and Aylmer (1989:203) are of the opinion that a mentor can help new employees to adjust to these new developmental roles and responsibilities. The researcher is of the opinion that the developmental roles and core skills are complementary as they both help the young adult to become more employable.

As the human develops changes happen on a biological, psychological and social domain (Louw & Louw, 2009:24). These changes do not happen separately from each other, but they form part of a lifelong development and each area or domain influences the other. For example a person's mental functioning (cognitive development) may determine what work (social development) this person can do. This correlates with the ecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner which forms the theoretical framework for this study. In the next paragraphs the researcher will elaborate on the four domains of development with specific reference to the young adult, namely cognitive development, social development, personality development and physical development (Louw & Louw, 2009:24) and how it links with core skills.

*Cognitive development* is the change that happens in the process of thinking, learning, remembering, judging, problem solving and communication throughout the human's life stages, it is from early childhood, through adolescence and young adulthood to adulthood (Louw & Louw, 2009:24, 89, 136; Santrock, 2009:15; Schoeman, 2005:79; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:187; Rice, 1995:10). According to Santrock (2009:374) the most important change in cognition in young adults transpires in reasoning, decision making and monitoring. These three components are identified by the Confederation of British Industry (2008:8) as part of employability skills and by Welsh and Canning (2003:8-13) as core skills. Santrock (2009:433) mentions that the operational thinking develops towards systematic and advanced thinking during young adulthood and this is the equivalent to critical thinking. Reasoning develops during young adulthood and this core skill is embedded when engaging in formal work (Louw & Louw, 2009:134; Santrock, 2009:433). Schaie (in Schaie & Willis, 2002) identified an achieving stage which

peaks during young adulthood. According to Louw and Louw (2009:136) this stage is achieved when long term goals are identified, applied and achieved. The accomplishment of a goal is very important during a young adult's stage of life (Louw & Louw, 2009:140). Goal and purpose setting are part of the core skills of teamwork and working with people (Guest, 2008:340; Team Purpose, 2010).

*Social development of the young adult* refers to social interaction or relationships with other (Louw & Louw, 2009:187; Santrock, 2009:181). The young adult spends a lot of time in increasing his social network (Sigelman & Rider, 2009:430; Specht & Craig, 1987:149). An important aspect that guides the young adult's attainment of a satisfactory relationships is attachment (Louw & Louw, 2009:194). Louw and Louw (2009:194) describe attachment as "a strong affectional tie that binds people together". Attachment is shaped during childhood and the quality of this attachment sculpts not only future relationships but also the way the person perceives themselves (Louw & Louw, 2009:194-197). The developmental task of establishing social networks and relationships is visible in the core skills of "communication", "competencies dealing with people" and "working with others". In this regard to social networks and relationships, Cripe and Mansfield (2002:134-137) mention the characteristics of knowing self and fellow colleagues as well as fostering teamwork as core skills. Communication is an important core skill that is applied in this developmental task of the young adult because communication is used to express ideas, needs and desires (Owens, 2005:11; Foley & Thompson, 2003:2).

*Personality development* and specifically the trait models of adult personality (Louw & Louw, 2009:158) are useful to understand in relation to the core skills of competencies dealing with people, working with others and solving problems. One component of the core skill of "competencies dealing with people" is "The leading of others" and in this component, the focus is to know fellow colleagues and subordinates, how to support and to encourage them as well as handling change (Cripe & Mansfield, 2002:134-137). People differ from each other and understanding one's own and other's personality types we come to appreciate, gain an understanding from these differences and acceptance of differences (Meyer et al., 2003:20). When understanding one's shortfalls and strengths, identity of self, and those of others in the team, each person can consciously work towards complementing the other



members in the team and facilitate creative problem solving which leads to success (Salas et al., 2005:555, 562, 565; Maxwell, 2001:5).

The *physical developmental tasks* of the young adult are mainly converged in change of appearance and sexual maturation (Louw & Louw, 2009:46, 56; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:150). The establishment of durable relationships is evident in the core skills of dealing with people, language, problem-solving and working with others (Malekoff, 2004:6; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:335).

The researcher is of the opinion that the developmental tasks and the identified core skills in this chapter are entwined and have a symbiotic association, yet each element has to evolve separately for the young adult to successfully enter the formal labour market.

#### **4.4 SUMMARY**

Individuals who can analyse and solve problems, communicate well, use information technology and work with others effectively, are more employable as they can assume an active, adaptive and responsible role in the workplace and society. These skills will sustain a person throughout life.

This chapter provided a literature study on core skills. This theoretical background is necessary to develop questionnaires to collect data for the development of a pre-employment core skills programme for young adults and then to pilot test this programme.

The next chapter will thus focus on an in-depth discussion of the research methodology used in this study in terms of problem formulation; goal and objectives of the study; research question and hypothesis; research approach; type of research; research design and methodology; research population, sample and sampling method; data collection method, pilot study; reliability and validity of questionnaires, data analysis and ethical considerations.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The focus of this study was on the development and pilot testing of a pre-employment core skills programme for young adults in order to equip them for the open labour market. Such a pre-employment core skills programme for young adults has the potential to improve the young adults' knowledge and application of employment core skills, which in turn could increase the likelihood of securing employment. Such a programme would also help to alleviate unemployment and poverty by contributing to the social development of young adults, enhancing human capital development, increasing opportunities to reach full educational potential, enhancing economic development and increasing the opportunity to be self-sufficient and raising the quality of life.

According to the Labour Force Survey (Department of Statistics, 2013:xiii, 4, 11) the unemployment rate in South Africa as at June 2013 was 36.7%, whilst the labour force grew 0.1%. During the first quarter of 2013, the unemployment rate rose among the black African and the white population, but it declined amongst the Indian/Asian and coloured population groups. On a year-on-year comparison a decrease was noticed among the black African and coloured population groups while it increased among white and Indian/Asian population groups. The survey (Department of Statistics, 2013:4) also states that approximately 33.5% of the 10,4 million South African youth were not in employment as at June 2013.

This high unemployment rate has repercussions for the youth as daily a substantial portion of the population is seeking employment and this results in a longer time for searching and securing a job (McLintok-Rudnick, 2001:viii).

Indabawa and Mpofu (2006:144) argue that it is necessary to ensure that the people of Africa (and specifically South Africa) acquire the necessary skills and values which will equip them to participate effectively in the global labour market. Visser (2009:1) mentions that the fall in production in the manufacturing sector will lead to large-

scale job losses. The expectancy in the manufacturing sector of the economy is that 100 000 workers will lose their jobs and that one out of every 100 workers will be without an income. The researcher agrees with De Lange (2009:1) that there will be more people with appropriate skills and experience that will seek employment. The young adult who has no experience in the labour market will be at a disadvantage and the chance to be employed will be minimal.

Based on the high unemployment amongst young adults and the lack of intervention programmes that address core skills for employment for young adults in South Africa, the researcher was interested in developing a pre-employment core skills programme for young adults that are making the transition from school to work. The researcher is thus of the opinion that a pre-employment core skills programme for young adults might increase the investment in human capital, increase employability, strengthen financial resources and enhance the quality of life of young adults in disadvantaged communities in South Africa.

When developing a programme from an empirical approach, it is important that the researcher uses appropriate and applicable research methods. The research methods as applicable in this study will be discussed in this chapter as part of the empirical phase of the study.

## **5.2 GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

Babbie and Mouton (2001:103) refer to a goal as a “dream”. Neuman (2000:23) refers to a goal as an objective that is more specific, concrete and measurable. Fouché and De Vos (2005a:104) state that a goal is “the end toward which effort or ambition is directed” and it is the “dream”, whilst the objective refers to that which can be measured, is specific and can be attained in a short period, “the steps one has to take” and “to attain the dream”.

### **5.2.1 Goal of proposed study**

The goal of this study was to develop and pilot test a pre-employment core skills training programme for young adults between ages of 18 and 25 years.

### **5.2.2 Objectives of the study**

Fouché and De Vos (2005a:104) describe the objective as the “concrete” and “measurable” concept of a research study. They refer to the steps or stages that have to be taken to achieve the goal(s).

The objectives formulated to achieve the goal of this study were the following:

- To conceptualise theoretically unemployment and the impact thereof on young adults, the phase of young adulthood and the core skills needed by young adults to be employable.
- To identify empirically the core employment skills needed for young adults from an employer’s perspective.
- To empirically explore the employment core skills needed from young adults’ perspective.
- To empirically explore the employment core skills needed for young adults from skills training providers’ perspective.
- To develop a pre-employment core skills programme for young adults.
- To pilot test the pre-employment core skills programme for young adults.
- To make recommendations to enhance the content of the newly developed pre-employment core skills programme for young adults.

Against this background the following research question and hypothesis guided the study.

### **5.3 RESEARCH QUESTION AND HYPOTHESIS**

Maree and Van der Westhuizen (2007:30) express that the research question must be linked to the goal or purpose of the study and it must be clear to “outside readers”. Research studies on core skills programmes in South Africa are scarce and this impeded on the formulation of a research question. In this regard Kumar (2005:73) states that “Hypotheses bring clarity, specificity and focus to a research problem...”.

This study consisted of two phases, namely an exploration phase (phase A) which explored the nature of employment core skills needed for young adults and a pilot test phase (phase B) which focussed on pilot testing the newly developed pre-employment core skills programme for young adults. For phase A, a research question was formulated and for phase B, a hypothesis was developed.

The research question for phase A of this study was:

*What are the core employment skills needed to develop a pre-employment core skills programme for young adults?*

Based on the outcome of the research question of phase A the following hypothesis for phase B was:

*If a pre-employment core skills programme is implemented with young adults, the young adult's knowledge and application of core employment skills would be enhanced.*

#### **5.4 RESEARCH APPROACH**

The broader theoretical perspective of the research process is referred to as the research approach (Creswell, 1994:4). According to Fouché and Delport (2005:73) there are two approaches to research, namely the qualitative and quantitative approaches. Quantitative research is more prescribed and controlled, procedures are planned prior to the commencement of the study, data collection is done in a standardised way and a hypothesis is tested (Fouché & Delport, 2005:73, 74). Ivankova et al., (2007:255) agree with the previous authors and add that the correlation between variables is explained. According to Kumar (2005:12) quantitative research is “a research process where the objectives, design, sample and questions that the respondents will be asked is predetermined”.

The approach in this study was a quantitative approach by using self-administered and group-administered questionnaires to collect data in a standardised way under

controlled circumstances with procedures planned prior to the commencement of the study in order to test a hypothesis. Questionnaires were used in both phase A and phase B of this study (see description of data collection methods in section 5.6.3).

## **5.5 TYPE OF RESEARCH**

When an immediate problem in practice is attempted to be solved which is relevant to the social work profession, then it can be described as applied research. Applied research uses existing knowledge from personal experience to develop services or processes (Fouché & De Vos, 2005a:106) and it aims to improve human conditions. This research is based on sustainable use of resources and the practical employment is not too far in the future (Applied Research, 2007:1).

The type of research used for the purpose of this study was applied research as the researcher attempted to understand a social problem in practice and finally developed a programme to induce change and to improve human conditions (De Vos, 2005:394; Fouché & De Vos, 2005a:106, 109). A pre-employment core skills programme for young adults that will make young adults more employable was developed.

## **5.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **5.6.1 Research design**

According to Huysamen (in Schoeman, 2005:11), Fouché and De Vos (2005c:132) and Kumar (2005:84) a research design is the overall plan, blueprint, logic or strategy according to which data is collected, examined, interpreted and questions are answered to obtain the end product.

The study was conducted in two phases namely:

- Phase (A): This phase was an exploration of core employment skills needed by young adults. The survey research design used was a randomised cross-sectional survey research design to explore and review which core employment skills were needed to develop a core skills programmes for

young adults from an employer's perspective, from young adults' perspective and from training providers' perspective. Fouché and De Vos (2005c:137) and Kumar (2005:282) are of the opinion that such a survey research design may be used during the needs assessment phase of research to develop an intervention or training programme.

- Phase (B): According to Kumar (2005:95) the advantage of the pretest-posttest design is that it measures the effect of transformation or the way of thinking of the same population at two different points in time. The researcher used the one-group pretest-posttest design in phase B of this study to assess the change in knowledge and application of core skills of young adults (dependent variables) through the deployment of an intervention, namely the pre-employment core skills programme for young adults (independent variable) (Fouché & De Vos, 2005c:139). The measuring instruments used during phase B were a group administered questionnaire, a practical case study in written format and unstructured observation of participation of respondents.

The pre-test measurement in this design was the measurement of the dependent variable (level of knowledge of core skills) with no independent variable (training programme) present. The dependent variable (level of knowledge of core skills) was measured (pre-test) before implementing the independent variable (training programme) with a group of young adults. The absence of the pre-test measurement of one of the dependent variables in this study, namely the level of application of core skills, is a limitation but unfortunately unavoidable due to the difficult nature of measuring application before the introduction of the independent variable. The independent variable (pre-employment core skills programme for young adults) was then introduced, followed by a repeated measuring (post-test) of the one dependant variable (level of knowledge). The measuring instrument was a group-administered questionnaire, which was presented before, and after the training programme to the respondents. A comparison between the results of the pre- and post-tests assisted the researcher to appraise the possible changes regarding the dependant variable namely knowledge of the

respondents. The other dependant variable namely application of core skills was measured on post-test level only by utilising a case study which the respondents had to complete in a written format and by utilising unstructured observation of participation by respondents.

## **5.6.2 Research population, sample and sampling method**

The researcher attempted to answer the question of “How will the population be defined and what sampling method will be employed?” A population and sample was chosen from all those that potentially had the same characteristics that were necessary for this study.

### **5.6.2.1 Research population**

Strydom (2005b:193) defines population as “...that sets boundaries on the study units” and “possess specific characteristics”. In the context of this study, the population for phase A and phase B of the study were the following:

**Phase A:** The following population groups were part of phase A in this study:

- All employers who employ young adults in Pretoria and Johannesburg areas,
- All training service providers registered at SETA who offer skills programmes for young adults and that were in Pretoria and Johannesburg, and
- All young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 years who have completed their schooling, were unemployed and were registered at Child Welfare Tshwane.

**Phase B:** The population for phase B of the study consisted of all young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 years who had completed their schooling, were unemployed and were registered at Child Welfare Tshwane.

### **5.6.2.2 Delimitation of the sample**

According to Strydom (2005b:194) and Kumar (2005:164), a sample is a small portion or subset of a bigger group that the researcher is interested in. A sample, which is a smaller unit of a population, was used to reduce the overall time and cost of the research study and to have easier access to the subjects.

- **Phase A:** The following three samples from the above mentioned populations were selected during phase A of this study:
  - Eight employers who employed young adults in the Pretoria and Johannesburg area,
  - Seven training providers who offered skills courses or learnerships to young adults and/or post matriculants in the Pretoria and Johannesburg area and who are registered at SETA, and
  - Twenty one young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 years, who were unemployed, had completed their schooling and were registered at Child Welfare Tshwane.
  
- **Phase B:** The sample for phase B of this study consisted of one group of ten young adults (female and male) between the ages of 18 and 25 years, who were unemployed, had completed their schooling and were registered at Child Welfare Tshwane. These young adults were not the same respondents as for phase A.

### 5.6.2.3 Sampling method

The researcher used different sampling methods to select the different samples of respondents in both phase A and phase B of the study.

- **Employers and training service providers:**

The sampling methods that the researcher used for selecting employers and training service providers was a combination of non-probability sampling techniques with specific reference to purposive sampling and availability sampling. Purposive sampling is defined by Strydom (2005b:202) as a sample that is based totally on the opinion of the researcher. The researcher selected respondents from the populations who met the specific characteristics necessary for this study and who were representative of the different populations. McBurney, (2001:246) as cited in Strydom (2005b:202) and Schutt (2006:152, 153) refer to availability sampling as respondents that are generally in close vicinity, the “most easily available” or easy to find. Availability sampling is also known as accidental, convenience or haphazard sampling (McBurney, 2001 as quoted by Strydom, 2005b:202; Schutt, 2006:152; Kasiram, 2007).



The researcher used specific selection criteria to ensure that the respondents were within the scope of this research study.

The criteria for **employers** involved in **phase A** consisted of the following:

- The first eight employers who were willing and available to participate.
- Located in Pretoria or Johannesburg.
- Employ young adults.
- Has been in business for at least five years.
- Must be a legal entity such as a closed corporation, private company or a public company.

The criteria for **skills training service providers** involved in **phase A** consisted of the following:

- The first seven service providers who were willing and available to participate.
- Located in Pretoria or Johannesburg.
- Offer skills training programmes or learnerships to young adults.
- Be registered with a SETA.
- Have qualified trainers that present the training programme or learnership for young adults.

- **Young adults for both phases A and B:**

The sampling techniques used to select young adults for both phases A and B of this study were a combination of non-probability sampling techniques, namely availability and purposive sampling as well as a probability sampling technique, namely systematic sampling. Systematic sampling is when the first respondent is selected randomly from a random table and the succeeding respondents are selected according to a set interval (Strydom, 2005b:200). The researcher compiled a list of young adults based on the following criteria:

- Between ages of 18 and 25 years.
- Female or male.
- Currently unemployed.
- Still looking for work.
- Qualifications: completed schooling.
- Registered at Child Welfare Tshwane.

For **Phase A**, the researcher selected the first respondent randomly from the list and the next 20 respondents were selected of every third respondent on the list of possible clients from Child Welfare Tshwane, who were willing and available to participate.

For **phase B** of this study the researcher selected the respondents from the balance of the list by selecting the first respondent randomly and the subsequent 9 respondents were selected by every third respondent on the list of clients from Child Welfare Tshwane, who were willing and available to participate.

### 5.6.3 Data collection method

The data was collected directly from the respondents (primary sources) (Kumar, 2005:118,119) with the help of questionnaires that the different groups of respondents had to complete. The questionnaires consisted of a set of questions on a form which was completed by the respondents (Delport, 2005:166). The content of the questionnaires consisted of closed ended questions based on an in-depth literature review and from within a business and training perspective respectively (See Appendixes 5, 6 & 7).

In **phase A** the researcher used a self-administered questionnaire to collect data from employers and training service providers as these groups consist of respondents that were spread over a wide geographic area (See Appendixes 6 and 7). According to Delport (2005:168), a self-administered questionnaire is a questionnaire that is given to the respondent to complete by themselves with the researcher being present to field any problems. A group-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from the young adults (See Appendix 5). A group-administered questionnaire means that a group of respondents completes the questionnaire by themselves without engaging into a dialogue with other group members (Delport, 2005:169). The young adults that participated were of a larger number and resided in close proximity, which made a group-administered questionnaire feasible. The researcher arranged with the selected respondents to meet at the Eersterust office of Child Welfare Tshwane. The researcher explained to the respondents the purpose of the study and the procedures for completing the questionnaire. The researcher distributed the informed consent form for completion

and answered any questions concerning the study and the form to be completed. The researcher then handed the questionnaire to the respondents for completion and explained the procedure for completion again to the respondents. The researcher was present during completion of the questionnaires and the respondents placed the completed questionnaires in a container.

In **phase B** a group-administered questionnaire was used to measure the dependant variable, namely the level of knowledge of core skills by the respondents (young adults) on a pre-and post-test level (See Appendixes 8 and 9). The same questionnaire was administered after the training programme (post-test) to the same group of young adults (See Appendix 9). The second dependant variable, namely the application of core skills by the respondents (young adults) was only measured on a post-test level due to the difficult nature of measuring application before knowledge development. The assessing of the application of core skills was done by means of a practical case study in written format, as well as utilising unstructured observation of participation of respondents, on a post-test level (See Appendix 10).

#### **5.6.3.1 Pilot testing of data collection instruments (questionnaires)**

A pilot test for the questionnaires was conducted for both phase A and phase B of the study. Factors like inclusion of short, clear, crucial and relevant questions was taken into consideration. Feedback from the respondents was in a written and verbal format. The respondents were excluded from the main study.

##### **Phase A:**

The self-administered questionnaires were tested with two employers and two training service providers who were not part of the main study. The group-administered questionnaire was tested with four young adults who were also not part of the main study. The purpose was to identify possible deficiencies in the questionnaires, to determine time taken to complete the questionnaires as well as the practicality and replication thereof. The comments of the respondents were taken into consideration to adapt or change the questionnaires for implementation during the main study. The comments from the young adult respondents that were taken into consideration were that the word “sentence” in question 12 could be misleading as these are rather a group of concepts and that they had difficulty in

understanding the concept “ranking”. No changes were identified by the expert respondents, namely the employers and the training service provider respondents.

### **Phase B:**

The group-administered questionnaire was pilot tested with two young adults who were not part of the main study, for relevance, appropriate language and the time it took to complete. Their comments were considered to adapt or change the questionnaire for implementation during the main study. Both the young adult respondents indicated that it would be helpful to have additional information or more pointers on the question concerning communication. The question on communication was changed to include more specific details or pointers such as “What is Rachel going to say to Eddie?”, “How will she tell him?” and “What will his response be?”.

#### **5.6.3.2 Reliability and validity of the questionnaires**

Pietersen and Maree (2008b:215) refer to reliability of an instrument, in this case the questionnaires, as obtaining the same results “every time the same instrument is used at different times” or “different respondents from the same population” complete the questionnaires. The reliability of the questionnaires in **phase A** and **phase B** was obtained by having different respondents from the same populations complete the same questionnaires.

Validity of a measuring instrument is defined as “the extent to which it measures what it is supposed to measure” (Pietersen & Maree, 2008a:38; Pietersen & Maree, 2008b:216). The authors mention four types of validity, namely face validity, content validity, construct validity and criterion validity (Pietersen & Maree, 2008b:217). For the purpose of this study the researcher circulated the questionnaire to three experts in the field to authenticate the face validity and content validity of the questionnaires and no changes were identified by the experts and as a result no changes were made.

#### **5.6.4 Data analysis**

Data analysis brings order, structure and meaning to the information that is gathered (De Vos, 2005:333). Kumar (2005:246) states that data processing incorporates all

operations undertaken, from the time that data is collected until it is suitable for analyses either manually or by information technology such as a computer. Data does not provide the answers and therefore the data has to be interpreted as well as the results (Kruger, De Vos, Fouché & Venter, 2005:218; Kumar, 2005:246).

The data gathered during phase A from the self-administered and group-administered questionnaires were described, analysed and then interpreted in chapter seven. The researcher used Microsoft Office 2013 Excel (MSEExcel) to capture the data (Mouton, 2001:74). The analysis and results were displayed visually in tables and graphical presentations in chapter seven.

The analyses of data gathered from the questionnaires in phase B (pre-test and post-test) sought to establish whether there was an increase in knowledge and an enhancement in the application of core employment skills. The measurements of the pre-test and post-test were compared with each other to measure the influence of the core skills training programme on the knowledge and application base of core employment skills of young adults. The data was captured using a spreadsheet programme, MSEExcel, as the volume of data is relatively small (Mouton, 2001:74). After analysis, the results were displayed visually in graphically and tables presentations in chapter seven.

## **5.7 ETHICAL ASPECTS OF THE STUDY**

Researchers have certain ethical responsibilities towards practice and research if they want to be successful and be professional. The responsibility is towards human and non-human who contribute to the study, and a responsibility to the discipline of science (Strydom, 2005a:56). Babbie and Mouton (2001:520) and Babbie (2004: 532) define ethics as the ability to distinguish what is right or wrong. The researcher had identified the following aspects of ethics that were applicable to the research:

### **5.7.1 Avoidance of harm**

The researcher informed the respondents verbally and also in written format, namely the informed consent letter, of the possible harm that they could experience such as

psychological harm (experiences of unemployment), emotional harm (feelings of inadequacy or hatred to educational system) and physical harm when engaging in an educational skills programme (Walliman, 2005:347). All the respondents were made aware, verbally and in writing, that if they needed debriefing because of completing the questionnaires, the researcher will refer them to an experienced counsellor at Child Welfare Tshwane.

The researcher was aware of the ethical responsibility and protected all respondents against possible physical and emotional discomfort. No physical or emotional risks were taken by respondents as they:

Phase (A): Completed the questionnaires.

Phase (B): Attended a training course and filled in the pre-test and post-test questionnaires.

No debriefing nor counselling was needed.

### **5.7.2 Informed consent**

Obtaining informed consent from all respondents forms a necessary condition to research (Strydom, 2005a:59; Walliman, 2005:346). Oliver (2003:28) and Strydom (2005a:59) maintain that all possible information, procedures, possible consequences as well as credibility of researcher be made known to possible respondents before the commencement of the research. Walliman (2005:346) mentions that there are different layers of consent, namely working within an organisation and the respondents. When working within an organisation clarity must be reached on how the investigation will be conducted so that no conflict arises.

The researcher obtained written permission from Child Welfare Tshwane (CWT) to approach young adults registered with CWT for possible respondents. The goal and objectives of the research were explained to CWT (See Appendix 3).

Respondents (young adults) of **phase A** were informed by means of a letter (See Appendix 1) of all aspects of the proposed research to enable them to make an informed decision whether the respondent wanted to participate or withdraw at any

stage (Strydom, 2005a:59; Walliman, 2005:347). The signing of the letters served as giving consent.

Likewise the researcher obtained written consent from employers and training service providers during **phase A** by means of a letter which explained all aspects of the research to enable them to make an informed decision whether the respondent wanted to participate or at any stage could withdraw. The signing of the letters served as giving consent (See Appendix 1).

The researcher followed the same procedure during **phase B** as in phase A to obtain informed consent from the respondents (young adults). The signing of the letter was regarded as giving consent (See Appendix 2).

### **5.7.3 Violation of privacy, anonymity or confidentiality**

The self-determination, anonymity and confidentiality of the respondent should be respected at all times and no hidden agendas should be present (Oliver, 2003:82; Strydom, 2005a:61). The respondents could decide whether their names would appear on the questionnaire or not. The latter ensured that the respondent remained anonymous and that their privacy was respected. Although the researcher was present when the respondents completed their questionnaire and therefore knew who the respondents were, the researcher ensured that the identity of the respondents was confidential by not including the names in the research report. All information obtained from respondents was handled as confidential. The information obtained was stored electronically on a storage device and kept safe in a fireproof safe at the Department of Social Work and Criminology, University of Pretoria.

### **5.7.4 Release of findings**

The findings of the research were written as accurately, effectively and objectively as possible. All respondents have access to the research results. All shortcomings and recommendations were recorded. The requirements of the Academic Administration of the University of Pretoria were taken into consideration and complied with before the research report was submitted.

### **5.7.5 Competence of researcher**

The researcher is knowledgeable about both the research process and as being an employee that works with young adults. The researcher had conducted several training sessions in life skills and business skills. All possible steps of being professional, unbiased and non-judgmental were taken to be objective as possible. The researcher also ensured professionalism and competence by involving her study supervisor and having had regular supervision sessions where the process and content of the research study was discussed. According to Kadushin and Harkness (2002:18, 19), supervision includes the responsibility to ensure quality of work at a quantitatively and qualitatively satisfactory level. The researcher has been exposed to a working environment for over twenty years.

### **5.7.6 Debriefing of respondents**

Oliver (2003:83) suggests that a “rephrasing” opportunity should be given at the end of a discussion or information giving session to enable respondents to rearticulate any shared information. A debriefing session was conducted for the respondents of phase B to share their experiences and perceptions.

## **5.8 SUMMARY**

This quantitative research was performed according to the research methodology described in this chapter. The practical implementation of the different components of this research study were discussed in terms of methods implemented, the progress of each step and the completion of the process.

In chapter six the empirical findings of phase A of this study will be discussed and graphically presented to assist with the development and pilot testing of a pre-employment core skills programme.



## CHAPTER SIX

### EMPIRICAL RESULTS: PHASE A OF THE STUDY (NEEDS ASSESSMENT)

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter three of this study focussed on a discussion of young adulthood as a life phase and unemployment. The researcher described the various developmental theories such as the psychoanalytic, cognitive theories of Piaget, Vygotsky's socio-historical view, the behavioural and social cognitive theories and the ethological and ecological developmental theories. The researcher also described the young adult with reference to his physical development, personality development, social development and cognitive development. It was argued that for the young adult to progress successfully through life certain developmental tasks have to be completed such as to establish a career and to become financially independent. These tasks were further theoretically explored within the current economic situation in South Africa with special reference to unemployment, and the effect of unemployment on the young adult. It was concluded that skills development of young adults needs to be considered from a different angle namely development of core skills to enhance the possibility of more opportunities for being more employable.

In chapter four of this study the researcher describes relevant core skills with specific reference to the young adult. It was emphasised that the late adolescent or young adult that leaves school and enters the labour market is faced with new roles and responsibilities (Child Development, [sa]). In this regard Levinson in Louw and Louw (2009:153) and Aylmer (1989:203) are of the opinion that a mentor can help new employees to adjust to these new developmental roles and responsibilities. It was concluded that individuals who can analyse and solve problems, communicate well, use information technology and work with others effectively, are more employable as

they can assume an active, adaptive and responsible role in the workplace and society.

As described in chapter five the goal of this study was to develop and pilot test a pre-employment core skills training programme for young adults between ages of 18 and 25 years. In order to obtain the goal the study was divided into two phases. Phase A focussed on collecting data on the core skills needed by young adults to be employable from a young adult's perspective, from an employer's perspective as well as from skills training providers' perspective. From these findings a pre-employment core skills training programme was developed and in phase B of the study the programme was pilot tested with young adults and results will be presented in chapter eight of this study. This chapter focusses on the empirical results of phase A of the study.

The empirical data collected during phase A of the study will be presented in three categories namely data collected from young adults, employers and training service providers. Data collected through questionnaires will be presented and discussed under the same sections as in the questionnaire. The data collected from questionnaire A1 (young adult) will be presented graphically and discussed in two sections, namely (1) a description of the biographical profile of respondents and (2) a description of the core skills identified by the young adults. The data collected from questionnaire A2 (employers) will be presented graphically and discussed in two sections, namely (1) a description of the biographical profile of respondents and (2) a description of the employment core skills identified by the employers. The data collected from questionnaire A3 (training providers) will be presented graphically and discussed in four sections, namely (1) a description of the biographical profile of respondents, (2) a description of the profile of trainee/participants of the training service providers, (3) a description of programme components of skills programme presented by training service providers and (4) a description of the training service providers' programme effectiveness. At the end a comparative discussion of all the three questionnaires of phase A will be presented.

## **6.2 EMPIRICAL RESULTS: PHASE A OF THE STUDY (Needs Assessment)**

### **6.2.1 Introduction**

During phase A information was gathered under controlled circumstances from 21 young adults between the age of 18 and 25 years, from 8 employers and from 7 training service providers by utilising group-administered and self-administered questionnaires respectively. The aim of the questionnaires were to gather information to develop a core skills training programme for the use of young adults who are seeking employment. The aim of the group-administered questionnaire A1 (Young Adult) was to empirically explore the employment core skills needed from young adults' perspective. The aim of the self-administered questionnaire A2 (Employers) was to empirically explore the employment core skills needed from an employer's perspective. The aim of the self-administered questionnaire A3 (Training Service Provider) was to empirically explore the employment core skills needed from a training service provider's perspective. The information collected was used as part of the knowledge base to develop a pre-employment core skills programme for the young adult.

The data that was collected from the young adults, the employers and training service providers will now be discussed. Information obtained will be presented in a graphic format.

### **6.2.2 Responses of young adults: Questionnaire A1 (Appendix 5)**

The questionnaire that was administered to the young adults consisted of two sections namely,

Section 1 – Biographical profile of young adults; and

Section 2 – Core Skills identified by young adults.

The data collected through the questionnaire will be presented in two sections namely: Section 1 – Biographical profile of young adults; and

Section 2 – Core skills identified by young adults.

## SECTION 1: Biographical profile of young adults

The variables that will be discussed are the age range, the gender, the home language, ethnicity group, highest qualification, work experience and business sector of work experience of the respondents as well as the period of unemployment of the respondents.

- **Age of young adults**

Figure 6.1 reflects the age range of the young adult respondents.

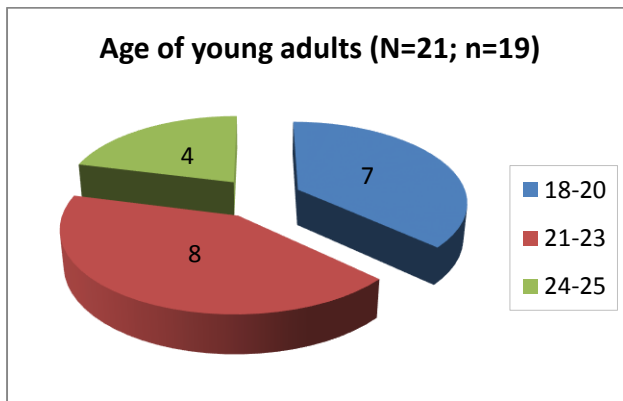


**Figure 6.1: Age of respondents (young adults)**

As seen in figure 6.1, 8 (42%) of young adults that completed the questionnaire were between 21-23 years of age, 7 (37%) were between 18-20 years of age and 4 (21%) were between 24-25 years of age. Two respondents did not indicate their age group.

- **Gender of young adults**

Figure 6.2 shows the gender of the respondents.

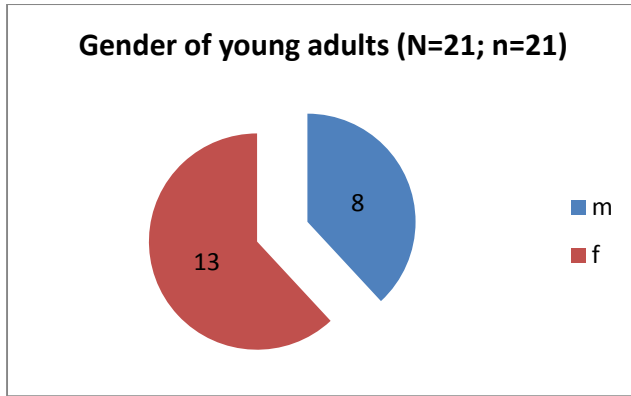


**Figure 6.2: Gender of young adults**

As seen in figure 6.2, 8 (38%) of the 21 respondents were males and 13 (62%) were females.

- **Home language of young adults**

Figure 6.3 reflects the home language of respondents.

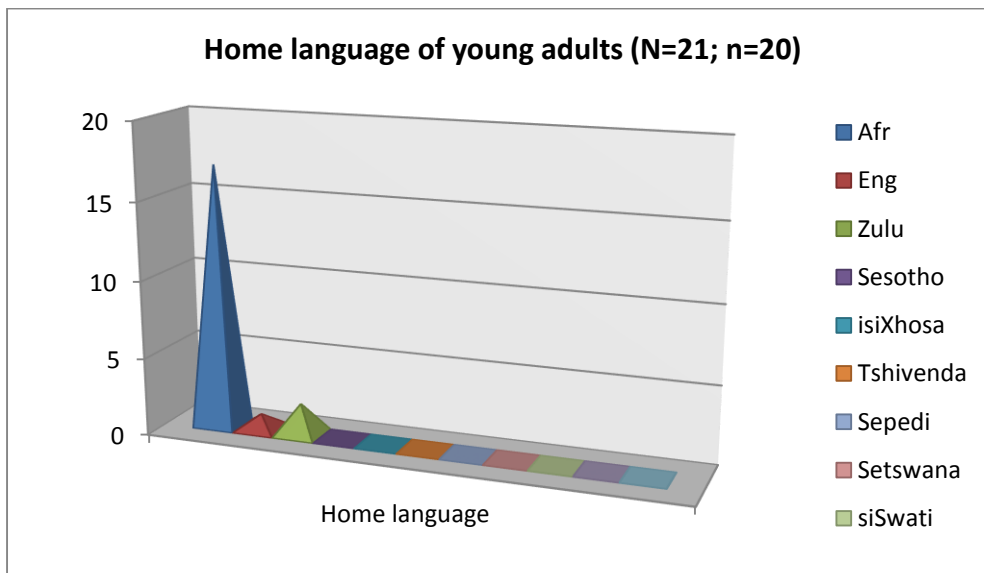


**Figure 6.3: Home language of young adults**

The majority (17 or 85%) of the respondents' home language was Afrikaans, 10% (2) of the respondents were Zulu and only one person indicated that their home language was English. One respondent did not indicate the home language.

- **Ethnicity group of young adults**

Figure 6.4 highlights the ethnicity group of respondents

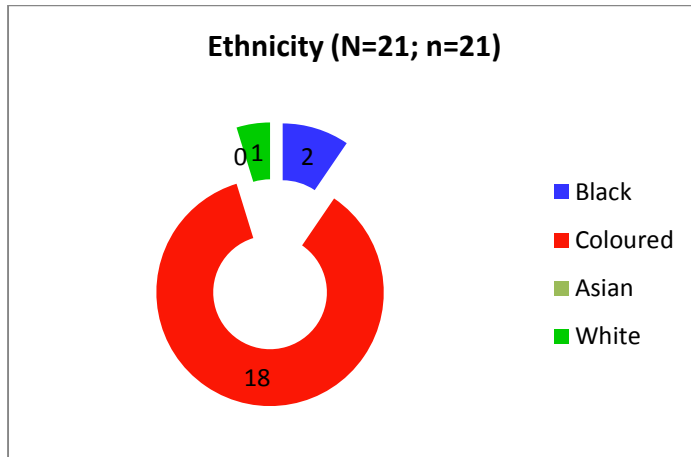


**Figure 6.4: Ethnicity group of young adults**

Most (18 or 86%) of the respondents belonged to the Coloured group and the minority (1 or 5%) respondents were from the White population. Two (9%) of the respondents were from the Black population and none from the Asian group.

- **Highest qualification of young adults**

Figure 6.5 reflects the highest qualification of the respondents

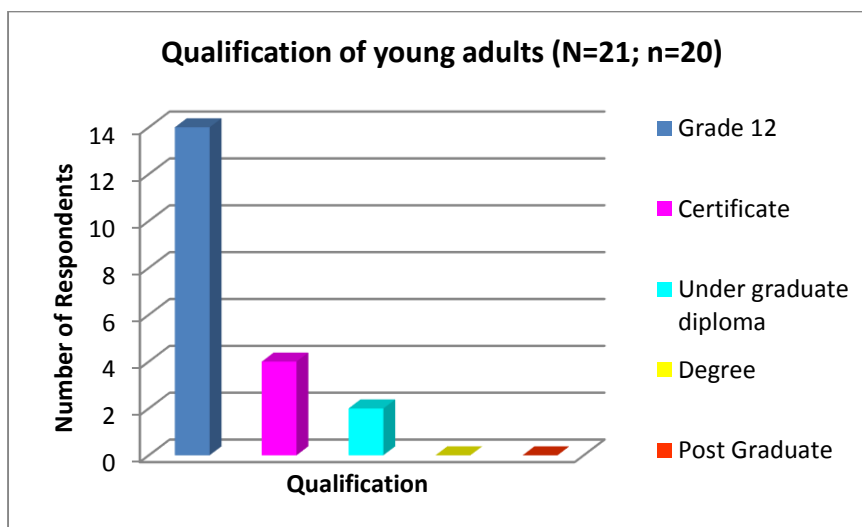


**Figure 6.5: Highest qualification of young adults**

The majority of the respondents completed grade 12, it is 70% or 14 respondents. None of the respondents had a degree or postgraduate qualification. Two respondents (10%) had an undergraduate diploma and four or 20% had a certificate as their highest qualification.

- **Probability of work experience of the young adults**

Figure 6.6 presents whether the respondents had any work experience.

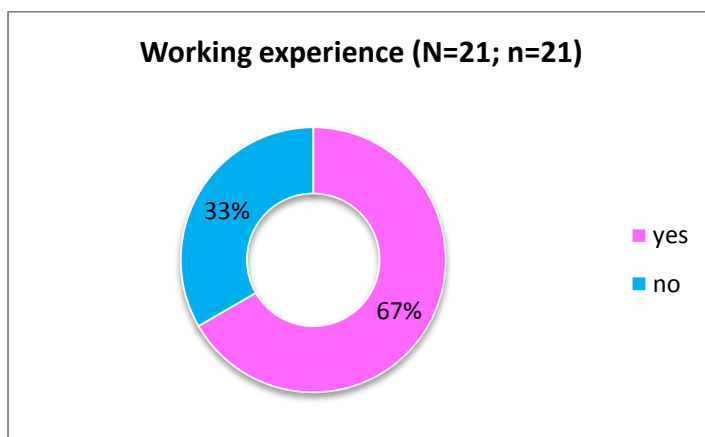


**Figure 6.6: Work experience of young adults**

The majority (14 or 67%) of the young adult respondents indicated that they had previous work experience and only seven (33%) indicated that they had never worked before. This figure is slightly higher than the formal unemployment figure of 24.1% of South African youth in the fourth quarter of 2013 (Department of Statistics South Africa, 2014), possibly due to the small sample of young adults and due to the fact that the young adults all come from a low socio-economic area that is characterised by unemployment. However, the figure of 33% unemployed young adults corresponds with the findings of The White Paper for Social Welfare (Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997:3).

- **Work experience of young adults according to business sector**

Figure 6.6.1 shows the business sector in which the respondents had work experience.

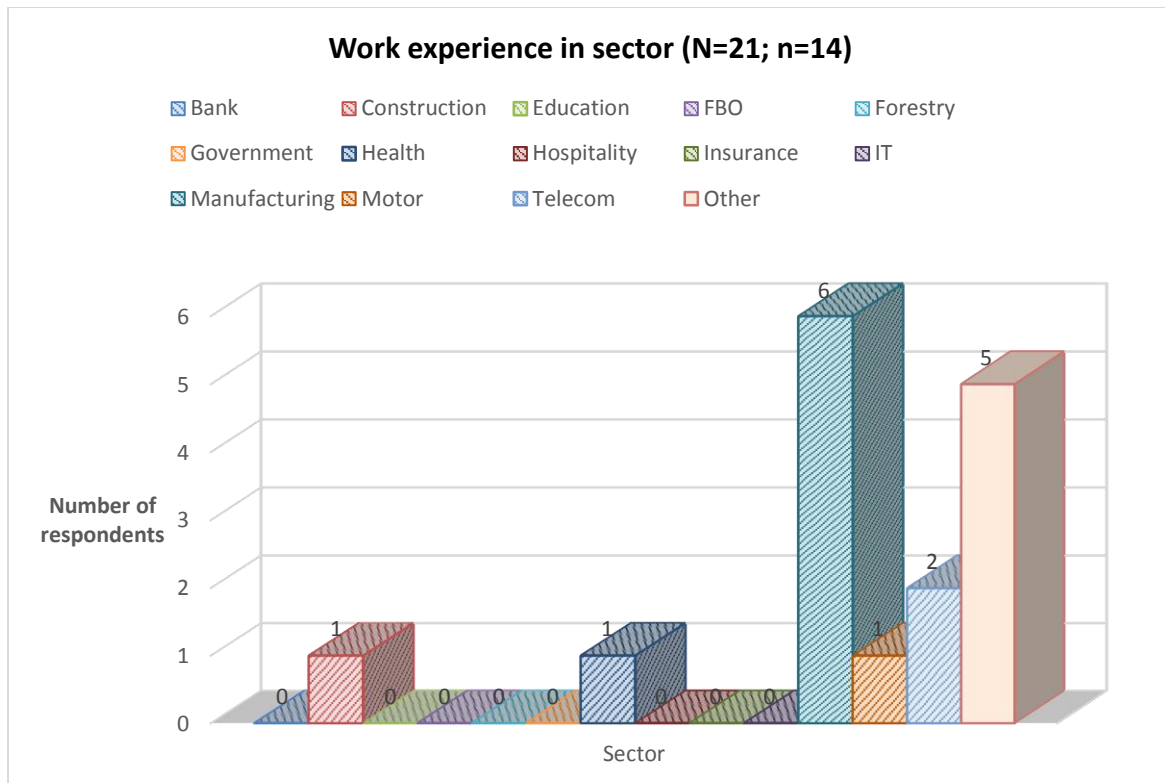


**Figure 6.6.1: Business sector according to work experience of young adults**

It is clear from graph 6.6.1 that the majority of respondents (6 or 43%) had work experience in the manufacturing sector. Two (14%) respondents indicated that they had work experience in the telecom sector. Five (38%) respondents had work experience in the “other” sector. The respondents identified “other” as the retail and sales sector. The motor, health and construction sector also had one (7%) respondent with work experience each. Two respondents indicated more than one sector in which they had work experience and this accounts for the variance in number of respondents. No respondents indicated that they had work experience in the Bank, Education, Faith Based Organisations, Forestry, Government, Hospitality, Insurance and Information Technology sectors.

- **Period of unemployment of young adults with no work experience**

Figure 6.6.2 displays the period of unemployment of the respondents with no work experience.



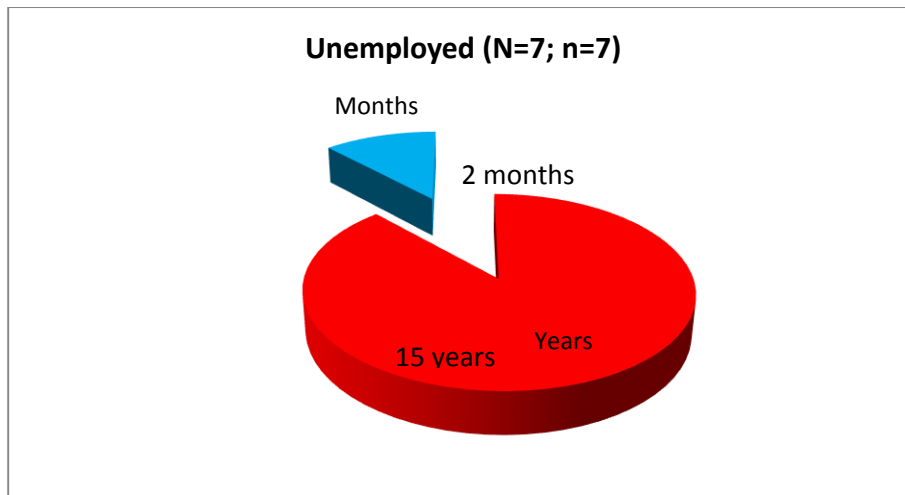


**Figure 6.6.2: Period of unemployment of young adults with no work experience.**

According to figure 6.6.2 the seven respondents that had no work experience had been accumulatively unemployed for 15 years and two months. The average time of unemployment of each respondent is 2 years and two months.

## **SECTION 2: Core skills identified by young adults**

The purpose of this section was to explore the understanding of the concept “core skills” by the young adults and the nature of employment core skills needed from young adults’ perspective. The components or variables discussed in this section will be a description of the young adult’s perception of the concept Core Skills and the meaning of the various core skills namely communication, numeracy, information technology, problem solving and working with people. This section also explored the young adult’s perceptions whether core skills may enhance employment opportunities and the reasons for improvement of these opportunities. The respondents (young adults) prioritised the core skills necessary for successful employment and indicated in which core skills they required more training and/or more knowledge. Furthermore, the young adult’s perception of reasons for unemployment was explored as well as the influence that the environment (in which the person grew up) has on the ability to perform core skills.

- **Young adults' understanding of the concept "core skills"**

Figure 6.7 shows the various descriptions of the concept "core skills". The respondent had to choose which option described the concept "core skills" the best.

The options were:

- Use of knowledge in the work place
- Main skills in a working environment
- Skills that help a person get employment more easily
- Skills that can be used in other jobs as well such as working with numbers, using information technology, communication, problem solving and working in a team
- All of the above

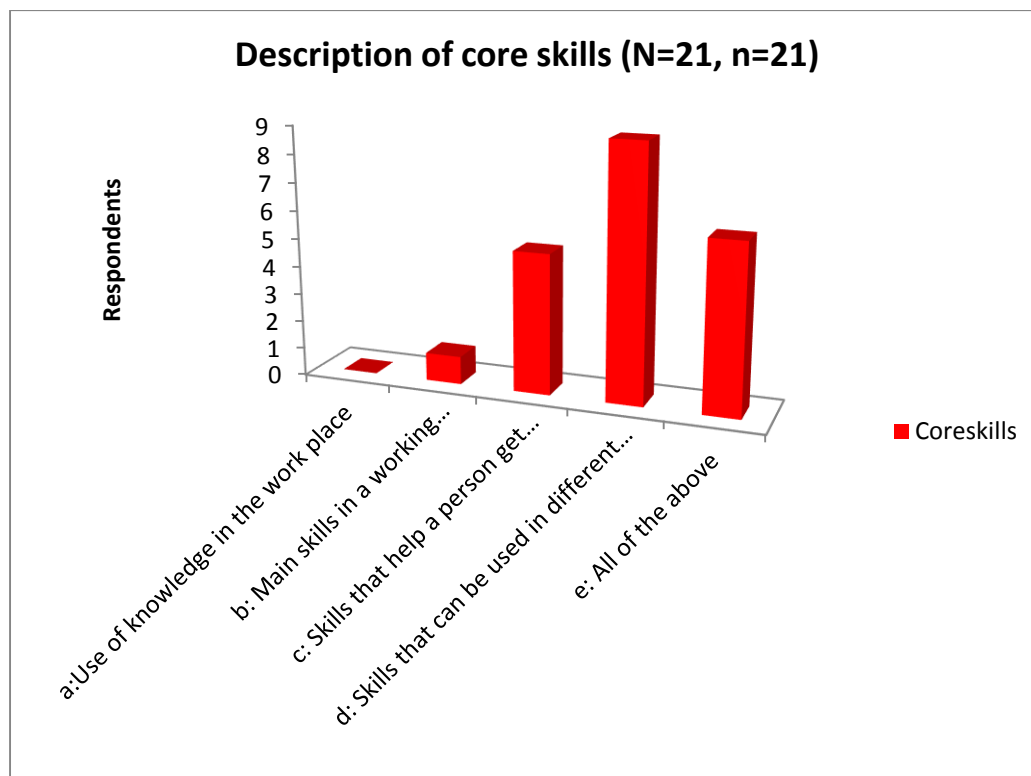


**Figure 6.7: Description of the concept "core skills" by the young adults**

The majority of respondents (9 or 43%) chose option (d) as the option that described the concept "core skills" the best. Six or 29% respondents chose option (e) as the next best description. The third best description was option (c) as five (24%) respondents chose this option. One (5%) respondent chose option (b) and no one chose option (a).

- **Young adults' description of "communication" as a core skill.**

Figure 6.8 displays the various options chosen by the respondents. The respondent had to choose which option described "communication" as a core skill the best. The options were:

- a) Standard, basic, two-way exchange of ideas
- b) Consists of speaking, writing and looking
- c) Makes use of interaction, a message, feedback, understanding and memory
- d) Communication is reading, writing and talking
- e) Giving information to key people

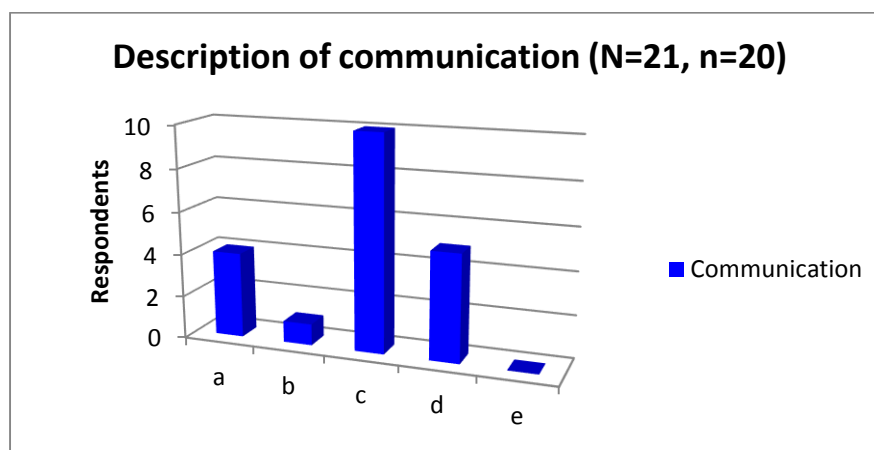


**Figure 6.8: Young adults' description of the core skill "communication".**

It can be clearly seen from figure 6.8 that the majority of respondents, namely 10 (50%) indicated that option (c) described communication as a core skill the best. Option (d) had the second most responses, namely five (25%) of the respondents and four (20%) respondents chose option (a). One (5%) respondent chose option (b). One respondent did not answer this question. The majority choice of best description for communication correlates with the description of communication as a skill in the article Good communication Skills-Key to Any Success (Essential Life Skills.net, 2014:1).

- **Young adults' description of "numeracy" as a core skill.**

Figure 6.9 shows the various choices of the respondents. The respondents had to choose from the following options which option described "numeracy" as a core skill the best.

- a) Using graphs, formulas, equations and measurements to find an answer
- b) A sensible way of thinking that uses numbers in everyday life
- c) Consists of algebra, geometry, trigonometry, ranking, possibilities, logarithms
- d) Use in mathematics, music, architecture, engineering, finances
- e) (b) and (c)

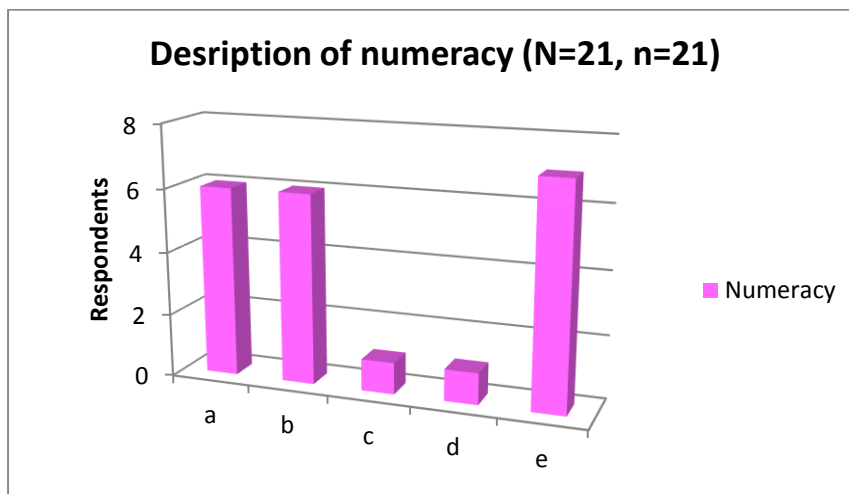


**Figure 6.9: Young adults' description of the core skill "numeracy"**

The above figure 6.9 indicates that the highest number of respondents (7 or 33%) indicated that option (e) described the concept "numeracy" best. Six (29%) of respondents chose options (a) and also six (29%) of the respondents chose option (b). Option (a) and option (b) were the second highest choices. The least number of respondents (1 or 5%) chose options (c) and (d) respectively as the statement that described "numeracy" the best. The young adults' choices are similar to the description of numeracy as cited by Welsh and Canning (2003:3), the New South Wales Department of Education and Communities (2011:1) and the *Oxford Dictionaries* (2014).

- **Young adults’ description of “information technology” as a core skill.**

Respondents had to indicate which option described “information technology” the best as a core skill. The result is graphically presented in figure 6.10. The various options from which the respondent could choose were:

- The use of computers and the internet to do your work
- A pre-requisite skill for employment
- The use of electronics to play games and connect with friends
- A tool used in the gathering, organising, storing, retrieving, distributing and using of information for gaining knowledge, problem solving and decision making.
- (a) and (c)

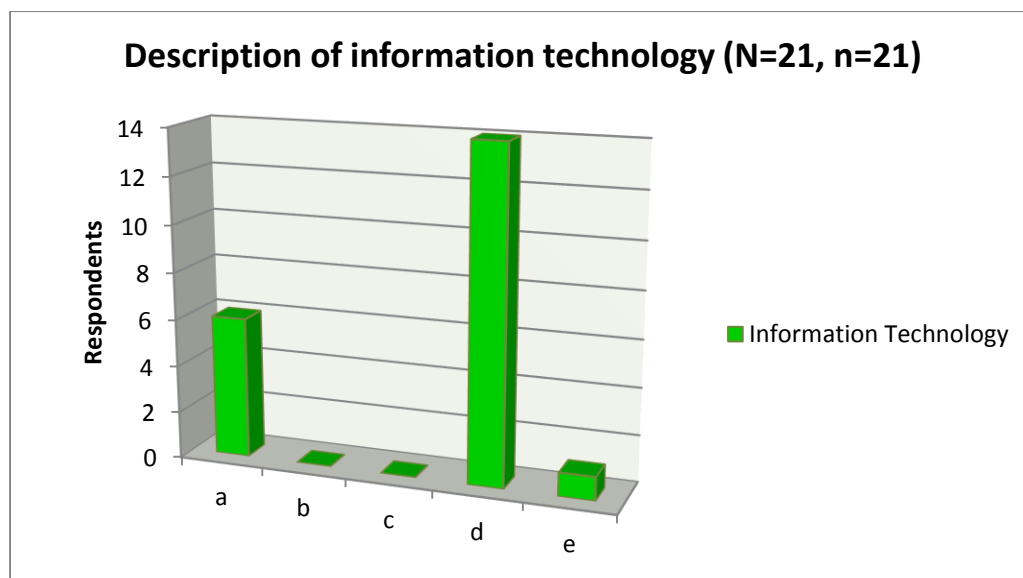


**Figure 6.10: Young adults’ description of the core skill “information technology”**

Figure 6.10 shows that the majority of respondents (14 or 67%) indicated that option (d) described the concept “information technology” best as a core skill. Option (a) was the second highest choice with 6 (29%) respondents choosing it as the statement that describes “information technology” best. The minority of respondents (1 or 5%) indicated that option (e) described information technology best. No respondents chose option (b) or option (c).

- **Young adults' description of the core skill “problem solving”.**

Respondents had to indicate which option described “problem solving” the best as a core skill. The result is graphically presented in figure 6.11. The various options from which the respondent could choose were:

- A skill that uses reasoned thinking to plan, organise, review and evaluate information to make a choice
- An unpleasant situation that needs to be solved
- A process that uses thinking skills to change a problem
- A tool that is used daily
- A skill that is necessary for employment

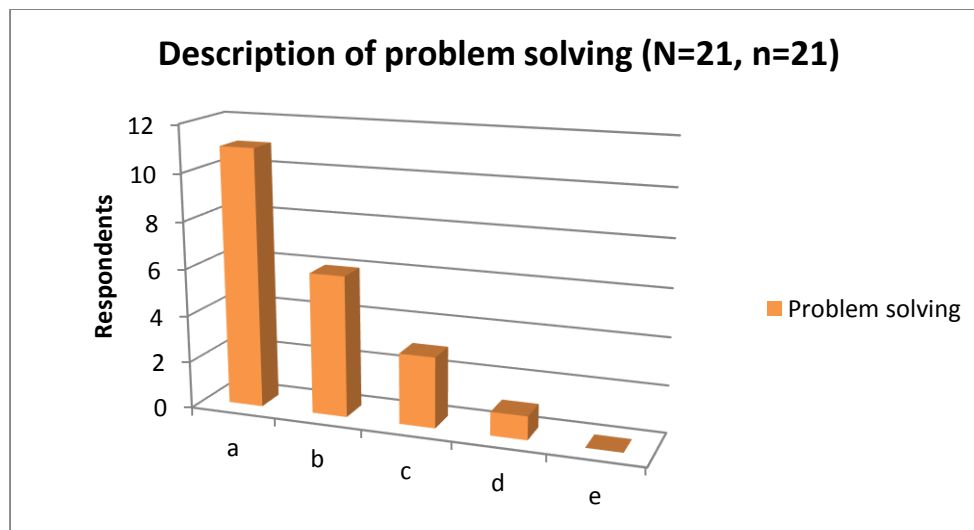


**Figure 6.11: Young adults' description of the core skill “problem solving”**

From the figure above (figure 6.11) it can be seen that the highest number of respondents namely 11 (52%) indicated that option (a) described “problem solving” the best. Six respondents (29%) chose option (b) as the statement that describes “problem solving” the best. Three (14%) and one respondent (5%) chose option (c) and (d) respectively as the statement that describes the core skill “problem solving” the best. No respondent chose option (e).

- **Young adults’ description of the core skill “working with people”.**

Respondents had to indicate which option described “working with people” the best as a core skill. The options referred to a set of various concepts that are present when “working with people” (see a) – e) below) rather than giving a description of the meaning of “working with people. The result is graphically presented in figure 6.12.

The various options from which the respondent had to choose were:

- Motivational support, empowerment, managing change and performance
- Self-knowledge, encourage, develop, lead, trust
- Attitude, personality types, goal setting, visionary, team work, communication, adaptability
- Leading others, influencing, sharing information, observation, understanding others and self, mind-set, listening, being involved, flexible
- Together everyone achieves more

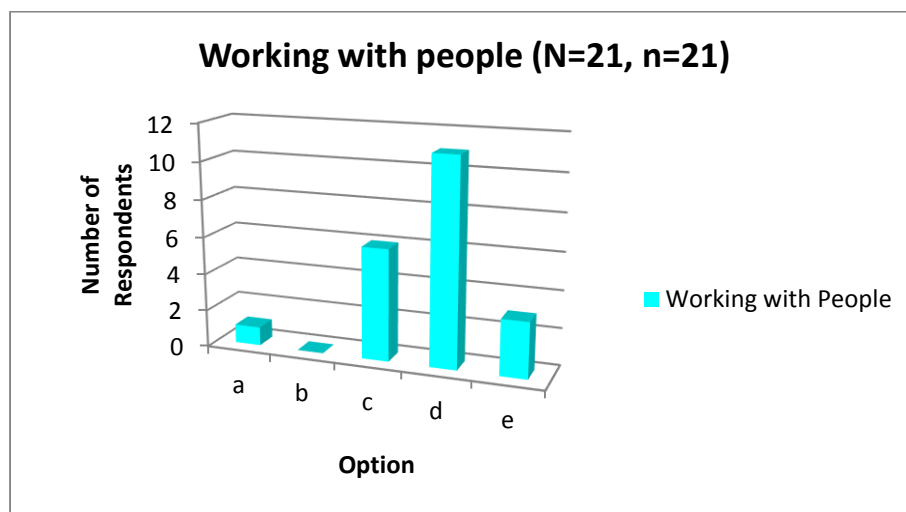


**Figure 6.12: Young adults’ description of the core skill “working with people”**

The majority of respondents (11 or 52%) chose option (d) as the collection of concepts that describes “working with people” best. Six respondents or 29% chose option (c) as the collection of concepts that describes “working with people” best. The minority (19%; 3 and 1) of respondents chose options (e) and (a) respectively as

the collection of concepts that describes the core skill “working with people” best. No respondent chose option (b).

- **Young adults’ perception whether core skills enhance the opportunity for employment.**

Respondents had to indicate “yes” if they thought core skills enhance their opportunity for employment or “no” if they thought it did not. The result is graphically presented in figure 6.13.

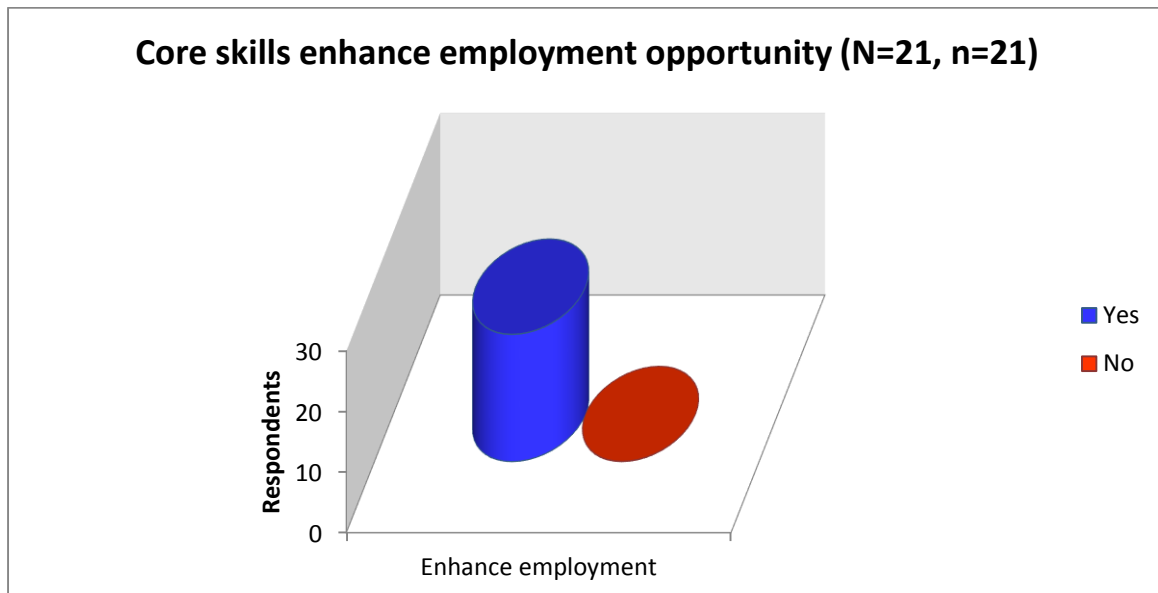


**Figure 6.13: Enhancement of opportunity of employment by core skills**

All the respondents (21 or 100%) were of the opinion that core skills will enhance their opportunity for employment. No respondent thought that core skills would not enhance the opportunity for employment. This response corresponds with the opinion of Cox and King (2006:264) and Farrell and Fenwick (2007:20) that the success to employment is applied “core skills”.



- **Young adults' view on how core skills will enhance the respondents' opportunity for employment.**

Respondents had to describe in their own words how they thought core skills will enhance their opportunity for successful employment. The respondents' views are presented in figure 6.14.

Figure 6.14 shows that five (24%) respondents thought that core skills will enable them to have the necessary knowledge to apply in a work situation. Four (19%) respondents indicated that they would obtain a specific skill (core skill) to obtain employment. Four (19%) respondents indicated that with the help of core skills they would develop a better work strategy. Three (14%) respondents said that core skills would help them to become a better employee. Two (9%) respondents said that with core skills they would get a better job. One (5%) respondent said that core skills would help him to understand himself better. Other themes that were suggested were that core skills would help them to work with people better, their communication and their flexibility would improve, know the etiquette of work better and present him better. These themes would improve their employment opportunity.

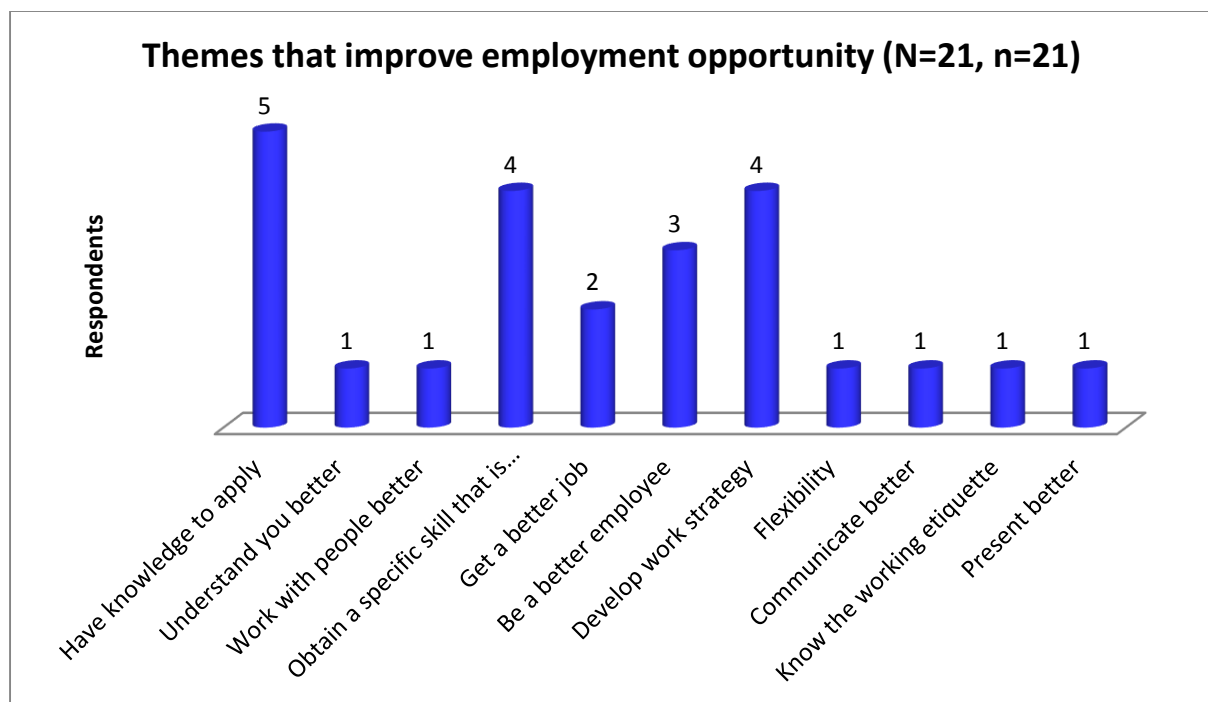


**Figure 6.14: Themes of how core skills will improve employment opportunity**

- **Young adults' prioritisation of the core skills.**

Respondents had to prioritise the core skills (communication, numeracy, information technology, problem solving and working with people) according to importance, from least (1) to most (5), for successful employment. The information is presented in figure 6.15.

From figure 6.15 it can be seen that the majority (14 or 74%) of respondents indicated that they consider communication as the most important skill for successful employment. The next most important core skill indicated by 32% (6) was the skill of “working with people”. The respondents saw problem solving (8 or 40%), numeracy (6 or 32%) and information technology (4 or 21%) as not such important core skills for successful employment.

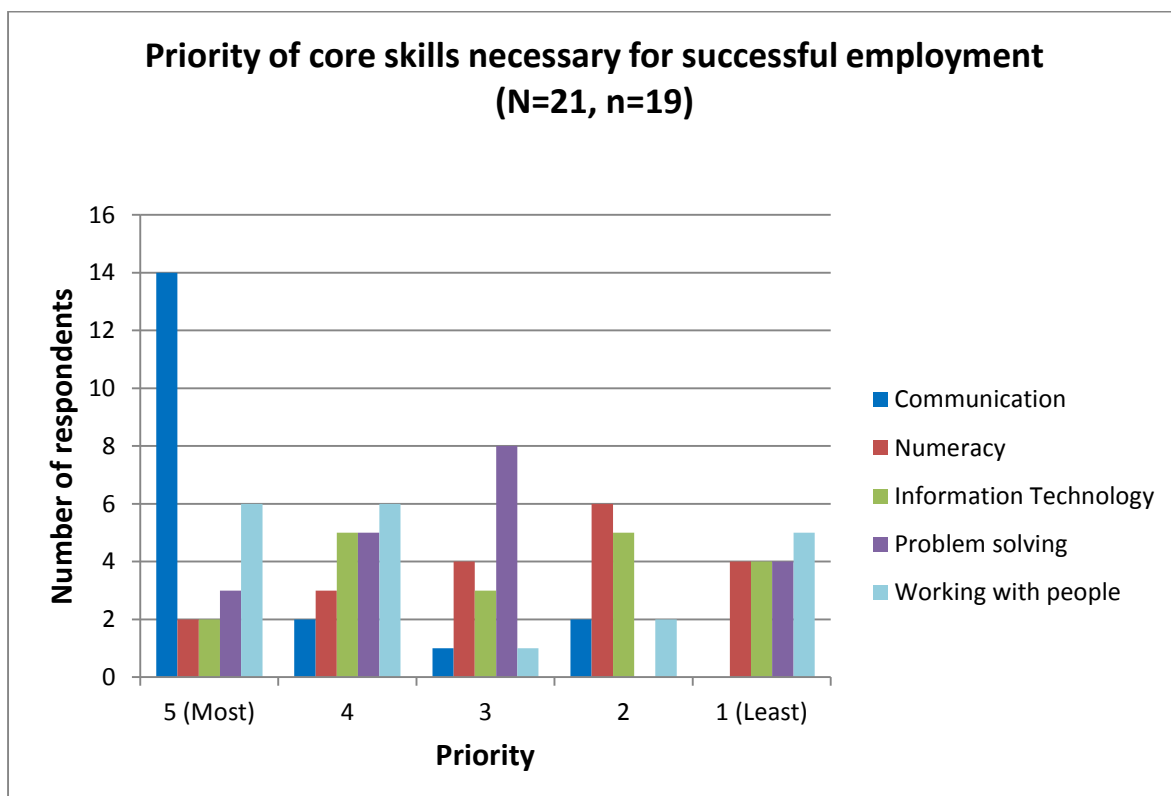


**Figure 6.15: Young adults' priority of core skills necessary for successful employment**

- Young adults' view on which component of the various core skills they needed more training in.

The respondents had to indicate with a “yes” or “no” which components of a specific core skill they needed more training in. The components for the core skill “communication” were oral (speaking), writing and use of electronic methods. The components for the core skill “numeracy” were using drawings (graphs) and using numbers. The components for the core skill “information technology” were using word processor, using spreadsheets, using storage for data, using graphics and using e-mail and internet. The components for the core skill “problem solving” consisted of using critical thinking, planning and organising and reviewing and evaluating. The components for the core skill “working with people” were understanding personality types, trusting in co-workers and their abilities and team work. The findings are presented in figure 6.16.

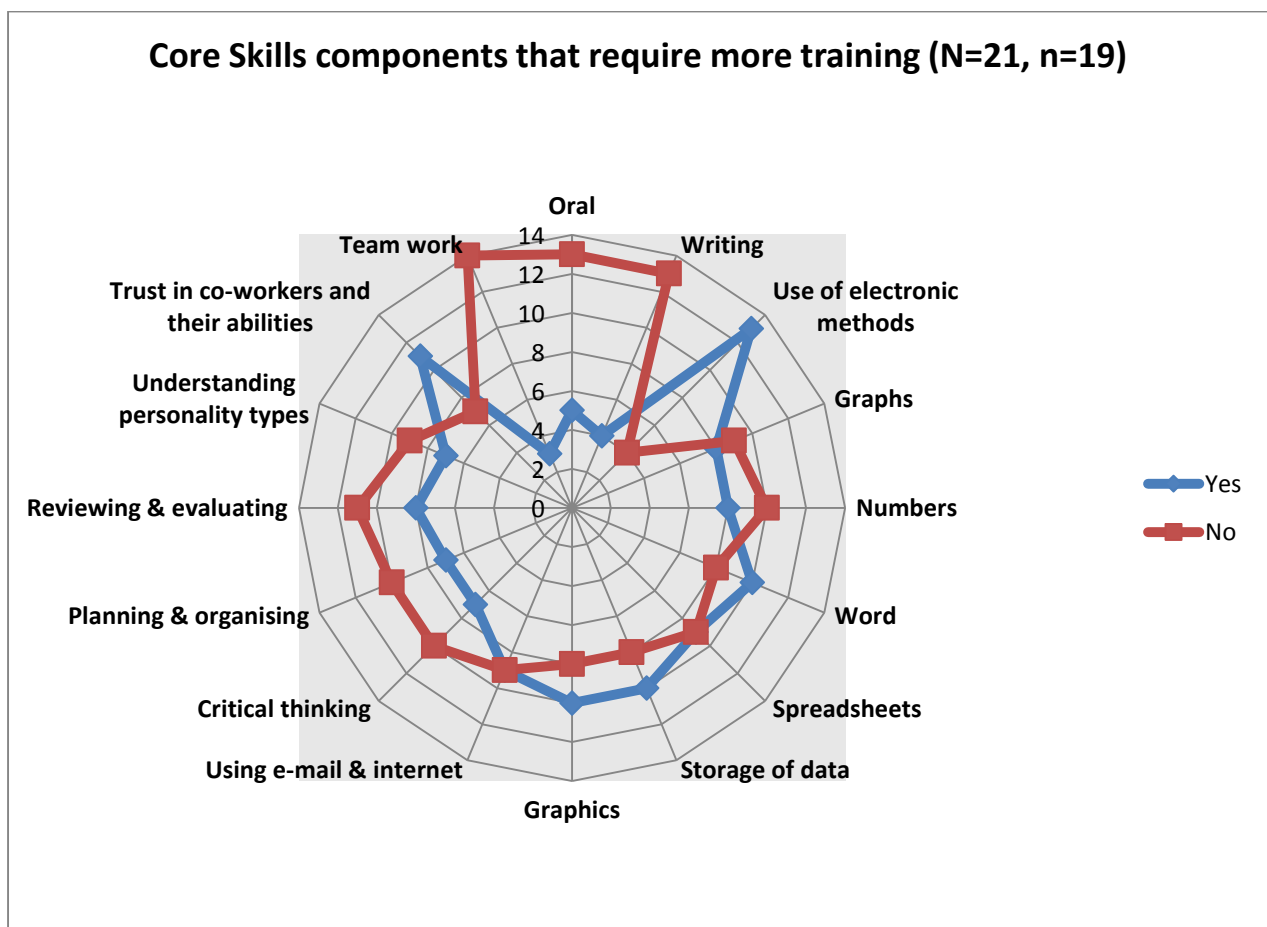


Figure 6.16: Core Skills components that require more training.

The majority of respondents (13 or 68%) indicated that they needed more knowledge or training in the use of electronic methods as a component of communication. The second highest need (11 or 58%) for more knowledge or training was in the “trusting in co-workers and their abilities” as a component of Working with People. The next core skill the respondents (10 or 53%) indicated that required more knowledge or training was the skill of Information Technology and specifically the three components of “using word processor”; “using storage for data” and “using graphics”. Nine (43%) respondents respectively indicated that they required more knowledge or training in using “spreadsheets” and “e-mail and internet”. Eight (38%) of the respondents said that they needed more knowledge or training in using graphs and using numbers as a component of the core skill “numeracy”. The reviewing and evaluating component of the core skill “problem solving” was identified by eight (38%) of the respondents in which they needed more knowledge or training. Seven (37%) respondents respectively indicated that they required more knowledge or training in the core skill “problem solving” and specifically in the components of “using critical thinking” and “planning and organising”. The core skills components of communication namely oral and writing; and “working with people – working in a team” were seen as the components with the lowest need for more knowledge or training as only five (24%), four (19%) and three (14%) respondents respectively identified the need.

Additional the researcher used the results from each component per core skill, combined the results per core skill and presented the conclusion in figure 6.16.1.

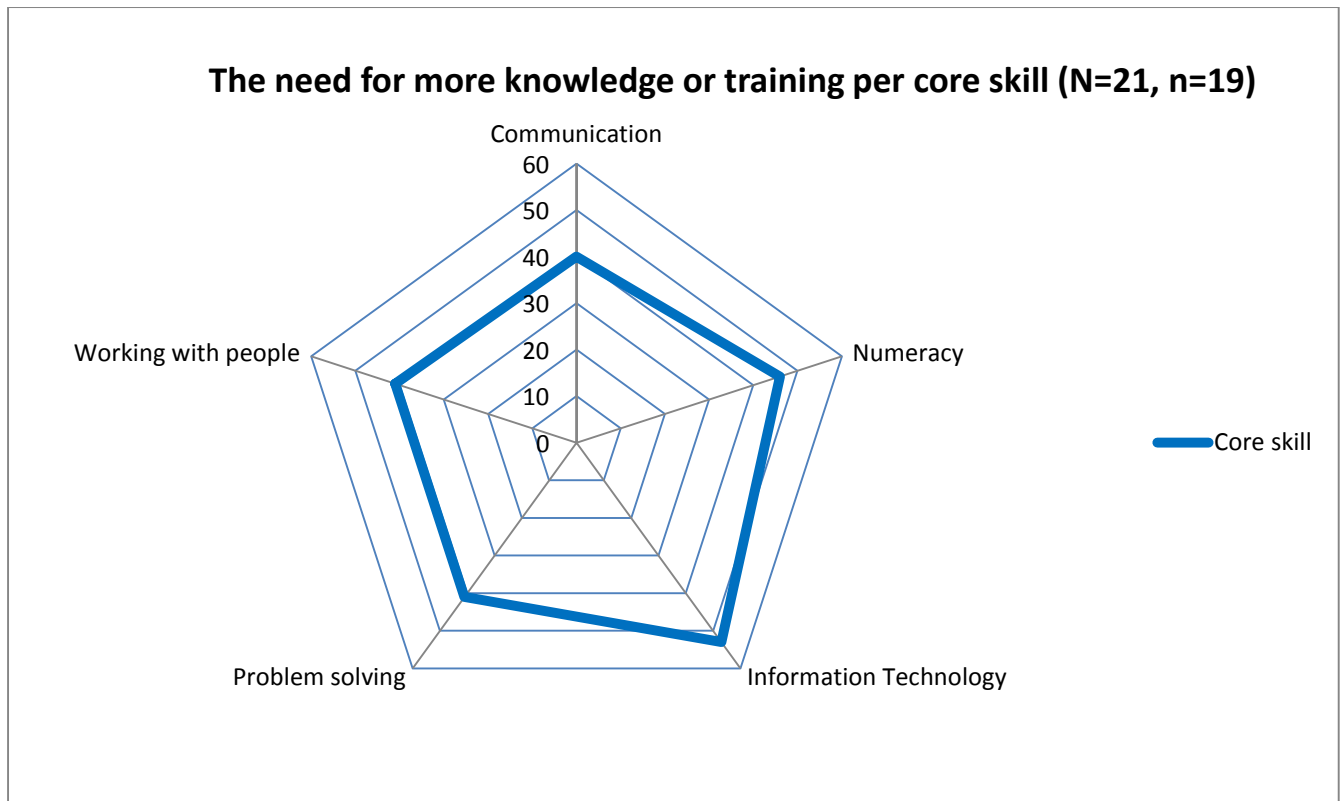


**Figure 6.16.1: The need for more knowledge and training per core skill.**

Figure 6.16.1 shows that the most respondents (53% or 18) required more knowledge or training in the core skill of Information Technology. Forty six percent (17) of the respondents indicated that they needed more knowledge or training in numeracy. The third most needed core skill that required knowledge or training in was problem solving with forty one percent (17). Both communication and working with people were the core skills with the lowest need for more knowledge or training with forty percent (17) respectively.

- **Young adults' ranking of reasons for unemployed young adults.**

The respondents had to indicate on a scale of 1 (least) to 5 (highest) which reason they thought was responsible for why so many young adults are unemployed. The reasons to choose from were:

- Not enough jobs available
- Person does not have experience
- Person has inadequate core skills

- Person's attitude is wrong, and
- Person wants too high a salary.

The findings are presented in figure 6.17.

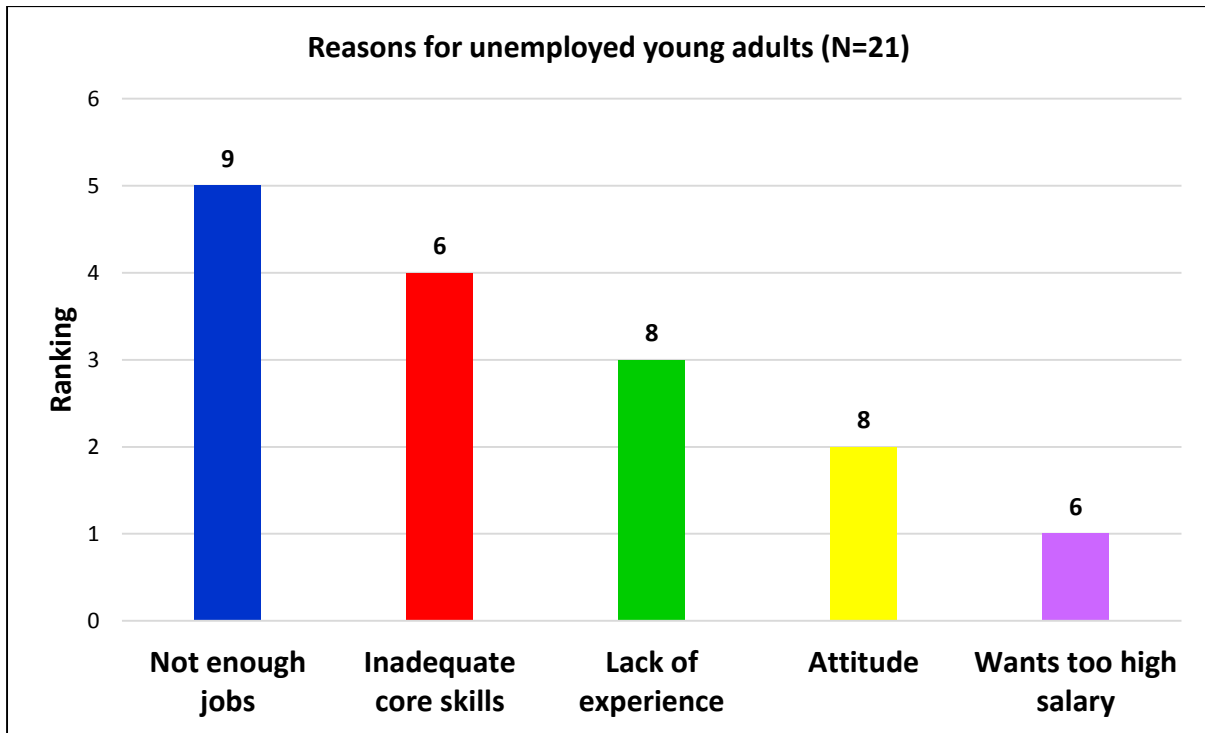


**Figure 6.17: Young adults' reasons for unemployment of young adults.**

From figure 6.17 it can be seen that according to most of the respondents (9 or 47%), the main reason for unemployed young adults was that there are not enough jobs. The second highest reason identified by the respondents (6 or 32%) was that the person had inadequate core skills. Eight (42%) respondents indicated that the third highest reason for unemployed young adults was that they did not have experience (lacked experience). Eight (42%) respondents showed that the second least reason for unemployed young adults was that their attitude was wrong. The least possible reason was that the person wanted too high a salary (6 or 32%).

- **Young adults' perception on whether the environment in which a person grows up has an influence on his/her ability to implement core skills and their components.**

Respondents had to indicate whether the environment in which a person grows up has or does not have an influence on his ability to perform a component of or a core skill per sé. The abilities that the respondent had to indicate whether a person could or not were to communicate, to read, to write, to work with other people, to successfully obtain employment, to use information technology (computer), numeracy and critical thinking. The findings will be discussed and are presented in figure 6.18.

Figure 6.18 shows that sixteen (76%) respondents indicated that the environment in which a person grows up has an influence on his/her ability to communicate. Fifteen respondents (75%) thought that the environment in which a person grows up has an influence on his/her ability in numeracy. Fourteen (74%) respondents thought that the environment in which a person grows up has an influence on his/her ability to use information technology. Seventy percent (14) of the respondents indicated that the environment in which a person grows up has an influence on his/her ability to think critically. Thirteen (68%) respondents thought that the environment in which a person grows up has an influence on his/her ability to work with people. Twelve (63%) respondents thought that the environment in which a person grows up has an influence on his/her ability to read. Eleven (58%) respondents indicated that the environment in which a person grows up has an influence on his/her ability to write. Eight (42%) respondents thought that the environment in which a person grows up has an influence on his/her ability to be successfully employed and eleven (58%) respondents did not think that the environment in which a person grows up had an influence on his/her ability to be successfully employed.

The majority of young adults' perceptions that the environment has an influence on the progression into the working environment correlates with the ecological theories and the systems theory that the individual is interconnected to the physical and

social context and the interconnectedness forms part of a larger system (Collins et al., 2010:15; Sigelman & Rider, 2009:48).

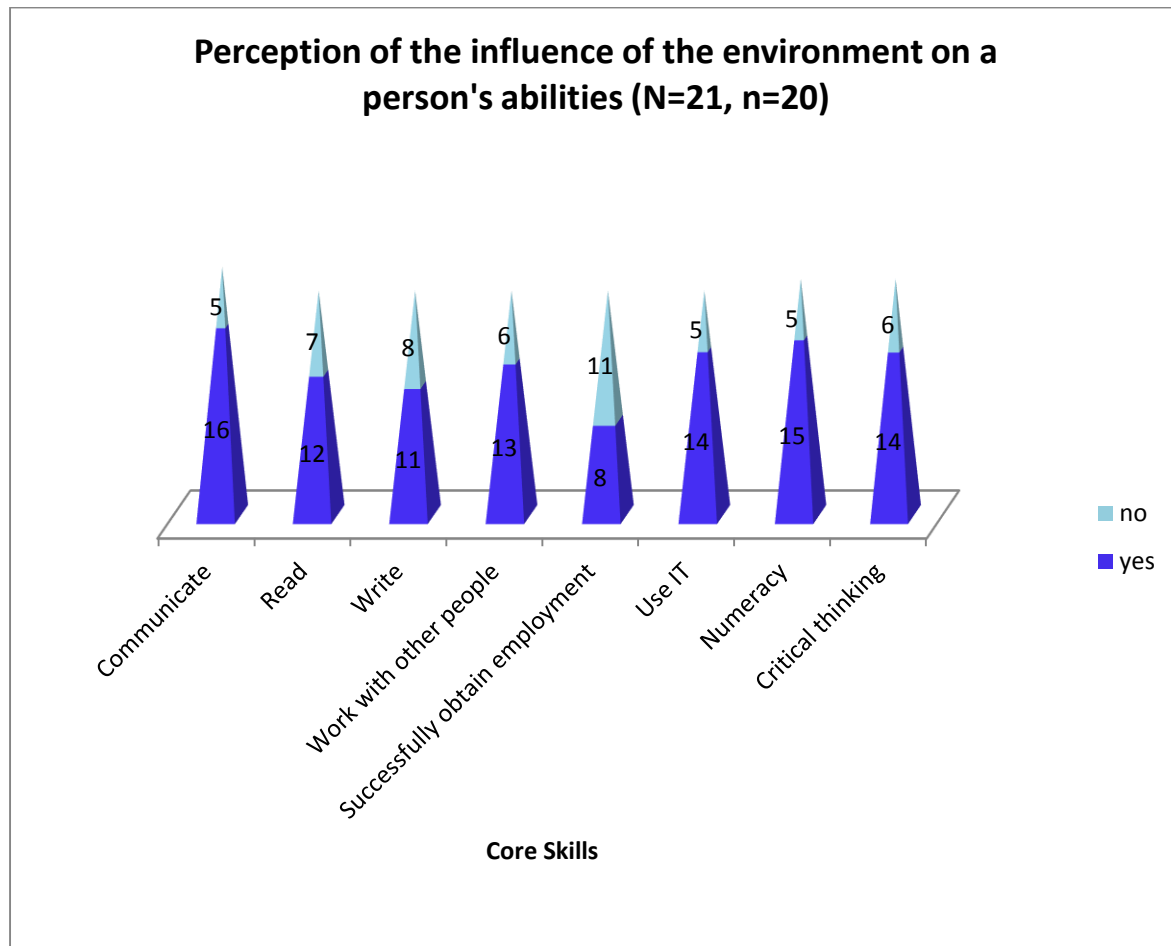


**Figure 6.18: Young adults' perception of the impact that the environment has on the ability to perform core skills.**

### 6.2.3 Responses of employers: Questionnaire A2 (Appendix 6)

The questionnaire that was administered to the eight employers consisted of two sections namely,

Section 1 – Biographical profile of employers, and

Section 2 – Core Skills identified by employers.



The data collected in the questionnaire will be presented in two sections namely:

Section 1 – Biographical profile of employers,

Section 2 – Core skills identified by employers.

## SECTION 1: Biographical profile of employers

The variables that will be discussed are the age range of the respondents, the gender of the respondents, the current professional position of the respondents, the service sector of the company of the respondents, the geographical information of the company or organisation, the legal type of the organisation, the total number of staff employed by the organisation and the major language of the organisation.

- **Age range of employers**

Figure 6.19 reflects the age range of the employer respondents.

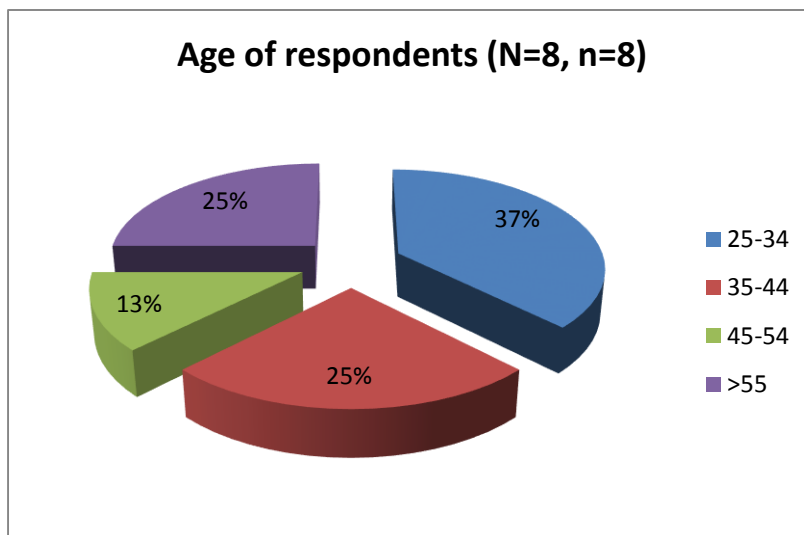


**Figure 6.19: Age group of employers**

Figure 6.19 shows that the majority of respondents (37% or 3) were in the age group between 25-34 years. Age group 35-44 years and older than 55 years were

respectively represented by 25% or two respondents each and one (12.5%) respondent was in the 45-54 years age group.

- **Gender of employers**

The gender of the respondents (employer) is graphically displayed in Figure 6.20.

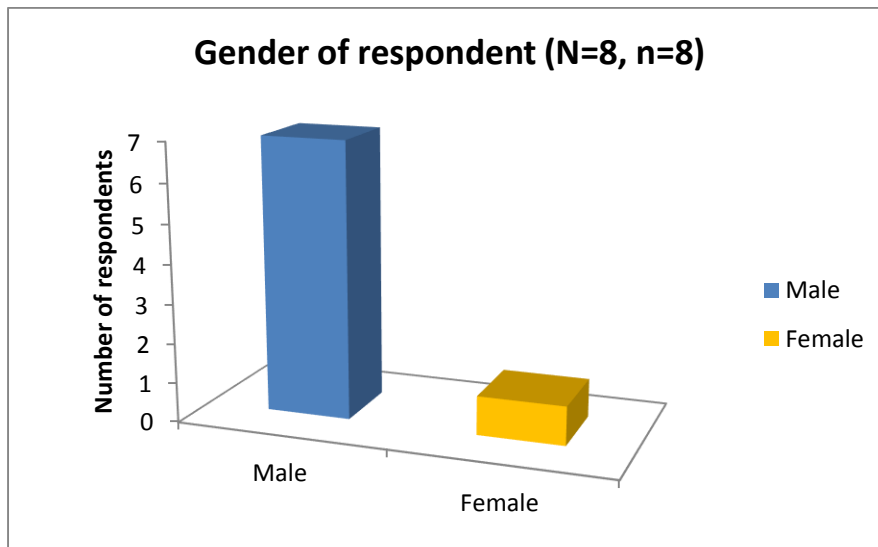


**Figure 6.20: Gender of employers**

The majority of respondents that completed the questionnaire on behalf the employer were males (7 or 87%) and the minority of respondents (1 or 13 %) was a female.

- **Current professional position of employee**

Figure 6.21 reflects the current professional position of employees.

Three (37%) of the respondents were currently holding the position as a divisional manager, two (25%) were trainers within the company, two (25%) were accountants and one (13%) respondent was the managing executive of the company. No psychologist, social worker, educator or human resource manager completed the questionnaire on behalf of the employer.

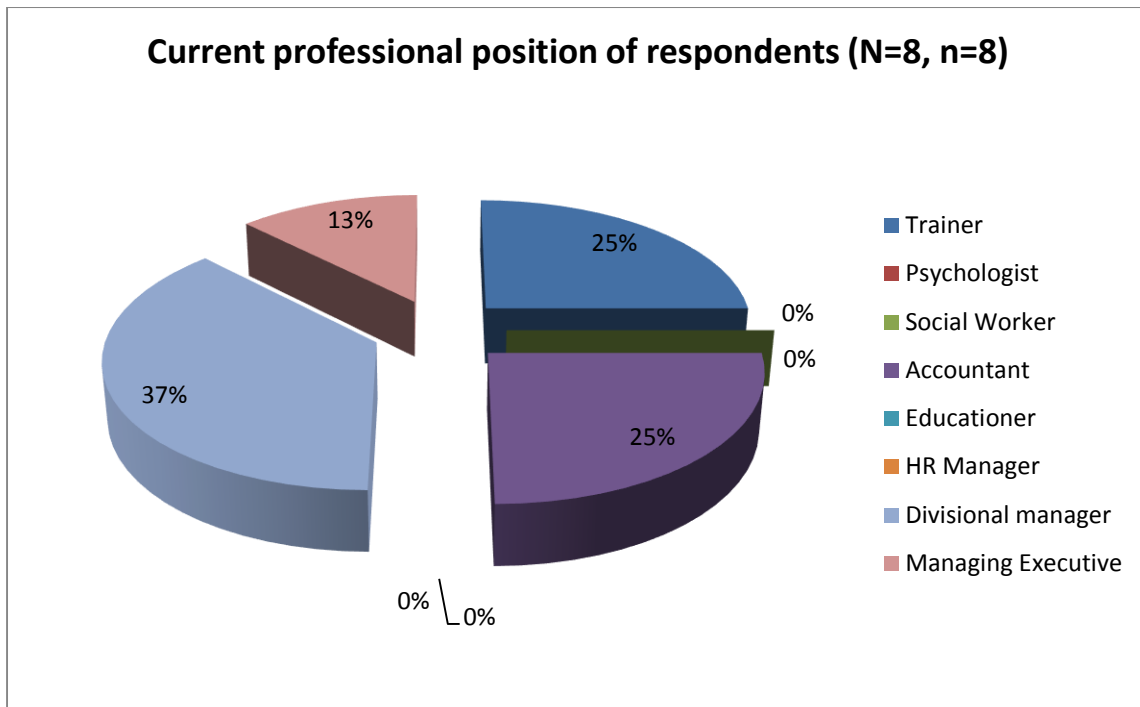


**Figure 6.21: Current professional position of employee**

- **Service sector of employers**

The service sector to which the company or employer belongs is graphically presented in figure 6.22.

Figure 6.22 shows that three (37%) of the companies represented the retail sector, two (25%) companies were from the construction sector, one (13%) was from the government, one (13%) from a non-government organisation (NGO) and one (13%) from the information technology sector which represented a variety of service fields.

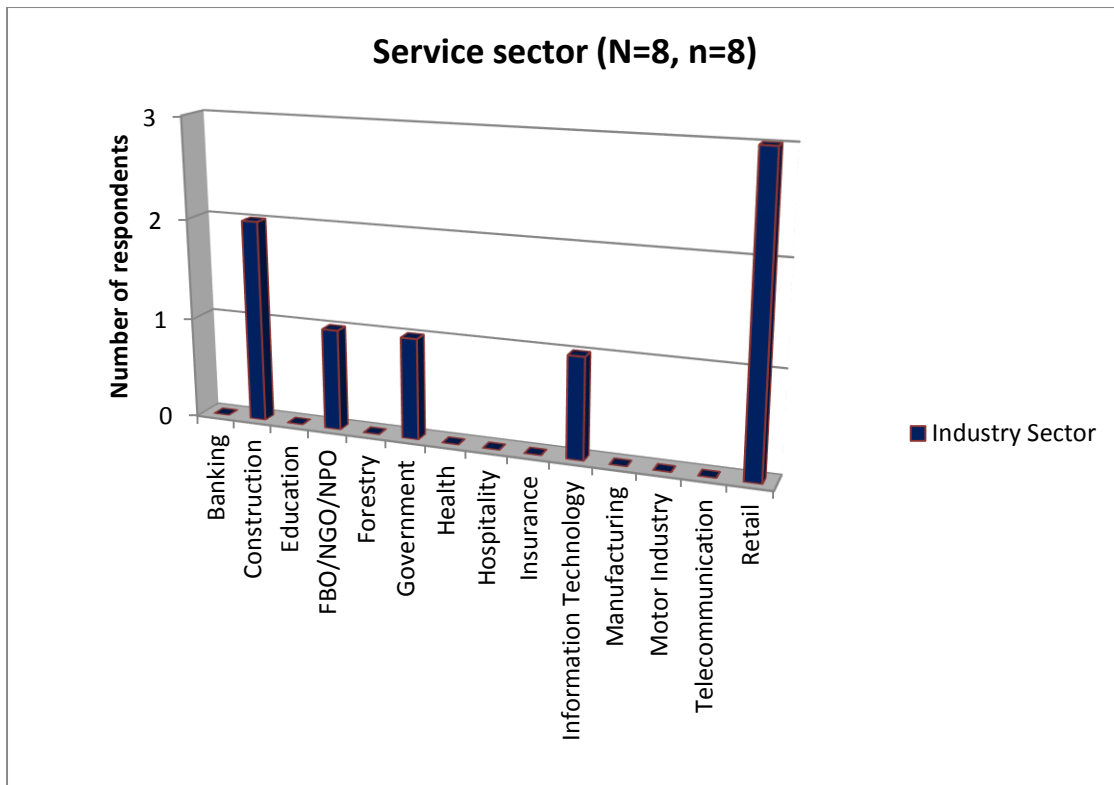


**Figure 6.22: The service sector of the company.**

- Geographical area of employer**

Figure 6.23 presents the geographical area of the employees' organisation.

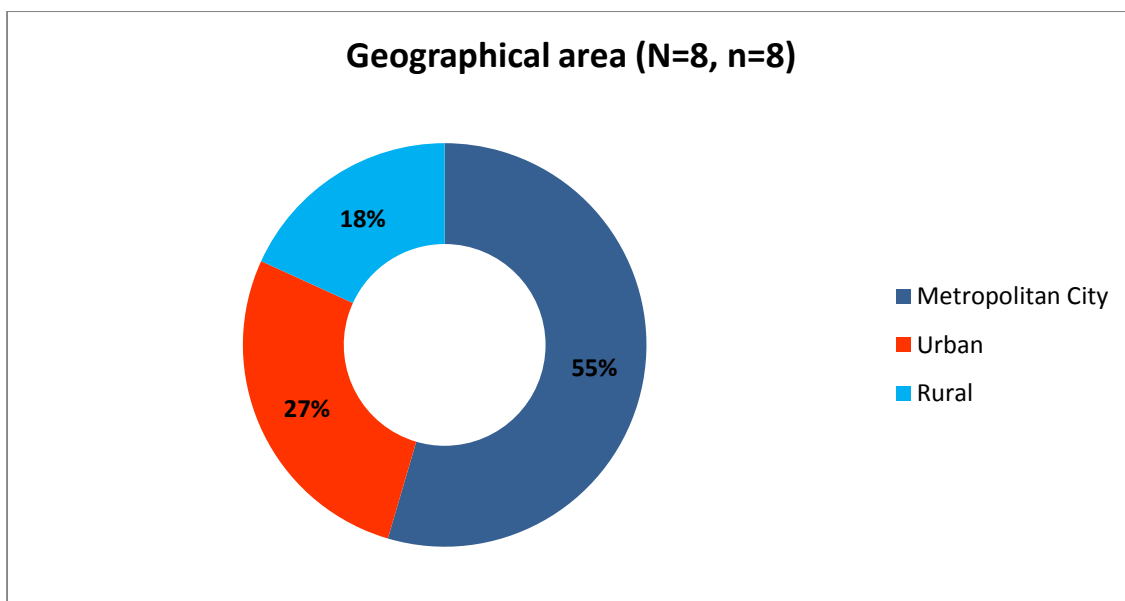


**Figure 6.23: Geographical area of the organisations.**

Figure 6.23 clearly shows that six (55%) of the companies operate in the metropolitan area, three (27%) in urban areas and two (18%) in the rural areas, which presented thus geographical diversity.

- **Legal nature of employers**

Figure 6.24 displays the legal nature of the employees' organisations.

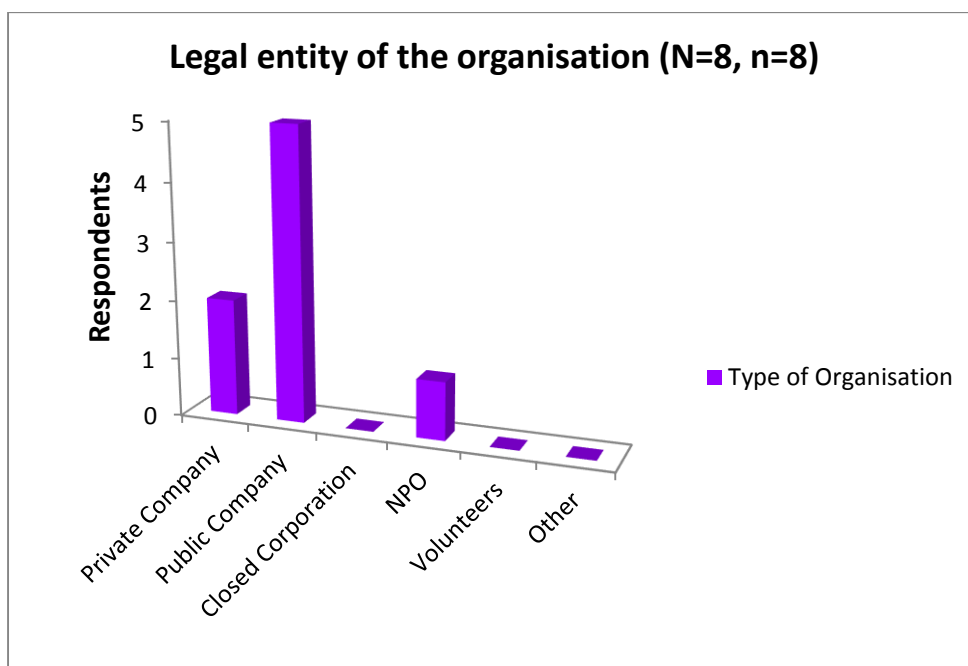


**Figure 6.24: Legal entity of the organisations.**

The majority (5 or 62%) of employers in this study were Public companies. Two (25%) respondents were from Private companies and one (13%) was from a non-profit organisation (NPO).

- **Total number of staff employed by employers**

The total number of staff employed by the employees' company is shown in figure 6.25.

Figure 6.25 clearly shows that three (37%) of the companies had a staff compliment of more than 250 employees and another three (37%) companies employed between 1-50 employees. One (13%) company had a staff compliment of between 51-100 employees and one (13%) company had a staff compliment between 101 and 150 employees. None of the respondent companies had a staff compliment between 151 and 200 or 201 and 250 employees. The variety of range of number of employees ensured diversity in company size.



**Figure 6.25: Total number of staff employed by company.**

- **Major language of employers**

Figure 6.26 displays the employer's major language.

Figure 6.26 indicates that the majority (6 or 75%) of employers' major language was English. One (12.5%) company indicated that there major language was Afrikaans and another company (12.5%) indicated that there major language was isiZulu.

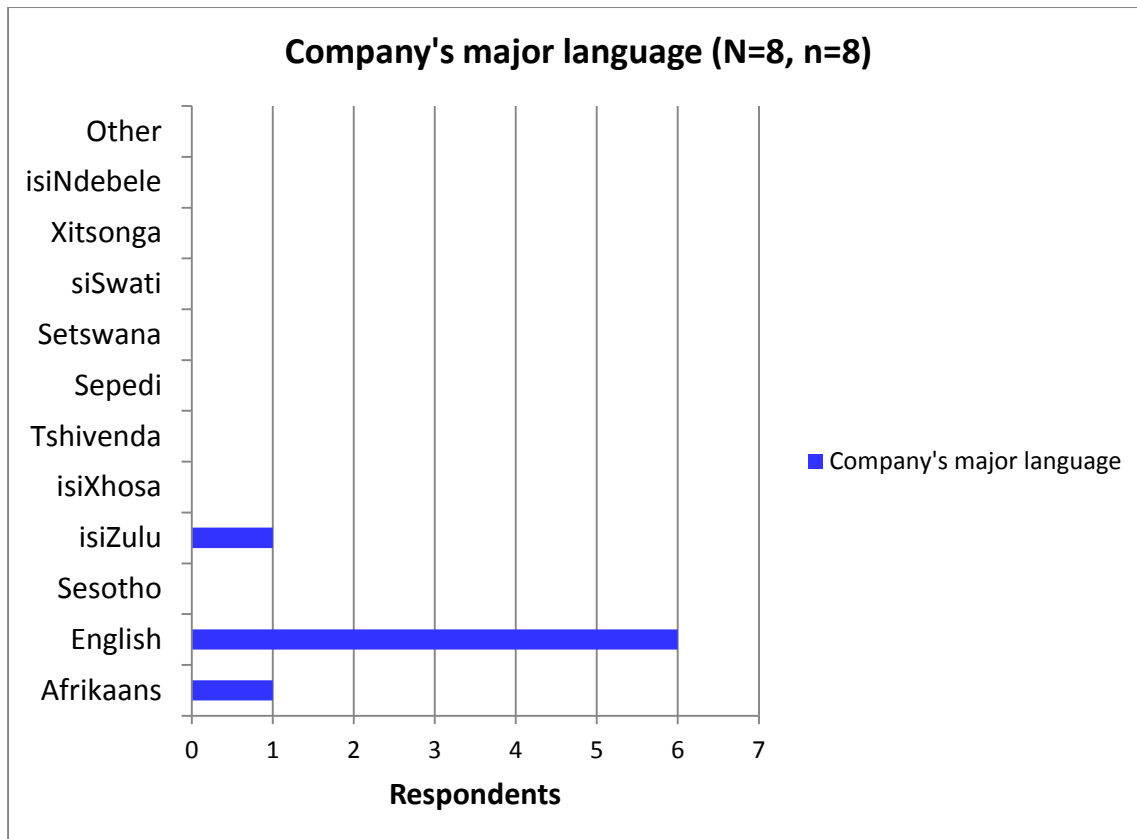


**Figure 6.26: Company's major language.**

## **SECTION 2: Core skills identified by employers**

The purpose of this section was to explore the understanding of the concept “core skills” by the employers and the nature of employment core skills needed from the employers’ perspective. The components or variables discussed in this section will be the description of the concept “core skills”; the level of knowledge of core skills needed in the employer’s company; prioritisation of core skills according to the necessity for successful employment within the organisation or company; the importance of the core skills communication, numeracy, information technology, problem solving and working with people for successful employment according to the employer; the components of the core skills that are applicable to the organisation or company; the use of a core skills profile for recruitment and its effectiveness; the importance of having core skills prior to employment; the need for training in core skills for employment seeking young adults and which core skill(s); the description of

the concept “employability”; the reasons for unemployment and any suggestions for additional core skills that the employer sees as necessary.

- **Employers’ understanding of the concept “core skills”**

Figure 6.27 shows the various descriptions of the concept “core skills”. The respondents had to choose which option described the concept “Core Skills” the best. The options were:

- a) Key skills necessary for a specific work situation
- b) Transferable skills that can be used in everyday situations
- c) Consists of team work, communication, numeracy, problem solving skills and people skills
- d) Core skills involves applied knowledge that leads to successful employment
- e) a and c
- f) b, c and d
- g) b and d

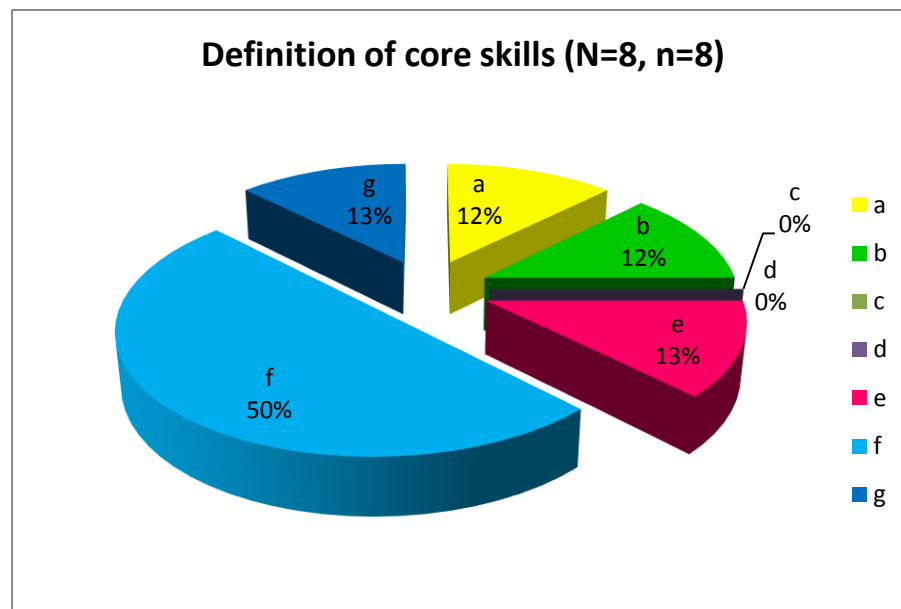


**Figure 6.27: Definition of the concept “core skills” by employers.**



Half (4 or 50%) of the respondents said that option (f) described the concept “core skills” the best. The remainder of the respondents each chose option (a) (12% or 1), option (b) (12% or 1), option (e) (13% or 1) and option (g) (13% or 1) as the definitions that described “core skills” the best. No respondent chose option (c) or (d).

- **Description of the employers’ level of knowledge of core skills needed in their company.**

The respondents had to choose which level described their knowledge of core skills needed in their organisation or company the best. Figure 6.28 displays the various options chosen by the respondents.

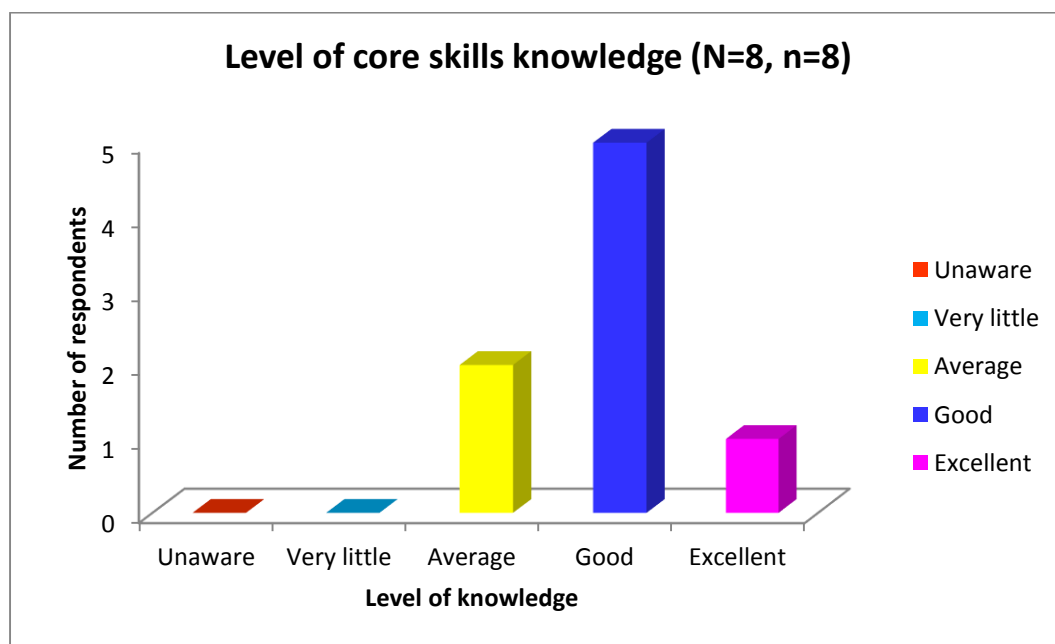


**Figure 6.28: Level of knowledge of core skills needed in the employers’ company.**

From figure 6.28 it can be seen that five (62.5%) of the respondents thought that they had a good level of knowledge of core skills that are needed in their company. Two respondents (25%) indicated that their level of knowledge of core skills needed in the company is average and one (12.5%) respondent said that his/her knowledge of core skills needed in the company is excellent. No respondents were unaware of

the core skills needed in their company or had very little knowledge of the core skills needed in their company.

- **Employers' prioritisation of the core skills from 1 (least) to 5 (most) according to the necessity for successful employment within the company.**

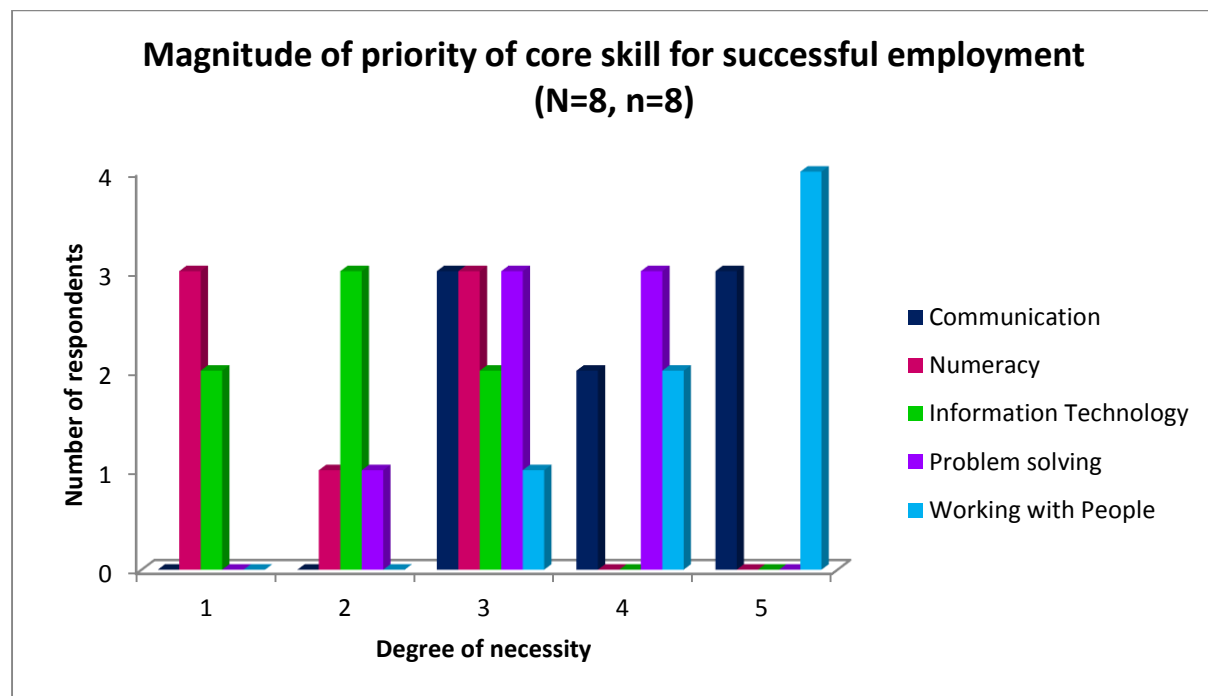


**Figure 6.29: Magnitude of priority of core skills necessary for successful employment within a company.**

Figure 6.29 shows that four (50%) of the respondents regarded the core skill “working with people” as the most important or needed core skill within their company for successful employment. Three (43%) respondents indicated that the core skill “communication” was the second most needed core skill within the company necessary for successful employment. Three respondents (43%) prioritised the core skill “problem solving” as a level four for successful employment within their company. The core skills “communication”, “numeracy” and “problem solving” were regarded of average importance for successful employment within a company. Information technology and numeracy were regarded as the least necessary core skills for successful employment.

- **Employers' perception of which components of the core skills are applicable to their company.**

Figure 6.30 displays the respondents' selection of components of core skills that are applicable to their company.

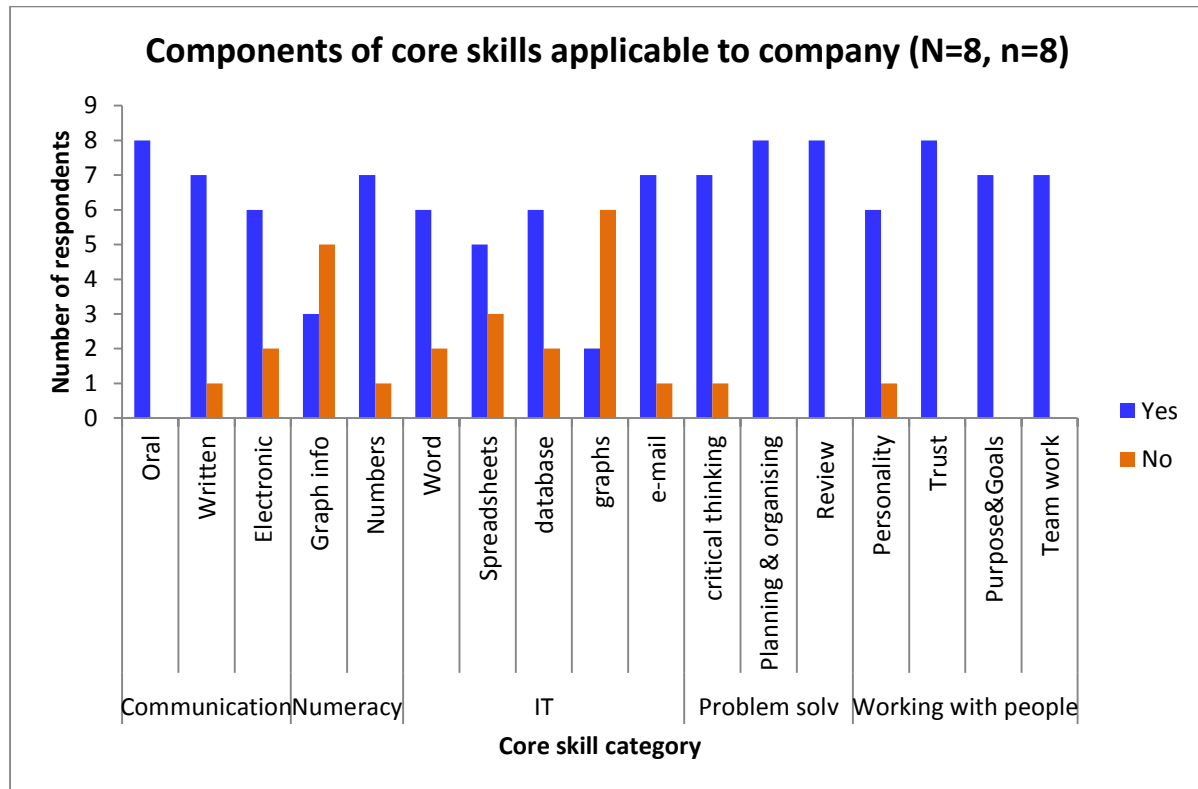


**Figure 6.30: Components of core skills applicable to a company.**

Figure 6.30 shows that all the respondents (8 or 100%) were of the opinion that the oral component of the core skill communication; the components of “planning and organising” and “review” of the core skill problem solving; and the component “trust” of the core skill working with people were applicable to their company. Seven (87.5%) of the respondents indicated that written communication, using numbers, e-mail, critical thinking, understanding own and other’s purpose or goals and teamwork were the second most applicable core skill components to their company. Electronic communication, using word processor, using database and understanding personality types were identified by 6 or 75% of the respondents as the third most applicable components of core skills in the company. Two (25%) of the respondents said that the component “using graphics” of the core skill information technology was the least applicable to their company.

- Employers' opinion whether their company or organisation uses a core skills profile when recruiting staff.

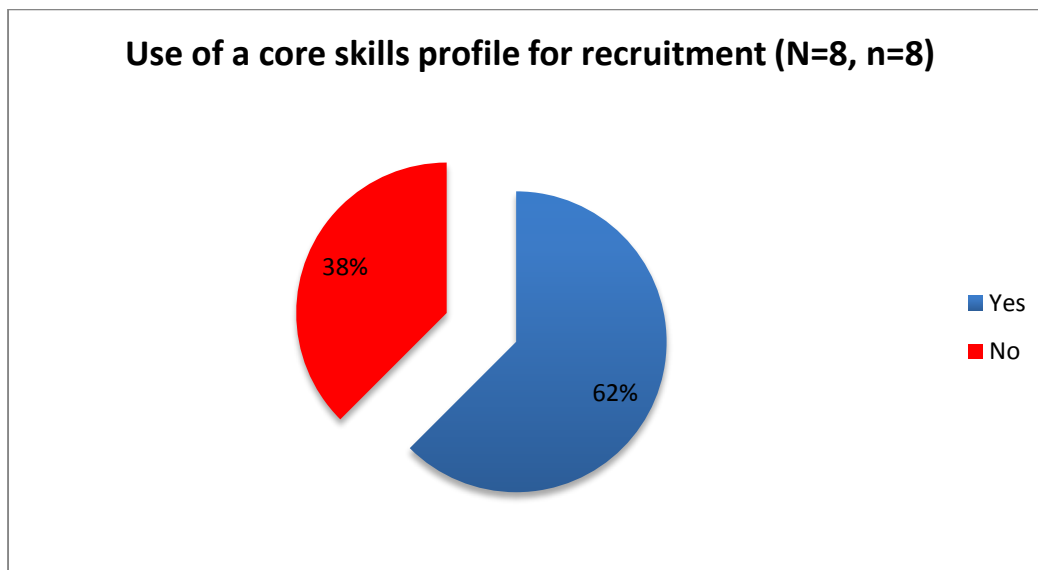


**Figure 6.31: Use of a core skills profile during recruitment by employers.**

Five (62%) respondents said that they used a core skills profile in the recruitment process and three (38%) said that their organisation did not use a core skills profile when recruiting new employees.

- Employers' opinion on the usefulness of the core skills profiles in the recruiting process within their company.

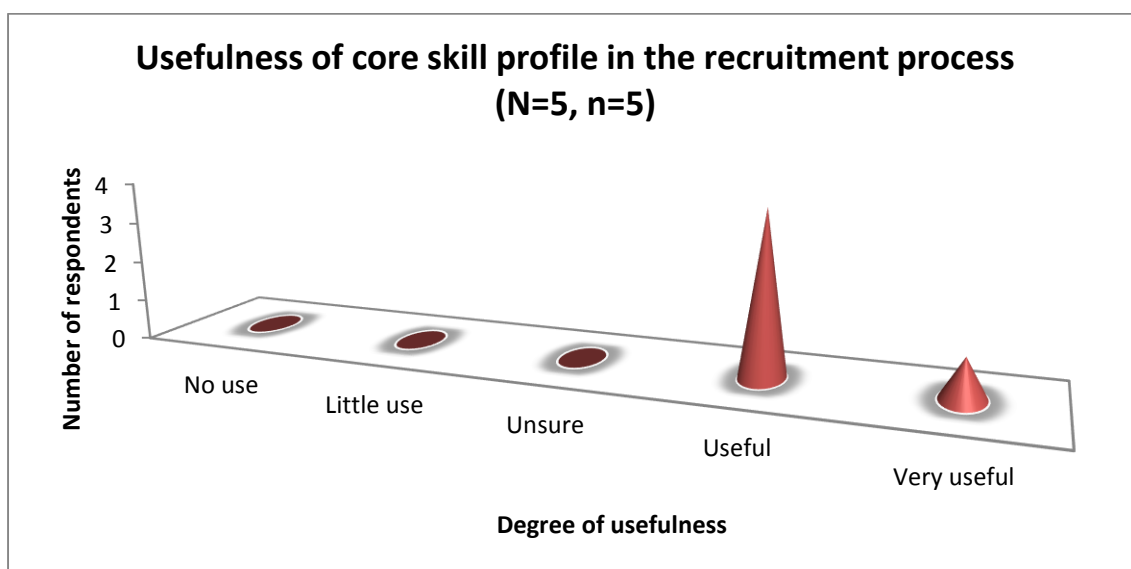


**Figure 6.32: Usefulness of a core skills profile during recruitment process.**

From the above figure 6.32, it can be deduced that 80% (4) of the respondents that used a core skills profile in the recruitment process found it useful and one (20%) respondent found the core skills profile very useful.

- **The employers' views of degree of importance of applicants to possess any core skills when applying for vacant posts in their company.**

Figure 6.33 displays the degree of importance of possessing core skills when applying for vacant posts in their organisation or company.

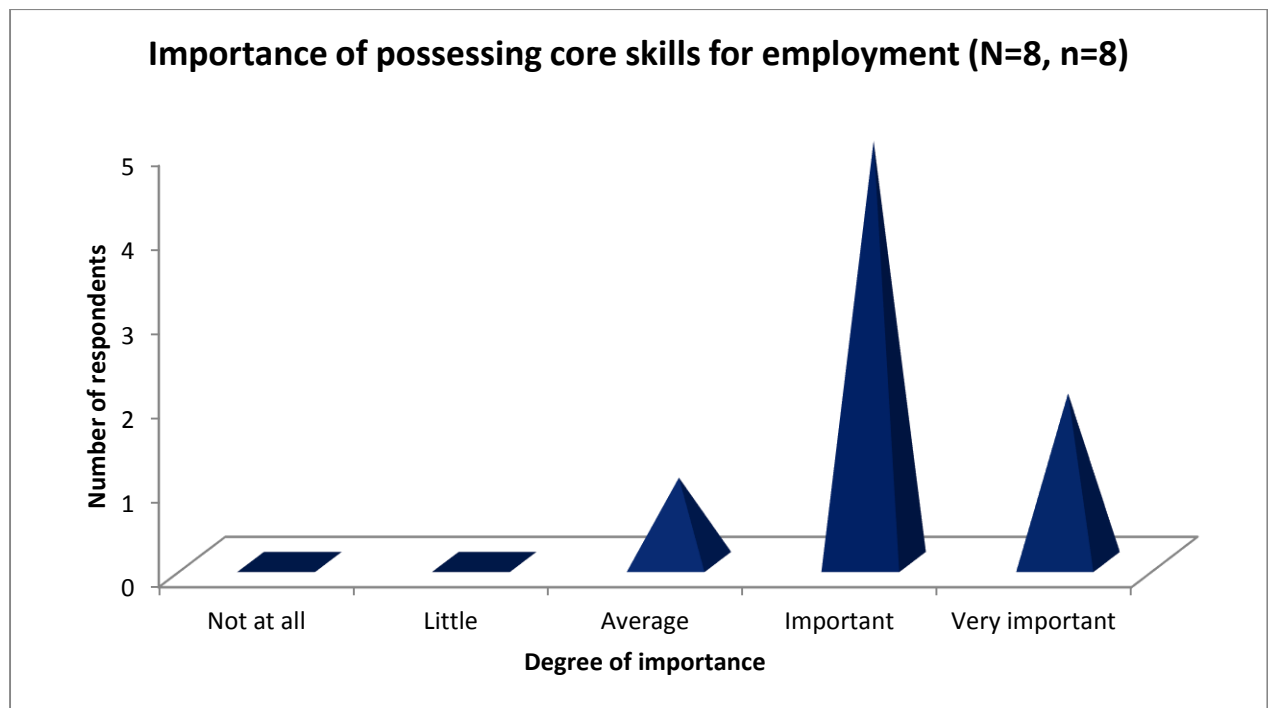


**Figure 6.33: Employers' view of importance of applicants to possess core skills during applications for vacant posts.**

More than half of the respondents (63%) said that it was important for a person to have core skills when applying for vacant posts in their company. Two respondents (25%) said that it was very important and one (12%) said that it was of average importance.

- **Employers' opinion whether young adults seeking employment should be given more training in core skills or not.**

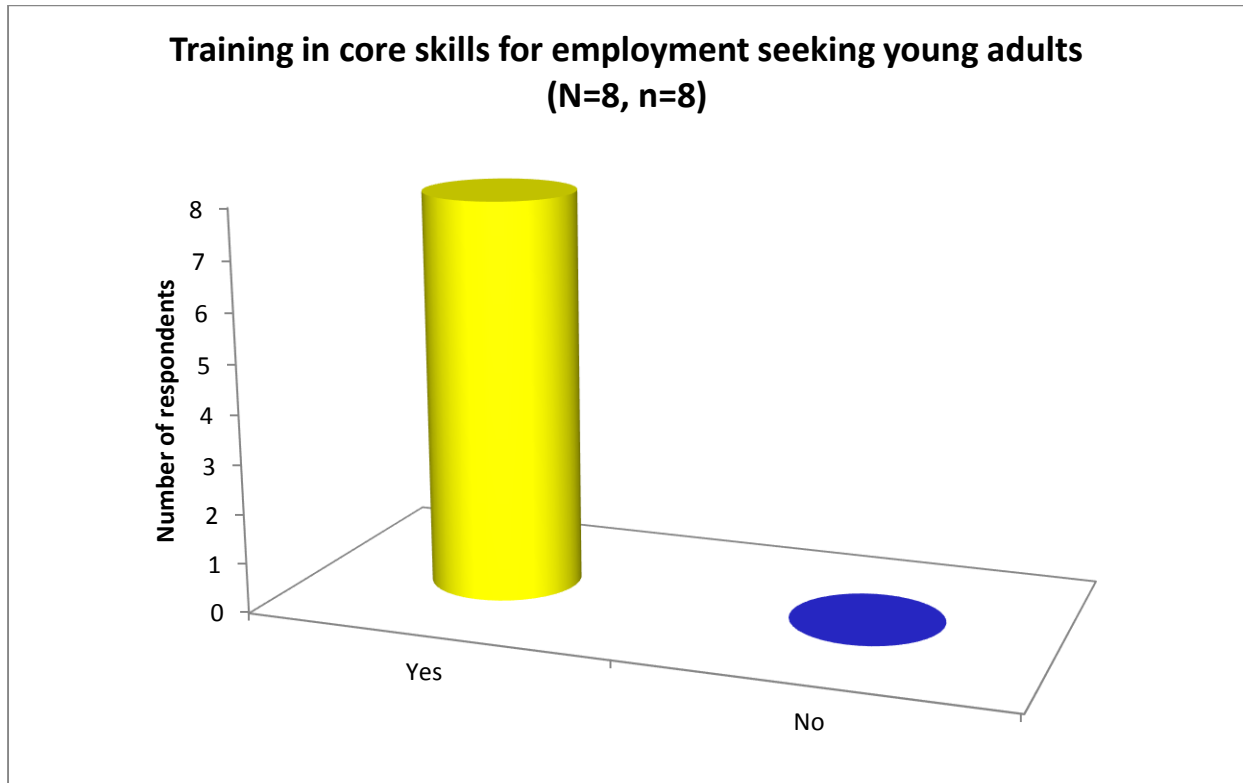


**Figure 6.34: The need for training in core skills for employment seeking young adults by employers.**

The above figure 6.34 clearly shows that all the respondents (8 or 100%) were of the opinion that young adults who seek employment should receive more training.

- **Employers' prioritisation of core skills that needed more training.**

Figure 6.35 displays the employers' choices of order of prioritisation of core skills that needed training on a scale of 1(least) to 5(most).

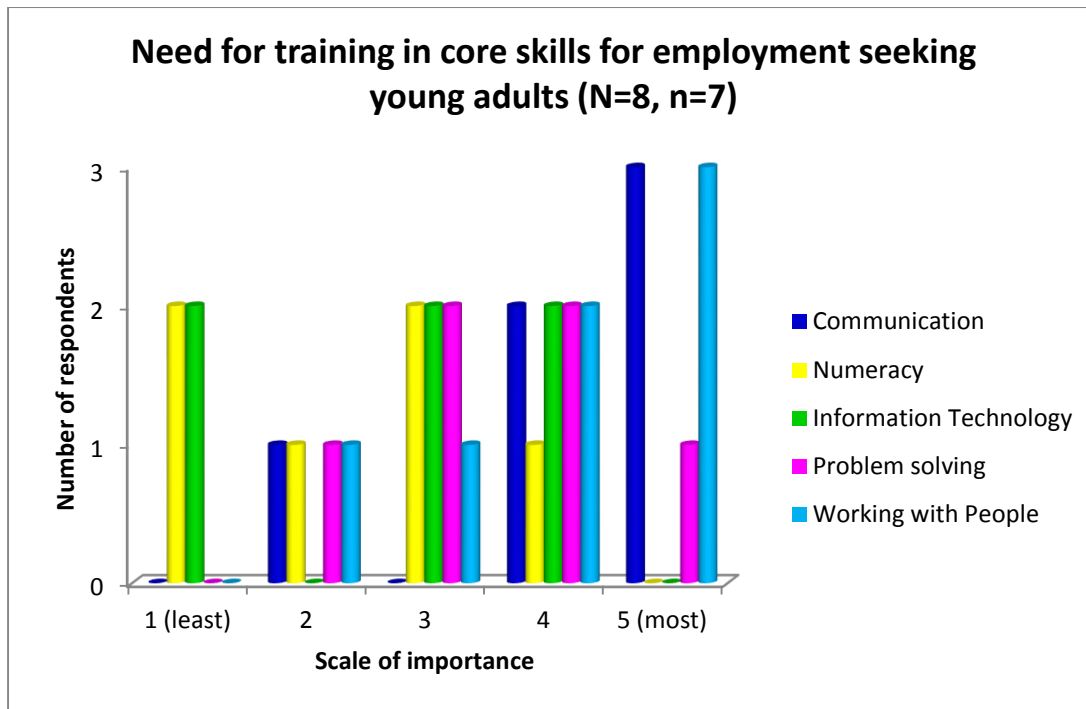


**Figure 6.35: Employers' prioritisation for need for training in core skills for employment seeking young adults.**

Three respondents indicated that communication and working with people were the core skills in which the young adults needed training the most. The core skills that needed the least training were numeracy and information technology.

- **Employers' description of the phrase "employability".**

Figure 6.36 shows the various descriptions of the phrase "employability". The respondents had to choose which option described the phrase "employability" the best. The options were:

- Values and attitudes compatible with work opportunities
- Basic skills (i.e. literacy and basic numeracy)
- The defined core skills (IT competence, working with others, communication, numeracy, problem solving)
- Customer service skills
- Up-to-date job specific skills and knowledge
- Career management skills

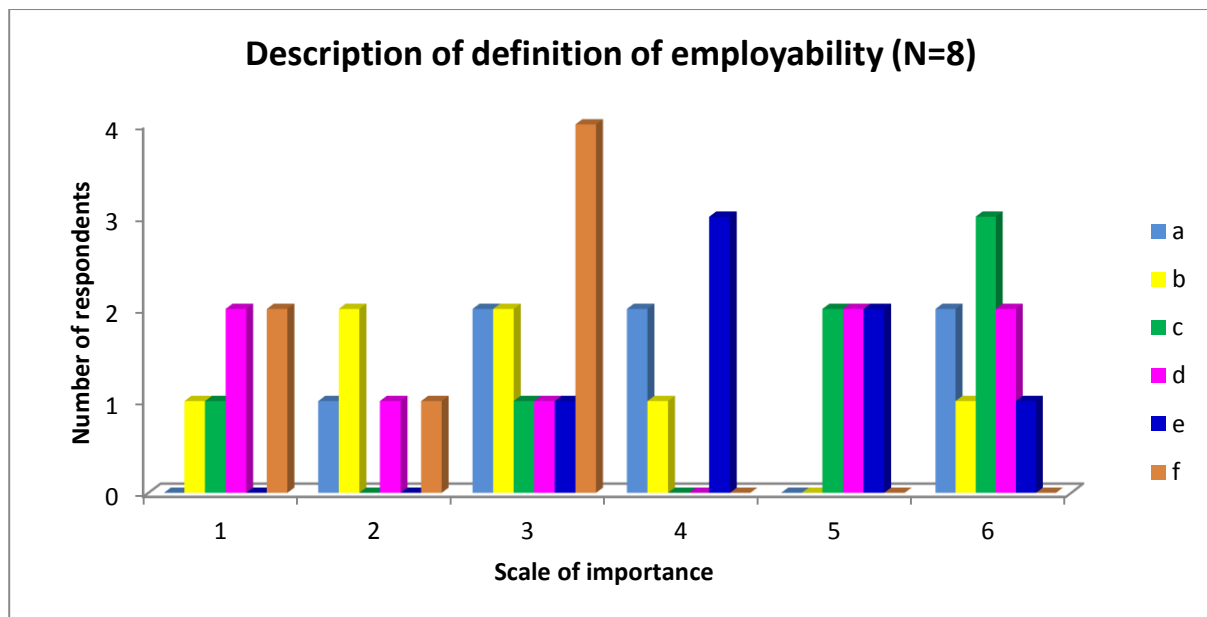


**Figure 6.36: Description of definition of employability by employers.**

Three respondents (38%) said that the phrase *The defined core skills (IT competence, working with others, communication, numeracy, problem solving)* or “c” described the concept “employability” best. The next best (25%) description of the concept “employability” chosen by the respondents was option “e” (*Up-to-date job specific skills and knowledge*). Two respondents (25%) indicated that options “a” and two respondents (25%) indicated that option “b” described the concept “employability” as average (not the best, nor the least). Four respondents (50%) indicated that option “f” (*Career management skills*) described the concept “employability” best in the category of “more or less” or value 3 on the scale of importance. According to the respondents (25%), options “d” (*Customer service skills*) and “f” (*Career management skills*) were the phrases that described “employability” the least.

- **Prioritisation of employers’ reasons for why so many young adults are unemployed.**

Figure 6.37 displays the respondents’ order of choices of reasons why so many young adults are unemployed. The choices were:

- Not enough jobs available



- Person does not have experience
- Person has inadequate core skills
- Person's attitude is wrong
- Person wants too high a salary
- Person does not have the necessary qualifications
- Other (respondents had to specify)
  - No working world experience
  - Not willing to do any job

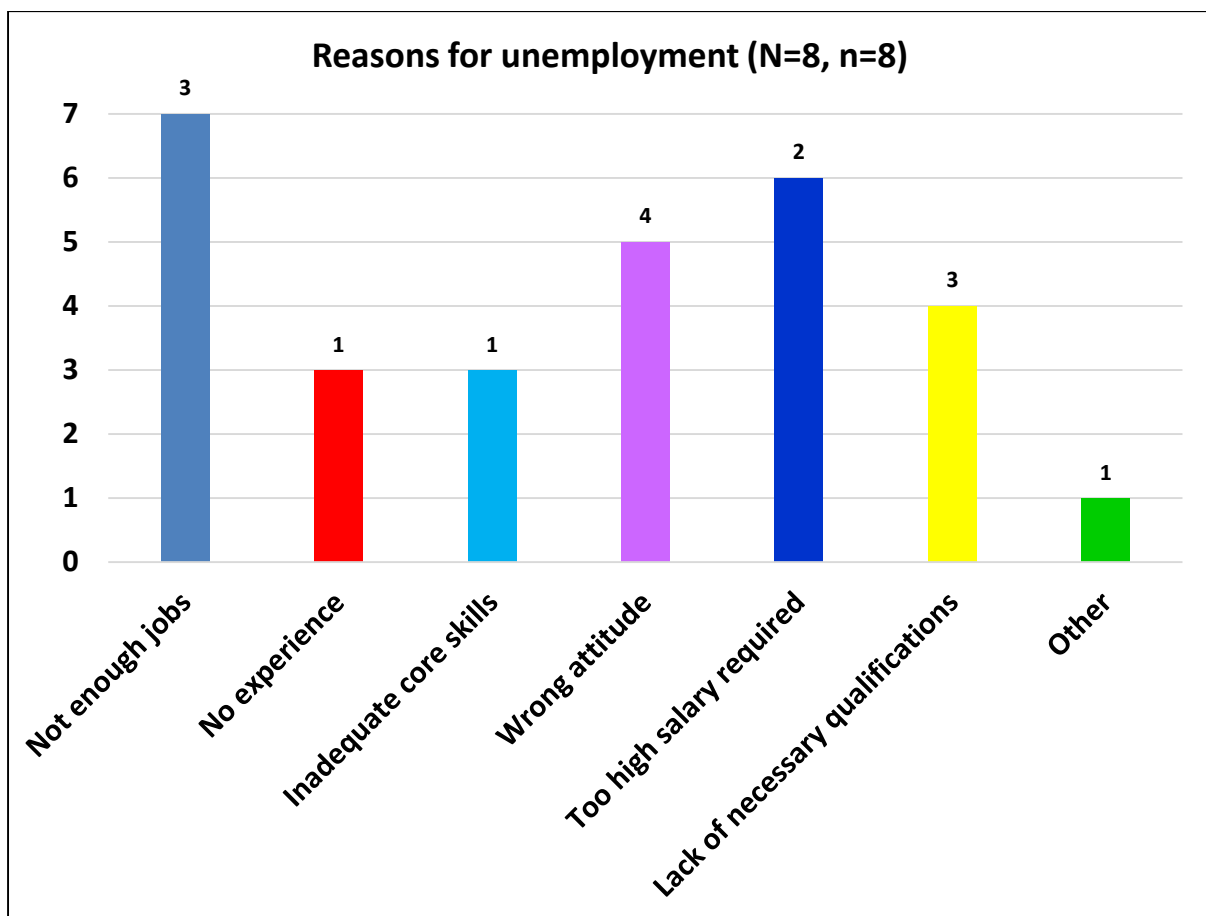


**Figure 6.37: Employers' reasons for unemployment**

From the above figure 6.37 three (38%) of respondents showed that the highest reason (level 7) why so many young adults are unemployed was that there are not enough jobs available. The second highest reason (level 6) chosen by two or 25% of respondents, is that the person wants too high a salary. Four (50%) respondents were of the opinion that the third highest reason (level 5) why so many young adults

were unemployed was that the person's attitude is wrong. Three (38%) respondents indicated that the reason for unemployment amongst young adults was that the person did not have the necessary qualifications was of average (level 4) importance. One respondent each indicated that the second least (level 3) reasons for unemployment were that young adults had no experiences and that they had "inadequate core skills". The least (level 1) reasons chosen by one (13%) respondent for unemployment were that young adults had no "world experiences" and were not willing to do any job.

- **Employers' suggestions of additional core skills to be included in a training programme**

Figure 6.38 displays the respondents' suggestions on what other core skills they thought should be included in the training programme that would help young adults become more employable.

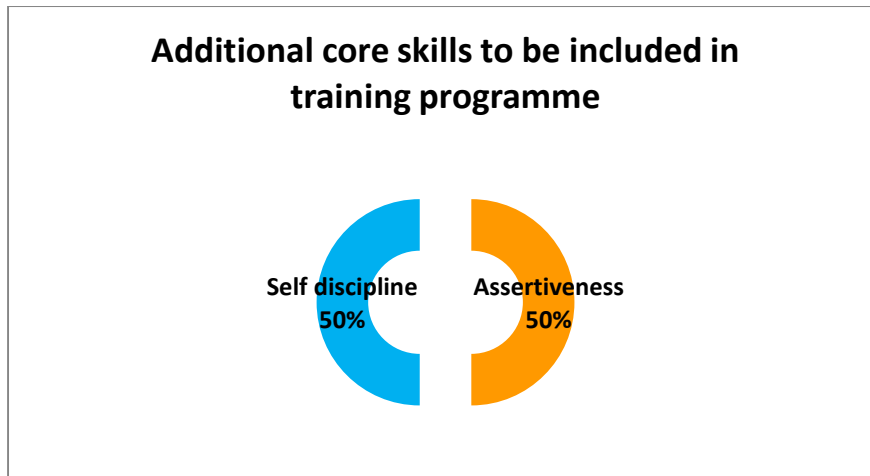


**Figure 6.38: Employers' suggestions for additional components of core skills for a training programme.**

Two respondents suggested that self-discipline and assertiveness should be included as components of core skills in the training programme.

#### **6.2.4 Responses of training service providers: Questionnaire A3 (Appendix 7)**

The questionnaire that was administered to the training service providers consisted of four sections namely,

Section 1 – Biographical profile of training service providers.

Section 2 – Profile of training service providers' trainees.

Section 3 – Programme components of skills programme presented by training service providers.

Section 4 – Programme effectiveness.

The data collected in the questionnaires will be presented in four sections namely:

Section 1 – Biographical profile of training service providers.

Section 2 – Profile of training service providers' trainees.

Section 3 – Programme components of skills programme presented by training service providers.

Section 4 – Programme effectiveness.

#### **SECTION 1: Biographical profile of training service providers**

The variables that will be discussed in this section are the respondents' age group, the respondents' gender, their years of experience as training service provider, the service sector in which the respondents provide skills training, the geographical area in which the organisation operates and the main language in which the training programme is presented.

- **Age range of training service providers**

Figure 6.39 reflects the age range of respondents.

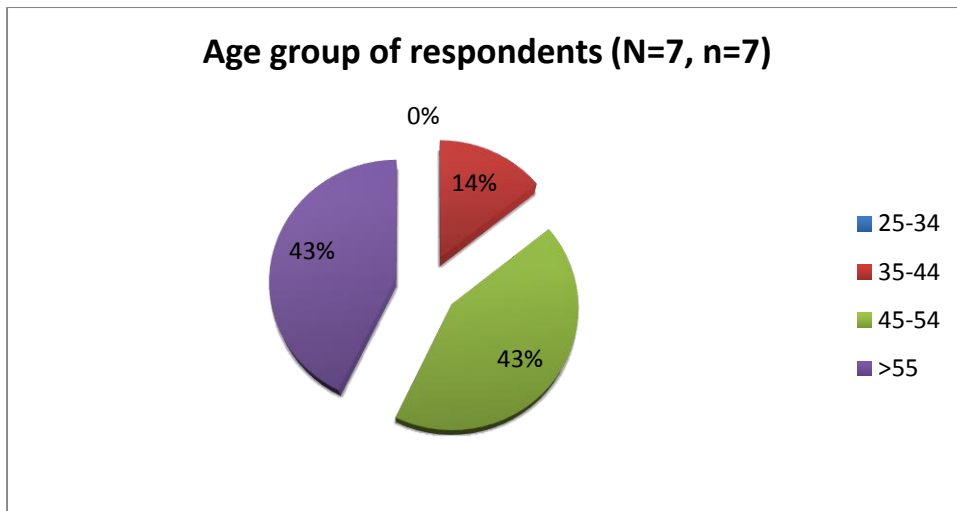


**Figure 6.39: Age group of training service providers.**

From figure 6.39 it can be seen that the majority of the respondents (6 or 86%) were above the age of 45 years. Fourteen percent (1) of the respondents were between 35 and 44 years of age. No respondents were younger than 35 years.

- **Gender of training service providers**

Figure 6.40 shows the gender profile of the training service provider respondents.

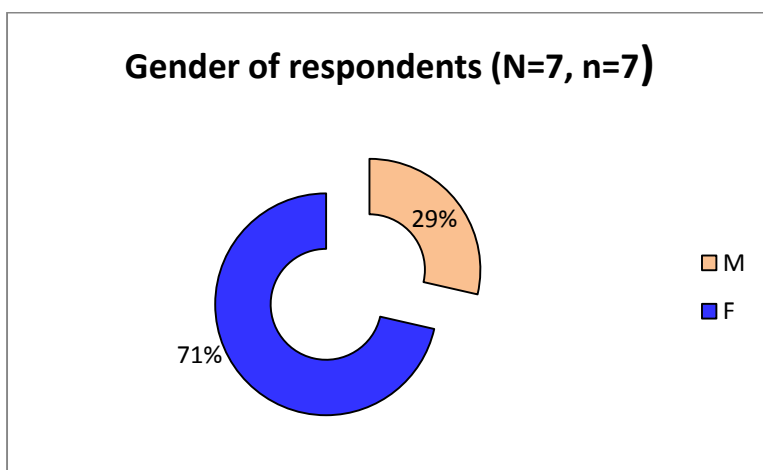


**Figure 6.40: Gender of respondents (training service providers).**

The majority (5 or 71%) of respondents were females and only two (29%) were males.

- **Number of years of experience of training service providers**

Figure 6.41 displays the number of years' experience of the training service provider respondents.

The accumulative years of experience as training service provider by the respondents as displayed in figure 6.41 are 140 years and one month. The average years of experience per respondent are 20 years, which was an indication that the respondents are experienced and knowledgeable people in the field of training.

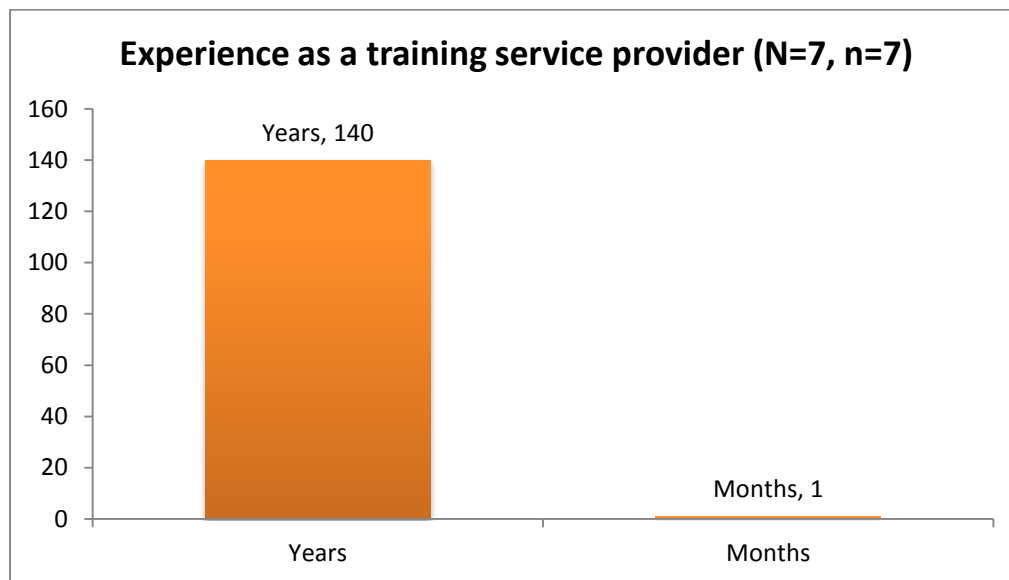


**Figure 6.41: Duration of experience as training service provider.**

- **Service sector of the training service providers**

Figure 6.42 indicates the variety of service sectors in which the training service providers provide training.

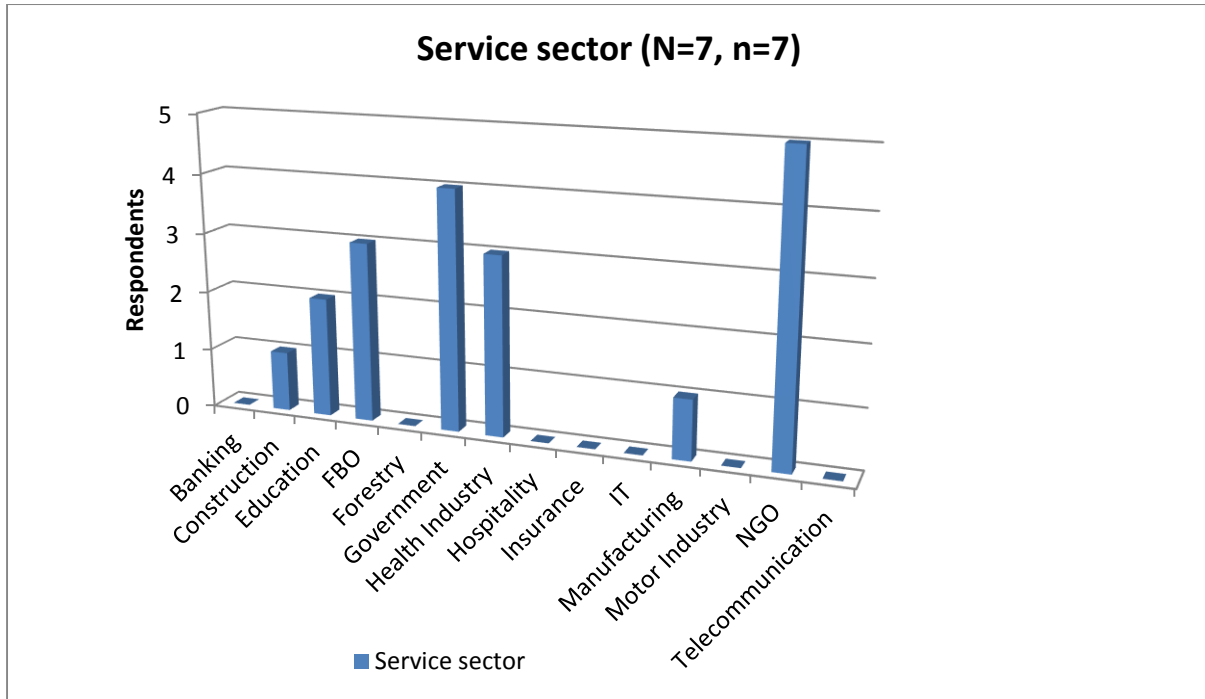


**Figure 6.42: Category of service sector of the training service providers.**

From figure 6.42, it can be seen that most of the respondents provided skills training to the NGO (non-government organisation) (5 or 71%) and government sector (4 or 57%). Three respondents (43%) provided skills training respectively to the FBO (Faith Based Organisation) and the health sectors followed by the education sector with two respondents (28.5%). The minority of respondents (one or 14%) provided skills training to the construction and manufacturing sector respectively.

- **Geographical area of training service providers**

The geographical area of the training service providers are displayed in figure 6.43.

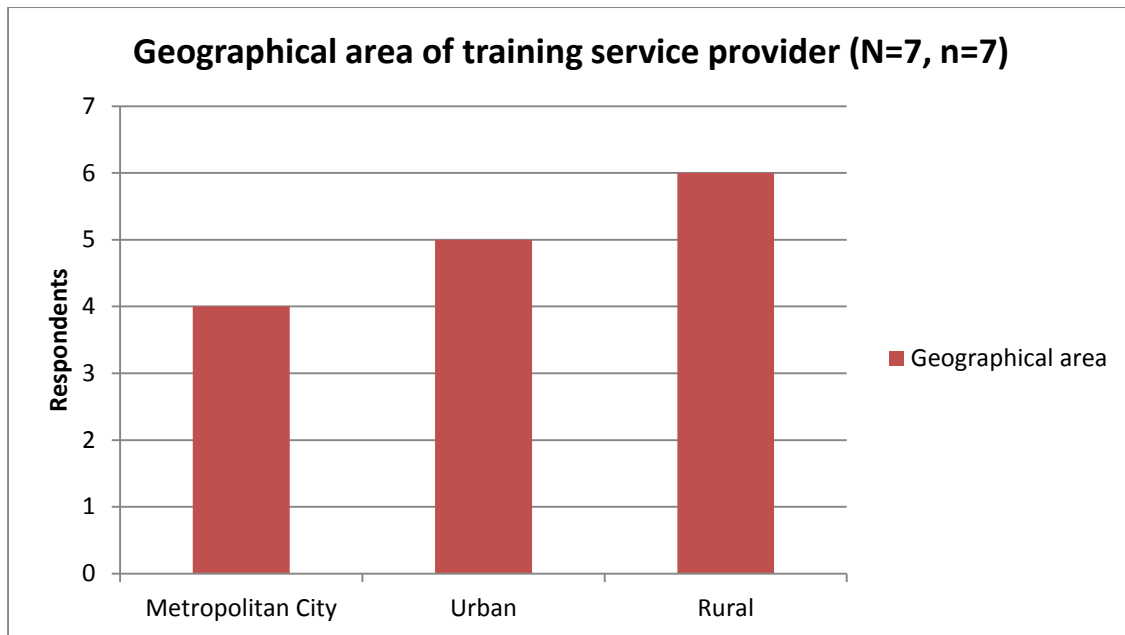


**Figure 6.43: Geographical area of training service provider.**

Most of the training service providers (6 or 86%) rendered services in the rural areas, five (71%) training service providers operate in the urban area and four (57%) operate in the metropolitan city. Four (57%) of the training service providers provided training in all three the areas, namely Metropolitan City, Urban and Rural areas. One (14%) Training Service Provider provided training in the Urban area only, and two (28%) only in the Rural area.

- **Main language in which skills programme is presented by training service providers**

Figure 6.44 displays the main language in which the training service providers' skills programme is presented.

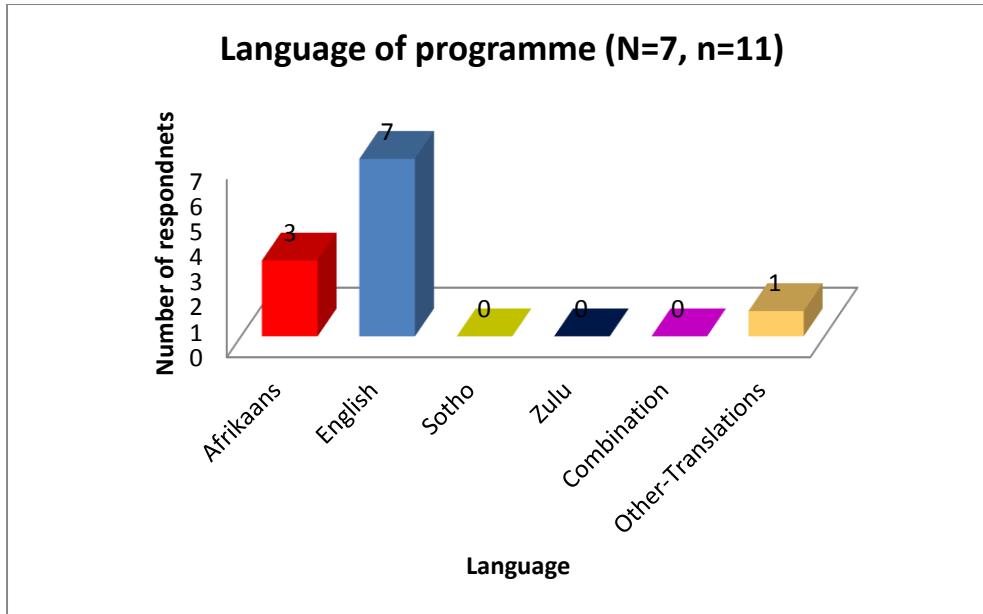


**Figure 6.44: Language of training programme.**

As seen in figure 6.44 all the respondents (7 or 100%) present their training programme in English, three (43%) respondents present the training programme in Afrikaans and one (14%) respondent provided their training in other languages identified as translations. Three (43%) Training Service Providers present their training programme in both Afrikaans and English. Four (57%) respondents present their training programme in English only.

## SECTION 2: Trainees' profile

The variables that will be discussed in this section are the trainees' age group, the percentage of trainees' gender, the ethnicity group of the trainees, the main language group of the trainees and the status of the trainees namely: unemployed, matriculant, youth, women, job seekers, new employees or existing employees, from a low socio-economic level or other.

- **Age profile of trainees**

Figure 6.45 reflects the age profile of the trainees according to a nominal ranking from 4 (most) to 1(least).



Figure 6.45 indicates that most of the respondents (5 or 71%) provide training to trainees that are in the adult age group and least to the adolescent age group. The age group to whom the second least training was provided by the training service providers were the young adult age group, namely four (57%) training service providers. The second most age group to whom the respondents (3 or 43%) provided training was the middle adulthood category. These figures indicate that there is a need for training programmes that focus on the young adult age group.

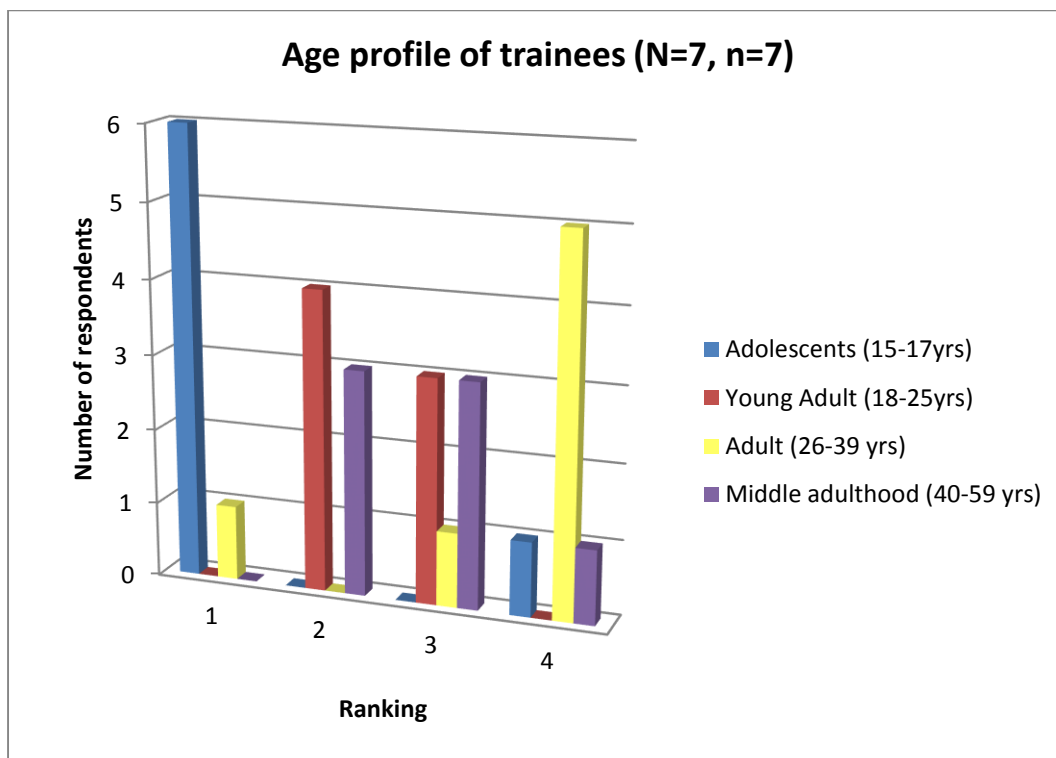


**Figure 6.45: Age profile of trainees.**

- **Gender of trainees**

Figure 6.46 reflects the gender ratio of the trainees.

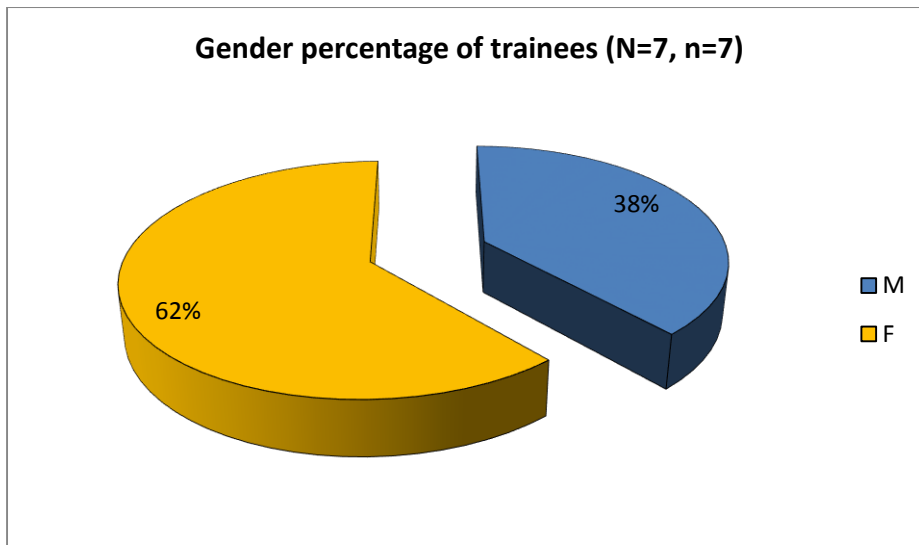


**Figure 6.46: Gender percentage of trainees.**

Figure 6.46 shows that the majority (62%) of trainees are females and only 38% are males.

- Ethnicity profile of trainees**

Figure 6.47 displays the ethnicity group profile of the trainees according to the nominal value of 5(most) to 1(least).

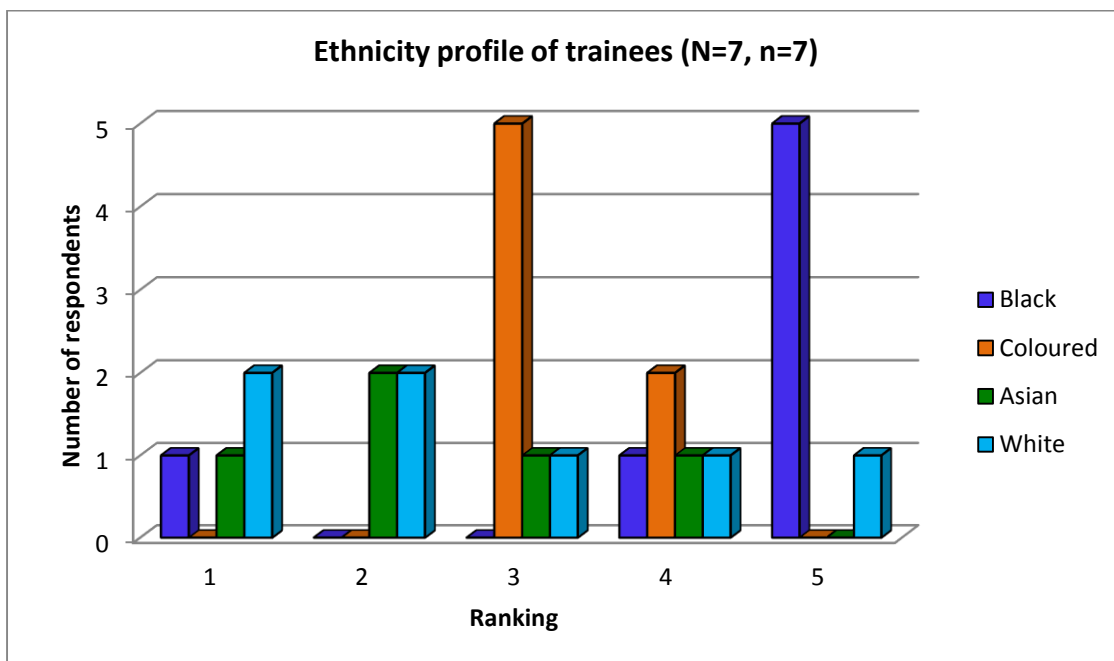


**Figure 6.47: Ethnicity profile of trainees.**

According to 71% of the training service providers the majority of the trainees belong to the Black ethnic group as indicated in figure 6.47. The respondents (100%) indicated that they provide training to the Coloured ethnic group second most. The White and Asian ethnic groups are the least presented groups under the trainees (28%).

- **Language profile of trainees**

Figure 6.48 displays the main language profile of the trainees.

Figure 6.48 clearly shows that the majority (4 or 57%) of respondent training service providers' trainees' main language is isiXhosa. The second largest (3 or 43%) groups of languages are isiZulu, English, Afrikaans and Setswana respectively.

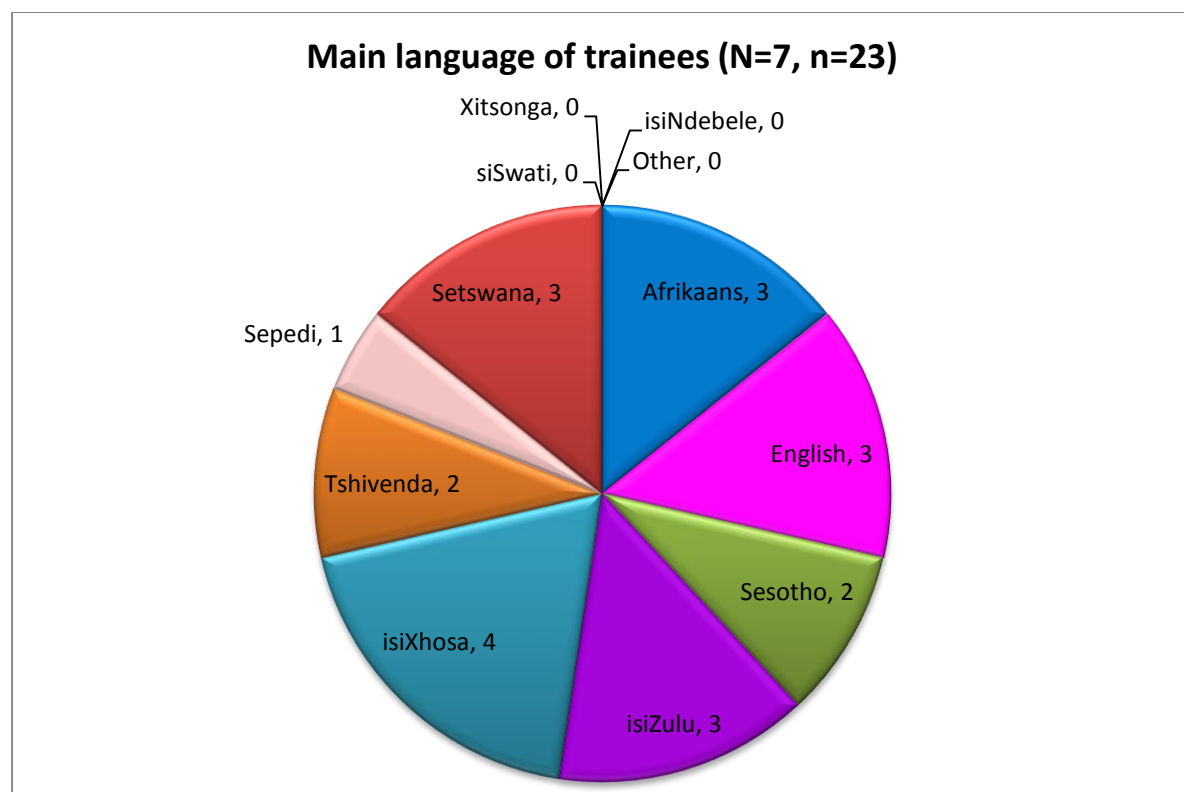


**Figure 6.48: Main language of trainees.**

The minority group of trainees have Sesotho (2 or 29%), Tshivenda (2 or 29%) and Sepedi (1 or 14%) as main languages. No trainees of the respondents' training

programmes speak isiNdebele, siSwati and Xitsonga. None of the other languages were identified as the main language of the trainees of the training service providers that responded to the questionnaire.

- **Group profile of trainees**

Figure 6.49 gives a synopsis of the group profile of the trainees according to a ranking from 9 (most) to 1 (least).

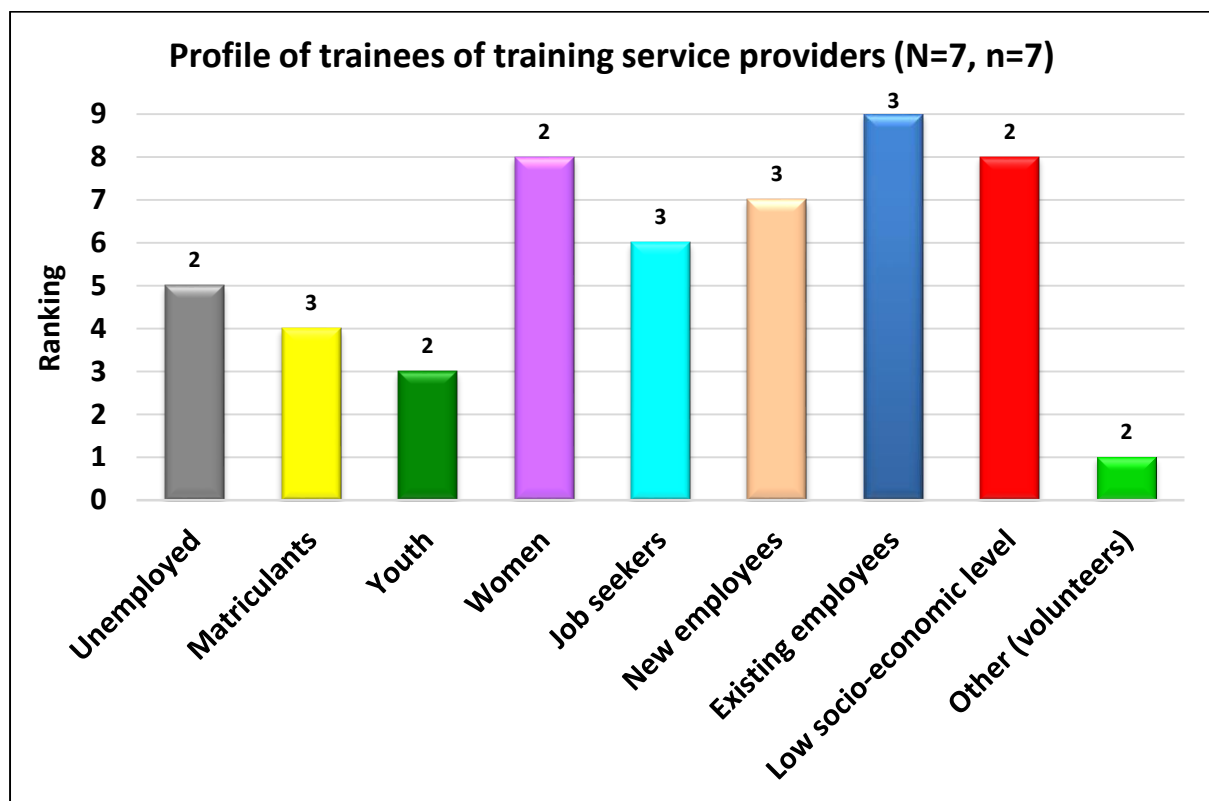


**Figure 6.49: Profile of trainees.**

According to figure 6.49 the highest number of respondents (3 or 43%) indicated that the most trainees trained are existing employees. The women and the low socio-economic level trainee group profile was chosen as the second most group trained by two (29%) respondents respectively. Three or 43% of respondents indicated that the next lower level of trained trainees profile were new employees (ranking 7) and three or 43% of respondents then indicated job seekers (ranking 6) as trainees trained. Two (29%) of the respondents respectively indicated that the unemployed

trainee group profile was ranked fifth in receiving training. Three (43%) respondents indicated that matriculants were ranked level four who received training. Three (43%) of respondents indicated that the second least (level 3) group of trainees who received training was the youth. Two or 29% of the training service providers indicated that the least (level 1) group of trainees who were trained are volunteers.

### **SECTION 3: Programme components of training service providers' training programme.**

The purpose of this section was to gather information about the service providers' training programme and the core skills covered by the programme that will enhance employability. The variables that will be discussed in this section are the percentage of each core skill covered by the training programme presented by the training service provider, the description of the phrase "employability" and the priority of each core skill for successful employment.

- **Core skills covered by training service providers' programme**

Figure 6.50 displays the percentage of the core skills that are covered by the training service providers' training programme.

Figure 6.50 indicates that three (43%) of the respondents covered the core skill "communication" the most (100%) in their training programme. Five (71%) of the respondents indicated that the core skill that is covered 75% is "working with people". Three (43%) respondents said that the core skill that is covered 50% in their training programme is "problem solving". Three (43%) respondents indicated that the core skill "information technology" was covered 25% and 0% respectively in the training programmes. Four (57%) of the respondents indicated that the core skill "numeracy" was not covered in their training programme. The core skill "attitude" was covered the second most (3 or 43%) in the 100% category and four (57%) of the respondents covered it 75% in their training programme.

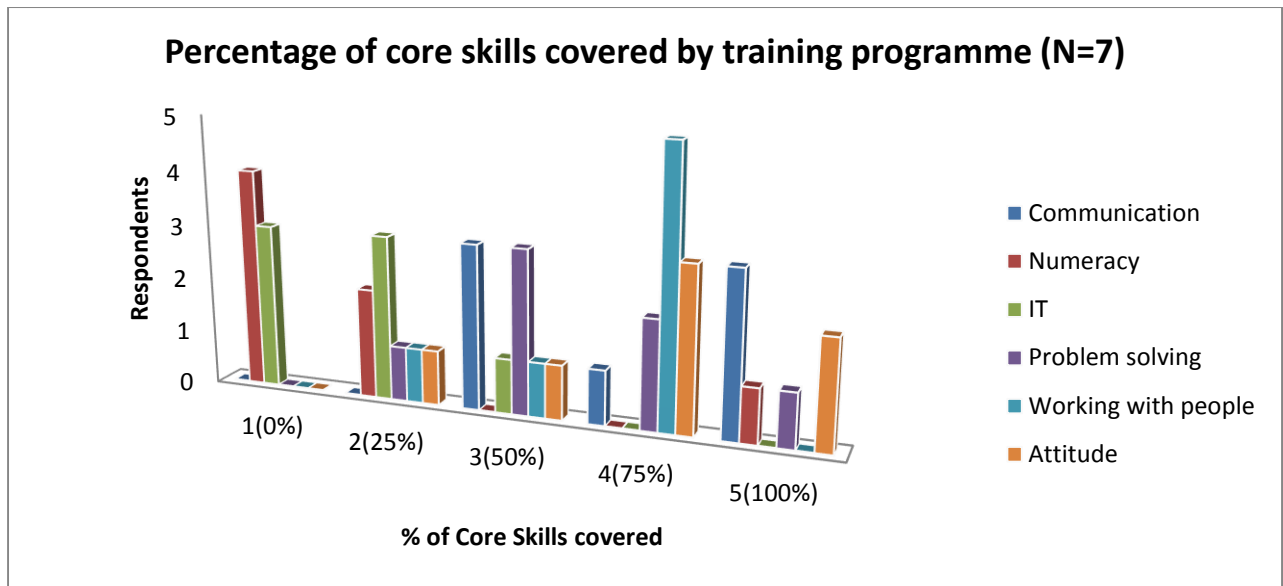


**Figure 6.50: Percentage of core skills covered by the training programmes.**

- Training service providers' description of the concept "employability"**

Figure 6.51 shows which phrase describes the concept "employability" the best.

Respondents had to indicate which option described "employability" the best by ranking the option from 6 (best) to 1 (least). The various options from which the respondents could choose were:

- Your values and attitudes are compatible with the work opportunities.
- Basic skills (i.e. literacy and basic numeracy)
- The defined core skills (IT competence, working with others, communication, numeracy, problem solving)
- Customer service skills
- Up-to-date job specific skills and knowledge
- Career management skills

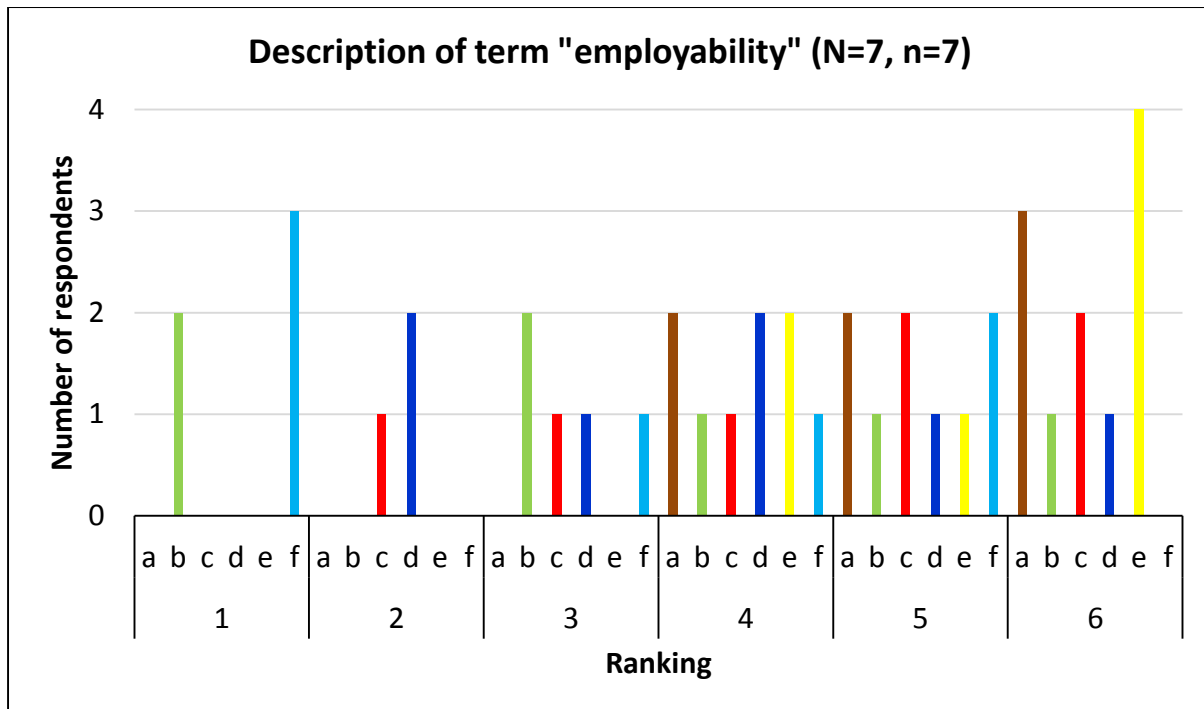


**Figure 6.51: Description of term “employability”.**

From figure 6.51 it can be seen that most (4 or 57%) of the respondents chose phrase “e” (up-to-date job specific skills and knowledge) as the phrase that describes the concept “employability” best (ranking 6). Three (43%) respondents chose phrase “a” (your values and attitudes are compatible with the work opportunities) as the phrase that describes “employability” best. Two respondents (29%) chose phrase “c” as the phrase that describes “employability” as the best (ranking 6). Phrase “c” (the defined core skills (IT competence, working with others, communication, numeracy, problem solving)) was chosen by two (29%) respondents as having a ranking of 6 (best) and a ranking of 5 (better). Phrase “d” (customer service skills) was chosen by two (29%) respondents as describing “employability” on a ranking of 4. Three (43%) respondents indicated that phrase “f” (career management skills) as the phrase that described “employability” the least. Two (29%) respondents indicate that they thought that phrase “b” (basic skills, i.e. literacy and numeracy) described “employability” the least.

- **Training service providers' perception of necessity of the different core skills for successful employment**

Figure 6.52 displays the prioritisation of the core skills according to the respondents' perception of necessity for successful employment.

According to figure 6.52 three (43%) respondents respectively are of the opinion that the core skills "attitude" and "communication" are the most necessary for successful employment. Two (29%) respondents respectively indicated that "working with people" and "problem solving" are the most necessary for successful employment. One (7%) respondent respectively indicated that "applied numeracy" and "utilising IT" were of the highest priority for successful employment.

Two (29%) respondents respectively said that "attitude", "working with people" and "problem solving" are a level 6 necessity for successful employment. One (14%) respondent indicated that "communication" was of a high priority for successful employment. No respondents indicated that "applied numeracy" and "utilising IT" was of a high necessity for successful employment.

Three or (43%) respondents indicated that "working with people" was of a level 5 priority for successful employment. Two (29%) respondents respectively indicated that "problem solving" and "attitude" were of above average priority (level 5) for successful employment. No (0%) respondent indicated that "communication", "applied numeracy" and "utilising IT" were of a level 5 necessity for successful employment.

Two (29%) respondents indicated that the core skill "communication" was of average (level 4) priority for successful employment. One (7%) respondent respectively indicated that the core skills "utilising IT" and "problem solving" are of average priority for successful employment. No respondents thought that the core skills



“attitude” and “working with people” had a value of less than five for the necessity for successful employment.

Three (43%) and five (71%) respondents respectively said that the core skills “applied numeracy” and “utilising information technology” are less than average necessary for successful employment. Figure 6.52 indicates that one (7%) respondent was of the opinion that the core skill “communication is a level 2 priority for successful employment and three (43%) respondents said that “applied numeracy” is a level 2 priority for successful employment.

No respondent indicated that any of the core skills namely “communication”, “applied numeracy”, “utilising IT”, “problem solving”, “working with people” and “attitude” are the least (level 1 priority value) necessary for successful employment.

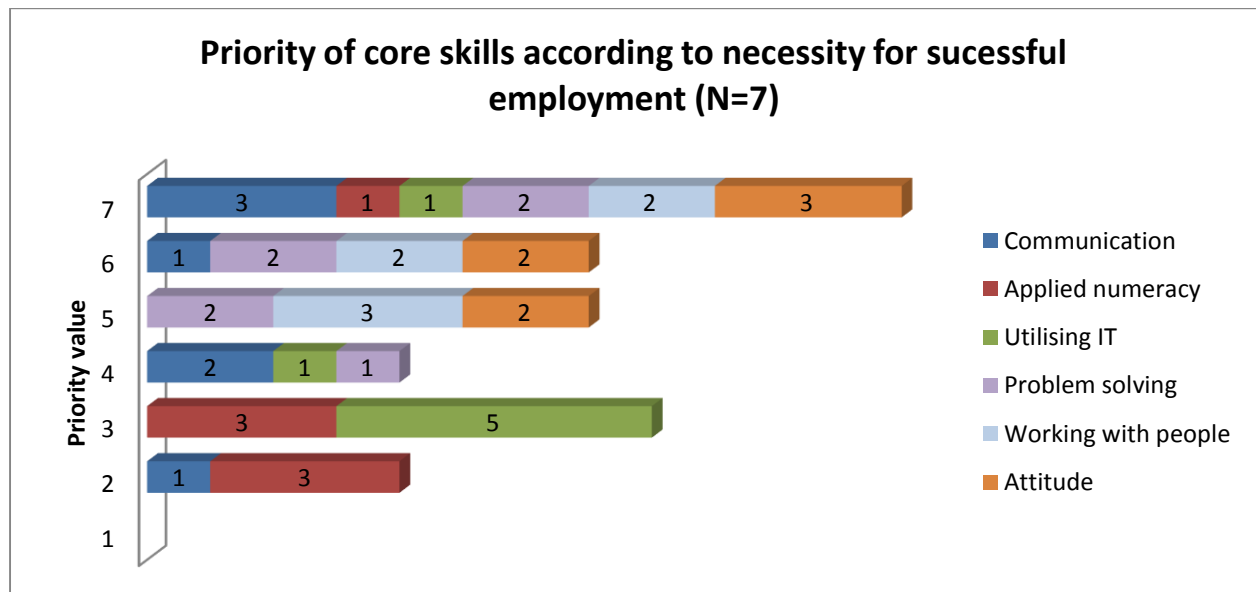


**Figure 6.52: Priority of core skills according to necessity for employment.**

#### **SECTION 4: Programme effectiveness of training service providers' training programme.**

This section explored the effectiveness of the training service providers' training programme and will be discussed below. The opinion of the respondents with regard to content, structure or other specific topics that they view should be included in the pre-employment core skills programme will also be discussed.

- **Effectiveness of training service providers' training programme**

Figure 6.53 shows the aggregate ranking for the training service providers' opinion of the degree of effectiveness of their training programme for each statement.

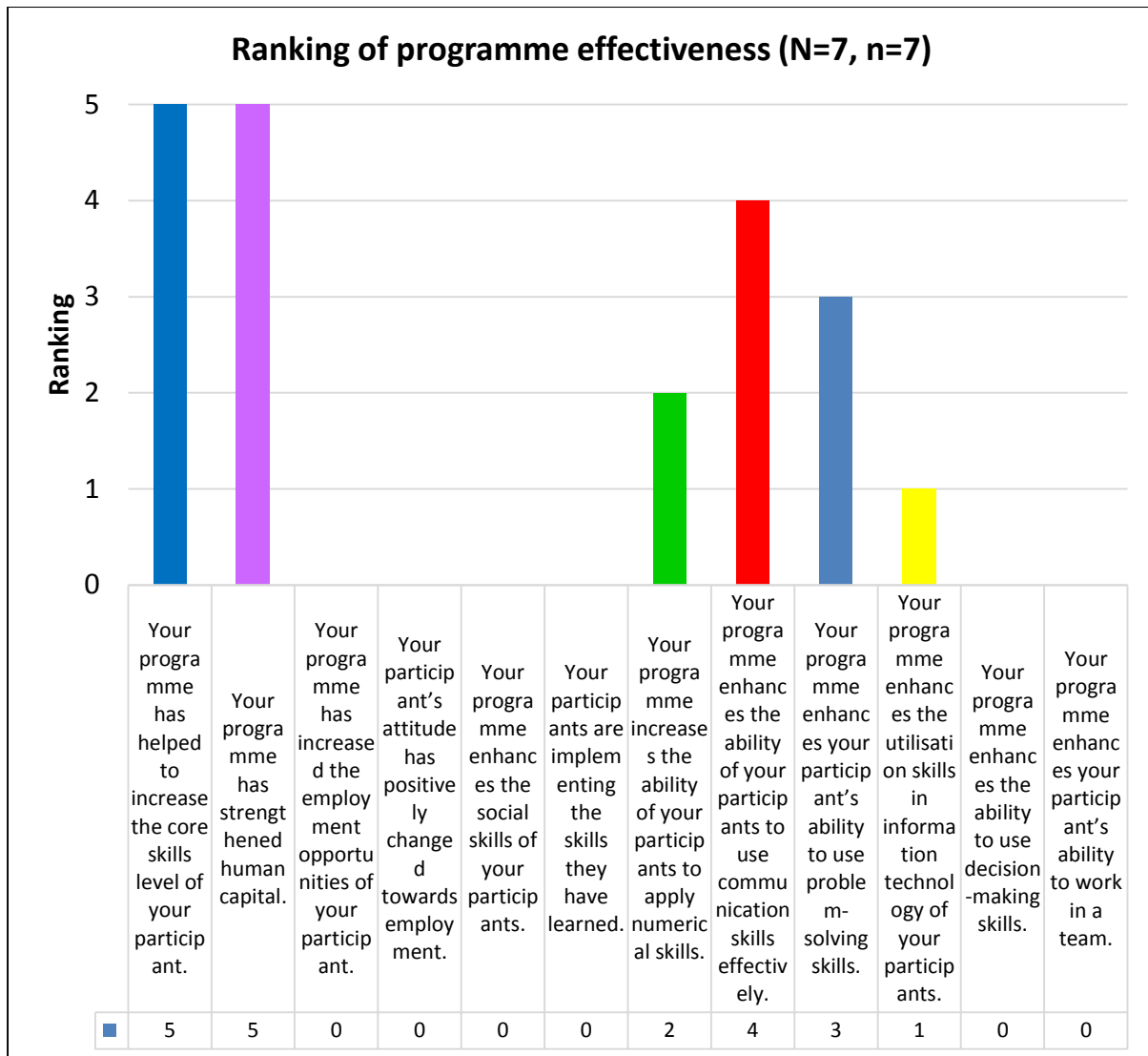


**Figure 6.53: Ranking of the training service providers' training programme effectiveness**

According to figure 6.53 the statements "Your programme has helped to increase the core skills level of your participant" and "Your programme has strengthened human capital" respectively were indicated by five (71%) of the respondents as the statements that outlined the effectiveness of the training service providers' training programme as the most. Six (86%) of the respondents indicated that the statement "Your programme enhances the ability of your participants to use communication skills effectively" as the statement that described the effectiveness of the training service providers' training programme as the second highest (level 4). The statement "Your programme enhances your participant's ability to use problem-solving skills" was chosen by four (57%) of the respondents as the statement that

described the effectiveness of the training service providers' training programme as average (level 3). The statement "Your programme increases the ability of your participants to apply numerical skills" was chosen by three (43%) of the respondents as the statement that was the second least efficiency of the training service providers' training programme. Four (57%) of the respondents indicated that the statement "Your programme increases the ability of your participants to apply numerical skills" as the least efficiency of the training service providers' training programme.

Figure 6.53.1 – figure 6.53.13 shows the training service providers' opinion of the degree of effectiveness of their training programme for each statement.

- **The programme you present is easily accessible for the community**

Figure 6.53.1 displays the effectiveness of the training service providers' training programme's accessibility for the community according to a ranking from 5 (highest) to 1 (least).

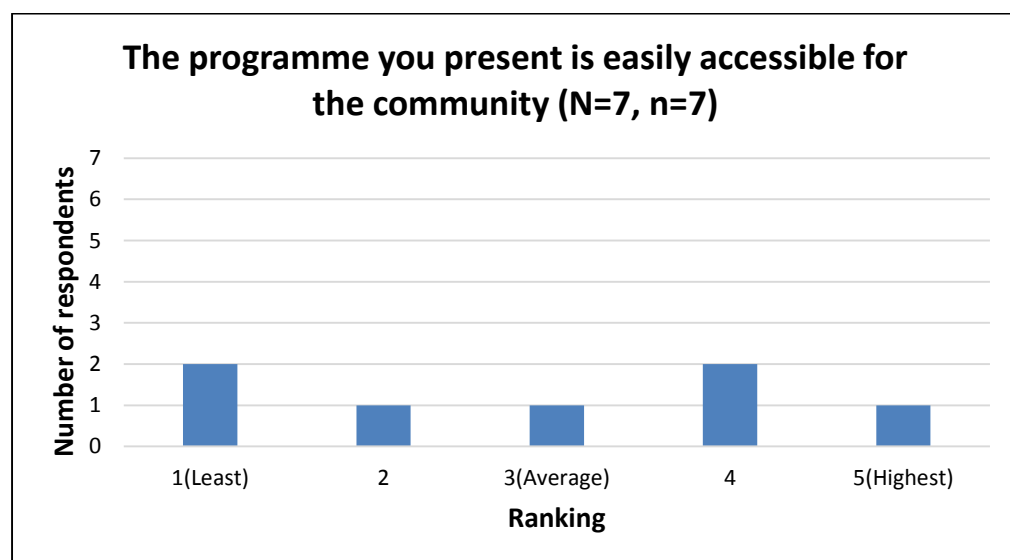


**Figure 6.53.1: Ranking of training programme's effectiveness for community accessibility**

One (14%) respondent indicated that the statement “The programme you present is easily accessible for the community” describes the effectiveness of their training programme as the best (level 5), average (level 3) and less than average (level 2). Two respondents (29%) indicated that the statement “The programme you present is easily accessible for the community” describes the effectiveness of their training programme as second highest (level 4) and least (level1) respectively.

- **Your programme has helped to increase the *core skills* level of your participant.**

Figure 6.53.2 displays the effectiveness of the training service providers’ training programme to help increase the core skills level of their participants according to a ranking from 5 (highest) to 1 (least).

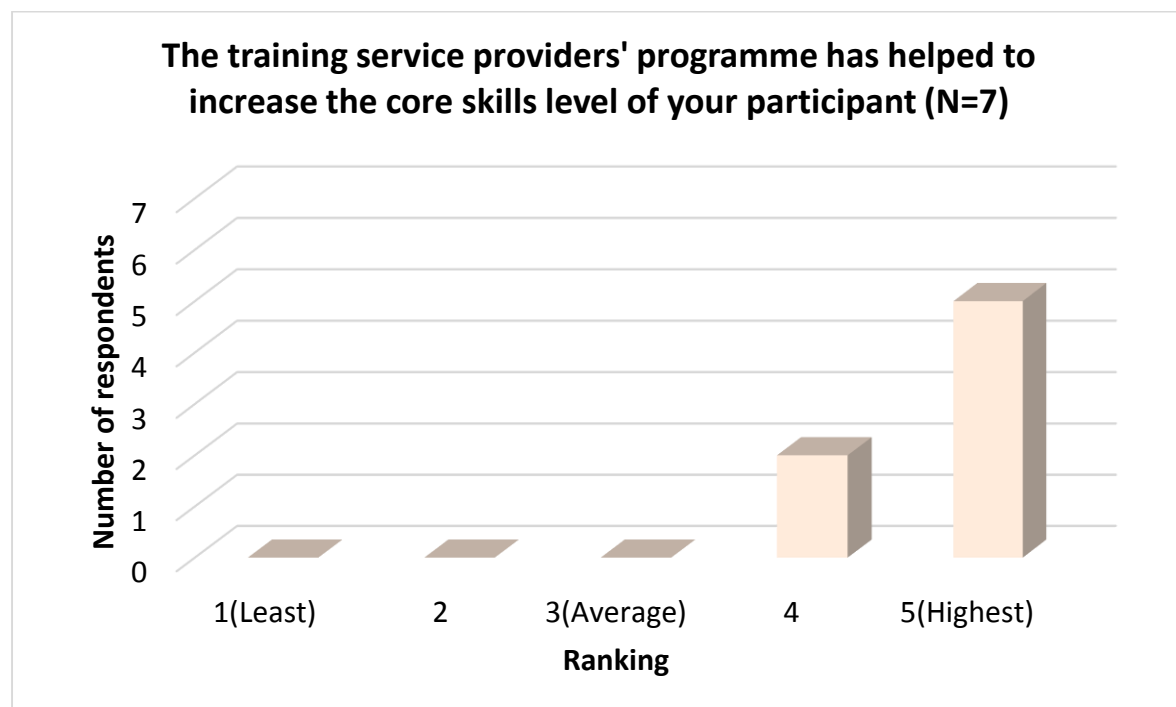


**Figure 6.53.2: Ranking of the training service providers' programme to help increase the core skills level of their participant.**

Five (71%) of respondents ranked the statement “Your programme has helped to increase the *core skills* level of your participant” as the most effective aspect of their

training programme. Two respondents indicated that their training programme helped to increase the core skills level of their trainees as the second highest efficiency of their training programme. No respondents ranked the above statement as below the second highest level of effectiveness for their training programme.

- **Your programme has strengthened human capital.**

Figure 6.53.3 displays the effectiveness of the training service providers' training programme to strengthen human capital. The effectiveness is arranged according to a ranking from 5 (highest) to 1 (least).

From figure 6.53.3 it can be concluded that five (71%) of respondents ranked the statement "Your programme has strengthened human capital" as the most effective aspect of their training programme.

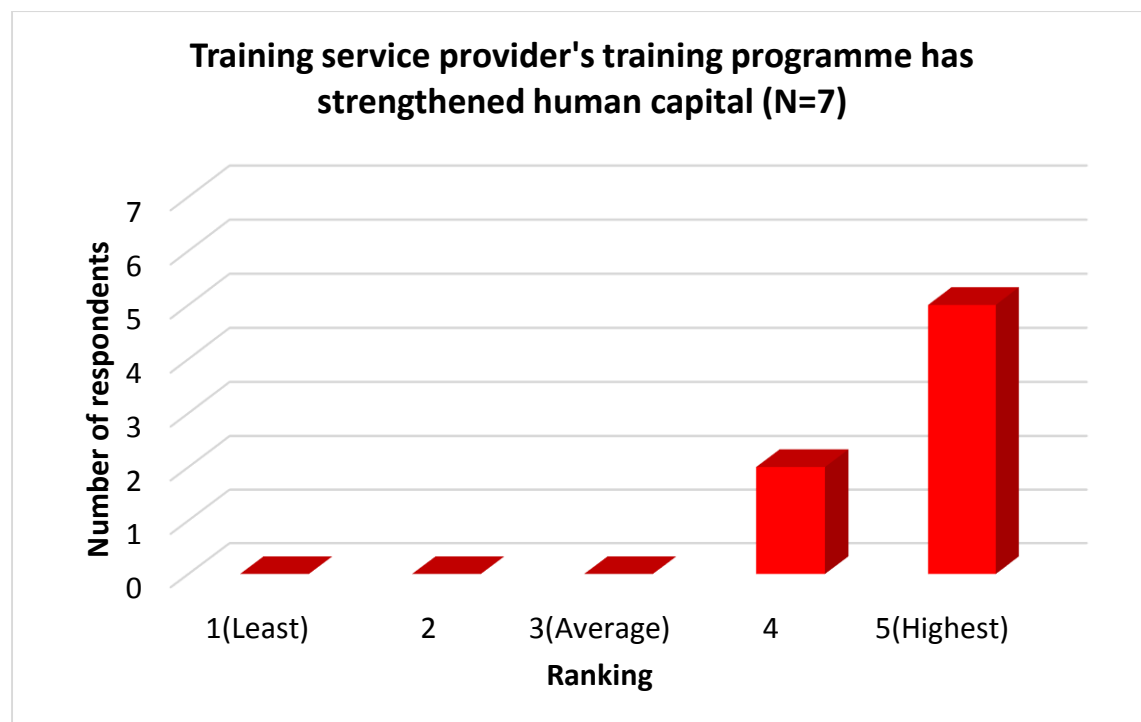


**Figure 6.53.3: Ranking of the training service providers' programme to strengthen human capital.**

Two respondents indicated that their training programme helped to strengthen human capital as the second highest efficiency of their training programme. No respondents indicated that their training programme strengthened human capital below the second highest level of effectiveness.

Figure 6.53.2 and figure 6.53.3 showed that both the statements “Your programme has helped to increase the core skills level of your participant” and “Your programme has strengthened human capital” were ranked the same efficiency for the training service providers’ training programmes.

- **Your programme has increased the employment opportunities of your participant.**

Figure 6.53.4 displays the effectiveness of the training service providers’ training programme to increase the employment opportunities of their trainees. The effectiveness is arranged according to a ranking from 5 (highest) to 1 (least).

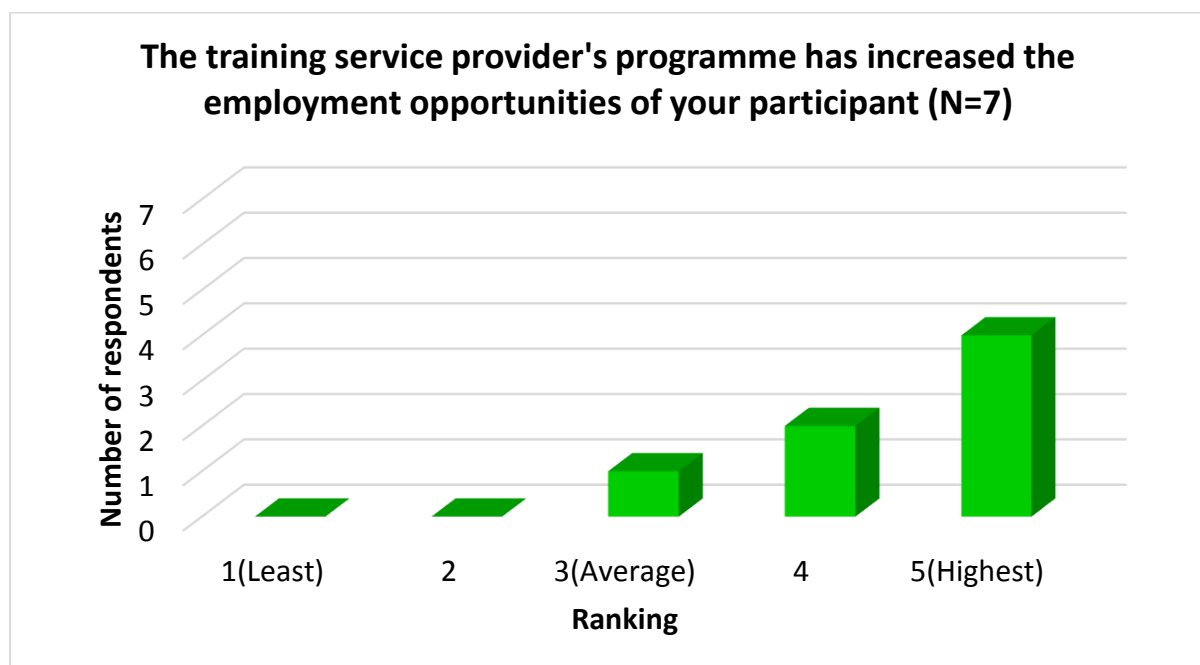


**Figure 6.53.4: Ranking of the training service providers' programme's effectiveness to increase the employment opportunities of their participants.**

Four (57%) of the respondents ranked the statement “Your programme has increased the employment opportunities of your participant” as the highest effectiveness of their training programme. Two (29%) of the respondents ranked the statement as second highest efficiency of their training programme. One (14%) respondent ranked the statement as the third highest efficiency of their training programme. No respondents indicated that the statement was the least or second least efficiency of their training programme.

- **Your participant’s attitude has positively changed towards employment.**

Figure 6.53.5 displays the effectiveness of the training service providers’ training programme to change their trainees’ attitude positively towards employment. The effectiveness is arranged according to a ranking from 5 (highest) to 1 (least).

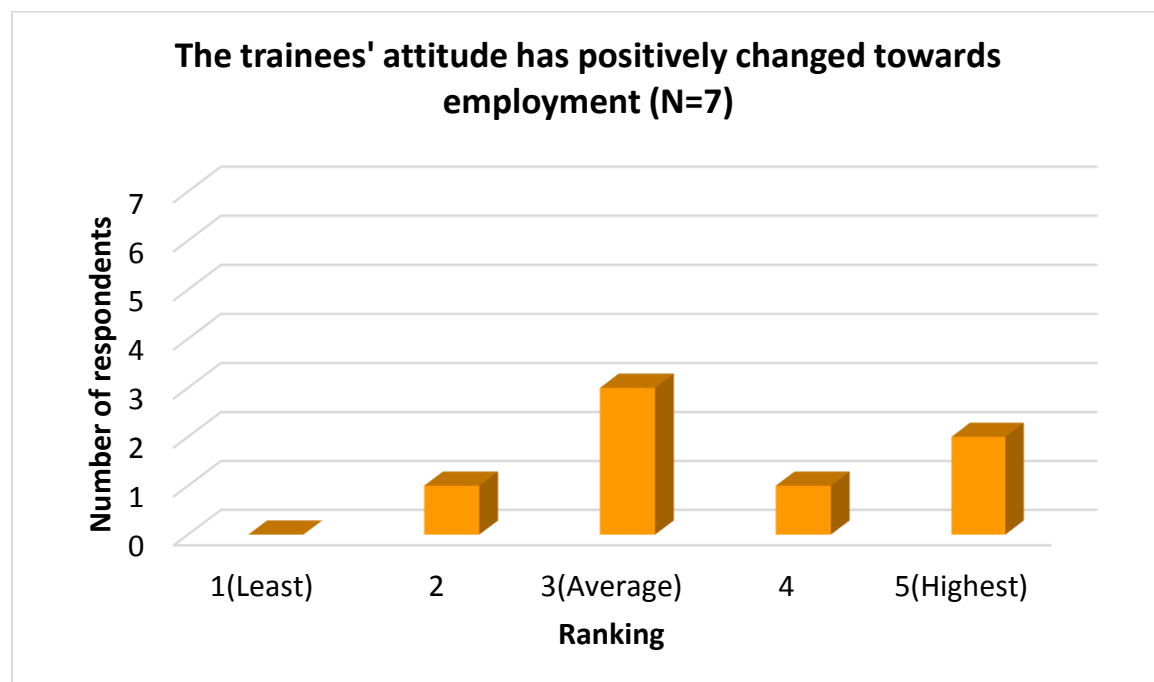


**Figure 6.53.5: Ranking of the training service providers' programme's effectiveness to positively change the attitude of their participants towards employment.**



The above figure 6.53.5 indicates that two (29%) of respondents ranked the statement “Your participant’s attitude has positively changed towards employment” as the highest effectiveness of their training programme. One (14%) respondent ranked the statement as the second highest efficiency of their training programme. Three (43%) respondents said that their programme was average effective in changing their trainees’ attitude positively towards employment. One (14%) respondent ranked the statement as second least efficiency of their training programme. None said that the training service providers’ training programme was least effective in changing their trainees’ attitude positively towards employment.

- **Your programme enhances the social skills of your participants.**

Figure 6.53.6 displays the effectiveness of the training service providers’ training programme to enhance the social skills of their trainees. The effectiveness is arranged according to a ranking from 5 (highest) to 1 (least).

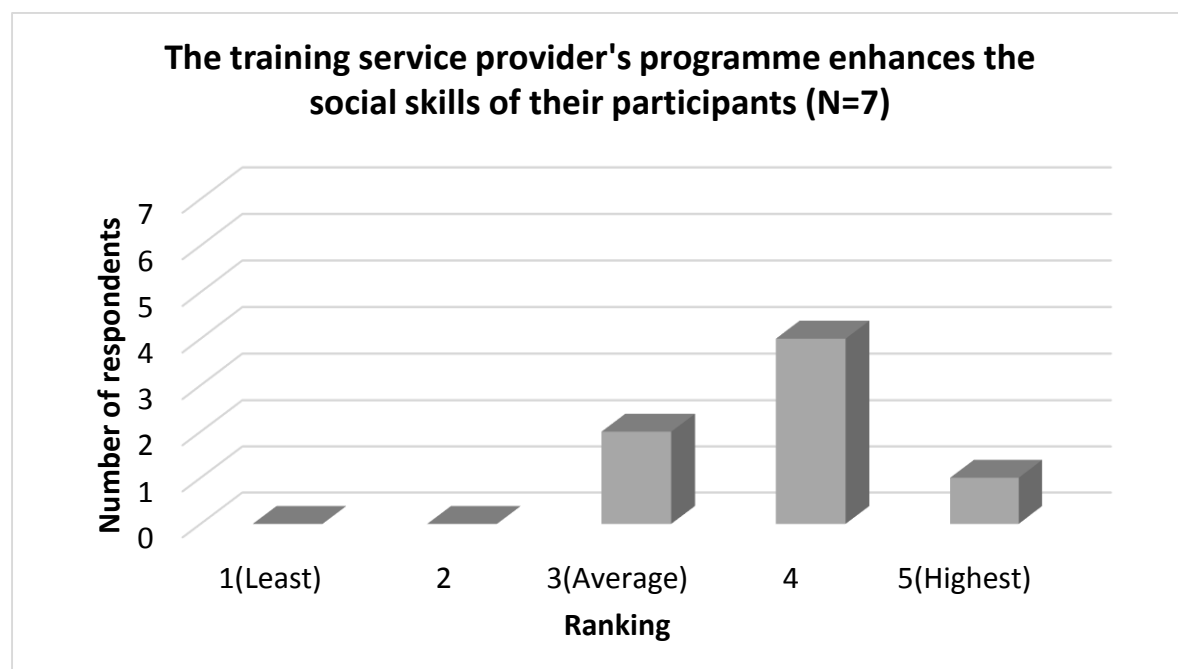


**Figure 6.53.6: Ranking of the training service providers' programme's effectiveness to enhance the social skills of their trainees.**

According to figure 6.53.6 one (14%) respondent indicated that the statement “Your programme enhances the social skills of your participants” was the highest efficiency of their training programme. Four (57%) respondents ranked the statement as the second highest efficiency of their training programme. Two (29%) of respondents indicated that their training programme was average effective in enhancing the social skills of their trainees. No respondents said that their training programme was the least or second least effective in enhancing the social skills of their trainees.

- **Your participants are implementing the skills they have learned.**

Figure 6.53.7 displays the effectiveness of the training service providers’ training programmes’ trainees to implement the skills they have learned. The effectiveness is arranged according to a ranking from 5 (highest) to 1 (least).

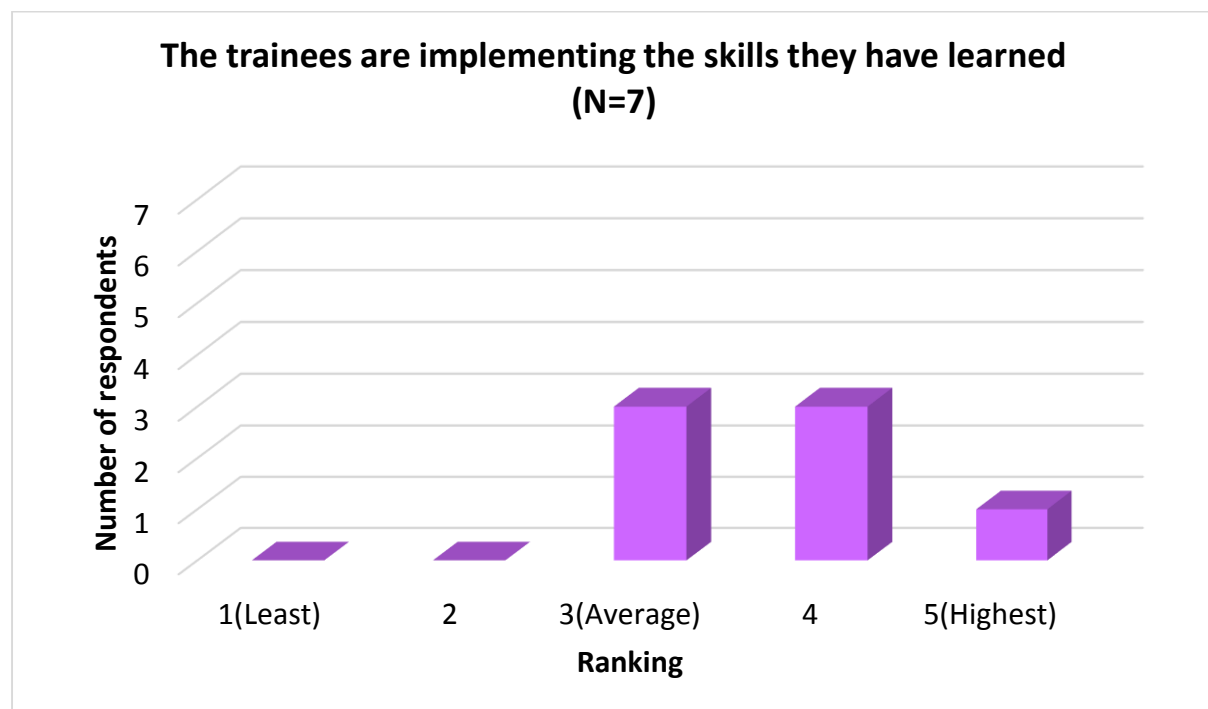


**Figure 6.53.7: Ranking of the training service providers' programme's effectiveness of their trainees implementing the skill they have learned.**

One (14%) respondent ranked the statement “Your participants are implementing the skills they have learned” as the highest effectiveness of their training programme. Three (43%) respondents ranked the statement as the second highest and as

average efficiency respectively of their training programme. No respondents indicated that their programme was second least and least effective in their trainees implementing the skills they have learned in the training service providers' training programme.

- **Your programme increases the ability of your participants to apply numerical skills.**

Figure 6.53.8 displays the effectiveness of the training service providers' training programme to increase the ability of their trainees' to apply numerical skills. The effectiveness is arranged according to a ranking from 5 (highest) to 1 (least).

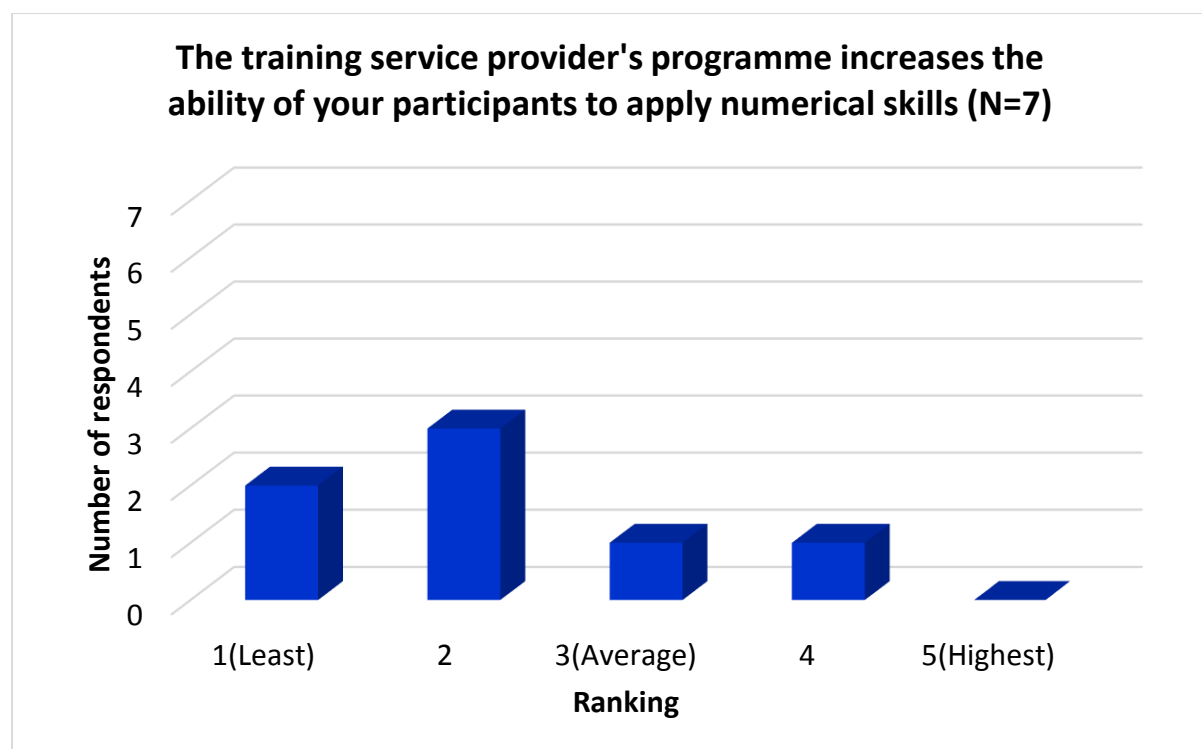


**Figure 6.53.8: Ranking of the training service providers' programme's effectiveness to increase the trainees' ability to apply numerical skills.**

One (14%) respondent said that the statement "Your programme increases the ability of your participants to apply numerical skills" indicates the effectiveness of their training programme respectively as second highest and as average. Three

(43%) respondents said that their training programme was below average effective in increasing the ability of the participants to apply numerical skills. Two (29%) of respondents said that the statement ranked the effectiveness of their training programme as the least.

- **Your programme enhances the ability of your participants to use communication skills effectively.**

Figure 6.53.9 displays the effectiveness of the training service providers' training programme to enhance the ability of their trainees' to use communication skills effectively. The effectiveness is arranged according to a ranking from 5 (highest) to 1 (least).

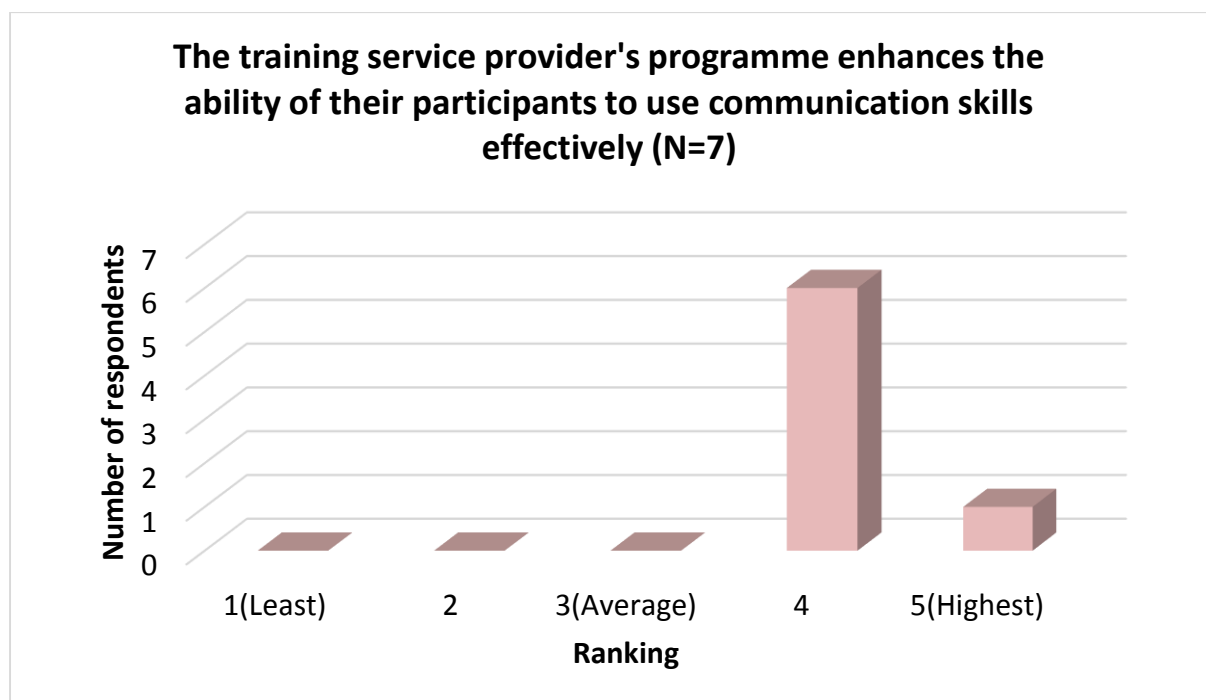


**Figure 6.53.9: Ranking of the training service providers' programme's effectiveness to enhance the trainees' ability to use communication skills effectively.**

From the above figure 6.53.9 it can be concluded that one (14%) respondent said that the statement "Your programme enhances the ability of your participants to use

communication skills effectively” indicates the highest effectiveness of their training programme. Six (86%) respondents indicated that the statement describes their training programme’s effectiveness as the second highest. No respondent chose the other rankings as describing the effectiveness of the training service providers’ training programme.

- **Your programme enhances your participant’s ability to use problem-solving skills.**

Figure 6.53.10 displays the effectiveness of the training service providers’ training programme to enhance the ability of their trainees’ to use problem-solving skills. The effectiveness is arranged according to a ranking from 5 (highest) to 1 (least).

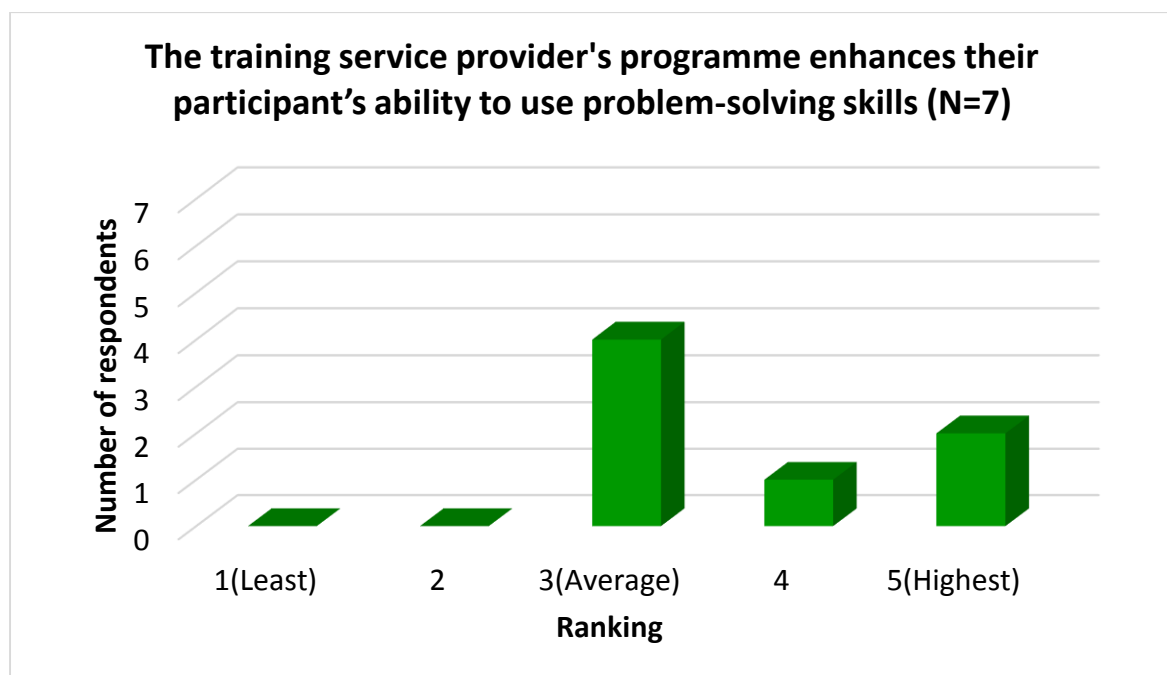


**Figure 6.53.10: Ranking of the training service providers' programme's effectiveness to enhance the trainees' ability to use problem-solving skills.**

Two (29%) respondents showed that the statement “Your programme enhances your participant’s ability to use problem-solving skills” describes the effectiveness of their training programme as the highest. One (14%) of the respondent indicated that the statement described their training programme’s effectiveness as the second highest.

Four (57%) respondents ranked the statement as describing the effectiveness of their training programme as average and none respondents ranked the statement as describing the effectiveness of the training programme as below average.

- **Your programme enhances the utilisation skills in information technology of your participants.**

Figure 6.53.11 displays the effectiveness of the training service providers' training programme to enhance their trainees' utilisation skills in information technology. The effectiveness is arranged according to a ranking from 5 (highest) to 1 (least).

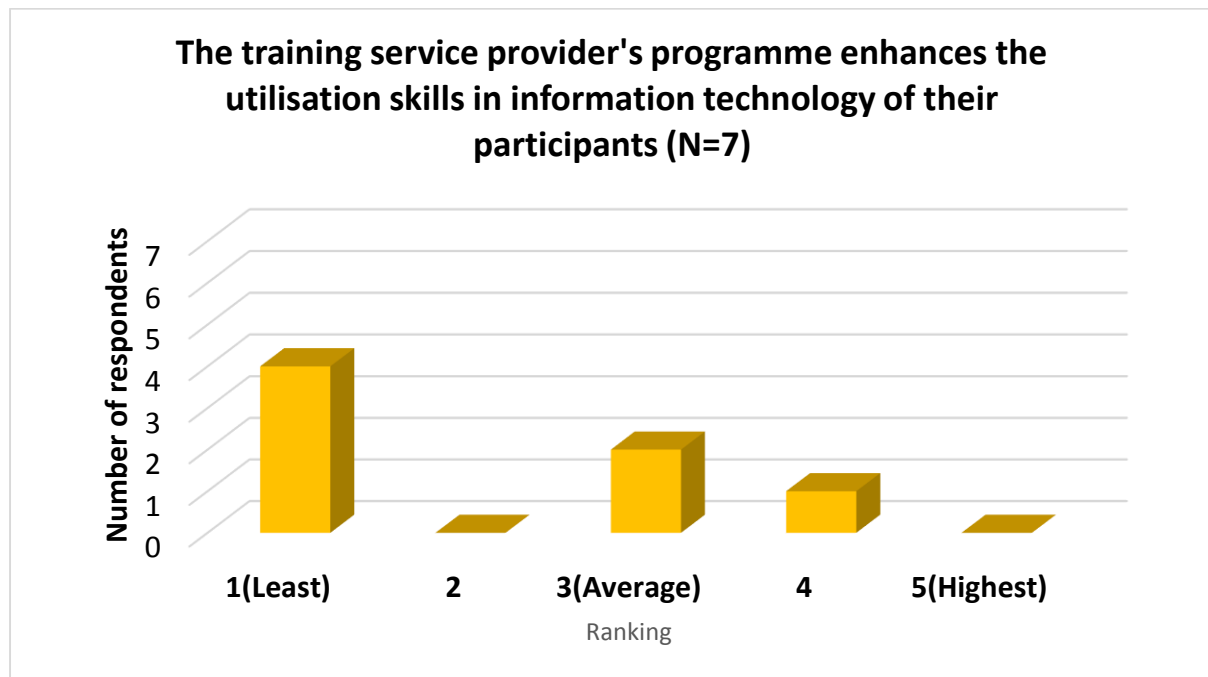


**Figure 6.53.11: Ranking of the training service providers' programme's effectiveness to enhance the trainees' utilisation skills in information technology.**

The above figure 6.53.11 clearly indicates that one (14%) respondent said that the statement "Your programme enhances the utilisation skills in information technology of your participants" described the efficiency of their training programme as second highest. Two (29%) of respondents said that the training programme was average effective in enhancing the trainees' utilisation skills in information technology. Four

(57%) respondents said that their training programme was the least effective in enhancing the utilisation skills in information technology.

- **Your programme enhances the ability to use decision-making skills.**

Figure 6.53.12 displays the effectiveness of the training service providers' training programme to enhance their trainees' ability to use decision-making skills. The effectiveness is arranged according to a ranking from 5 (highest) to 1 (least).

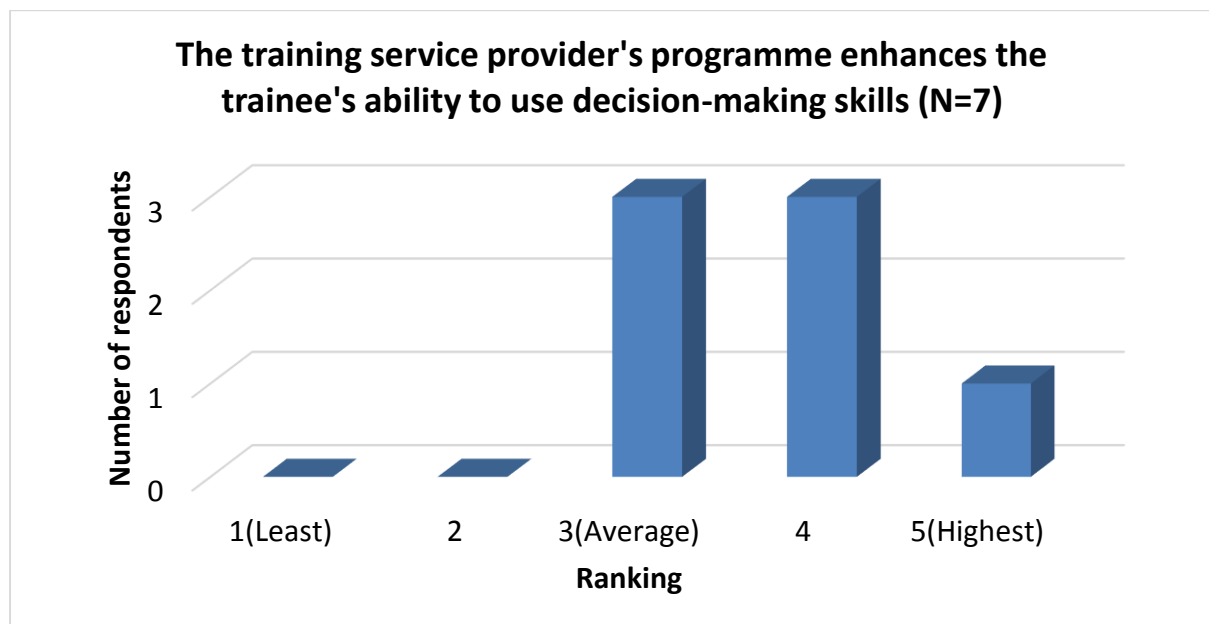


**Figure 6.53.12: Ranking of the training service providers' programme's effectiveness to enhance the trainees' ability to use decision-making skills.**

One (14%) respondent said that their training programme was the highest effective in enhancing the ability to use decision-making skills. Three (43%) respondents indicated that their training programme's effectiveness was ranked according to the statement as the second highest. Three (43%) respondents indicated that their training programme was average effective in enhancing the ability of their trainees to use decision-making skills. No respondents chose the statement to describe the effectiveness of their training programme as second least or least.

- **Your programme enhances your participant's ability to work in a team.**

Figure 6.53.13 displays the effectiveness of the training service providers' training programme to enhance their trainees' ability to work in a team. The effectiveness is arranged according to a ranking from 5 (highest) to 1 (least).

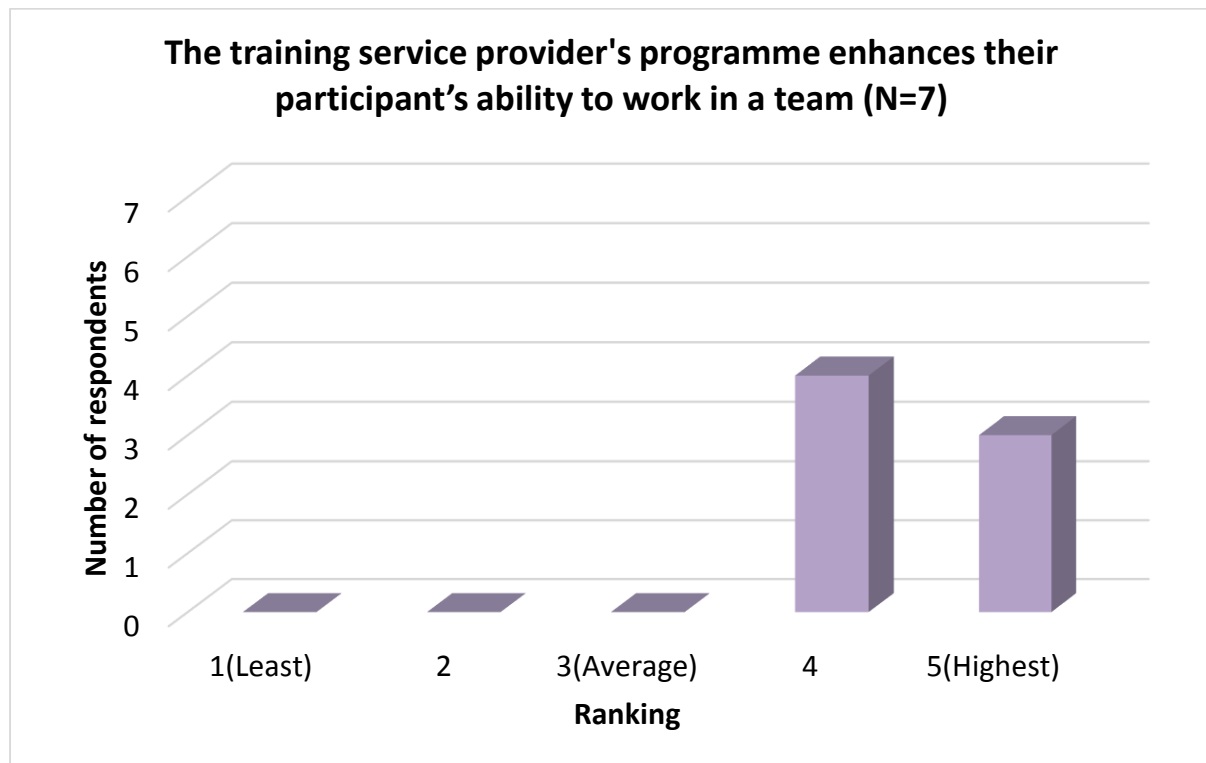


**Figure 6.53.13: Ranking of the training service providers' programme's effectiveness to enhance the trainees' ability to work in a team.**

Three (43%) respondents said that their training programme was the highest effective in enhancing their trainees' ability to work in a team. Four (57%) respondents said that the statement "Your programme enhances your participant's ability to work in a team" described their training programme's effectiveness as second highest. No respondents ranked the statement to describe their training programme's effectiveness as average and below average.



- **Suggested additional topics for inclusion in pre-employment programme**

Figure 6.54 shows the additional topics or contents for inclusion into the pre-employment core skills programme for young adults that the training service providers recommended and suggested.

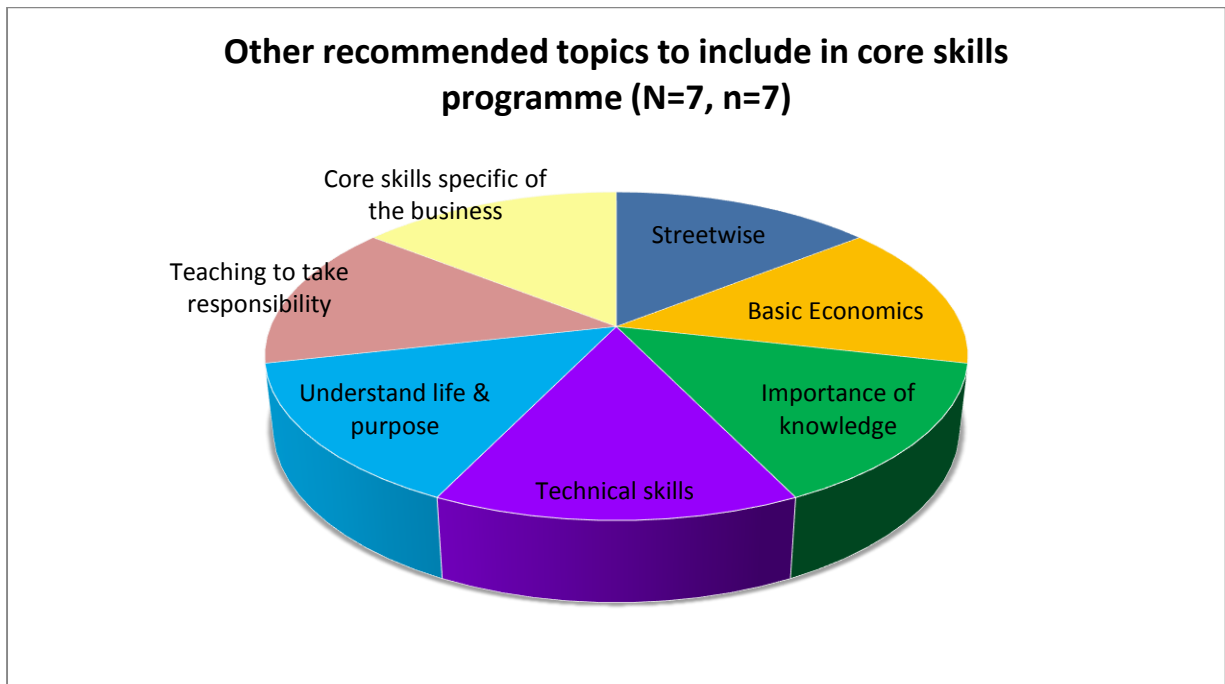


**Figure 6.54: Other recommended topics for inclusion in the programme.**

Seven respondents recommended that the following topics or content should be included, namely:

- Streetwise,
- Basic Economics,
- Importance of knowledge,
- Technical skills,
- Understand life and purpose,
- Taking responsibility, and
- Core skills specific of the business

### 6.3 DISCUSSION OF KEY FINDINGS OF PHASE A.

When discussing the empirical results it is important to keep the research question in mind. The research question was:

*What are the core employment skills needed to develop a pre-employment core skills programme for young adults?*

In order to describe the core skills that are needed the empirical findings will be discussed in terms of commonalities and differences.

- **Meaning of the concept “core skills”**

The young adults’ choice of best description of the concept “core skills” agreed in essence with the best choice made by the employers’ respondents, namely that core skills are skills that can be used in everyday situations and in other jobs. Both also agreed that the main components of core skills are “*working with numbers, using information technology, communication, problem solving and working in a team*” and “*Consists of team work, communication, numeracy, problem solving skills and people skills*”. In principal the two groups of respondents had the same understanding or notion assigned to the concept of “core skill”, namely that the essence of the word core in “core skill” means “interchangeable” or “movable”. This description is also in line with how Welsh and Canning (2003:8-13) and Cox and King (2006:26) view the concept “core skills”, namely that core skills consist of communication skills, numeracy, information communication technology, problem solving skills and working with others. Furthermore Welsh and Canning (2003:3, 8) express that core skills are “skills that are applied in a given context” or “competencies” that are used to compliment a task in a specific situation and needed for “responsible members of society”. McNeill ([sa]:1) also identifies communication, application of numbers, information technology, working with others and problem solving as components of core skills.

- **Core skills’ necessity for employment**

Both the young adults’ and employers’ respondents unanimously agreed that core skills are necessary for employment. The Scottish Qualifications Authority (2006:1)

are clear that core skills are essential to realise and accomplish personal and societal goals as employees are expected to take responsibility for the quality of work and services they produce. Gibbons-Wood and Lange (2000:24, 26) state that core skills are becoming more necessary to be employable in the rapidly changing workplace as the demand has shifted from task specific skills to broader and interdisciplinary skills. Welsh and Canning (2003:5, 8), and Esterhuizen (2008) agree that core skills are necessary for employing a person in current times as employers require “people with the right attitude and ability to fit in” and that are proficient. Cox and King (2006:263) are of the opinion that people need to be more flexible and have the ability to acquire skills that will last for the entire working life. Cox and King (2006:264) further elaborate that the employment patterns have changed and that more and more people are employed by smaller enterprises that require the employee to be more skilled in core skills to satisfy the service culture that has developed globally.

- **Priority of the various core skills**

The young adult’s responses show that they considered the core skill “communication” as the most important core skill. The next important core skill according to the young adults was “working with people” followed by “problem solving”. Numeracy and Information Technology were the lowest priority according to the young adults.

The employers’ respondents said that “working with people” was the most important core skill. This was followed by “problem solving” and “communication”. According to the employer respondents “Information Technology” and “numeracy” were the least important core skill.

The training providers’ responses showed that “communication” and “attitude” were the most important core skills that a person needs for employment. The core skill “problem solving” was the next most important core skill followed by “working with people”, “Information Technology” and “numeracy” was the least priority.

It can be concluded that the three most important core skills identified by the respondents were “communication”, “problem solving” and “working with people”. Johnston and Watson (2004:53, 56) indicated that communication and working with people are critical core skills for young adults to be employed and that employers expect young adults to be competent in communication, teamwork and problem-solving.

- **More knowledge required in a specific core skill**

From the data collected the respondents of the young adults’ group indicated that they needed more knowledge of the core skill “communication” and specifically in the component “use of electronic methods”. The second core skill they identified in which they needed more training was “working with people” and specifically the component of “trusting in co-workers and their ability”. This was followed by “Information Technology”, “numeracy”, “understanding personality types” and least in “working in a team”. The respondents of the employers’ group identified from an employers’ perspective that young adults need more training or knowledge in the core skill “working with people” and “communication”. The core skill “problem solving” was the second most core skill that they thought needed more training or knowledge. The respondents from the training service providers’ group also indicated that “attitude” and “communication” were viewed as the most needed for successful employment. The second most needed core skills were “problem solving” and “working with people”. From this information it can be concluded that the young adults need more knowledge and training in the core skills “communication”, “working with people” and “problem solving”. These findings correlate with Santrock’s (2009:8-9) opinion that development of a person is multidimensional, multidisciplinary and contextual and the identified core skills in which more knowledge is required confirms the person’s need for development and growth in various dimensions of his being. Johnston and Watson (2004:53, 55, 56) state that the core skill competencies must be integrated with personal development, progress in the working environment and lifelong learning and that the person takes a greater role in assessing their needs. Cox and King (2006:267) also mentioned that employers identified that young adults needed more training in teamwork and communication as a core skill.

- **Reasons for unemployment**

From the data collected it can be inferred that both the respondents from the young adult group and the employer group agreed that “not enough jobs”, “inadequate core skills” and “lack of experience” are the main reasons why so many young people are unemployed. Coleman and Webber (2002:136) also state that a person is a product of their environment and that the environment influences the development of a person. The development of the person happens within cultural, economic, historical and social context and this is clearly seen from Bronfenbrenner’s ecological system model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:3) as well as Erik Erikson’s theory for behaviour (Santrock, 2009:23, 28). Santrock (2009:9) also supports this view that the development of a person is contextual. The “lack of experience” cited by the young adults’ respondents can be compared with the opinion of Phillips and Pittman (2003:3, 115) and Franzén and Kassman (2005:413) that young adults from low socio-economic families have limited opportunities and are more likely to be economically inactive. The reason identified by the respondents from the young adults’ group and the employers’ group as “has inadequate core skills” is also cited by Banerjee et al (2007:51) as he said that young adults between ages of 20 and 24 were the third highest group (7.43%) that gave “lack of skills” as a reason for unemployment. This lack of competencies was confirmed by Mr. Gordhan, the then Minister of Finance of South Africa, in his National Budget Speech in 2010.

- **Programme effectiveness**

The respondents from the training service providers’ group said that their training programmes has helped to increase the core skills level of their participants, that it has strengthened their human capital and that the programme has increased the employment opportunities of their participants. Rae’s (2004:3) statement that an effective programme brings “more meaning and purpose to a person’s life” and “training effects positive change” are in agreement with the respondents’ response that their training programmes effected increased core skills levels, increased human capital and increased the employment opportunities of the trainees. The authors Dyson and Keating (2005:iii) and Patel (2005:16) have argued that lack of skills had an influence on employability which is confirmed by the response of the training service providers that their programmes have helped to increase core skills levels

and the employment possibility of the trainees. The responses of the training service providers' respondents also confirmed the view of Lombard (2005:211) that skills training strengthens human capital.

## **6.4 SUMMARY**

The findings that were obtained from the quantitative research approach and more specific the descriptive survey research design were graphically presented and discussed in this chapter to give meaning to the data collected. The data was collected with the help of three self-constructed questionnaires in phase A. A short outline was given of the data collected and the measuring instruments and analysis of data as comprehensively discussed in chapter 1 and 5.

The findings from phase A were presented in four categories, namely responses from the young adult group, responses from the employer group, responses from the training service provider group and a brief comparative discussion of the findings from the three groups. These findings were used to develop a pre-employment core skills programme for young adults which was pilot tested in phase B.

The content of the pre-employment core skills programme for young adults will now be described in chapter seven.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **PRE-EMPLOYMENT CORE SKILLS PROGRAMME FOR THE YOUNG ADULT**

#### **7.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapters provided a discussion of a theoretical foundation to formulate a pre-employment core skills programme for the young adult. Aspects such as employment, employment within the South African context, young adulthood as a life phase and core skills were theoretically explored. The knowledge gained from the literature study as well as from the questionnaires completed by the young adults, employers and training service providers (Phase A of the research) were used to develop the pre-employment core skills programme. The programme for the pre-employment core skills was further based on the conceptual programme model, the experiential learning approach and problem-based learning to enhance the opportunities for successful employment for the young adult. The conceptual programme model, experiential learning approach as well as problem-based learning will be briefly discussed in the next section.

#### **7.2 CONCEPTUAL PROGRAMME MODEL AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING APPROACH FOR CORE SKILLS PROGRAMME**

The conceptual programme model is based on a “system of assumptions and concepts” (Boone, Safrit & Jones, 2002:245). Concepts serve as the basis for communication (Boone et al., 2002:66). The researcher used various concepts such as young adult, core skills and employment to develop the pre-employment core skills programme for the young adult.

##### **7.2.1 Conceptual programme model**

The pre-employment core skills programme was developed from an ecological systems theory background by using the conceptual programme model. Fulton (2008:66) mentions that those people who develop adult programs are change agents. He suggests that these people use a systems oriented approach as they and their “target audience” are all part of or form a system. Theodorsen and

Theodorsen in Boone et al. (2002:67) define the concept conceptual model as “a pattern of interrelated concepts (constructs)...” and that the model “serves as a guide to action”.

Boone et al. (2002:156, 157) state that “Human behaviour, human society, and human concerns are all complex; human needs are assumed to be similarly complex.” Boone et al. (2002:243) apply this complexity by using a conceptual programming model which is based on a principal belief that programming for adults occurs in a social context as well as the sociocultural, economic, political and technological environment. The conceptual programming model consists of three main sub-processes namely planning, design and implementation, as well as evaluation and accountability (Boone et al., 2002:71). Each sub-process consists of four process tasks, namely needs, objectives, change strategies and change outcomes (Boone et al., 2002:71, 159).

The first sub-process, namely planning, consists of understanding the context in which the proposed programme will be presented (Fulton, 2008:66; Gboku, Nthogo Lekoko & McClellan, 2007:35). For the purpose of this study the context consisted of the life phase of young adults, employment and core skills necessary for employment. The understanding of the context was achieved through a thorough literature study (see chapters 2, 3 and 4). The planning stage also required the identification of the needs in the “system” or the target audience, which is in this study the needs of the young adult and the work environment or employer (Boone et al, 2002: 73, 95, 109, 143). According to Indabawa and Mpofu (2006:73) adult education programmes should be designed to meet the needs of young adults across different socio-economic settings. The content and activities can only be established after consultation with the young adult learner and need to be adapted accordingly (Indabwa & Mpofu, 2006:73). The researcher established the needs through using the different questionnaires for the young adult, the employer and the training service provider (see appendices 5, 6 and 7).

The second sub-process of design and implementation is to transform the identified needs into a blueprint for a programme which consists of aims, objectives and outcomes (Boone et al., 2002:72, 73; Fulton, 2008: 66). This sub-process builds on previous process task to present the “needs” into an understandable and



manageable programme that effects developmental changes (Boone et al., 2002:155, 156; Fulton, 2008: 66; Gboku et al., 2007:38). The outcome of the second sub-process, the designed pre-employment core skills programme for the young adult, will be described under point three of this chapter.

The third sub-process of evaluation and accountability is fundamental to the entire process to ensure effectiveness throughout the programme. This is achieved by examining the values that support the programme so that planned outcomes can be identified (Boone et al., 2002:86). Furthermore the third sub-process helps with the monitoring, assessing and evaluation of the effectiveness of the whole programme so that the impact of the programme on its beneficiaries is maximised and to account to the various stakeholders (Boone et al., 2002:87). The outcome of the third sub-process does not entirely fall within the scope of this research. Findings of the evaluation of the pre-employment core skill programme, it is the pilot test, will be discussed in chapter eight and recommendations for replanning will be discussed in chapter nine of this research study.

### **7.2.2 Experiential learning**

Kolb developed the Experiential Learning Theory (KELT) and the experiential learning cycle based on the works of other authors in human development and learning such as Kurt Lewin, John Dewey and Jean Piaget (Kolb & Kolb, 2008:3; Tight, 2002:24). The experiential learning theory is based on six learning propositions namely:

- “Learning is best conceived as a process”,
- “All learning is re-learning”,
- “Learning requires the resolution of conflicts between opposing modes of reflection and action and feeling and thinking”,
- “Learning is a holistic process of adaptation”,
- “Learning results from synergetic transactions between the person and the environment”, and
- “Learning is the process of creating knowledge” (Kolb & Kolb, 2008:4-5).

Chan (2010:112) elaborates on the experiential learning approach by referring to a “blended learning” approach which uses a combination of traditional methods and

technological methods. It uses a combination of options to teach, support and sustain skills that are needed for optimum job performance. Milano in Chan (2010:151) expands the interaction to an engagement between learner and facilitator, learner and learner and learner and the content.

From his experiential learning theory Kolb developed a four stage experiential learning cycle (Kelly, 1997:1; Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory..., 2013:1). The learning cycle's four stages or preferences are the concrete experience (CE) or feeling stage, reflective observation (RO) or watching stage, abstract conceptualization (AC) or thinking stage and active experimentation (AE) or doing stage (Kolb's Experiential Learning..., 2013:1). For the implementation of the developed pre-employment core skills programme for young adults, the predominant stages that will be used are the "watching", "thinking" and "doing" stages.

The researcher used Kolb's approach to experiential learning which is viewed as "a continuous process", "an interaction between the learner and the environment" or "a dialogue about a learning experience" (Tight, 2002:24, 25). This will be achieved by including an activity in each module of the pre-employment core skills programme for young adults where the young adult will be giving feedback on each topic after reflecting on the topic and the core skill learned as well as integrating the core skill into a problem solving situation.

### **7.2.3 Problem-based learning**

Additional to the experiential learning approach the researcher applied problem-based learning in the development of the pre-employment core skills programme. Stewart (1998:38) states that Albanese and Mitchell explained that problem-based learning "uses problems as a context" for learners and that in small groups the skill of problem-solving is acquired to broaden their knowledge base. Fyrenius, Bergdahl and Silén (2005:61) and Igo, Moore, Ramsey and Ricketts (2008:53) also mention that problem-based learning occurs in small groups and that the "teacher" becomes a facilitator. Fyrenius et al., (2005:61), Igo et al., (2008:54) and Stewart (1998:38) state that the problem is presented prior to having learned the theory and the problem is relevant to the work situation. This implies that not all the available knowledge is used to find an answer or solution to the problem. Stewart (1998: 38)

is of the opinion that the problem statement can be represented by role-plays, a collection of process notes or progress reports of clients or customers relevant to the profession. Tight (2002:108) also states that problem-based learning uses a true-to-life problem familiar to the target audience's environment, simulating the problem, encouraging dialogue and alternative solutions and then reapplying the new knowledge in the current situation.

Fyrenius et al., (2005:61), Igo et al., (2008:54), Stewart (1998: 39) and Tight (2002:108) mention that problem-based learning encourages transfer of skills learned in the formal learning environment to applying the skills in the working situation when being faced with a similar problem. For the above mentioned reason the researcher adopted problem-based learning as a supportive learning approach and incorporated it into the programme by using real problems as case studies.

The researcher will next focus on the pre-employment core skills programme developed to enhance the opportunities for successful employment for the young adult.

### **7.3 THE PRE-EMPLOYMENT CORE SKILLS PROGRAMME**

The pre-employment core skills programme is developed to help the young adult acquire a better knowledge of the core skills that are necessary for successful employment. The researcher identified subject matters that meet the requirements for a pre-employment core skills programme that the young adults, the employers and the training service providers identified in their respective questionnaires that were completed during the needs assessment phase (phase A) of this research study (see chapter six).

The subject matters aim to achieve six main goals, namely to:

#### **Understand, integrate and demonstrate knowledge and skills regarding the core skills that are necessary for employment**

When young adults are able to identify, define and explain the different core skills and how they relate to employment, they will understand the usefulness of these skills for successful employment.

**Develop, understand and apply communication skills as a core skill within the employment environment**

Communication skills help the young adult to express and share ideas, needs and desires with colleagues and other people as well as to build relationships within the employment environment.

**Build, strengthen and maintain relationships between young adult and other people as a core skill within the employment environment.**

The inter-relational competency of the young adult will be improved through knowing one self, fellow colleagues, sub-ordinates and clients within the employment environment. After completion of the programme the young adult will know how to support, encourage, develop and lead people. This in turn will encourage effective teamwork.

**Develop, understand and apply problem solving skills as a core skill within the employment environment.**

Young adults continuously make decisions about problem situations, whether at home or at work. The programme attempts to affect change by developing and practising problem-solving skills by using a seven step model to identify the problem, finding alternative solutions to the problem, choosing the best option, implementing the option and evaluating the effectiveness of the solution.

**Understand and apply numeracy skills as a core skill applicable to the employment environment.**

Mathematical concepts are part of everyday life and can be found in virtually everything around us such as shapes of buildings, buying goods, budgets, travelling from one point to another, cooking and throwing cricket balls. Numeracy helps the young adult to think logically and debate with numbers and mathematical notions. This programme focusses on integrating numeracy skills with all the other core skills of the programme to show the universality of numeracy.

**Develop and demonstrate knowledge of using literacy skills as a core skill within the employment environment.**

Understanding and application of language transpires mainly during adulthood. The importance of literacy, which consists of speech, reading and writing skills, is

important in public, political, educational and work situations. During the programme the focus will be on practical deployment of literacy skills in all the modules as this will teach the young adult to internalise this core skill.

The pre-employment core skills programme for the young adult consists of eight modules or sessions that are conducted over eight consecutive weeks. The modules are 1) Build, strengthen and maintain relationships with young adults and other people, 2) Communication skills, 3) Working with people – personality profiles, 4) Working with people – teamwork, 5) Working with people – trust, 6) Problem solving, 7) Literacy and numeracy and 8) Summarising and termination. The duration per module is 3 hours. The young adults will also be involved in practise exercises which they will complete at home. The purpose of the practise exercises is to engage the young adult with what they have learned by doing and applying to become proficient (Chan, 2010:171). In the next part of this chapter a summary of the actual programme content and its activities will be described.

### 7.3.1 The content of the pre-employment core skills programme

**Module 1: Build, strengthen and maintain relationships with young adults and other people**

| <b>Activity 1.1</b>     | <b>Getting to know each other</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
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| <b>Goal of activity</b> | Create a relaxed, warm and favourable environment for learning through familiarising group members (young adults) toward each other, through acceptance and inclusion. The unique input by the young adults is being appreciated and cohesion in the group starts forming.                                   |
| <b>Activity</b>         | Each young adult tears off as many toilet paper sheets as he would like. Each young adult then tells the rest of the group as many particulars about himself equal to the number of sheets torn off (three things if three sheets were torn off). The facilitator demonstrates the process by sharing first. |
| <b>Training aids</b>    | Roll of toilet paper                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

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| <b>and material needed</b>               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Activity 1.2</b>                      | <b>Pre-test questionnaire</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Goal of activity</b>                  | Determine the young adults' base knowledge of the core skills necessary for employment at the beginning of the programme for comparison with his knowledge at the end of the programme to determine the effectiveness of the programme.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Activity</b>                          | A form with questions concerning the concepts of the core skills necessary for employment is completed by the young adults.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Training aids and material needed</b> | Pre-test questionnaire<br>Pens                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Activity 1.3</b>                      | <b>Introduction to programme</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Goal of activity</b>                  | Give direction to the group by clarifying the purpose and objectives of the programme and to discover the young adults' expectation of the programme.<br><br>Create an environment that is conducive for optimal learning.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Activity</b>                          | The young adults are asked what they would like to gain from this programme and the expectations are written up on a sheet of white paper for reference at the end of the programme to see whether the expectations have been met. The facilitator explains the purpose of the programme, namely to develop a basic knowledge, understanding and application of the core skills to enhance the opportunity for employment.<br><br>A set of guidelines for behaviour and participation in the group will be developed together with the young adults. |
| <b>Training aids and material needed</b> | Flip chart stand<br>Flip chart paper<br>Pens                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

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| <b>Activity 1.4</b>                      | <b>Group discussions on concepts of employment, work and core skills for employment.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Goal of activity</b>                  | Develop and demonstrate a basic knowledge and understanding of what the concepts of “employment” and “work” are. Identify and explain the core skills for employment.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Activity</b>                          | The young adults divide into groups of three or five, depending on the size of the group. Each group discusses what they think the concept “employment” and “work” means. Each group writes their points up on the sheet of paper and presents it to the rest of the group. Then the group identifies what they think are the core skills necessary for employment. The facilitator asks the group to call out these core skills. The facilitator then asks each group to explain the core skills of communication, information technology, numeracy, problem solving and working with people. Each group writes their points up on the sheet of paper and presents it to the rest of the group. The facilitator can then add to the discussion at the end to ensure that all points are covered and gives each person a pre-prepared summary of the concepts. |
| <b>Training aids and material needed</b> | Flip chart stand<br>Flip chart paper<br>Coloured Pens<br>Handouts/notes on theory of themes namely communication, information technology, numeracy, problem solving and working with people.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Activity 1.5</b>                      | <b>Summarising and ending module 1</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Goal of activity</b>                  | Ensure that the young adult can identify and has a basic knowledge of the different concepts, namely employment, work and the different core skills needed in the employment environment.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Activity</b>                          | The facilitator summarises the concepts addressed and answers any questions that the young adults might have.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

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|                                          | The facilitator reminds the group about the next session and what the topic is namely communication skills. The young adult completes the session evaluation form. |
| <b>Training aids and material needed</b> | Flip chart stand<br>Flip chart paper<br>Session evaluation form<br>Coloured pens                                                                                   |

## Module 2: Communication skills

| <b>Activity 2.1</b>                      | <b>What is communication?</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Goal of activity</b>                  | Develop and demonstrate a basic knowledge of communication so that young adults can express themselves in appropriate and understandable ways when interacting with other people. Interactions influence the way we experience our environment and how we respond to situations and other people.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Activity</b>                          | <p>The young adults are divided into groups of three or five members each. The group discusses what they think communication is and why it is an important core skill. The groups will then identify different ways of communication, identify things they have done the past week that involved communication and categorise them under reading, speaking and writing.</p> <p>Each group identifies and discusses different communication skills such as listening, using questions, conflict management, writing skills, telephone skills and presentation skills. Each group will give feedback to the rest of the big group. The facilitator ensures that all the basic information is covered and if not, then supplements the information.</p> |
| <b>Training aids and material needed</b> | Flip chart stand<br>Flip chart paper<br>Coloured pens                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |



|  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
|  | Hand out on communication |
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| <b>Activity 2.2</b>                      | <b>Positive and negative interactional situations</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Goal of activity</b>                  | Identify positive and negative interactional situations. Develop and apply communication skills to address the situations in their life situations.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Activity</b>                          | The facilitator plays clips of a positive interactional situation and asks the young adults to identify and discuss communication skills that the persons used to enrich the interaction. After this activity the facilitator plays another clip of a negative interactional situation and asks the young adults to look for ways how this situation can be turned into a positive interaction situation. The young adults will demonstrate their ability to solve the situation by using appropriate communication skills such as active listening, non-verbal communication, asking questions, identifying key points, summarising and handling conflict by implementing role-plays. The facilitator and the young adults identify areas of challenges in communication skills that the person needs to improve. |
| <b>Training aids and material needed</b> | Video clips of a positive and negative interactional situation.<br>Video machine / laptop and data projector<br>Paper<br>Pens<br>Hand out with a brief introduction for role plays, namely customer complaint, saying no, workers on a go-slow, new edition to a colleague's family and asking for a promotion.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Activity 2.3</b>                      | <b>Electronic communication</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Goal of activity</b>                  | Develop and demonstrate a knowledge of electronic communication skills                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Activity</b>                          | Each young adult is requested to open the content of a CD and read the case study on electronic communication skills. The young adult identifies the interactional situation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

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|                                          | and finds solutions for this situation based on the skills they learned in the previous activity. Each person submits their observation and recommendations in electronic format to the facilitator by the next session.                                                                           |
| <b>Training aids and material needed</b> | CD that contains electronic data files and worksheets.<br>Copies of a newspaper clip, a memorandum and a complaint letter from a client.<br>Access to computer and electronic communication media.                                                                                                 |
| <b>Activity 2.4</b>                      | <b>Summarising and ending module 2</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Goal of activity</b>                  | Determine how well the young adults understand the new information they obtained on the core skill “communication”. Extend their knowledge by giving additional notes on communication skills. Reflect on what they have learned during this module. Prepare the young adults for the next module. |
| <b>Activity</b>                          | The facilitator hands out a form with reflective questions on the topic of communication skills to each young adult for completion. Any questions that the young adults might have on the topic are discussed. Hand out the questionnaire on personality types for completion for the next module. |
| <b>Training aids and material needed</b> | Reflective questions on communication skills<br>Flip chart stand with flip chart paper.<br>Pens<br>Handouts/notes on communication skills<br>Questionnaire on personality types                                                                                                                    |

### Module 3: Working with people - Personality Types

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| <b>Activity 3.1</b>     | <b>Understanding “Me” and others</b>                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Goal of activity</b> | Develop and demonstrate a basic knowledge of characteristics of different personality types and the importance of this knowledge in bringing harmony in working with people. Through understanding our inner |

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|                                          | selves we can begin to understand our actions and those of others. Understanding the different personality types helps a person to understand their own actions as well as that of other people. This understanding leads to becoming the best and to work well with others.                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Activity</b>                          | The activity starts with a group discussion on the importance of understanding people. Each young adult then completes the score of the personality type questionnaire to determine their dominant personality type. The different characteristics of the temperaments are explained by giving a narrative of each personality type along with the main characteristics and strengths of each type. The young adults are asked to discuss how each personality type can be supported. |
| <b>Training aids and material needed</b> | <p>Personality type score sheet</p> <p>Narrative/video clip of the Choleric, Sanguine, Melancholic and Phlegmatic personality type</p> <p>Flip chart stand and flip chart paper</p> <p>Coloured pens</p> <p>Hand outs of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strengths and weaknesses of each personality type,</li> <li>• How to support each personality type.</li> </ul>                                                                                                 |
| <b>Activity 3.2</b>                      | <b>Applying Electronic communication skills</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Goal of activity</b>                  | Continue developing and demonstrating knowledge of electronic communication skills.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Activity</b>                          | Each young adult is requested to open the content of a CD and read the case study on Personality Types (module three). Each person gives a possible solution to the case study in electronic format. The solution is based upon the characteristics of the different personality types. This activity expands on activity 2.3 and assists with further development in the core skill of electronic communication.                                                                     |
| <b>Training aids</b>                     | CD that contains electronic data files and worksheets for                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

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| <b>and material needed</b>               | module 3.<br>Access to computer and electronic communication media.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Activity 3.3</b>                      | <b>Summarising and ending module 3</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Goal of activity</b>                  | Determine how well the young adults understand the new information they obtained on the core skill “working with people” and specifically on personality types. Extend their knowledge by giving additional notes on the Personality Types. Reflect on what they have learned during this module. Prepare the young adults for the next module. |
| <b>Activity</b>                          | The facilitator hands out a form with reflective questions on the topic of Personality Types to each young adult for completion. Any questions that the young adults might have on this topic are discussed.                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Training aids and material needed</b> | Reflective questions on the importance of understanding Personality types when working with people.<br>Flip chart stand with flip chart paper.<br>Pens<br>Handouts/notes on “Working with People - Personality types”                                                                                                                           |

#### Module 4: Working with people - Teamwork

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| <b>Activity 4.1</b>     | <b>“Discover the complete”</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Goal of activity</b> | Discuss the importance of teamwork in a work context, to develop and demonstrate a basic knowledge of an effective team, its members and the roles that team members display.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Activity</b>         | The facilitator starts the activity with a discussion (theory) on the importance of team work in a work context. Then the young adults are divided into three groups of five. Each group is given an envelope with different resources in it which they have to use. Each group makes four different products. The products are: Significance (four 3-inch strips of green paper), Catalyst (2-inch white square |

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|                                          | attached to a yellow triangle), Chain (a four-colour paper chain) and Big Picture (a four page book with colour cover). The exercise is completed within 15 minutes and the products are judged by quality and quantity including completeness. On completion the group judges the products, discusses the process, the role that each member played and how effective the team worked.                                                                                                    |
| <b>Training aids and material needed</b> | C4 Envelopes<br>Different colours of paper (green, white, yellow and red)<br>Scissors<br>Paper clips<br>Ruler<br>String of cotton<br>Stop watch<br>Flip chart stand and flip chart paper<br>Coloured pens                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Activity 4.2</b>                      | <b>Using electronic communication skills</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Goal of activity</b>                  | Deepen a knowledge of and practising electronic communication skills                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Activity</b>                          | The young adults read the electronic file containing the case study marked for Teamwork (module 4). Teams of three to five persons work together to present a possible solution in terms of team work to the scenario. The scenario is of a manager that needs to prepare a tender document to be submitted to the municipality within a week. The solution is presented in the form of an attached electronic document to the facilitator. This activity expands on activity 2.3 and 3.2. |
| <b>Training aids and material needed</b> | CD that contains electronic data files and worksheets for module 4.<br>Hand outs on theory of core skills, communication skills, personality types and teamwork.<br>Access to computer, processing software and electronic communication media.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

| Activity 4.3                             | Summarising and ending module 4                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
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| <b>Goal of activity</b>                  | Determine how well the young adults understand the new information they obtained on the core skill “working with people” and specifically on teamwork. Extend their knowledge by giving additional notes on the information covered. Reflect on what they learned during this module. Prepare the young adults for the next module regarding trust when working with people. |
| <b>Activity</b>                          | The facilitator shows different video clips on teamwork and hands out form with reflective questions pertaining to the clips to each young adult for completion. Any questions that the young adults might have on teamwork are discussed. Briefly introduce the topic for the next module, namely trust.                                                                    |
| <b>Training aids and material needed</b> | Video clips of teamwork<br>Reflective questions on the importance of understanding teamwork.<br>Flip chart stand with flip chart paper.<br>Pens<br>Handouts/notes on “Working with People-Teamwork”                                                                                                                                                                          |

### Module 5: Working with People - Trust

| Activity 5.1            | The “Trust” game                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
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| <b>Goal of activity</b> | Develop and demonstrate a basic knowledge of the notion of trust when working with people and in the work context.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Activity</b>         | The facilitator briefly discusses with the young adults what they think trust means. After the discussion the young adults are divided into two groups. Each team assigns a leader. The rest of the group stands in a line behind each other with arms on shoulders. Everyone, except the leader, is blindfolded. Set up obstacles for each team, from one end of the room to the other, to create a winding path. The leaders now lead their team through the path |

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|                                          | <p>without anyone touching or knocking down the obstacle. Have the teams compete to see who can make it to the other side first. Repeat with a different leader to enable everyone, or as many as possible, practicing to lead and to trust. Discuss how each role player (leader and follower) felt and what challenges they faced.</p>                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Training aids and material needed</b> | <p>Blind folds</p> <p>Obstacles such as cones or empty shoe boxes or two-litre plastic bottles.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Activity 5.2</b>                      | <b>Impact of trust</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Goal of activity</b>                  | <p>Explore, identify and discuss the impact that trust has on communication, decision-making and an effective organisation.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Activity</b>                          | <p>Divide the young adults into three groups and ask each group to discuss what they think trust is, why it is important to have it when working with people and why it is important in the work context. Then assign each group a topic, namely communication, decision-making and effective organisation and let them discuss the impact that trust has on the specific aspect. Each group then presents their points to the rest of the young adults.</p> |
| <b>Training aids and material needed</b> | <p>Flip chart stand and flip chart paper</p> <p>Coloured pens</p> <p>Hand outs on trust and the impact it has on communication, decision-making and the work context.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Activity 5.3</b>                      | <b>Using electronic communication skills</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Goal of activity</b>                  | <p>Broaden the knowledge and competence in electronic communication skills by presenting a possible solution to a problem associated with trust.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Activity</b>                          | <p>The young adults read the electronic file containing the case study marked for Trust (module 5). Teams of three to five persons work together to present a possible solution to the scenario in the form of an attached electronic document to the facilitator. The young adults</p>                                                                                                                                                                      |

|                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                          | integrate the knowledge obtained from the previous modules on communication skills, personality types, team work and trust to present a solution. This activity has a higher degree of difficulty than activities 2.3, 3.2 and 4.2.                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Training aids and material needed</b> | <p>CD that contains electronic data files and worksheets for module 5 (Trust).</p> <p>Handouts from previous modules namely communication skills, personality types, teamwork and trust</p> <p>Access to computer, processing software and electronic communication media.</p>                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Activity 5.4</b>                      | <b>Summarising and ending module 5</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Goal of activity</b>                  | Determine how well the young adults understand the new information they obtained on the core skill “working with people” and specifically concerning trust. Extend their knowledge by giving additional notes on the skill of working with people with specific reference to trust. Reflect on what they have learned about trust during this module. Prepare the young adults for the next module on problem solving. |
| <b>Activity</b>                          | The facilitator hands out an evaluation form with reflective questions on the topic of trust to each young adult for completion. Any questions that the young adults might have on the topic of trust within the working context are discussed. Briefly introduce the topic for the next module, namely problem solving.                                                                                               |
| <b>Training aids and material needed</b> | <p>Evaluation forms with reflective questions.</p> <p>Pens</p> <p>Handouts or notes on trust.</p> <p>Flip chart stand and flip chart paper</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

## Module 6: Problem Solving

|                         |                                                      |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Activity 6.1</b>     | <b>Building a tower</b>                              |
| <b>Goal of activity</b> | Develop and demonstrate a basic knowledge of problem |



|                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
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|                                          | solving within a working situation. The systemic approach forms the basis for the problem solving model.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Activity</b>                          | <p>The group of young adults discusses why they think “problem solving” is a necessary skill for employment. After the brief discussion the facilitator divides the young adults into groups of five. Each group is given toothpicks and jelly tots and a polystyrene cup. Each group has to build a tower that can hold a cup filled with water for two minutes.</p> <p>After completion, the correct process of solving a problem is introduced. The process is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Identify the problem</li> <li>◆ Define/describe the problem</li> <li>◆ Generate and plan possible solutions</li> <li>◆ Evaluate each possibility and its consequences</li> <li>◆ Decide on the best solution</li> <li>◆ Implement the best solution</li> <li>◆ Evaluate the outcome and if necessary adjust by returning to step three.</li> </ul> <p>This process is linked to the activity performed and challenges are identified and discussed.</p> |
| <b>Training aids and material needed</b> | <p>Toothpicks</p> <p>Jelly tots or small marshmallow sweets</p> <p>Polystyrene cups</p> <p>Flat sturdy surface</p> <p>Flip chart stand</p> <p>Flip chart paper</p> <p>Coloured pens</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Activity 6.2</b>                      | <b>Electronic communication skills and problem solving skills</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Goal of activity</b>                  | Broaden the knowledge of electronic communication skills and applying problem solving skills                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

|                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>                          | <p>The young adults read the electronic file on a compact disc containing the case study marked for Problem Solving (module 6). The case study is about a cashier who is getting married to an actor who has just completed his degree in acting. The cashier found out that the artist has a 4 year old son. She also heard that the company that the actor has been freelancing for is relocating to Cape Town. The company that the cashier is working for told her that there is an opportunity to get a bursary and study accounting. The Human Resource manager needs an answer by the following day. Teams of three to five persons work together to present the best possible solution to the scenario by using the problem solving model and skills they learned in this module as well as integrate the knowledge they have obtained from the previous modules on communication skills, personality types, teamwork and trust. The answer to the case study is saved on a disc and handed to the facilitator. This activity expands on activity 2.3, 3.2, 4.2 and 5.3.</p> |
| <b>Training aids and material needed</b> | <p>CD that contains electronic data files and worksheets for module 6.</p> <p>Handouts from previous modules namely communication skills, personality types, teamwork, trust and problem solving.</p> <p>Access to computer, processing software and electronic communication media.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Activity 6.3</b>                      | <b>Summarising and ending module 6</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Goal of activity</b>                  | <p>Determine how well the young adults understand the new information they obtained on the core skill “working with people” and specifically concerning problem solving. Extend their knowledge by giving additional notes on the information covered. Reflect on what they have learned during this module. Prepare the young adults for the next module.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

|                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>                          | The facilitator hands out an evaluation form with reflective questions on the topic of problem solving to each young adult for completion. Any questions that the young adults might have on the topic of problem solving within the working context are discussed. Briefly introduce the topic for the next module, namely numeracy. |
| <b>Training aids and material needed</b> | Evaluation forms with reflective questions.<br>Pens<br>Handouts or notes on problem solving.<br>Flip chart stand and flip chart paper                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

### Module 7: Literacy and Numeracy

| <b>Activity 7.1</b>     | <b>Numeracy skills - Budget</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Goal of activity</b> | Demonstrate and apply basic knowledge of numeracy. Young adults are guided and encouraged to use a budget to manage their income and expenses and to build wealth. Basic concepts of numeracy are practised and applied in drawing up a budget.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Activity</b>         | <p>The facilitator will explain how a budget works. The process of drawing up a budget is discussed. The principles of saving are also discussed. Each person is given the story of Joseph (who has just been employed at a factory in Rosslyn, Pretoria) and each young adult draws up a budget by using basic numeracy skills such as addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. The activity also uses problem solving skills. The young adults attempt to draw up a budget.</p> <p>Each young adult is given a budget template. The budget is divided into two main categories namely income and expenses. All income such as salary, savings and interest are added together. All expenses are identified under the headings of generous giving, “paying myself”, transport,</p> |

|                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                          | rent, food, accounts, loans and other. The expenses are added up and then deducted from the income to determine what money is available for saving (difference between income and expenses). The facilitator hands out another exercise/scenario and the young adults complete it.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Training aids and material needed</b> | The story of Joseph<br>Budget template<br>Handouts on numeracy and budgeting                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Activity 7.2</b>                      | <b>Literacy Skills</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Goal of activity</b>                  | Review the skills the young adults have learned over the past five sessions using writing and reading skills.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Activity</b>                          | <p>A summary of the skills that the young adults have used over the past five sessions is reviewed and discussed with reference to the practical examples that were submitted. Challenges regarding communication skills including electronic communication skills, understanding personality types, working with people, trust in the working context, problem solving skills and drawing up budgets, which were experienced are discussed and assessed. Possible solutions are discussed.</p> <p>A fictional case study is handed to the young adults and they have to use the skills they have learned over the sessions to present the best solution. The two groups write up how they arrived at the solution and present it verbally at the next session.</p> |
| <b>Training aids and material needed</b> | Worksheets<br>Handouts on communication skills, personality types, teamwork, trust, problem solving skills, budgeting and writing a report.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Activity 7.3</b>                      | <b>Revision of different core skills</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Goal of activity</b>                  | Develop and demonstrate basic knowledge of core skills necessary for employment namely communication skills, working with people, problem solving and budgeting.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

|                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>                          | Guide the young adults to name, explain and give examples of the core skills for employment that they have learned, namely communication skills (including electronic communication skills), working with people (personality types, teamwork and trust), problem solving and numeracy skills (budgeting). Divide the young adults into two groups and introduce the game “bingo” and play it. This game tests the young adults’ knowledge of the core skills and their ability to apply it. This fun activity engages the young adult actively. |
| <b>Training aids and material needed</b> | Bingo cards<br>List of topic specific questions to be asked by “caller”.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

## Module 8: Summarising and termination

|                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Activity 8.1</b>                      | <b>Post test questionnaire</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Goal of activity</b>                  | Determine the young adults’ base knowledge and application of the core skills necessary for employment, namely communication skills (including electronic communication skills), working with people (personality types, teamwork and trust), problem solving and numeracy skills, at the end of the programme by administering the post-test questionnaire. The outcomes are compared with the results from the pre-test questionnaire to determine the success of the programme as well as areas for improvement. |
| <b>Activity</b>                          | A practical case study as well as a post-test form with questions concerning the concepts of the core skills necessary for employment are completed by the young adults in written format.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Training aids and material needed</b> | Case study<br>Post-test questionnaire<br>Pens                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

| Activity 8.2                             | Termination                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Goal of activity</b>                  | Terminate the pre-employment core skills programme.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Activity</b>                          | <p>The two groups are given an opportunity to verbally present their solution to the fictional case study. The young adults are given an opportunity to affirm each other by stating one positive trait of each member.</p> <p>Each young adult is given a touch stone on which they can write one word that describes their experience of the course and which they would like to remember. Each person is given the opportunity to share this with the rest of the group. The facilitator hands out an attendance certificate to each young adult that has completed the whole programme.</p> |
| <b>Training aids and material needed</b> | <p>Small stones</p> <p>Felt tip pen</p> <p>Attendance certificates</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

## 7.4 SUMMARY

The pre-employment core skills programme for the young adult consisted of eight modules/sessions which were presented over eight days.

The purpose of the pre-employment core skills programme is to equip the young adult with core skills that will enhance the opportunity for successful employment.

Session one focussed on the introduction of trainees and the trainer, contracting with the professional facilitator, orientation in terms of the programme and to administer the pre-test questionnaire.

Session two focussed on communication skills and with specific reference to handle positive and negative communication situations. This session also started to practise the use of electronic method to communicate.

Session three, four and five focussed on the core skill of working with people and respectively on personality types, team work and trust.

Session six focussed on the core skill of problem solving through activities and strategies to successfully solve problems.

Session seven focussed on the core skill of using Information Technology as well as numeracy. During the session the young adult had to complete a budget, submit a solution to the fictional case study electronically. During these activities the young adult had to apply the learned skills.

Session eight focussed on ending and terminating the core skills programme. During this session the practical case study and post-test were administered. Attendance certificates were handed to each young adult and the programme was terminated.

The empirical findings of phase B of this study (the pilot test of the pre-employment core skills programme) will be discussed in chapter eight.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **EMPIRICAL RESULTS: PHASE B OF THE STUDY (PILOT TEST OF PROGRAMME)**

#### **8.1 INTRODUCTION**

In chapter three and four the researcher described certain developmental tasks that the young adult has to complete to progress into the open labour market, to establish a career and to become financially independent. These tasks were further explored within the current economic situation in South Africa with special reference to unemployment, and the effect of unemployment on the young adult. Chapter seven of this study briefly discussed the basis of the conceptual programme model, the experiential learning approach as well as problem-based learning for the development of the pre-employment core skills programme to enhance the opportunities of the young adult to be more employable.

As described in chapter five the goal of this study was to develop and pilot test a pre-employment core skills training programme for young adults between ages of 18 and 25 years. The newly developed programme was pilot tested during phase B of this study with young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 years who were unemployed and who matriculated. The findings from the pilot test will be discussed in the next sections of this chapter.

#### **8.2 EMPIRICAL RESULTS: PHASE B (Pilot Test)**

When discussing the empirical results it is important to keep the research question and hypothesis in mind. The hypothesis for Phase B was:



*If a pre-employment core skills programme is implemented with young adults, the young adult's knowledge and application of core employment skills would be enhanced.*

According to Kumar (2005:95) the advantage of the pretest-posttest design is that it measures the effect of transformation or the way of thinking of the same population at two different points in time.

### 8.2.1 Introduction – Phase B

The developed pre-employment core skills programme was pilot tested with a group of young, unemployed adults between ages of 18 and 25 years that had completed their matric and that were clients of Child Welfare Tshwane. During phase B information was gathered under controlled circumstances from 10 young adults between the age of 18 and 25 years by utilising group-administered questionnaires. The aim of the questionnaires were to test the knowledge of the core skills necessary for employment of the young adults who are seeking employment before presenting the programme and again after the presentation of the programme. The aim of the **pre-test group-administered questionnaire** was to empirically explore the knowledge base of the core skills needed for successful employment as identified during phase A from the young adults' perspective. The aim of the **group-administered post-test questionnaire** was to empirically explore whether the knowledge base of the young adults' core skills needed for employment was enhanced after the presentation of the programme as well as to assess the application of the core skills by the young adults.

The initial size of the group at the start consisted of 14 respondents and only 10 respondents completed the programme as four young adults withdrew after module 1. Due to time constraints the researcher presented the programme over four days, two consecutive sessions per day.

The data collected from the young adults between 18 and 25 years of age during the empirical phase B will be presented in two sections, namely the biographical profile of the respondents and the empirical results. Section two (empirical results) will be presented in two parts, namely **part 1 -knowledge base of core skills by young adults** and **part 2 – application of core skills by young adults**. Under each section the collected data will be presented graphically and discussed in terms of the pre-test and the post-test. The data that was collected from the young adults will now be discussed.

#### **8.2.1.1 Responses of Young Adults**

##### **Section 1: Biographical profile of the respondents**

The variables that will be discussed are the age range, the gender, the home language, ethnicity group, highest qualification, work experience and the period of unemployment of the respondents.

- **Age of the respondents**

Figure 8.1 reflects the age range of the young adult respondents.

As seen in figure 8.1, four (40%) were between 18 and 20 years of age, five (50%) young adults that completed the questionnaires were between 21 and 23 years of age, and one (10%) was between 24 and 25 years of age.

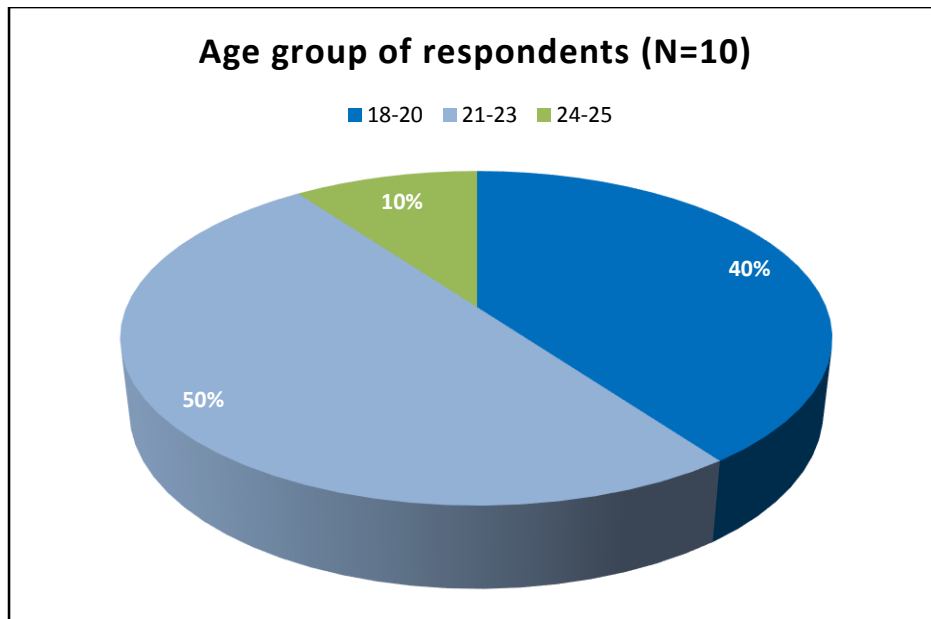


**Figure 8.1: Age of respondents (young adults)**

- **Gender of respondents**

Figure 8.2 shows the gender of the respondents.

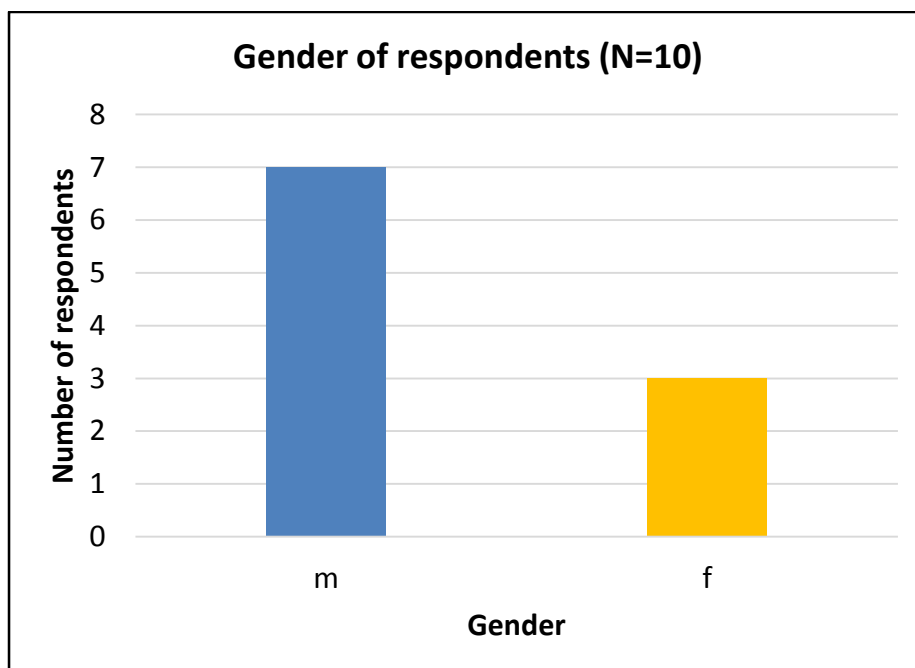


**Figure 8.2: Gender of young adults**

As seen in figure 8.2, seven (70%) of the ten respondents who completed the pre- and post-test questionnaires were males and three (30%) were females.

- **Home language of the respondents**

Figure 8.3 shows the home language of the respondents.

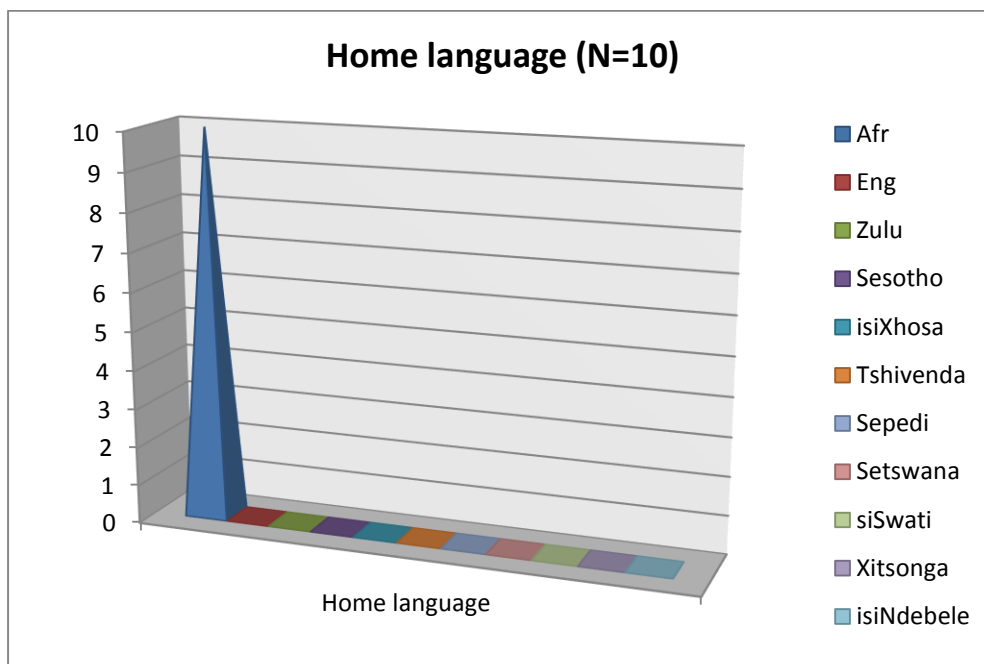


**Figure 8.3: Home language of respondents**

The above figure 8.3 indicates that all the respondents (10 or 100%) who completed the pre- and post-test questionnaire spoke Afrikaans as their home language.

- **Ethnicity group of the respondents**

Figure 8.4 shows the ethnicity group the respondents belong to.

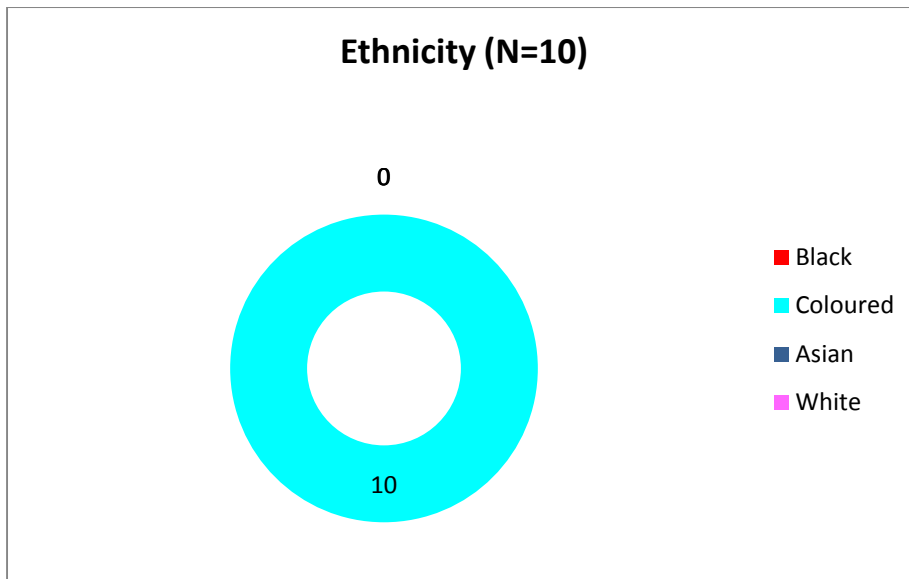


**Figure 8.4: Ethnicity group of respondents**

As seen in figure 8.4 all the respondents (10 or 100%) belonged to the Coloured ethnic group.

- **Highest qualification of the respondents**

Figure 8.5 reflects the highest qualification of the respondents.

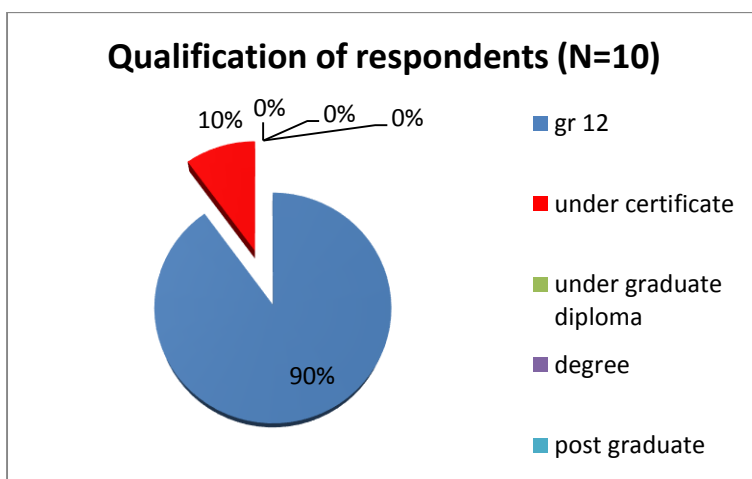


**Figure 8.5: Highest qualification of the respondents**

The majority of the respondents (9 or 90%) completed grade 12. One respondent (10%) had a certificate as the highest qualification.

- **Work experience of respondents**

Figure 8.6 presents whether the respondents had any work experience.

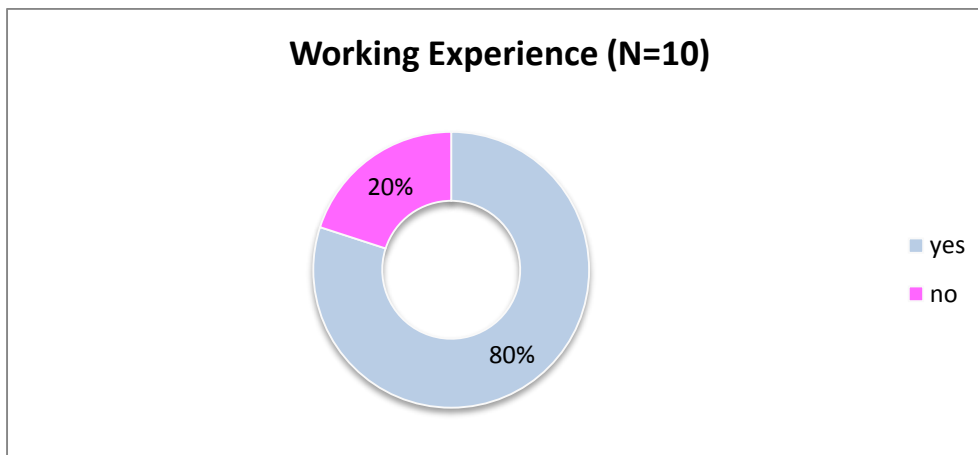


**Figure 8.6: Work experience of the respondents**

The majority of the respondents (8 or 80%) indicated that they had previous work experience. Two respondents said that they had no previous work experience in the formal labour market.

- **Period of unemployment of respondents**

Figure 8.7 displays the period of unemployment of the young adults who completed the training programme.

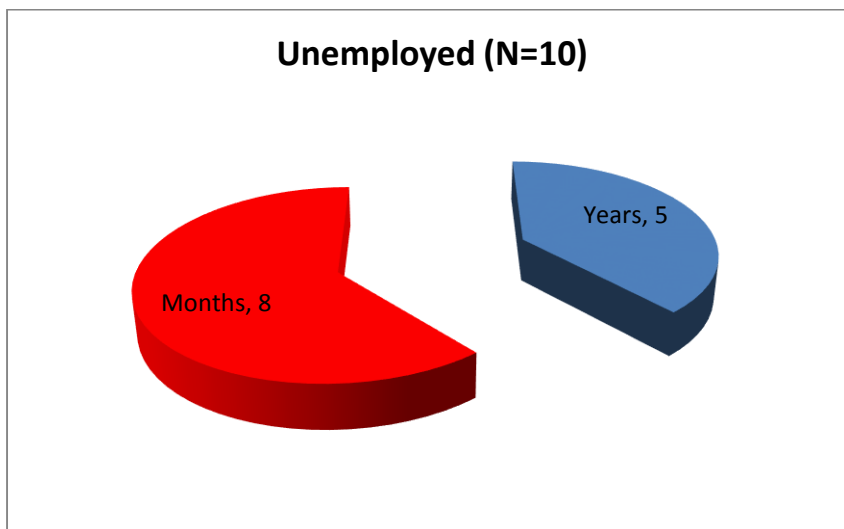


**Figure 8.7: Period of unemployment of the respondents**

According to figure 8.7 the ten respondents that completed the training programme had been accumulatively unemployed for five years and eight months.

## **Section 2: Empirical results**

### **Part 1: Knowledge base of core skills by respondents.**

The purpose of this section was to explore the knowledge base and understanding of the concept “core skills” by the young adults. The components or variables discussed in this part will be a description of the young adult’s knowledge base of the concept core skills and the meaning of the various core skills namely communication, numeracy, information technology, problem solving and working with people prior to (pre-test) and after the completion of the programme (post-test).

- **Respondents’ understanding of the concept “core skills”**

Figure 8.8 shows the various descriptions of the concept “core skills”. The respondent had to choose which option described the concept “core skills” the best. The options were:

- a) Use of knowledge in the work place
- b) Main skills in a working environment
- c) Skills that help a person get employment more easily
- d) Skills that can be used in other jobs as well such as working with numbers, using information technology, communication, problem solving and working in a team
- e) All of the above

Figure 8.8 shows that in the pre-test the majority of respondents (4 or 40%) chose option “c” and “e” as the phrase that described the concept “core skills” the best. One (10%) respondent respectively chose options “a” and “d” as the phrase that described the concept “core skills” the best. None of the respondents chose option “b”.

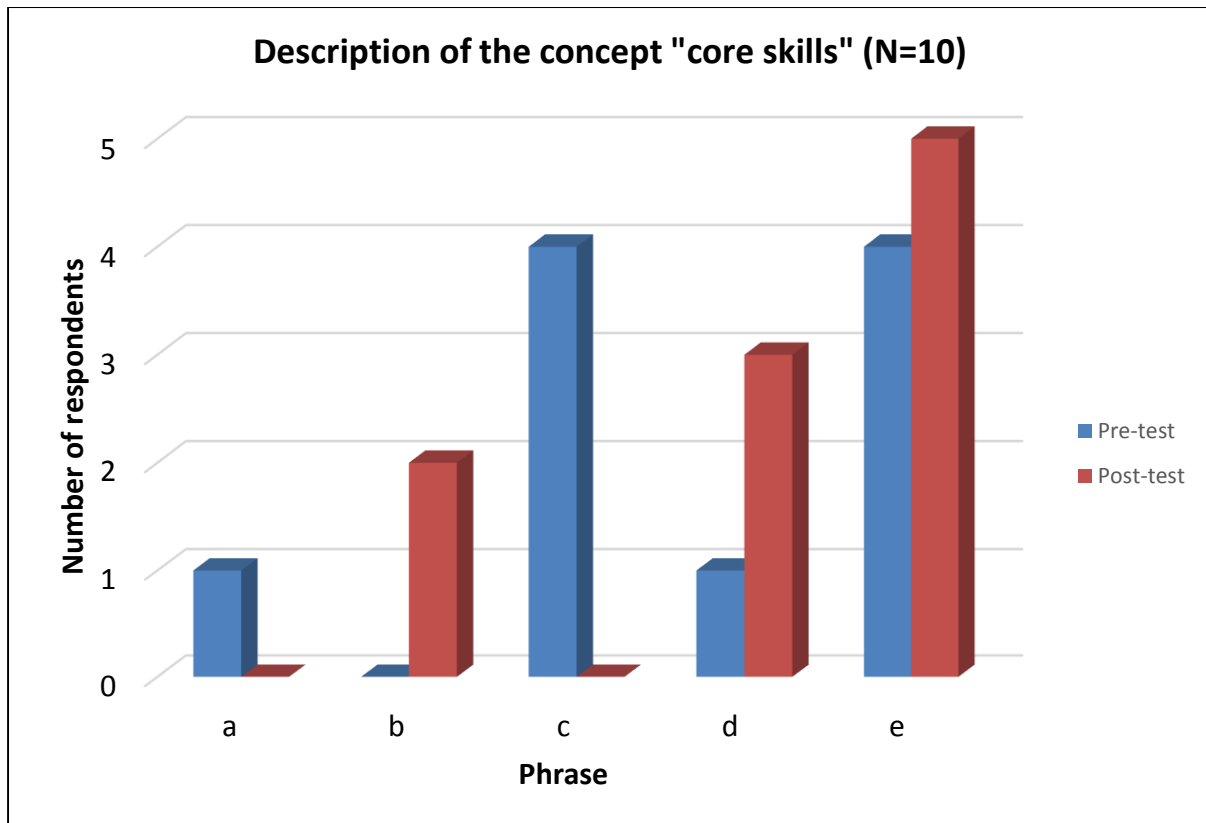


**Figure 8.8: Description of the concept “core skills” by the respondents**

The data collected from the post-test revealed that the majority of respondents (5 or 50%) chose option “e” as the phrase that describes the concept “core skills” best. The next best choice chosen by three (30%) respondents was option “d” and the least was option “b” chosen by two (20%) respondents. None of the respondents chose options “a” and “c” as the phrase that describes the concept “core skills” best.

The young adults clearly became aware of the different meanings that make up the concept “core skills”. The respondents understanding of the concept “core skills” is similar to the view of Welsh and Canning (2003:3,8) and Cox and King (2006:26) who describe core skills as “skills that are applied in a given context” and that core skills consist of communication skills, numeracy, information communication technology, problem solving skills and working with others respectively.



- **Respondents' description of "communication" as a core skill.**

Figure 8.9 displays the various options chosen by the respondents. The respondent had to choose which option described "communication" as a core skill the best. The options were:

- a) Standard, basic, two-way exchange of ideas
- b) Consists of speaking, writing and looking
- c) Makes use of interaction, a message, feedback, understanding and memory
- d) Communication is reading, writing and talking
- e) (a), (c) and (d)

It can be clearly seen from figure 8.9 that the majority of respondents, namely four (40%) indicated that option "d" described communication as a core skill the best during the pre-test. Option "a" had the second most responses, namely three (30%) of the respondents. One (10%) respondent chose option "b" and none chose option "e". The majority choice of best description for communication correlates with the description of communication as a skill in the article on Good communication Skills- Key to Any Success (Good communication...., Essential Life Skills.net, [sa]:1).

The data collected from the post-test questionnaires indicated that six (60%) respondents chose option "e" as the best description of communication as a core skill. Option "d" was the second best option and was chosen by three (30%) respondents. One (10%) respondent chose option "a" as the phrase that describes "communication" the best. No respondent chose option "b" or "c" as the phrase that describes "communication" the best.

The young adults' choice of the phrase that describes the core skill "communication" after completing the training programme shows a much wider inclusion of phrases than the choices prior to completing the training programme.

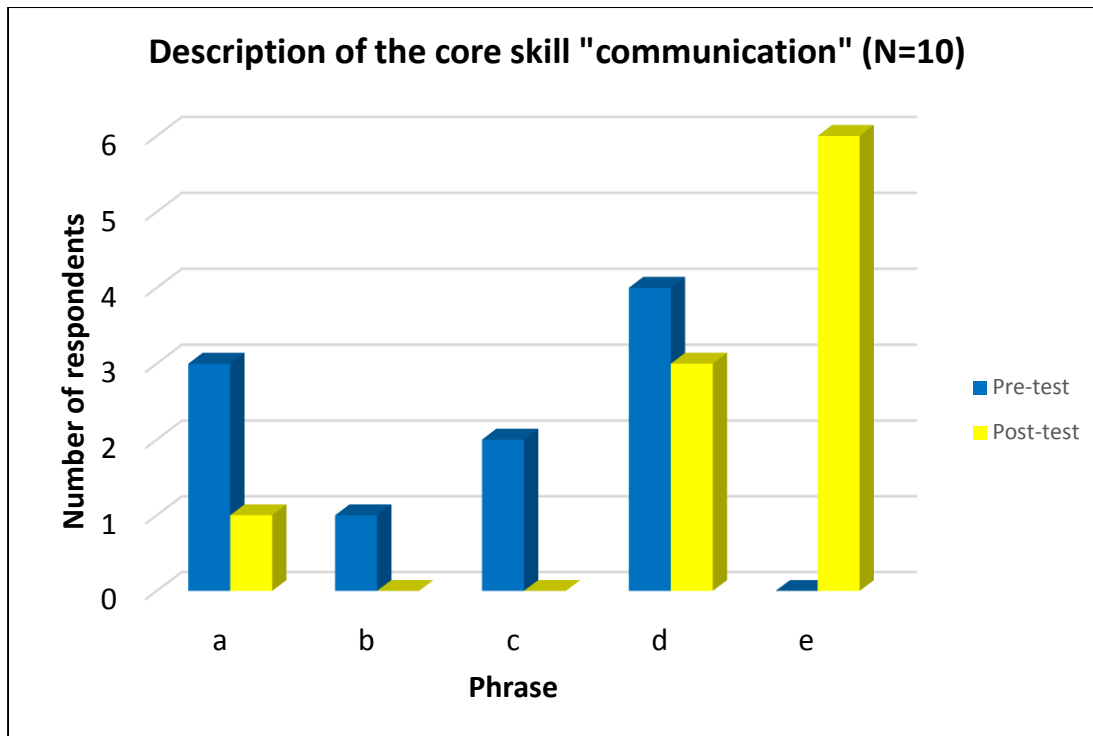


**Figure 8.9: Respondents' description of the core skill "communication".**

- **Respondents' description of "numeracy" as a core skill.**

Figure 8.10 shows the various choices of the respondents. The respondents had to choose from the following options which option described "numeracy" as a core skill the best.

- Using graphs, formulas, equations and measurements to find an answer
- A sensible way of thinking that uses numbers in everyday life
- Consists of algebra, geometry, trigonometry, ranking, possibilities, logarithms
- Use in mathematics, music, architecture, engineering, finances
- (b) and (c)

Figure 8.10 indicates that the highest number of respondents (4 or 40%) in the pre-test indicated that option "a" described the concept "numeracy" best. Four (40%) of respondents chose option "e". One (10%) of the respondents chose options "b" and "c" respectively. None of respondents chose option "d" as the statement that described "numeracy" the best. The young adults' choices during the pre-test were

similar to the description of numeracy as cited by Welsh and Canning (2003:3), the New South Wales Department of Education and Communities (2011:1) and the *Oxford Dictionaries* (2014).

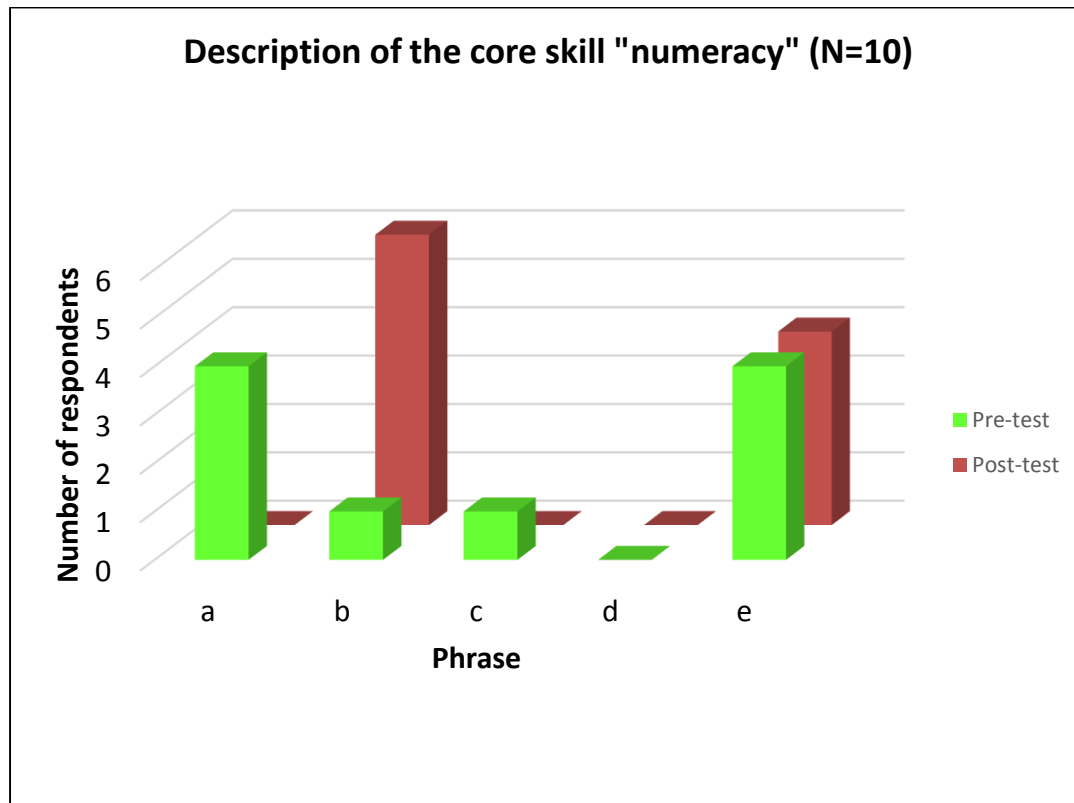


**Figure 8.10: Respondents' description of the core skill "numeracy"**

Six (60%) respondents chose option "b" as the phrase that described the concept "numeracy" best after completing the training programme. Four (40%) respondents chose option "e" as the phrase that described "numeracy" as the best. None (0%) of the respondents chose options "a", "c" or "d" as the phrase that describes the concept "numeracy" as the best.

The young adults' knowledge base of the concept "numeracy" did not change significantly after the completion of the training programme.

- **Respondents' description of "information technology" as a core skill.**

Respondents had to indicate which option described "information technology" the best as a core skill. The result is graphically presented in figure 8.11. The various options from which the respondent could choose were:

- a) The use of computers and the internet to do your work
- b) A pre-requisite skill for employment
- c) The use of electronics to play games and connect with friends
- d) A tool used in the gathering, organising, storing, retrieving, distributing and using of information for gaining knowledge, problem solving and decision making.
- e) (a) and (c)

Figure 8.11 shows that in the pre-test the majority of respondents (5 or 50%) indicated that option "d" described the concept "information technology" best as a core skill. Option "a" was the second highest choice with four (40%) respondents choosing it as the statement that describes "information technology" best. The minority of respondents (1 or 10%) indicated that option "e" described information technology best. No respondents (0%) chose option "b" or option "c".

As part of the post-test the majority of respondents (5 or 50%) indicated that option "d" described the concept "information technology" best as a core skill. Option "a" was the second highest choice with four (40%) respondents choosing it as the statement that describes "information technology" best. The minority of respondents (1 or 10%) indicated that option "e" described information technology best. No respondents (0%) chose option "b" or option "c".

The completion of the training programme by the young adults did not change the young adults' knowledge base of the concept "information technology" as the choices remained the same.

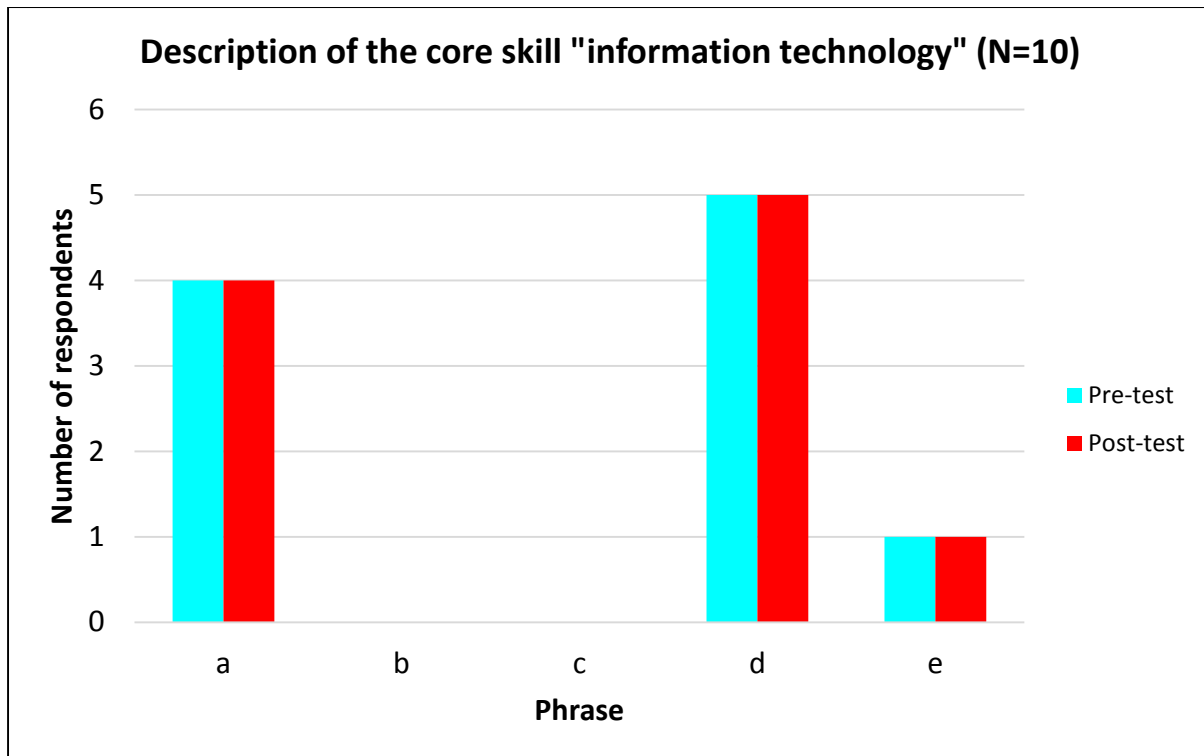


**Figure 8.11: Respondents' description of the core skill "information technology"**

- **Respondents' description of the core skill "problem solving".**

Respondents had to indicate which option described "problem solving" the best as a core skill. The result is graphically presented in figure 8.12.

The various options from which the respondent could choose were:

- A skill that uses reasoned thinking to plan, organise, review and evaluate information to make a choice
- An unpleasant situation that needs to be solved
- A process that uses thinking skills to change a problem
- A tool that is used daily
- A skill that is necessary for employment

From figure 8.12 it can be seen that the highest number of respondents namely five (50%) indicated in the pre-test that option "a" described "problem solving" the best.

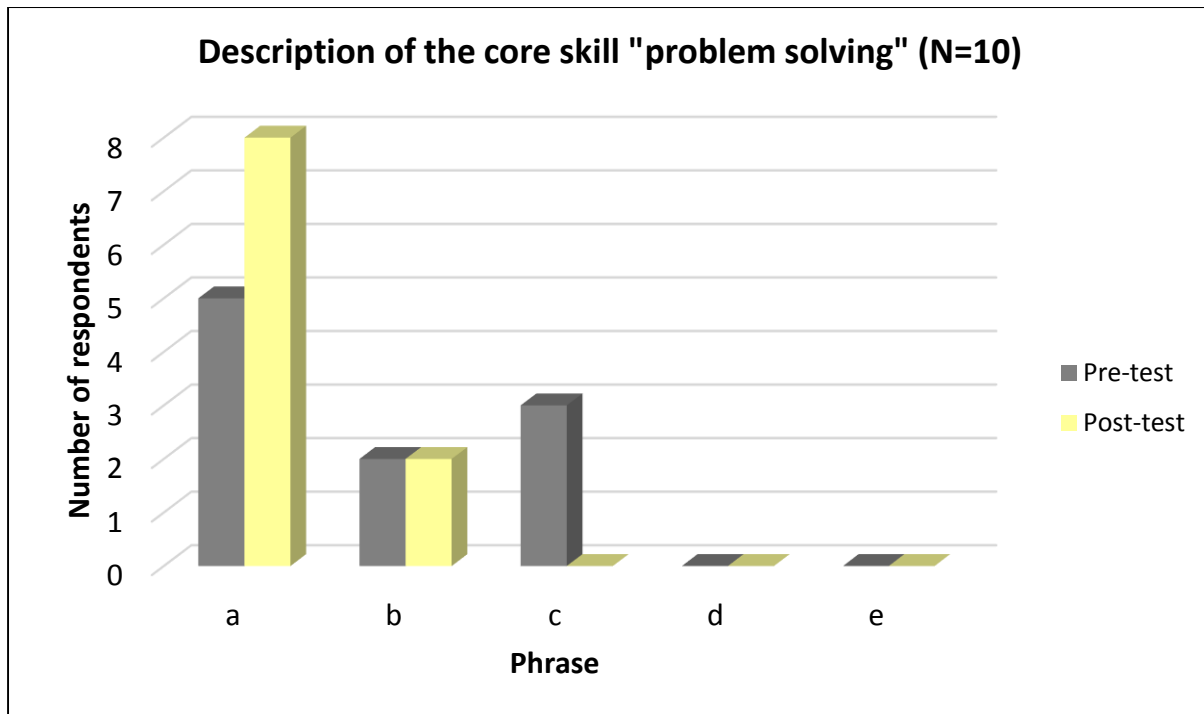


**Figure 8.12: Respondents' description of the core skill "problem solving"**

Three respondents (30%) chose option "c" as the statement that describes "problem solving" the best. Two (14%) respondents chose option "b" as the statement that describes the core skill "problem solving" the best. No respondent chose option "d" or "e" as the phrase that describes the concept "problem solving" the best.

During the post-test the highest number of respondents, namely eight (80%), indicated that option "a" described the core skill "problem solving" the best. Two respondents (20%) chose option "b" as the statement that describes the core skill "problem solving" the best. None (0%) of the respondents chose options "c", "d" or "e" as the statement that describes the core skill "problem solving" the best.

The phrase chosen by the young adults that described the core skill "problem solving" the best prior to completion of the programme was option "a" (*A skill that uses reasoned thinking to plan, organise, review and evaluate information to make a choice*). After completing the programme the young adults' choice that described the core skill "problem solving" best was also option "a" (*A skill that uses reasoned*

*thinking to plan, organise, review and evaluate information to make a choice*). The number of respondents that chose option “a” increased from 50% to 80% after the respondents had completed the programme. The young adults’ knowledge base of the concept “problem solving” was significantly enhanced by the training programme.

- **Respondents’ description of the core skill “working with people”.**

Respondents had to indicate which option described “working with people” the best as a core skill. The result is graphically presented in figure 8.13. The various options from which the respondent had to choose were:

- a) Motivational support, empowerment, managing change and performance
- b) Self-knowledge, encourage, develop, lead, trust
- c) Attitude, personality types, goal setting, visionary, team work, communication, adaptability
- d) Leading others, influencing, sharing information, observation, understanding others and self, mind-set, listening, being involved, flexible
- e) Together everyone achieves more

According to figure 8.13 the majority of respondents in the pre-test namely 6 or 60% chose option “c” as the statement that describes “working with people” best. Two respondents or 20% chose option “d” as the statement that describes “working with people” best. The minority (1 or 10%) of respondents chose options (a) and (e) respectively as the statement that describes the core skill “working with people” best. No respondent chose option “b” as the phrase that describes “working with people” best.

In the post-test the majority of respondents (8 or 80%) chose option “c” and “d” as the statement that describes the core skill “working with people” best. One respondent or 10% respectively chose option “a” and option “b” as the statement that describes “working with people” best. No respondent chose option “e”.

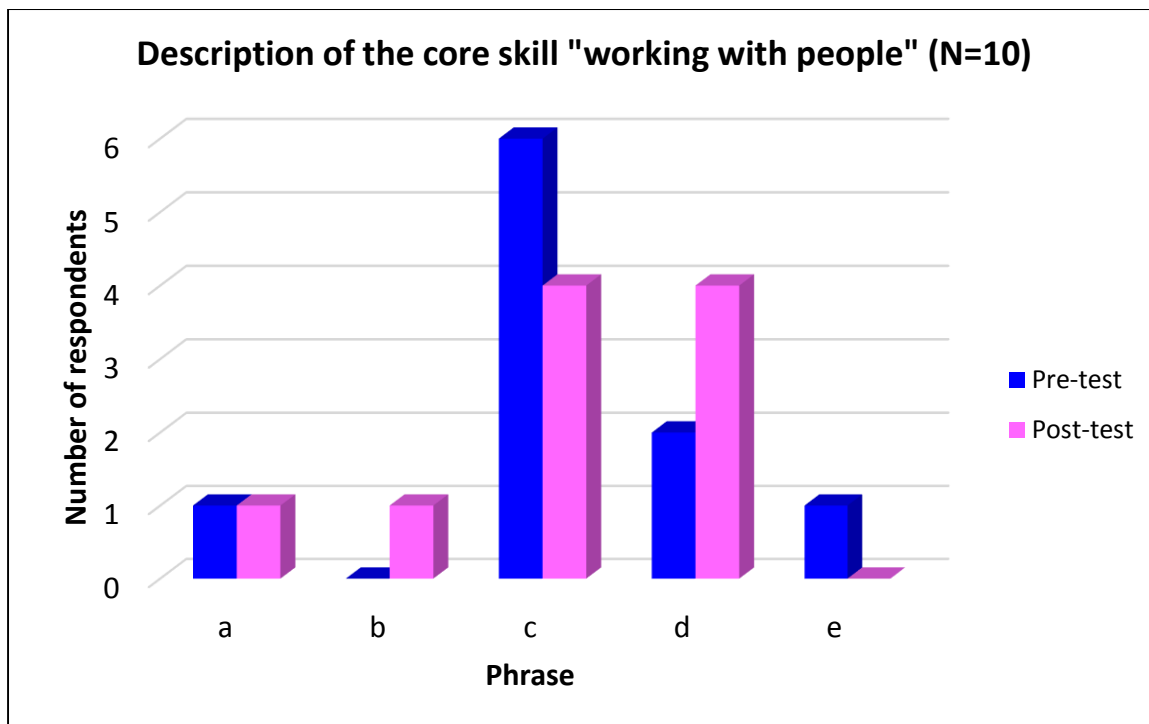


**Figure 8.13: Respondents' description of the core skill "working with people"**

The young adults' choice of best description of the core skill "working with people" prior to the programme was option "c" (*Attitude, personality types, goal setting, visionary, team work, communication, adaptability*). After the completion of the programme the young adults' choice of phrase that described the core skill "working with people" the best was equally distributed between option "c" (*Attitude, personality types, goal setting, visionary, team work, communication, adaptability*) and "d" (*Leading others, influencing, sharing information, observation, understanding others and self, mindset, listening, being involved, flexible*). The young adults' choices after completing the training programme included a wider range of concepts that described the core skill "working with people" best.

- **Respondents' description of the phrase "employability".**

Figure 8.14 shows the various descriptions of the phrase "employability". The respondents had to choose which option described the phrase "employability" the best. The options were:

- Values and attitudes compatible with work opportunities
- Basic skills (i.e. literacy and basic numeracy)



- The defined core skills (IT competence, working with others, communication, numeracy, problem solving)
- Customer service skills
- Up-to-date job specific skills and knowledge
- Career management skills

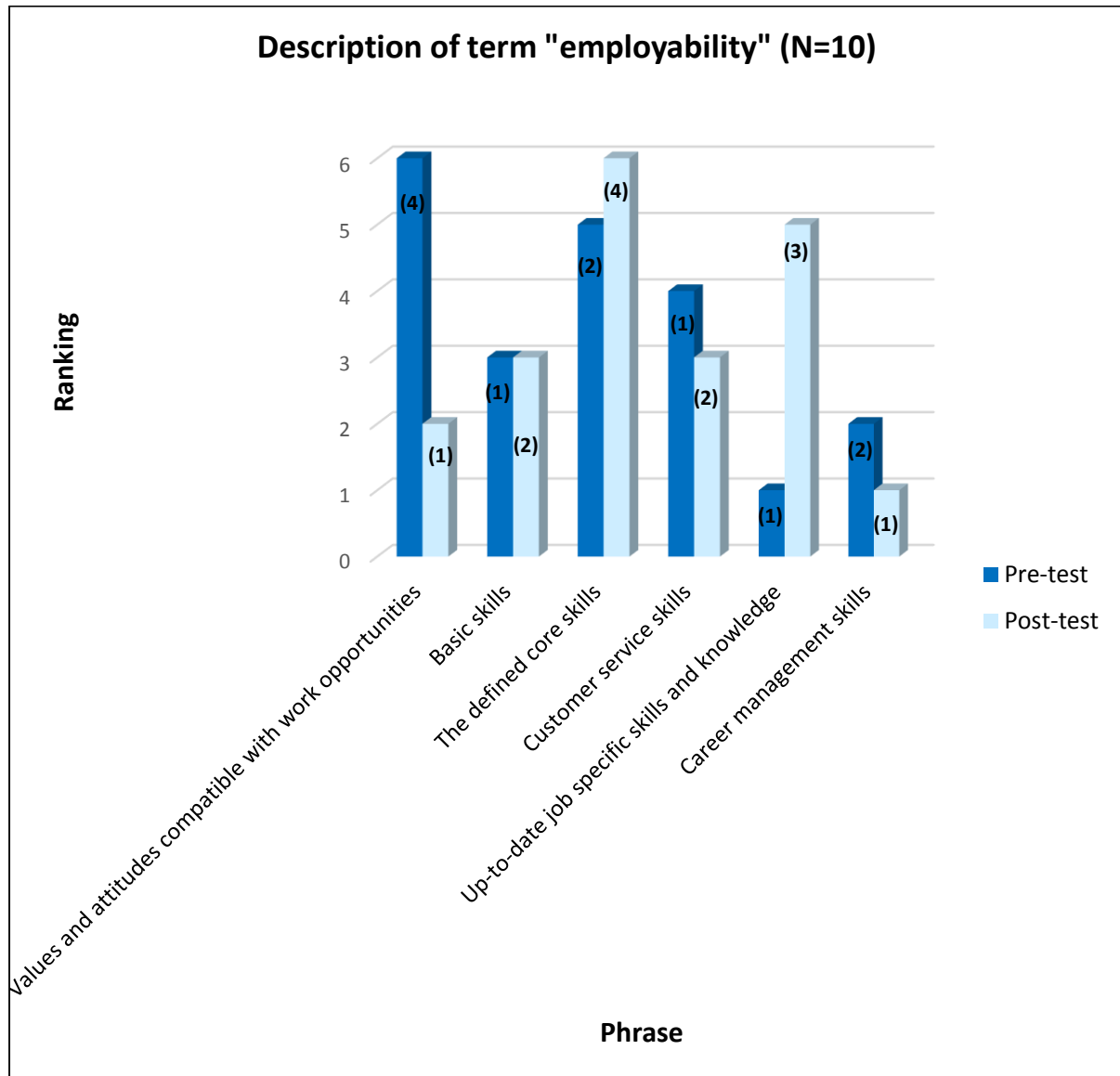


**Figure 8.14: Respondents' description of definition of employability.**

According to figure 8.14, four respondents (40%) said prior to the completion of the training programme that the phrase *Values and attitudes compatible with work opportunities* described the concept "employability" best. The next best (two or 20%) description of the concept "employability" chosen by the respondents prior to the

training programme was the phrase *The defined core skills*. The third best description chosen by one (10%) respondent prior to the training programme was *Customer service skill*. *Career management skills* was the second least option chosen by two (20%) respondents to describe the concept “employability” as the best. The phrase *Up-to-date job specific skills and knowledge* was chosen by one (10%) respondent as the least “best” description of the concept “employability” prior to the training programme.

The phrase *The defined core skills (IT competence, working with others, communication, numeracy, problem solving)* was chosen by four (40%) respondents after completing the training programme as describing the concept “employability” the best. After completing the training programme the phrase *Up-to-date job specific skills and knowledge* was chosen by three (30%) respondents as the second best phrase describing the concept “employability”. The phrases *Customer service skills* and *Basic skills (i.e. literacy and basic numeracy)* were respectively chosen by two (20%) respondents after completing the training programme as the phrase that described “employability” the third best. After completing the training programme two (20%) respondents indicated that the phrase *Values and attitudes compatible with work opportunities* described the concept “employability” the second least best. One respondent (10%) indicated that the phrase *Career management skills* described the concept “employability” the least after completing the training programme.

From the discussion above it can be concluded that the young adults’ knowledge base of the concept “employability” has expanded to include the defined core skills (information technology competence, working with others, communication, numeracy, problem solving) and up-to-date job specific skills and knowledge in comparison with only values and attitude compatible with work opportunities which was seen as the best description of “employability” prior to the training programme.

## **Part 2: Application of core skills by respondents.**

- **Introduction**

The purpose of this section was to explore the degree of application of core skills by the young adults. Due to the difficult nature to measure the degree of application of core skills of the young adults (respondents) the researcher measured the application on the post-test level by utilising a practical case study which the respondents had to complete in a written format. Additional to the case study, the researcher used unstructured observation as a technique to assess the respondents' participation during the application of the core skills needed for successful employment.

- **Data collection method**

The pilot test was presented over eight sessions within four days. At the end of each session from session two till session seven there was an activity where the young adults had to apply the knowledge gained during the session to a practical scenario in written format.

At the end of session eight the young adults were given a case study in an electronic format. They had to find a possible solution, work in groups of three, and present it in an electronic format. The possible solution had to be based on the knowledge and core skills gained during the sessions. The best possible solution that the young adults presented was assessed in written format as well as by unstructured observation of respondents' participation to determine whether the young adult's application of the core skills was enhanced as a result of the training programme. The researcher listened, observed, looked and reflected on the respondents' participation during the completion of the practical case study to be able to interpret the degree of application of core skills of the young adults after completing the training programme.

The following case study (appendix 10) was used: "Rachel who is working as a cashier at ABC stores is getting married to Eddie (an actor) who has just completed

his degree in acting. Rachel found out that Eddie has a 4 year old son. She also heard that the company that Eddie has been freelancing for is relocating to Cape Town. The company that Rachel is working for told her that there is an opportunity to get a bursary for studying accounting. Eddie is earning R4500 per month. They are renting a place for R1500 per month and he pays maintenance of R500 per month for his child. Rachel is earning R2000 per month. They have just bought a new lounge suit and are paying R500 per month off on the hire purchase over 60 months. The Human Resource manager of ABC stores needs an answer from Rachel by the following day.”

In order to assess the application of core skills of the young adults the researcher considered the following aspects in the solution that was offered:

- ❖ Was the **problem solving model** used with specific reference to the six steps? (Problem definition, problem analysis, generating possible solutions, analysing the solutions and possible barriers, selecting the best solution(s) and planning the next course of action).
  - ❖ Description of communication skills (verbal and non-verbal communication techniques namely active listening, open ended questions used, reflection of content and feelings, seeking clarification, reframing),
  - ❖ Using personality profiles and give reasons for choice (melancholic and sanguine),
  - ❖ Use of budget template and calculations,
  - ❖ Whether decisions were made, and
  - ❖ The task was completed.
- **Data analysis**
    - The researcher noticed that the verbal answers given at the end of each session (session 2 to session 7) by the young adults were easily forthcoming and the young adults found it relatively easy to apply the knowledge gained during each session and present a possible solution.
    - The response to the case study presented in electronic format at the end of session eight, which had to incorporate all the knowledge and skills learned

during the previous sessions, presented a different picture. The young adults found it not so easy to integrate all the knowledge and skills, especially the core skill “working with people” and the core skill “information technology” (See example of one of the responses as appendix 11).

- The three groups could easily apply the “working with numbers” exercise and presented a budget for the activity. The core skill of “communication” was also well applied and they formulated a well thought through response. Elements of open ended questions, referral to non-verbal communication, reflecting of content and feelings and seeking clarification were present (See example of one of the responses as appendix 11).
- The application of the core skill “working with people” was experienced on two different levels. The young adults could identify the different personalities and their characteristics easily. The application of “teamwork” within the core skill “working with people” was a bit more challenging as the team members did not complete the exercise in totality in the time given. The unstructured observation revealed that group one relied on one person to come up with the possible solutions and the other three members accepted the solutions without discussing it. In this group the female member had to do all the electronic application. Group two worked much better together as they discussed and debated different scenarios. The three members assigned one person to lead a specific section and divided the work load amongst them. The members assisted each other when one team member did not know what to do. The third group consisted of three members and they also worked reasonably well together. This group found it difficult to complete all the steps of the “problem solving” model. They could not reach a consensus on what the best possible solution is and therefore did not present a possible solution in electronic format in the time given.

### **8.3 SUMMARY**

A short outline was given of the data collected and the measuring instruments and analysis of data as comprehensively discussed in chapter 1, 5 and 7.

The usefulness of the programme was evaluated by using a pre-test and a post-test questionnaire during the presentation of the programme to young adults.

The findings were discussed and illustrated by means of a graphical presentation and the comparison was compared with the literature study where possible.

After analysis of the data collected during phase B, the deduction can be made that the respondents showed improvement in their knowledge base of the core skills after completion of the training programme. No clear deduction can be made that the young adults enhanced their applications of the core skills after completing the training programme due to the omission of the application questions in the pre-test questionnaire.

The findings from phase B were used to make recommendations to enhance the content of the newly developed pre-employment core skills programme for young adults.

## CHAPTER NINE

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 9.1 INTRODUCTION

The researcher attempted to contribute towards expanding the young adult's general knowledge of core skills necessary for employment and to improve the prospect for successful employment of young adults in South Africa. With this study and specifically the pre-employment core skills programme for the young adult, the researcher also sought to help alleviate unemployment and poverty by contributing to the social development of young adults, enhancing human capital development, increasing opportunities to reach full educational potential, enhancing economic development and increasing the opportunity to be self-sufficient and raising the quality of the young adult's life.

In the first phase, the exploration phase or phase A, of this study, the researcher explored the nature of employment core skills needed for young adults from the young adult's perspective, the employer's perspective and from the training service provider's perspective. The collected data was analysed and based on the results a pre-employment core skills programme for the young adult was developed. In the second phase of this study, phase B, the newly developed pre-employment core skills programme for the young adult was pilot tested. The aim of the pre-employment core skills programme for young adults was to understand the different core skills necessary for successful employment and to apply these core skills by completing tasks relating to everyday situations.

In this chapter the key findings, conclusions and recommendations of this research study will be presented. Thereafter the achievement of the goal and objectives of the study will be evaluated and discussed.

## 9.2 KEY FINDINGS

The following key findings were made:

- A limitation of this study is that the researcher realised during the pilot testing of the training programme that **application** of the core skills cannot be thoroughly measured by a pre-test, only by a post-test and that it needs to be measured in practice over a longer period of time. However, in an attempt to assess the application of the core skills, the researcher used a practical case study with specific instructions to apply the core skills as well as unstructured observation of the participation of the respondents.
- The core skills necessary for employment that were identified by the employer, training service provider and young adults as well as identified in literature were “communication”, “numeracy”, “information technology”, “problem solving” and “working with people”. These core skills were used to develop a pre-employment core skills programme for young adults.
- The empirical results showed that the young adults’ knowledge base of the different core skills was enhanced after the presentation of the pre-employment core skills training programme.
- No definite conclusion could be made that the training programme enhanced the young adults’ application of the core skills due to reasons as explained above.

## 9.3 CONCLUSIONS

This section presents a summary of the main concepts that were discovered during the literature review on the subject matter as well as the main findings found during the empirical enquiry of this study.

### 9.3.1 Conclusions based on literature review

The following conclusions can be drawn from the literature study:

- The theoretical framework for this study was described in chapter two, namely the Ecological Systems Perspective. The researcher discusses the historical background of the Ecological Systems Perspective that was derived from the systems theory with the addition of the “person in context” and the relationship



is “reciprocal”. The person is part of the environment and shapes the environment as much as the environment shapes the person. This is of importance to understand the influence that the “environment” has on the young adult as well as how the young adult influences his/her environment within the South African context. The helping professional must consider the strengths and resources in the environment available to the person and the “fit” between the two. Social work’s perspective on the ecological perspective is from a strength or empowerment perspective versus a deficit and dependency perspective (Collins et al., 2010:17; Nilsson, 2003). Thus before the training programme could be developed, the researcher needed to understand the environment of the young adult and how the different levels of the environment, namely the micro-, meso-, exo- and macrosystems, affect the young adult.

- In order to understand the **young adult** (person-in-environment) it was important to describe the development of the person with specific reference to the subsystems (cognitive, emotional, behavioural and biophysical) of the life phase “young adult” (interpersonal system) as well as his/her developmental tasks within that life phase. Chapter three comprehensively discussed the development of the young adult from a cognitive, emotional, behavioural and biophysical perspective. From the literature study completed, the researcher came to conclusion that development is a lifelong process and this is discussed in more detail in chapter three (see 3.2.1). For the purpose of this study the two life phases of “adolescence” and “early adulthood” were of importance with specific reference to the developmental tasks of “establishing own identity and independence” during adolescence and “developing a career” and “financial independence” during “early adulthood” (see 3.3 and 3.4). In South Africa, the young adult has multiple roles and responsibilities he engages in such as education, become economically active, experience unemployment, form new relationships, start a family of their own or even devote time to childcare (Statistics South Africa, 2005:67). The researcher concludes that for the young adult to be successfully employed and to become economically independent, he needs to invest in his education, learning and skills (see 4.4). This was confirmed by two employers Esterhuizen (2008) and Heuer (2007) who indicated that they would rather

employ a person with a higher education level and who shows initiative to develop themselves further by attending relevant courses.

- From the literature study and specifically from the unemployment statistics from South Africa, the researcher concludes that the current economic situation in South Africa is providing a challenging environment for employment opportunities for young adults and increasing their vulnerability to becoming financial independent (see 3.5.3). Furthermore, it is evident from the literature study that the longer the young adult is unemployed the more negatively the impact is on their mental health and other psychosocial and social issues such as crime (see 3.5.4).
- The literature study on core skills clearly indicated that currently there is more emphasis on the application of knowledge in practice (core skills) than on technical and intellectual knowledge. Businesses require a workforce that is pre-equipped with generic and basic skills. The various authors consulted agreed that core skills refer to the broad transferable skills and consist of communication skills, numeracy, information communication technology, problem solving skills and working with others (see 4.2). It can be concluded from the literature study that core skills are an important trait for young adults who want to be well equipped and play an active and flexible role in modern workplaces and society and reduce unemployment amongst young adults (Palmer, 2006:399, 402; Tomé, 2007:340).
- The researcher took all the aspects explored during the literature study, together with the empirical data collected in phase A of this study into consideration to develop the pre-employment core skill programme for young adults. The pre-employment core skills programme was developed from an ecological systems theory background and using the conceptual programming model (see 7.2.1). The conceptual programming model consists of three main sub-processes namely planning, design and implementation, as well as evaluation and accountability. The researcher concluded that all three sub-processes are of importance when developing the pre-employment core skills programme for young adults.

- Each sub-process of the conceptual programming model consists of four process tasks, namely needs, objectives, change strategies and change outcomes (Boone et al., 2002:71, 159). These four process tasks are of importance when developing a training programme. The researcher established the needs through using the different questionnaires for the young adult, the employer and the training service provider. The pre-employment core skills programme for young adults was constructed of eight sessions consisting of smaller units (activities) that transformed into understandable and manageable units that helped learners gain knowledge and skills (see 8.3). Each unit comprises of goals (objectives), sub-activities (change strategies) and an application to evaluate the change. The researcher used all four processes during this study.
- Kolb approaches experiential learning as “a continuous process”, “an interaction between the learner and the environment” or as “a dialogue about a learning experience” (Tight, 2002:24, 25). As this study’s theoretical framework is based on the ecological systems approach, it is of importance to include “an interaction between the learner and the environment”. This was achieved by including an activity in each module whereby the young adult is giving feedback on each topic after reflecting on the topic and the core skill learned and integrating the core skill into a problem solving situation over the eight sessions (see 7.3 and 7.4). The interaction helped the young adults to broaden their knowledge base and application of skills as they discovered additional ways of doing things by talking to each other and sharing their solutions for a particular problem.

### **9.3.2 Conclusions based on empirical findings**

- This study focused on an issue that is relevant in practice, namely a pre-employment core skills programme for young adults and therefore it fits in the “applied research” category. The findings from phase A provided the researcher with information to design and develop a pre-employment core skills programme for young adults.

- During phase A information was gathered under controlled circumstances from 21 young adults between the age of 18 and 25 years, from 8 employers and from 7 training service providers by utilising group-administered and self-administered questionnaires. The information collected was used as part of the knowledge base to develop a pre-employment core skills programme for the young adult.
- The employer respondents came from a variety of sectors or industries, namely government, construction, retail and information technology. Together with a structured questionnaire these contributed to the study having a reasonable objective view on core skills needed by young adults for successful employment from an employers' perspective.
- The training service provider respondents were also represented from a variety of sectors, namely construction, education, government, health industry, manufacturing and the non-government organisations. It can be concluded that this provided for a fair representation of core skills needed by young adults for successful employment from a training service provider's perspective.
- The questionnaires that were used during phase A were pilot tested to ensure that the language used was comprehensible, relevant and applicable to the three groups and did not take too long to complete. All three groups could relate to the questions asked and this ensured that the measuring instrument was fitting for this study.
- In phase A of this study the descriptions of the core skills concepts showed that there were multiple realities of giving meaning to the concepts. The majority of young adult respondents, namely 10 (50%) indicated that *Makes use of interaction, a message, feedback, understanding and memory* described communication as a core skill the best. The highest number of young adult respondents (7 or 33%) indicated that *A sensible way of thinking that uses numbers in everyday life* and *Consists of algebra, geometry, trigonometry, ranking, possibilities, logarithms* described the concept

“numeracy” best. The majority of young adult respondents (14 or 67%) indicated that *A tool used in the gathering, organising, storing, retrieving, distributing and using of information for gaining knowledge, problem solving and decision making* described the concept “information technology” best as a core skill. The highest number of young adult respondents namely 11 (52%) indicated that *A skill that uses reasoned thinking to plan, organise, review and evaluate information to make a choice* described “problem solving” the best. The majority of young adult respondents (11 or 52%) chose *Leading others, influencing, sharing information, observation, understanding others and self, mind-set, listening, being involved, flexible* as the collection of concepts that describes “working with people” best.

- Both the young adults’ and employers’ respondents unanimously agreed that core skills are necessary for employment.
- Furthermore, the findings from phase A showed that the three most important core skills identified by all three groups of respondents were “communication”, “problem solving” and “working with people”. The majority (14 or 74%) of young adult respondents indicated that they consider communication as the most important skill for successful employment, 32% (6) indicated that the next most important core skill was “working with people” and eight (40%) said that problem solving was the third important core skill necessary for employment. Four (50%) of the employer respondents regarded the core skill “working with people” as the most important or needed core skill within their company for successful employment and three respondents (43%) prioritised the core skill “problem solving” as the third highest priority for employment. Two (29%) training service provider respondents respectively indicated that “working with people” and “problem solving” are the most necessary for successful employment. Three (43%) training service provider respondents were of the opinion that the core skill “communication” was the most necessary for successful employment.
- The core focus of this study was to develop a pre-employment core skills programme for young adults which when implemented would enhance the knowledge and application of core skills necessary for employment

prospective of young adults. The findings from phase A of this study were used as a base to develop the training programme. The programme was then pilot tested in phase B of this study. The pretest-posttest design was used to test the transformation of the same young adults who participated in the pilot test (Kumar, 2005:95).

- From the comparison of the findings in phase B it showed that after completing the programme the young adults' choices consisted of a wider range of phrases that described the various core skill concepts. Prior to the training programme, the majority of young adult respondents (4 or 40%) chose option *Skills that help a person get employment more easily* as the phrase that described the concept "core skills" the best. The data collected from the post-test revealed that the majority of respondents (5 or 50%) chose *All the options* as the phrase that describes the concept "core skills" best. It can thus be concluded that there was a change in the knowledge of core skills in the young adults after exposure of eight session over four days to the pre-employment core skills programme. No definite conclusion could be made about whether the training programme effectuated improvement in the application of the identified core skills over the eight sessions.
- The researcher observed during the practical application of the core skills learned that the size of the group, the size of the venue and the access to electronic equipment could pose a limiting factor. Due to limited number of computers (3), the group members had to work in threes to complete the tasks in electronic format. The size of the room could only accommodate twelve people comfortably. The movement of the trainer was limited and this made observation during activities more difficult.

Overall, the researcher concludes that this training programme is of value to contribute to the knowledge of core skills needed for employment of young adults.

## 9.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the empirical evidence and findings of this study, recommendations will be proposed and presented in two ways, namely first for **practice application** and secondly for **future research**.

### 9.4.1 Recommendations for practice application

- This study highlights the important value that the field of social work, economic studies and education (skills development) can contribute to the common goal of the preparation, development and empowerment of young adults for the open labour market. This emphasises the role of a multi-disciplinary team that renders services to young adults. By engaging a social worker either on a contractual or permanent basis in the work place a support system will be created for young adults on an emotional level, a core skills application level and on an employee wellness level. The increase in successful employment of young adults will contribute to the economy of South Africa and help to eradicate poverty.
- Collaboration amongst the various role players and stakeholders in government, non-government and business sectors should be encouraged to render effective and relevant services to young adults.
- It is recommended that this programme should be further tested and implemented with young adults from different socio-economic levels and from different ethnic groups to extend the reach and to get a wider discernment.
- To ensure maximum impact, the programme should be presented with a minimum of two days in-between sessions to provide for ample of time to embed the knowledge learned and to practice the application of the core skill learned.
- It is recommended that this programme is translated into other official languages to broaden the span of possible young adults that could benefit from it.

#### 9.4.2 Recommendations for future research

- The researcher recommends that the young adults' application of core skills be measured over a longer period of time to be able to reach a definite conclusion whether the training programme has enhanced the young adults' application of the core skills needed for employment.
- It is recommended that after the presentation of the training programme to young adults, the application in terms of knowledge gained should be further evaluated in a longitudinal study to evaluate the "application" of knowledge to determine the long-term sustainability of the acquired core skills and whether it leads to better employment opportunities.
- The different pre-employment core skills programmes for young adults of different countries could be compared to determine best practise models which in turn could enrich South African's young adults prospects for employment.
- Future research should look at the effectiveness of this pre-employment core skills programme across South Africa, across different areas such as rural and urban, and across ethnic groups.

#### 9.5 ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The **goal** of this study was:

***To develop and pilot test a pre-employment core skills training programme for young adults between ages of 18 and 25 years.***

The researcher was successful in developing and pilot testing a pre-employment core skills training programme for young adults between ages 18 and 25 years. The training programme was developed after exploring the nature of employment core skills needed for young adults by conducting a thorough literature review as well as by collecting data from young adults, employers and training service providers



through using group-administered and self-administered questionnaires. The respondents consisted of twenty one (21) young adults, eight (8) employers and seven (7) training service providers. The training programme was presented (pilot tested) to ten (10) young adults who were between the ages of 18 and 25 years, who had completed their schooling, who were clients of Child Welfare Tshwane and who were unemployed. Ten young adults completed the training programme.

The goal of this study was achieved through the attainment of the **seven (7) objectives**.

- ◆ **Objective 1:** To conceptualise theoretically unemployment and the impact thereof on young adults, the phase of young adulthood and the core skills needed by young adults to be employable.

This objective was achieved through an in-depth literature review. The different chapters specific to this objective discussed the Ecological Systems Perspective as the theoretical framework for this study in chapter two (2), Young adulthood as a Life Phase, the theories of development (the psychoanalytic, cognitive, behavioural and social cognitive, ethological and ecological developmental theories) and the importance of the developmental tasks of the young adult for learning and preparing for the open labour market in chapter three (3), and core skills in chapter four (4).

- ◆ **Objective 2:** To identify empirically the core employment skills needed for young adults from an employer's perspective.
- ◆ **Objective 3:** To empirically explore the employment core skills needed from young adults' perspective.
- ◆ **Objective 4:** To empirically explore the employment core skills needed for young adults from skills training providers' perspective.

Objectives 2-4 were achieved through the compilation of three questionnaires, namely a questionnaire for employers (see appendix 6), training service providers (see appendix 7) and young adults (see appendix 5). These questionnaires were distributed during phase A to employers, young adults and training service providers.

The data that was collected was analysed, interpreted and presented by means of graphics in chapter six (6).

- ♦ **Objective 5:** To develop a pre-employment core skills programme for young adults.

From the data that was collected, analysed and interpreted during phase A, the researcher developed a pre-employment core skills programme for young adults. The programme is discussed in detail in chapter seven (7) of this study.

- ♦ **Objective 6:** To pilot test the pre-employment core skills programme for young adults.

During March 2014 the pre-employment core skills programme for young adults was pilot tested with ten young adults. The measuring instrument for this programme was a group administered questionnaire which was administered to the respondents prior to the beginning and after the completion of the training programme. The aim of the training programme was to enhance the young adult's knowledge and application of core employment skills which is connected to the research hypothesis. The data collected was analysed, discussed and graphically presented in chapter eight (8) of this study. The implementation of this objective formed part of phase B of this study.

- ♦ **Objective 7:** To make recommendations to enhance the content of the newly developed pre-employment core skills programme for young adults.

The results obtained from pilot testing the training programme were analysed, interpreted and discussed in chapter eight (8). The discussion of the quantitative data that was collected during phase B assisted the researcher to make recommendations to enhance the content of the pre-employment core skills programme for young adults. The recommendations are described formerly in this chapter.

The **research question** for phase A of this study was:

*What are the core employment skills needed to develop a pre-employment core skills programme for young adults?*

The research question was answered by identifying the core skills needed by young adults for employment by conducting an in-depth literature review as well as by collecting data from young adults, employers and training service providers by using group-administered and self-administered questionnaires and then analysing the data collected. The results are described in chapter six of this study.

The **hypothesis** for phase B was:

*If a pre-employment core skills programme is implemented with young adults, the young adult's knowledge and application of core employment skills would be enhanced.*

The pre-employment core skills programme was pilot tested with ten young adults between 18 and 25 years of age. After analysis of the data collected during phase B (chapter eight), the deduction was made that the respondents showed improvement in their knowledge base of the core skills after completion of the training programme. No clear deduction could be made that the young adults' applications of the core skills were enhanced after completing the training programme. The reason for this conclusion is due to the researcher's realisation that application is very difficult to measure during a pre-test and therefore the application questions were not included in the pre-test questionnaire. However, in an attempt to assess the application of the core skills, the researcher used a practical case study with specific instructions to apply the core skills, as well as by using unstructured observation of the participation of respondents. There was enhancement in the application of the core skills "numeracy", "communication" and "problem solving". The young adults' application of the core skill "working with people" and the core skill "information technology" was not greatly enhanced.

## 9.6 SUMMARY

The young adult has many challenges to conquer to fulfil the developmental tasks during the life phase of young adulthood. Some of the developmental tasks of the young adult are to establish themselves in a career, become independent and to find a place in the community and contribute towards it.

Globally and nationally, the work environment has changed over the years from a production environment to a more service oriented work environment and a knowledge economy. This brought along that employers are more and more requiring a person with core skills and a person that has the ability to apply these core skills in practice. The partnership between education and businesses plays an important role to create opportunities where the outcome can be a well prepared and employable young adult that can reach its full educational and human potential.

The democratic government of South Africa is committed to address the shortage of human capital and especially the high unemployment rate amongst young adults. Since 2007 the national budget has made provision for education including skills development. Initiatives by the National Skills Fund, the Department of Public Works through its Extended Public Works Programme, the Further Education and Training Colleges and the SETAs through their “on the job training” programme are making an effort to enhance the human development through equipping them with better education and skills. Their aim is to eradicate poverty in South Africa especially amongst the marginalised by investing in human capital and to link the unemployed with work opportunities.

The researcher is of the opinion that this research study has yielded an intervention programme, namely the developed pre-employment core skills programme, which will contribute in a practical way to increase the investment in human capital, increase employability, strengthen financial resources and enhance the quality of life of young adults in disadvantaged communities in South Africa.

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## **Appendix 1: Informed consent (Phase A)**

## **Appendix 2: Informed consent (Phase B)**

## **Appendix 3:      Permission to conduct research**

## **Appendix 4: Ethical clearance**

## **Appendix 5: Questionnaire A<sub>1</sub> for the Young Adults (Phase A)**

## **Appendix 6: Questionnaire A<sub>2</sub> for the Employers (Phase A)**

## **Appendix 7:      Questionnaire A<sub>3</sub> for the Training Service Providers                                  (Phase A)**

## **Appendix 8: Pre-test questionnaire (Phase B)**



## **Appendix 9: Post-test questionnaire (Phase B)**

## **Appendix 10: Case study (Phase B)**

## **Appendix 11: Example of one of the responses to the case study (Phase B)**



Faculty of Humanities  
Department of Social Work & Criminology

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM – PHASE A

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PARTICIPANT NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**RESEARCHER:** Heidemarie Coetzee, MSW student at the Department of Social Work and Criminology, University of Pretoria.

**PROMOTOR:** Prof. C.S.L. Delpont, Department of Social Work and Criminology, University of Pretoria.

#### INFORMED CONSENT:

- 1. TITLE OF STUDY:** A pre-employment core skills programme for young adults.
- 2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:** The purpose of this study is to develop and pilot test a pre-employment core skills training programme for young adults between ages of 18 and 25 years.
- 3. PROCEDURES:** I will be asked to complete a questionnaire on my thoughts, knowledge and application of core employment skills needed for young adults during the exploration phase of the study.
- 4. RISKS AND DISCOMFORT:** There are no foreseen physical, psychological, legal and social risks or discomforts associated with this study. However, if I will experience any harm, I will be entitled to debriefing by either the researcher or an experienced counsellor at Child Welfare Tshwane.
- 5. BENEFITS:** I understand that there are no benefits to me for participating in this study.
- 6. PARTICIPANTS RIGHTS:** I may withdraw from participating at any time.
- 7. CONFIDENTIALITY:** I understand that the answers to the questions will be kept confidential and will only be used as evidence to analyse all the findings in this phase of the study to produce a pre-employment core skills programme for young adults in South Africa. The results of the entire questionnaire may be published in the dissertation of the study, in

professional scientific journals and at professional, but my records or identity will not be revealed unless required by law.

I can obtain any further information by phoning Heidi Coetzee at cell no. 0722062068 or e-mail [coetzeejh@lantic.net](mailto:coetzeejh@lantic.net).

I understand my rights as research subject, and I voluntarily consent to participation in this study. I understand what the study is about and how and why it is being done. I am aware of the fact that the information will be stored for 15 years at the University of Pretoria. I will receive a signed copy of this consent form.

---

Subject's signature

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Date

---

Researcher's signature

---

Date



Faculty of Humanities  
Department of Social Work & Criminology

## INFORMED CONSENT FORM – PHASE B

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PARTICIPANT NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**RESEARCHER:** Heidemarie Coetzee, MSW student at the Department of Social Work and Criminology, University of Pretoria.

**PROMOTOR:** Prof. C.S.L. Delpont, Department of Social Work and Criminology, University of Pretoria.

### INFORMED CONSENT:

- 1. TITLE OF STUDY:** A pre-employment core skills programme for young adults.
- 2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:** The purpose of this study is to develop and pilot test a pre-employment core skills training programme for young adults between ages of 18 and 25 years.
- 3. PROCEDURES:** I will be asked to complete a questionnaire on my experiences, feelings, thoughts with reference to my knowledge and application of core employment skills needed for young adults before I start the training programme and after I have completed the training programme. The duration of the training programme will be five days.
- 4. RISKS AND DISCOMFORT:** There are no foreseen physical, psychological, legal and social risks or discomforts associated with this study. However, if I will experience any harm, I will be entitled to debriefing by either the researcher or an experienced counsellor at Child Welfare Tshwane.
- 5. BENEFITS:** I understand that there are no benefits to me for participating in this study. However, the exposure to work may help me to become more employable.
- 6. PARTICIPANTS RIGHTS:** I may withdraw from participating at any time.
- 7. CONFIDENTIALITY:** I understand that the answers to the questions will be kept confidential and will only be used to analyse all the findings, without names being mentioned. The results of the entire questionnaire may be published in the dissertation of the study and be used as

evidence for a pilot study, but my records or identity will not be revealed unless required by law.

I can obtain any further information by phoning Heidi Coetzee at cell no. 0832590953 or e-mail [coetzeejh@lantic.net](mailto:coetzeejh@lantic.net).

I understand my rights as research subject, and I voluntarily consent to participation in this study. I understand what the study is about and how and why it is being done. I am aware of the fact that the information will be stored for 15 years at the University of Pretoria. I will receive a signed copy of this consent form.

---

Subject's signature

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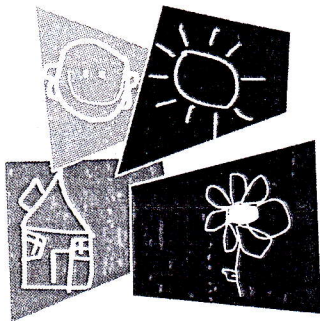
Date

---

Researcher's signature

---

Date



**Child Welfare Tshwane**  
NPO Reg No 001-612

## Child Welfare Tshwane

246 Schröder Street  
Groenkloof  
PO Box 503  
Pretoria 0001

Tel: 012 460 9236  
Fax: 012 460 6333

E-mail: [info@childwelfare.co.za](mailto:info@childwelfare.co.za)  
[www.childwelfare.co.za](http://www.childwelfare.co.za)

Adoptions  
012 460 9239

Atteridgeville  
Tel: 012 373 8131  
Fax: 012 373 8306

Bramley  
Children's Home  
Tel: 012 460 9236  
Fax: 012 460 6333

Centurion  
Tel: 012 664 6175  
Fax: 012 664 6154

Eersterust  
Tel: 012 806 7046/7  
Fax: 012 806 7283

Elandspoort  
Tel: 012 386 8652  
Fax: 012 386 7332

Ford Care Centre  
HIV/AIDS Project  
Tel: 012 803 0103  
Fax: 012 842 2750

Itumeleng Shelter  
Tel: 012 343 1373  
Fax: 012 344 5747

Mamelodi  
Tel: 012 805 4056/7  
Fax: 012 805 4997

Mid City  
Tel: 012 322 5803  
Fax: 012 320 1419

Olievenhoutbosch  
Tel: 012 652 0029  
Fax: 012 652 0029

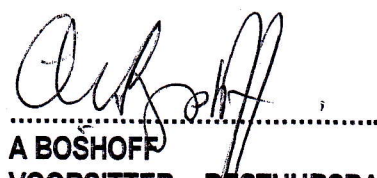
Ons Verw: A Boshoff

Universiteit van Pretoria  
Lynnwoodweg  
PRETORIA

### AAN WIE DIT MAG AANGAAN

Namens die Raad van Child Welfare Tshwane verleen ek hiermee toestemming aan  
Heidie Coetzee om haar navorsing vir verdere studies by Child Welfare Tshwane te  
doen en ons databasis en kliënte te gebruik vir genoemde navorsing.

Die uwe



**A BOSHOFF**  
**VOORSITTER: BESTUURSRAAD**





UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Humanities  
Research Ethics Committee

4 June 2012

Dear Prof Lombard

**Project:** A pre-employment core skills programme for young adults  
**Researcher:** HE Coetzee  
**Supervisor:** Prof CSL Delpont  
**Department:** Social Work and Criminology  
**Reference number:** 78411328

Thank you for your response to the Committee's letter of 4 August 2009.

I have pleasure in informing you that the Research Ethics Committee formally **approved** the above study at an *ad hoc* meeting held on 4 June 2012. Please note that this approval is based on the assumption that the research will be carried out along the lines laid out in the proposal. Should your actual research depart significantly from the proposed research, it will be necessary to apply for a new research approval and ethical clearance.

The Committee requests you to convey this approval to the researcher.

We wish you success with the project.

Sincerely

**Prof. John Sharp**  
**Chair: Research Ethics Committee**  
**Faculty of Humanities**  
**UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA**  
**e-mail: john.sharp@up.ac.za**

## RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

**NAME OF THE INSTITUTION: UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA**

**RESEARCH TOPIC: A PRE-EMPLOYMENT CORE SKILLS  
PROGRAMME FOR YOUNG ADULTS**

Please answer all the questions. The information collected in this questionnaire will be handled in strict confidence.

The coding on the right hand side of the questionnaire is to assist the statisticians with sampling.

Your participation in this research project is greatly appreciated.

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- Read each question carefully before answering.
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## INTRODUCTION

Definition of the key concepts in the context of this study:

**Core skills** is defined as key skills that are necessary for any work situation, transferable to any situation, that help young adults towards successful employment and that include communication skills, numeracy, information communication technology, problem solving skills and people skills.

**Employment** is a process of placing a person to do work or carry out activities, tasks or duties that produce something of economic value or a service to others.

**Numeracy** is the skill to think logically and reason with numbers and mathematical formulas.

**Pre-employment** is the stage or period immediately prior to being employed or entering the labour market.

**Unemployment** is where people are not employed, thus are not placed to do work or carry out activities, tasks or duties for economic value or service to others.

**Young adult** is an individual between the age of 18 and 25 years, who has completed his or her schooling and who is in the process of becoming an adult.

# RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE FOR YOUNG ADULT

For Office Use

RESPONDENT NUMBER:

V1

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1

Questionnaire: A1

Date: .....

Please answer all the questions.

Please mark the correct answer with an “x” or where required with a numerical value in the shaded block provided.

## SECTION 1: IDENTIFYING PARTICULARS:

Mark only one choice at each question.

1. What is your age?

|             |  |             |  |             |  |
|-------------|--|-------------|--|-------------|--|
| 18-20 years |  | 21-23 years |  | 24-25 years |  |
|-------------|--|-------------|--|-------------|--|

V2

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4

2. What is your gender?

|      |  |        |  |
|------|--|--------|--|
| Male |  | Female |  |
|------|--|--------|--|

V3

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5

3. What is your home language?

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Afrikaans            |  |
| English              |  |
| Sesotho              |  |
| isiZulu              |  |
| isiXhosa             |  |
| Tshivenda            |  |
| Sepedi               |  |
| Setswana             |  |
| siSwati              |  |
| Xitsonga             |  |
| isiNdebele           |  |
| Other (specify)..... |  |

V4

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|  |  |
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6

4 Which ethnicity group do you belong to?

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| Black    |  |
| Coloured |  |
| Asian    |  |

V5

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8

Question 4 continues on the next page...

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| White                |  |
| Other (specify)..... |  |

**5. What is your highest qualification?**

|                   |                              |                          |        |                            |
|-------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------|----------------------------|
| Gr 12<br>(matric) | Undergraduate<br>certificate | Undergraduate<br>diploma | Degree | Postgraduate qualification |
|-------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------|----------------------------|

V6  9

**6. Do you have any work experience?**

|     |    |
|-----|----|
| Yes | No |
|-----|----|

V7  10

**6.1 If yes, in which area of business have you worked?**

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Banking sector         |  |
| Construction           |  |
| Education              |  |
| FBO/NGO/NPO            |  |
| Forestry               |  |
| Government             |  |
| Health industry        |  |
| Hospitality            |  |
| Insurance              |  |
| Information Technology |  |
| Manufacturing          |  |
| Motor industry         |  |
| Telecommunication      |  |
| Other (specify).....   |  |

V8   11

**6.2 If "No", how long have you been unemployed?**

|       |        |
|-------|--------|
| years | months |
|-------|--------|

V9  13

**SECTION 2: CORE SKILLS**

Answer questions 7–13 by marking the letter in the block provided that describes your answer the best.

**7. Which statement do you think describes "core skills" best?**

- a) Use of knowledge in the work place
- b) Main skills in a working environment
- c) Skills that help a person get employment more easily
- d) Skills that can be used in different jobs such as working with numbers, using information technology, communication, problem solving and working in a team
- e) All of the above

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a | b | c | d | e |
|---|---|---|---|---|

V10  14

**8. Which sentence do you think describes what communication is best?**

- a) Standard, basic, two-way exchange of ideas
- b) Consists of speaking, writing and looking

**Question 8 continues on the next page...**

- c) Makes use of interaction, a message, feedback, understanding and memory  
d) Communication is reading, writing and talking

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a | b | c | d | e |
|---|---|---|---|---|

V11  15

**9. Which sentence do you think describes “Numeracy” best?**

- a) Using graphs, formulas, equations and measurements to find an answer  
b) A sensible way of thinking that uses numbers in everyday life  
c) Consists of algebra, geometry, trigonometry, ranking, possibilities, logarithms  
d) Use in mathematics, music, architecture, engineering, finances  
e) (b) and (c)

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a | b | c | d | e |
|---|---|---|---|---|

V12  16

**10. Which sentence do you think describes “information technology” best?**

- a) The use of computers and the internet to do your work  
b) A pre-requisite skill for employment  
c) The use of electronics to play games and connect with friends  
d) A tool used in the gathering, organising, storing, retrieving, distributing and using of information for gaining knowledge, problem solving and decision making.  
e) (a) and (c)

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a | b | c | d | e |
|---|---|---|---|---|

V13  17

**11. Which sentence do you think describes “problem-solving” best?**

- a) A skill that uses reasoned thinking to plan, organise, review and evaluate information to make a choice  
b) An unpleasant situation that needs to be solved  
c) A process that uses thinking skills to change a problem  
d) A tool that is used daily  
e) A skill that is necessary for employment

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a | b | c | d | e |
|---|---|---|---|---|

V14  18

**12. Which sentence do you think describes “working with people” best?**

- a) Motivational support, empowerment, managing change and performance  
b) Self knowledge, encourage, develop, lead, trust  
c) Attitude, personality types, goal setting, visionary, team work, communication, adaptability  
d) Leading others, influencing, sharing information, observation, understanding others and self, mindset, listening, being involved, flexible  
e) Together everyone achieves more

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a | b | c | d | e |
|---|---|---|---|---|

V15  19

**13. Do you think core skills will enhance your opportunity for employment?**

|     |    |
|-----|----|
| Yes | No |
|-----|----|

V16  20

**14. How will core skills enhance your opportunity for employment?**

V17  21

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15. Prioritise the following core skills from 1(least) – 5(most) which you think are necessary for someone to be employed successfully?

| Core skill             | Value |
|------------------------|-------|
| Communication          |       |
| Numeracy               |       |
| Information Technology |       |
| Problem solving        |       |
| Working with people    |       |

V18  22

16. In which component(s) do you need more knowledge or training?

| Core skill                         | Component                                 | Yes | No |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| <b>Communication</b>               | Oral (speaking)                           |     |    |
|                                    | Writing                                   |     |    |
|                                    | Use of electronic methods                 |     |    |
| <b>Numeracy</b>                    | Using drawings (graphs)                   |     |    |
|                                    | Using numbers                             |     |    |
| <b>Information Technology (IT)</b> | Using word processor                      |     |    |
|                                    | Using spreadsheets                        |     |    |
|                                    | Using storage for data                    |     |    |
|                                    | Using Graphics                            |     |    |
|                                    | Using e-mail and internet                 |     |    |
| <b>Problem solving</b>             | Using critical thinking                   |     |    |
|                                    | Planning and organising                   |     |    |
|                                    | Reviewing and evaluating                  |     |    |
| <b>Working with people</b>         | Understanding Personality types           |     |    |
|                                    | Trusting in coworkers and their abilities |     |    |
|                                    | Working in a team                         |     |    |

V19   23

17. Indicate on a scale of 1 (least) to 5 (highest) what you think the reason is why so many young adults are unemployed?

| Reason                            | Value |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| Not enough jobs available         |       |
| Person does not have experience   |       |
| Person has inadequate core skills |       |
| Person's attitude is wrong        |       |
| Person wants too high a salary    |       |

V20  25

18. Do you think that the environment in which a person grows up has an influence on his/her ability to:

|                                       | Yes | No |
|---------------------------------------|-----|----|
| Communicate                           |     |    |
| Read                                  |     |    |
| Write                                 |     |    |
| Work with other people                |     |    |
| Successfully obtain employment        |     |    |
| Use information technology (computer) |     |    |
| Numeracy                              |     |    |
| Critical thinking                     |     |    |

V21

26

*Thank you for your time and  
assistance*



**NAME OF THE INSTITUTION: UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA**

***TITLE OF THE STUDY:* A PRE-EMPLOYMENT CORE SKILLS  
PROGRAMME FOR YOUNG ADULTS**

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## MEASURING INSTRUMENT FOR EMPLOYERS

For Office Use

RESPONDENT NUMBER:

V1 

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 1

**Questionnaire:** A2

**Date:** .....

**Name of Organisation/Company:**.....

**Work position:**.....

**Period of involvement with company?**.....

*Please answer all the questions.*

*Please mark the correct answer with an "x" in the block provided or when asked with a number.*

### SECTION 1: IDENTIFYING PARTICULARS:

Mark only one choice at each question.

1. What is your age?

|         |         |         |     |
|---------|---------|---------|-----|
| 25 - 34 | 35 - 44 | 45 - 54 | >55 |
|---------|---------|---------|-----|

V2 

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 4

2. What is your gender?

|      |  |        |  |
|------|--|--------|--|
| Male |  | Female |  |
|------|--|--------|--|

V3 

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 5

3. What is your current professional position?

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Trainer                |  |
| Psychologist           |  |
| Social worker          |  |
| Accountant             |  |
| Educator               |  |
| Human resource manager |  |
| Divisional manager     |  |
| Other (specify).....   |  |

V4 

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 6

4. Please indicate your company's sector:

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| Banking sector |  |
| Construction   |  |
| Education      |  |
| FBO/NGO/NPO    |  |
| Forestry       |  |
| Government     |  |

V5 

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 7

*Question 4 continues on the next page...*

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Health industry        |  |
| Hospitality            |  |
| Insurance              |  |
| Information Technology |  |
| Manufacturing          |  |
| Motor industry         |  |
| Telecommunication      |  |
| Other (specify).....   |  |

**5. Geographical information of your organisation:**

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Metropolitan City |  |
| Urban             |  |
| Rural             |  |

V6 

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 9

**6. Type of your organisation (mark only one type):**

|                 |                |                    |     |            |                 |
|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|-----|------------|-----------------|
| Private company | Public company | Closed Corporation | NPO | Volunteers | Other (specify) |
|                 |                |                    |     |            |                 |

V7 

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 10

**7. What is the total number of staff employed by your company?**

|      |        |         |         |         |      |
|------|--------|---------|---------|---------|------|
| 1-50 | 51-100 | 101-150 | 151-200 | 201-250 | >250 |
|------|--------|---------|---------|---------|------|

V8 

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 11

**8. What is your company's major language?**

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Afrikaans            |  |
| English              |  |
| Sesotho              |  |
| isiZulu              |  |
| isiXhosa             |  |
| Tshivenda            |  |
| Sepedi               |  |
| Setswana             |  |
| siSwati              |  |
| Xitsonga             |  |
| isiNdebele           |  |
| Other (specify)..... |  |

V9 

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 12

**SECTION 2: CORE SKILLS**

**9 Which definition describes core skills the best according to you?**

- a) Key skills necessary for a specific work situation
- b) Transferable skills that can be used in everyday situations
- c) Consists of team work, communication, numeracy, problem solving skills and people skills

**Question 9 continues on the next page...**

- d) Core skills involves applied knowledge that leads to successful employment  
e) a and c  
f) b, c and d  
g) b and d

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a | b | c | d | e | f | g |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

V10  14

- 10 Describe your level of knowledge of core skills needed in your company at present:

|         |             |         |      |           |
|---------|-------------|---------|------|-----------|
| Unaware | Very little | Average | Good | Excellent |
|---------|-------------|---------|------|-----------|

V11  15

- 11 Prioritise the following core skills from 1(least) to 5(most) according to necessity for successful employment within your company?

| SKILL                                                                                                                 |  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Communication (oral, written, electronic)                                                                             |  |
| Numeracy (think logically, make deductions with numbers, mathematical concepts)                                       |  |
| Utilising Information Technology (word processing, spreadsheets, databases, graphics, e-mail)                         |  |
| Problem solving (Critical thinking, Planning and organising, Reviewing and evaluating)                                |  |
| Working with people (Understanding Personality types, Trust, Understanding own and other's purpose / goals, Teamwork) |  |

V12  16

- 12 Which of the following components of core skills are applicable to your company?

| Core skill                  | Component                   | Yes | No |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----|----|
| Communication               | Oral                        |     |    |
|                             | Written                     |     |    |
|                             | Electronic                  |     |    |
| Numeracy                    | Using graphical information |     |    |
|                             | Using numbers               |     |    |
| Information Technology (IT) | Using word processor        |     |    |
|                             | Using spreadsheets          |     |    |
|                             | Using database              |     |    |
|                             | Using Graphics              |     |    |
|                             | e-mail                      |     |    |
| Problem solving             | Critical thinking           |     |    |
|                             | Planning and organising     |     |    |
|                             | Reviewing and evaluating    |     |    |

V13   17

Question 12 continues on the next page...

|                            |                                               |  |  |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Working with people</b> | Understanding Personality types               |  |  |
|                            | Trust                                         |  |  |
|                            | Understanding own and other's purpose / goals |  |  |
|                            | Working in a team                             |  |  |

**13 Does your organisation use a core skills profile when recruiting staff?**

|     |    |
|-----|----|
| Yes | No |
|-----|----|

V14  19

**If you answered YES to 13, answer 13.1, if you answered NO, proceed to question 14.**

**13.1 How useful have you found the profiles in the recruiting process?**

|           |               |        |        |             |
|-----------|---------------|--------|--------|-------------|
| Of no use | Of little use | Unsure | Useful | Very useful |
|-----------|---------------|--------|--------|-------------|

V15  20

**14. How important do you consider it for applicants to possess any core skills when applying for vacant posts in your company?**

|            |        |         |           |                |
|------------|--------|---------|-----------|----------------|
| Not at all | Little | Average | Important | Very important |
|------------|--------|---------|-----------|----------------|

V16  21

**15. Should young adults seeking employment be given more training in core skills?**

|     |    |
|-----|----|
| Yes | No |
|-----|----|

V17  22

**If your answer was YES to 15 answer 15.1, if your answer was NO, proceed to question 16.**

**15.1. In which core skill(s) do you think young adults need training in? Prioritise from 1(least) to 5(most).**

|                                                                                 |  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Communication                                                                   |  |
| Numeracy (think logically, make deductions with numbers, mathematical concepts) |  |
| Information Technology                                                          |  |
| Problem solving                                                                 |  |
| Working with people                                                             |  |

V18  23

**16. Indicate which phrase you think describes "employability" best (least = 1, best = 6)?**

|                                                                                                        |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Values and attitudes compatible with work opportunities                                                |  |
| Basic skills (i.e. literacy and basic numeracy)                                                        |  |
| The defined core skills (IT competence, working with others, communication, numeracy, problem solving) |  |
| Customer service skills                                                                                |  |
| Up-to-date job specific skills and knowledge                                                           |  |
| Career management skills                                                                               |  |

V19  24

**Question 17 follows on the next page...**

17. Indicate on a scale of 1 (least) to 7 (highest) what you think the reason is why so many young adults are unemployed?

V20

25

|                                                   |  |
|---------------------------------------------------|--|
| Not enough jobs available                         |  |
| Person does not have experience                   |  |
| Person has inadequate core skills                 |  |
| Person's attitude is wrong                        |  |
| Person wants too high a salary                    |  |
| Person does not have the necessary qualifications |  |
| Other (specify)                                   |  |

18. What other core skills do you think/suggest I should include in my training programme that would help young adults become more employable?

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*Thank you for your time and assistance.*

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE**

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**RESEARCH TOPIC: A PRE-EMPLOYMENT CORE SKILLS  
PROGRAMME FOR YOUNG ADULTS**

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# RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TRAINING SERVICE PROVIDERS

For Office Use

RESPONDENT NUMBER:

V1

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|

1

Questionnaire: A3

Date: .....

Name of Organisation/Company:.....

Please answer all the questions.

Please mark the correct answer with an "x" or where required with a numerical value in the block provided.

## SECTION 1: IDENTIFYING PARTICULARS:

Mark only one choice at each question.

1. What is your age?

|         |         |         |     |
|---------|---------|---------|-----|
| 25 - 34 | 35 - 44 | 45 - 54 | >55 |
|---------|---------|---------|-----|

V2

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

4

2. What is your gender?

|      |        |
|------|--------|
| Male | Female |
|------|--------|

V3

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

5

3. How many years experience do you have as training service provider?

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

V4

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|--|--|
|  |  |
|--|--|

6

4. Please indicate to which service sector(s) you provide skills training?

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| Banking sector           |  |
| Construction             |  |
| Education                |  |
| Faith based organisation |  |
| Forestry                 |  |
| Government               |  |
| Health industry          |  |
| Hospitality              |  |
| Insurance                |  |
| Information Technology   |  |
| Manufacturing            |  |
| Motor industry           |  |
| NGO                      |  |
| Telecommunication        |  |
| Other (specify)<br>..... |  |

V5

|  |  |
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8

**5. In which geographical area does your organisation operate?**

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Metropolitan City |  |
| Urban             |  |
| Rural             |  |

V6  10

**6. Your programme or training is mainly presented in which language?**

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Afrikaans                   |  |
| English                     |  |
| Sotho                       |  |
| Zulu                        |  |
| Combination (specify) ..... |  |
| Other (specify).....        |  |

V7  11

**SECTION 2: TRAINEE/PARTICIPANT'S PROFILE:**

**7. What is the age group of your trainees/participants? Rank your answer from 4 (most) to 1 (least).**

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Adolescents (15-17 years)      |  |
| Young adults (18-25 years)     |  |
| Adults (26-39 years)           |  |
| Middle adulthood (40-59 years) |  |

V8  12

**8. What is the percentage of males and females of your trainees/participants?**

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| Males   |  |
| Females |  |

V9  13

**9. Indicate from 5 (most) to 1(least) to which ethnicity group your trainees/participants belong to?**

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Black                |  |
| Coloured             |  |
| Asian                |  |
| White                |  |
| Other (specify)..... |  |

V10  14

**10. What are your trainees/participants' main language?**

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Afrikaans |  |
| English   |  |

V11   15

**Question 10 continues on the next page....**

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Sesotho              |  |
| isiZulu              |  |
| isiXhosa             |  |
| Tshivenda            |  |
| Sepedi               |  |
| Setswana             |  |
| siSwati              |  |
| Xitsonga             |  |
| isiNdebele           |  |
| Other (specify)..... |  |

**11. To which group do your trainees/participants belong? Rank from 9 (most) to 1 (least).**

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| Unemployed               |  |
| Matriculants             |  |
| Youth                    |  |
| Women                    |  |
| Job seekers              |  |
| New employees            |  |
| Existing employers       |  |
| Low socio-economic level |  |
| Other (specify).....     |  |

V12

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17

**SECTION 3: PROGRAMME COMPONENTS:**

**12. Which percentage of your training programme covers the following core skills? Indicate with a number, 1=0%, 2=25%, 3=50%, 4=75% and 5=100%:**

| SKILL                                                                                         | Number(%) |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Communication skills (oral, written, electronic)                                              |           |
| Numeracy skills (think logically, make deductions with numbers, mathematical concepts)        |           |
| Information technology skills (word processing, spreadsheets, databases, graphics, e-mail)    |           |
| Problem solving skills (Critical thinking, Planning and organising, Reviewing and evaluating) |           |

V13

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

19

**Question 12 continues on the next page....**

|                                                                                                                   |  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Working with people skills (Understanding Personality types, Trust, Understanding your purpose / goals, Teamwork) |  |
| Attitude (approach, handling change, commitment)                                                                  |  |

**13. Indicate which phrase you think describes “employability” best (best = 6, least = 1)?**

|                                                                                                        |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Your values and attitudes are compatible with the work opportunities                                   |  |
| basic skills (i.e. literacy and basic numeracy)                                                        |  |
| the defined core skills (IT competence, working with others, communication, numeracy, problem solving) |  |
| customer service skills                                                                                |  |
| up-to-date job specific skills and knowledge                                                           |  |
| career management skills                                                                               |  |

V14  20

**14. Prioritise the following core skills (from 1(least) to 7(most)) according to your thinking of necessity for successful employment?**

| SKILL                                                                                                 | Value |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Communication (oral, written, electronic)                                                             |       |
| Applied Numeracy (think logically, make deductions with numbers, mathematical concepts)               |       |
| Utilising Information Technology (word processing, spreadsheets, databases, graphics, e-mail)         |       |
| Problem solving (Critical thinking, Planning and organising, Reviewing and evaluating)                |       |
| Working with people (Understanding Personality types, Trust, Understanding purpose / goals, Teamwork) |       |
| Attitude (viewpoint, handling change, commitment)                                                     |       |

V15  21

#### SECTION 4: PROGRAMME EFFECTIVENESS

**15. Please read the following questions and rank your answer on a scale of 1 (least) to 5 (highest).**

**Example:**

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Question                       |   |
| Do you enjoy watching cricket? | 4 |

*Question 15 continues on the next page....*

| Question                                                                                          |  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| The programme you present is easily accessible for the community                                  |  |
| Your programme has helped to increase the <i>core skills</i> level of your participant.           |  |
| Your programme has strengthened human capital.                                                    |  |
| Your programme has increased the employment opportunities of your participant.                    |  |
| Your participant's attitude has positively changed towards employment.                            |  |
| Your programme enhances the social skills of your participants.                                   |  |
| Your participants are implementing the skills they have learned.                                  |  |
| Your programme increases the ability of your participants to apply numerical skills.              |  |
| Your programme enhances the ability of your participants to use communication skills effectively. |  |
| Your programme enhances your participant's ability to use problem-solving skills.                 |  |
| Your programme enhances the utilisation skills in information technology of your participants.    |  |
| Your programme enhances the ability to use decision-making skills.                                |  |
| Your programme enhances your participant's ability to work in a team.                             |  |

V16

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  |  |
|--|--|

22

**16** What else do you think could help or could you recommend concerning content, structure or specific topics that should be included in my pre-employment core skills programme for young adults?

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*Thank you for your time and assistance.*

## PRE-TEST QUESTIONNAIRE (PHASE B)

RESPONDENT NUMBER.....

Date: .....

Please answer all the questions.

Please mark the correct answer with an “x” or where required with a numerical value in the shaded block provided.

### SECTION 1: IDENTIFYING PARTICULARS:

Mark only one choice at each question.

1. What is your age?

|             |  |             |  |             |  |
|-------------|--|-------------|--|-------------|--|
| 18-20 years |  | 21-23 years |  | 24-25 years |  |
|-------------|--|-------------|--|-------------|--|

2. What is your gender?

|      |  |        |  |
|------|--|--------|--|
| Male |  | Female |  |
|------|--|--------|--|

3. What is your home language?

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Afrikaans            |  |
| English              |  |
| Sesotho              |  |
| isiZulu              |  |
| isiXhosa             |  |
| Tshivenda            |  |
| Sepedi               |  |
| Setswana             |  |
| siSwati              |  |
| Xitsonga             |  |
| isiNdebele           |  |
| Other (specify)..... |  |

4 Which ethnicity group do you belong to?

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Black                |  |
| Coloured             |  |
| Asian                |  |
| White                |  |
| Other (specify)..... |  |

**5. What is your highest qualification?**

|                   |                              |                          |        |                            |
|-------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------|----------------------------|
| Gr 12<br>(matric) | Undergraduate<br>certificate | Undergraduate<br>diploma | Degree | Postgraduate qualification |
|-------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------|----------------------------|

**6. Do you have any work experience?**

|     |    |
|-----|----|
| Yes | No |
|-----|----|

**7. How long have you been unemployed?**

|       |        |
|-------|--------|
| years | months |
|-------|--------|

**SECTION 2: CORE SKILLS**

Answer questions in this section by marking the letter in the block provided that describes your answer the best.

**8. Which statement do you think describes “core skills” best?**

- a) Use of knowledge in the work place
- b) Main skills in a working environment
- c) Skills that help a person get employment more easily
- d) Skills that can be used in other jobs as well such as working with numbers, using information technology, communication, problem solving and working in a team
- e) All of the above

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a | b | c | d | e |
|---|---|---|---|---|

**9. Which sentence do you think describes what communication is best?**

- a) Standard, basic, two-way exchange of ideas
- b) Consists of speaking, writing and looking
- c) Makes use of interaction, a message, feedback, understanding and memory
- d) Communication is reading, writing and talking
- e) (a), (c) and (d)

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a | b | c | d | e |
|---|---|---|---|---|

**10. Which sentence do you think describes “Numeracy” best?**

- a) Using graphs, formulas, equations and measurements to find an answer
- b) A sensible way of thinking that uses numbers in everyday life
- c) Consists of algebra, geometry, trigonometry, ranking, possibilities, logarithms
- d) Use in mathematics, music, architecture, engineering, finances
- e) (b) and (c)

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a | b | c | d | e |
|---|---|---|---|---|

**11. Which sentence do you think describes “information technology” best?**

- a) The use of computers and the internet to do your work
- b) A pre-requisite skill for employment
- c) The use of electronics to play games and connect with friends
- d) A tool used in the gathering, organising, storing, retrieving, distributing and using of information for gaining knowledge, problem solving and decision making.
- e) (a) and (c)

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a | b | c | d | e |
|---|---|---|---|---|

**12. Which sentence do you think describes “problem-solving” best?**

- a) A skill that uses reasoned thinking to plan, organise, review and evaluate information to make a choice
- b) An unpleasant situation that needs to be solved



- c) A process that uses thinking skills to change a problem
- d) A tool that is used daily
- e) A skill that is necessary for employment

| a | b | c | d | e |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|---|---|---|---|---|

**13. Which sentence do you think describes “working with people” best?**

- a) Motivational support, empowerment, managing change and performance
- b) Self knowledge, encourage, develop, lead, trust
- c) Attitude, personality types, goal setting, visionary, team work, communication, adaptability
- d) Leading others, influencing, sharing information, observation, understanding others and self, mindset, listening, being involved, flexible
- e) Together everyone achieves more

| a | b | c | d | e |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|---|---|---|---|---|

**14. Indicate which phrase you think describes “employability” best (least = 1, best = 6)?**

|                                                                                                        |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Values and attitudes compatible with work opportunities                                                |  |
| Basic skills (i.e. literacy and basic numeracy)                                                        |  |
| The defined core skills (IT competence, working with others, communication, numeracy, problem solving) |  |
| Customer service skills                                                                                |  |
| Up-to-date job specific skills and knowledge                                                           |  |
| Career management skills                                                                               |  |

<<<< THE END >>>>

## POST-TEST QUESTIONNAIRE (PHASE B)

RESPONDENT NUMBER.....

Date: .....

Please answer all the questions.

Please mark the correct answer with an “x” or where required with a numerical value in the block provided.

### SECTION 1: IDENTIFYING PARTICULARS:

Mark only one choice at each question.

1. What is your age?

|             |  |             |  |             |  |
|-------------|--|-------------|--|-------------|--|
| 18-20 years |  | 21-23 years |  | 24-25 years |  |
|-------------|--|-------------|--|-------------|--|

2. What is your gender?

|      |  |        |  |
|------|--|--------|--|
| Male |  | Female |  |
|------|--|--------|--|

3. What is your home language?

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Afrikaans            |  |
| English              |  |
| Sesotho              |  |
| isiZulu              |  |
| isiXhosa             |  |
| Tshivenda            |  |
| Sepedi               |  |
| Setswana             |  |
| siSwati              |  |
| Xitsonga             |  |
| isiNdebele           |  |
| Other (specify)..... |  |

4 Which ethnicity group do you belong to?

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| Black    |  |
| Coloured |  |
| Asian    |  |

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| White                |  |
| Other (specify)..... |  |

**5. What is your highest qualification?**

|                   |                              |                          |        |                            |
|-------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------|----------------------------|
| Gr 12<br>(matric) | Undergraduate<br>certificate | Undergraduate<br>diploma | Degree | Postgraduate qualification |
|-------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------|----------------------------|

**6. Do you have any work experience?**

|     |    |
|-----|----|
| Yes | No |
|-----|----|

**7. How long have you been unemployed?**

|       |        |
|-------|--------|
| years | months |
|-------|--------|

**SECTION 2: CORE SKILLS**

Answer questions in this section by marking the letter in the block provided that describes your answer the best.

**8. Which statement do you think describes “core skills” best?**

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- c) Skills that help a person get employment more easily
- d) Skills that can be used in other jobs as well such as working with numbers, using information technology, communication, problem solving and working in a team
- e) All of the above

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a | b | c | d | e |
|---|---|---|---|---|

**9. Which sentence do you think describes what communication is best?**

- a) Standard, basic, two-way exchange of ideas
- b) Consists of speaking, writing and looking
- c) Makes use of interaction, a message, feedback, understanding and memory
- d) Communication is reading, writing and talking
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|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a | b | c | d | e |
|---|---|---|---|---|

**10. Which sentence do you think describes “Numeracy” best?**

- a) Using graphs, formulas, equations and measurements to find an answer
- b) A sensible way of thinking that uses numbers in everyday life
- c) Consists of algebra, geometry, trigonometry, ranking, possibilities, logarithms
- d) Use in mathematics, music, architecture, engineering, finances
- e) (b) and (c)

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a | b | c | d | e |
|---|---|---|---|---|

**11. Which sentence do you think describes “information technology” best?**

- a) The use of computers and the internet to do your work
- b) A pre-requisite skill for employment
- c) The use of electronics to play games and connect with friends
- d) A tool used in the gathering, organising, storing, retrieving, distributing and using of information for gaining knowledge, problem solving and decision making.
- e) (a) and (c)

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a | b | c | d | e |
|---|---|---|---|---|

**12. Which sentence do you think describes “problem-solving” best?**

- a) A skill that uses reasoned thinking to plan, organise, review and evaluate information to make a choice
- b) An unpleasant situation that needs to be solved
- c) A process that uses thinking skills to change a problem
- d) A tool that is used daily
- e) A skill that is necessary for employment

| a | b | c | d | e |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|---|---|---|---|---|

**13. Which sentence do you think describes “working with people” best?**

- a) Motivational support, empowerment, managing change and performance
- b) Self knowledge, encourage, develop, lead, trust
- c) Attitude, personality types, goal setting, visionary, team work, communication, adaptability
- d) Leading others, influencing, sharing information, observation, understanding others and self, mindset, listening, being involved, flexible
- e) Together everyone achieves more

| a | b | c | d | e |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|---|---|---|---|---|

**14. Indicate which phrase you think describes “employability” best (least = 1, best = 6)?**

|                                                                                                        |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Values and attitudes compatible with work opportunities                                                |  |
| Basic skills (i.e. literacy and basic numeracy)                                                        |  |
| The defined core skills (IT competence, working with others, communication, numeracy, problem solving) |  |
| Customer service skills                                                                                |  |
| Up-to-date job specific skills and knowledge                                                           |  |
| Career management skills                                                                               |  |

**<<< THE END >>>**

## POST-TEST QUESTIONNAIRE (PHASE B)

### CASE STUDY

Date:.....

Application of core skills:

#### Case Study:

Rachel who is working as a cashier is getting married to Eddie (an actor) who has just completed his degree in acting. Rachel found out that Eddie has a 4 year old son. She also heard that the company that Eddie has been freelancing for is relocating to Cape Town. The company that Rachel is working for told her that there is an opportunity to get a bursary for studying accounting. Eddie is earning R4500 per month. They are renting a place for R1500 per month and he pays maintenance of R500 per month for his child. Rachel is earning R2000 per month. They have just bought a new lounge suit and are paying R500 per month off on the hire purchase over 60 months. The Human Resource manager needs an answer by the following day.

#### Instructions:

- 1.1. As a group you must present the **best possible solution** for the above scenario by using the **problem solving model** and **skills** you have learned in all the modules of the training programme. **Integrate** the knowledge obtained from the previous modules as well, namely **communication skills, personality profiles, teamwork, trust and budgeting**. Describe under each heading your reason for choice and motivate your choice.  
(Here are some example questions that might be helpful to start you off:
  - 1.1.1. What is Rachel going to say to Eddie? How will she tell him? What will his response be? How will Rachel handle his answer?
  - 1.1.2. Use the budget template that you received for the budget presentation. Show your mathematical steps.
  - 1.1.3. What are your recommendations to Rachel – should she take the opportunity or not and give reasons for your answer.)
- 1.2. **Save your answer** on the CD with the name of Case Study post-test and list your group member names at the bottom of your proposal.
- 1.3. The document should **not be longer than two pages**, excluding the budget.

<<< THE END >>>

## CASE study

Eddy : Good evening Rachel

Rachel : Good evening there is something which I want to talk to you about it is important

Eddy : I listen

Rachel : Let's sit down and work out a budget .

*Busy working on the budget.*

Rachel : Eddy , do you think we can live on this budget . And what about your child whom you did not tell me of. When were you planning to inform me ? This makes it very difficult .

Eddy : Sorry man . I did not want to lose you, and we were very busy . Let's go to the movies , then I'll make it up to you.

Rachel : You know you are the one and only perfect man for me . The movie can wait. I have something important to tell you . My boss called me today ..... Eddy , are you listening ?

Eddy : Sorry man , I am thinking of the show I have to do. I will give you my attention. Now honey, what were you going to tell me?

Rachel : Eddy , I have a chance to study in Cape Town and my work and wants to know by tomorrow whether I am accepting the offer. What do you think about this chance?

Eddy : What ? It's fantastic!. When do we move? I think it is great. You have always wanted to study for an accountant and I could possibly get more work down there. How do you feel about this opportunity? What would you like to do?

Rachel: It sounds like a good opportunity and I think I hear some excitement in your voice. We will really need to work carefully with our money and find a place close to the university so that I can walk to classes.

Eddy: Yes, that would be good if we could find a place close to the college. I agree that we will have to work carefully with our money, especially as I now have to pay some money for Thomas. I still would like to hear from you what you think.

Rachel: I am scared as we are so comfortable here. I don't know whether I would make it. And then there is my mother who is getting older. On the other hand, I am excited to fulfil my dream. This is really a once off opportunity. I think we must really look at our budget. If I am not going to earn R2000 anymore, how are we going to make it up?

Eddy: No problem Rachel. I can earn more money when I am in Cape Town. We can even live on the beach and go fishing. Then we will have plenty of food.

Rachel: Eddy, stop joking. This is serious matter. Are you saying that we don't have plenty of food now? I am really wondering whether this is a good idea.

Eddy: Rachel, I think you must go for it. You are a clever girl and you always wanted to do this. Just think about your dream of wanting to be an accountant.

Rachel: I guess you are right. I will sleep on it and I will have to ask HR for more information.

Rachel clearly has a melancholic personality as she loves working with figures and she wants to know every detail before making a choice. Eddy is more a sanguine personality as he is in the acting business. He likes to go to the movies and he is impulsive by wanting to move immediately without having discussed the situation.

The budget shows that Eddy and Rachel need to look very careful at their finances as they do not have much money to spend. Eddy said that he would earn more and they could save on transport as Rachel will walk to university.

If Eddy can earn more money and they can find a place to stay that is not too expensive and close to the university, then Rachel can go and study.

Team members:

1. V
2. A
3. M

# MY BUDGET

DATE:

|                 |                     |      |
|-----------------|---------------------|------|
| <b>1 INCOME</b> | a) Salary / wages   | 6500 |
|                 | b) Others           |      |
|                 | <b>TOTAL INCOME</b> | 6500 |

|                                       |      |
|---------------------------------------|------|
| <b>10% of Income</b>                  | 650  |
| <b>A: TOTAL - 10% = Usable Income</b> | 5850 |

|                   |                               |      |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|------|
| <b>2 EXPENSES</b> | a) Transport                  | 2000 |
|                   | b) Rent (+ electricity+water) | 1500 |
|                   | c) Food                       | 1000 |
|                   | d) Money home                 |      |
|                   | e) Accounts                   |      |
|                   | 1)                            | 500  |
|                   | 2)                            | 500  |
|                   | 3)                            |      |
|                   | 4)                            |      |
|                   | 5)                            |      |
|                   | f) Loans                      |      |
|                   | 1)                            |      |
|                   | 2)                            |      |
|                   | 3)                            |      |
|                   |                               |      |
|                   | <b>B: TOTAL EXPENSES</b>      | 5500 |

|                                               |     |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----|
| <b>DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INCOME AND EXPENSES</b> | 350 |
| <b>(A - B)</b>                                |     |

## ACTION PLAN OF HOW TO GET OUT OF MY DEBT SPIRAL

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_