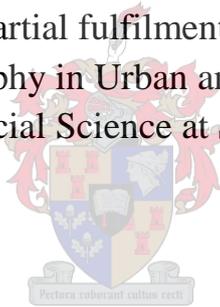


**AN INVESTIGATION OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUTH IN THE LABOUR MARKET IN THE LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA**

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Mini Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Master of Philosophy in Urban and Regional Science in the Faculty of Arts and Social Science at Stellenbosch University



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## **AUTHOR'S DECLARATION**

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## ABSTRACT

The ability of youth to become active participants in the labour market and to thrive and secure quality employment upon entry is a challenge and a growing concern in many countries. In Limpopo province and its local municipalities, joblessness, gender disparity, discouragement and inequality across population groups remain a challenge among youth in the labour market. The main aim of this study is to investigate the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of youth in the labour market across different geographical scales within the Limpopo province. The characteristics include age, gender, population group, educational status, employment sector and individual monthly income. In providing an overview of the characteristics of youth in the labour market, this study provides important information to planners and policymakers to understand the underlying demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the youth in the labour market. Descriptive statistics provided an overview of the characteristics whilst the relationships between labour market categories and demographic and socio-economic characteristics were established through regression, correlation and hotspot analysis.

The results revealed that employed people accounted for a larger share at all geographical scales, than the unemployed and discouraged work-seekers. The majority were black African males between the ages of 30 and 35, who have obtained some secondary education, who were employed in the formal sector and earning between R801 and R1 600 per month. There were strong relationships established between all the demographic and socio-economic characteristics and individuals' employment status except age where the relationship was not significant. The hotspots (clustering of high values) for the employed white population were mainly main places within the Waterberg District while cold spots (clustering of low values) were mainly within the Vhembe and Mopani districts. Hotspots for the employed youth with some secondary as highest level of education were mainly main places within Waterberg, Mopani and Greater Sekhukhune districts, while the cold spots were mainly within the Capricorn District.

There is currently no existing youth profile that explains the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of youth aged 15–35 in the labour market for Limpopo and hence, this study will contribute in this area. It will also provide sufficient evidence to inform policies and strategies that will address the unhealthy labour market, which consequently will assist towards the achievement of the National Development Plan (NDP) targets.

**Key words:** Limpopo province, labour market, demographic and socio-economic characteristics

## OPSOMMING

Die vermoë van jongmense om aktiewe deelnemers in die arbeidsmark te word en om vooruit te gaan en gehalte werk te verkry by hulle toe trede tot die mark is 'n uitdaging en 'n bron van toenemende kommer in baie lande. In die Limpopo-provinsie en sy plaaslike munisipaliteite bly werkloosheid, geslagsdiskriminasie, ontmoediging en ongelykheid onder bevolkingsgroepe 'n uitdaging onder jongmense in die arbeidsmark. Die hoofdoel van hierdie studie is om die demografiese- en sosio-ekonomiesekaraktereienskappe van jongmense in die arbeidsmark te ondersoek op verskillende geografiesekale binne die Limpopo-provinsie. Karaktereienskappe sluit in ouderdom, geslag, bevolkingsgroep, onderwysstatus, indiensnemingsektor en individuele maandelikse inkomste. Deur 'n oorsig te gee van die karaktereienskappe van jongmense in die arbeidsmark, verskaf hierdie studie belangrike inligting vir beplanners en beleidmakers om die onderliggende demografiese en sosio-ekonomiesekaraktereienskappe van jongmense in die arbeidsmark te verstaan. Beskrywende statistieke voorsien 'n oorsig van die karaktereienskappe terwyl die verhouding tussen die arbeidsmark-kategorieë en die demografiese- en sosio-ekonomiesekaraktereienskappe bepaal word deur regressie en "hotspot" analise.

Die resultate toon dat werkende mense 'n groter gedeelte beslaan op alle geografiesekale as werkloses of ontmoedigde werksoekers. Die meerderheid was swart Afrikaan-mans tussen die ouderdom van 30 en 35 jaar, wat een of andervorm van sekondêre onderwys behaal het, wat in die formele sektor werkzaam is en tussen R801 and R1 600 per maand verdien. Daar was 'n perfekte/sterkverhouding tussen die demografiese- en sosio-ekonomiesekaraktereienskappe en die individu se indiensneming status. Die "hotspots" (saamgroepering van hoëwaardes) vir die werkende wit bevolking was hoofsaaklik te vinde in hoofplekke binne die Waterberg-distrik, terwyl "cold spots" (saamgroepering van laewaardes) hoofsaaklik te vinde was in the Vhembe-distrik en Mopani-distrik. "Hotspots" vir werkende jongmense met 'n sekondêre opvoedkundige kwalifikasie as hul hoogste onderwyskwalifikasie is gevind hoofsaaklik in hoofplekke binne die Waterberg-, Mopani- en Greater Sekhukhune-distrikte, terwyl "cold spots" hoofsaaklik voorgekom het in die Capricorn-distrik.

Daar is tans geen bestaande jeugprofiel wat die demografiese- en sosio-ekonomiesekaraktereienskappe van jongmense tussen die ouderdom van 15 en 53 in die arbeidsmark in Limpopo verduidelik nie, en daarom sal hierdie studie tot hierdie navorsingsgebied bydra. Dit sal ook voldoende bewys lewer om beleid en strategieë te beïnvloed, wat die ongesonde arbeidsmark sal aanspreek, en wat gevolglik sal bydra tot die bereiking van die Nasionale Ontwikkelingsplan (NOP) se doelwitte.

Sleutelwoorde: Limpopo-provinsie, arbeidsmark, demografiese en sosio-ekonomiesekaraktereienskappe

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## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

Gross Domestic Product (GDP)  
Local Municipality (LM)  
Microsoft Excel (MS Excel)  
National Development Plan (NDP)  
Quarterly Labour Force (QLFS)  
Statistics South Africa (Stats SA)

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Youth entering the labour market are exposed to risks, both personal such as low levels of education, and externally such as economic fluctuations and unfavourable job market conditions. Limited employment opportunities are available in the current economic environment; however, low entry rates are more prevalent among the youth (Verick 2012, Gough, K et al 2013). The transition of youth from school to the labour market in the modern world had become a daunting task to a point that the journey has become more difficult since the pathway is filled with far more potholes, one-way streets and dead ends (Keep 2012). In poor and middle income countries, the number of youth that are unemployed and discouraged are higher than the employed, suggesting that the youth labour market challenges have been underestimated (African Economic Outlook 2014).

Prior to 1994 in South Africa apartheid policies resulted in the unequal opportunities for different population groups. This also contributed to South Africa being excluded from global labour market dynamics. Since 1994, the South African government has undergone significant changes; policies such as the Employment Equity Act 1998, Skills Development Act of 1998, etc., aimed at redressing the injustice of the past were developed and implemented to support and protect people entering the labour market. The policies paved the way for all South Africans; including the youth in particular, to access opportunities that they were previously deprived of. However, the youth are still facing challenges such as low levels of education, skills mismatch, severe living conditions and difficulties in gaining employment. Although the level of education for the youth improved over the period 2008 to 2014, the rate of youth participation in the labour market has deteriorated. This trend reflects labour market weaknesses resulting from a mismatch between skills and jobs available in the market (Stats SA 2014).

The Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS), quarter 2 of 2014 revealed that between 2013 and 2014 in South Africa as a whole and in Limpopo province in particular, employment increased by 403 000 and 114 000 respectively. The growth of employment and the increase in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was not high enough to support the overall employment and development targets as outlined in the NDP, which means the economy was not creating enough jobs to meet the demand, and concerns have been raised about the quality of jobs available and the alarming level of discouragement among job-seekers (Department of Labour 2013). In order to gain a better understanding of the youth in the labour market it is necessary to have an overview of their demographic and socio-economic characteristics. Although many scholars have studied specific characteristics of youth in the labour market, very little have been researched to understand the circumstances of youth in a holistic and exhaustive manner. Understanding a complete profile about youth remains an area that requires further research to have a common understanding of the youth. A

common view however, exists among scholars on age as one of the demographic characteristics as well as educational status as one of the socio-economic characteristics; however there are divergent views on other characteristics. Demographic characteristics of youth included age while socio-economic characteristics were, among others, area of residence, marital status, education and main current activity (Elder 2009), The United Kingdom classified age and education as demographic and socio-economic characteristics respectively (The Office for National Statistics 2014). O'Higgins (2003) focused on demographic characteristics, including age, and gender and socio-economic characteristics which included education, income levels and employment sector. For the purposes of this study, age, gender and population group are classified as demographic while educational status, employment sector and individual monthly income are socio-economic. The focus is on Limpopo province and local municipalities and main places (villages) within the province. There is currently no existing youth profile that explains the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of youth aged 15–35 in the labour market for Limpopo and hence, this study makes a contribution in this area.

The specific objectives of the study are to firstly obtain a better understanding of the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of youth in the labour market in Limpopo. This is done by analysing and establishing dynamics of characteristics such as individual employment status, age, gender, population group, level of education attained, employment sector and level of income. Understanding the demographic and socio-economic profile of the youth in the labour market would provide for a better understanding of their circumstances and challenges. The analysis is done at provincial, local municipal and main place geographic levels. Secondly, the study provides an insight into the contributing factors to the unhealthy labour market. Thirdly, the study provides an insight into the relationships between the demographic and socio-economic characteristics and employment status. With existing relationships ascertained areas where the variables with the strongest relationships cluster are spatially established and discussed.

## 2 BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE OVERVIEW

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

This section provides an overview of critical existing scholarly contributions to the topic from a range of international and South African scholars. Key concepts used often throughout the discussion are defined, specifically the description of 'the youth' and 'the labour market'. Scholastic contribution on areas of youth labour market conditions and dynamics is provided with special focus on consequent demographic and socio-economic characteristics. Literature does not generally point to single or universally accepted definitions of the 'youth' and 'labour market'. These concepts have been defined differently by different scholars in different countries and therefore can be derived in many different ways and manipulated for many different purposes. The United Nations defined youth as a period of transition from childhood dependence to adulthood independence where age was the main deciding factor (United Nations publication 2006). Similar arguments came from O'Higgins (2003: 2) who used the standard United Nations definition of youth as "those belonging to the 15 to 24 age group with the lower group adjusted to accommodate variations in minimum school-leaving age". Haji & Haji (2007) argued that the United Nations used the definition only for statistical purposes to avoid prejudice to other definitions used by member states.

The World Youth Report (2003: 74) also defined youth as those on "the transition stage between childhood and adulthood" comprising of a series of transitions from "adolescence to adulthood, from dependence to independence, and from being recipients of society's services to becoming contributors to national economic, political, and cultural life". African countries such as Ghana and Tanzania defined their youth population in accordance with the African Youth Charter which prescribes youth as those aged between 15 and 35 years (Brempong & Kimenyi 2013). The South African National Youth Policy (2009-2014) refers to youth as those falling within the age group of 14 to 35 years, which is not aligned with the African Youth Charter. This, however, is based on the mandate of the National Youth Commission Act, 1996. These different definitions of the youth population make it difficult to universally deliberate and understand issues about youth without creating contradictions among views from other scholars.

Elder (2009) and Stats SA (2014) defined the labour market as a collective noun comprising three categories, namely the employed, unemployed and discouraged work-seekers. The employed are those engaged in market production activities; the unemployed are those who are not working but available and actively looking for employment or trying to start a business. Discouraged work-seekers are those who are without work, not employed but available to work or to start a business but who never took active steps to find work or start any business. The Labour Market Information

and Research Unit (2005) agrees with Elder and Stats SA on the understanding of the employed and the unemployed, but is divergent on the discouraged work-seekers. In Canada, the labour market is regarded as the relationship and interaction between the employer and people aged 15 and over, who are either working or looking for a job. It also compares the labour market to other forms of markets where there are always demand and supply components in the market.

Scholars who studied the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of youth shared common views in some areas; however, these characteristics were explained individually and separately which did not provide a combined holistic youth profile. This study categorises demographic characteristics as age, gender and population group while educational status, employment sector and individual monthly income are classified as socio-economic characteristics. Labour market conditions differ from country to country.

## **2.2 LABOUR MARKET CONDITIONS IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES**

History and background to the labour market revealed that there were different aspects experienced across countries and time (O'Higgins 2003). Garcia & Fares (2008) argued that the majority of youth in sub-Saharan African countries tended to move directly into the labour market from an early age without attending any formal education, which in some countries constituted what came to be known as child labour. Garcia & Fares (2008:15) further indicated that early entry into the job market "can have a strong negative impact on future labour market" particularly because the natural transition from school to the labour market becomes less exciting or attractive due to the unhealthy labour market conditions.

Recent studies on the youth labour market situation in developed countries argued that a persistent share of youth experience longer-term unemployment spells, with a strong imbalance towards youths with low educational attainment (Quintini, Martin, and Martin 2007). In developing countries, educational levels had been increasing over the years; however, unemployment rates remained high (O'Higgins 2003). Finding employment for those located in the poorest countries of the world has in some instances been interpreted as "somehow a luxury that few can afford" (Van der Geest, 2010: 14). In the absence of decent and well-paid work opportunities, Van der Geest (2010) noted that people located in the poorest countries were forced by their circumstances to accept ill-paid and often unsafe wage employment or, more commonly, "earn an insufficient and unstable income as self-employed in the informal sector or on low-yielding plots of land".

In different parts of the world, youth in the labour market are facing different challenges that prevent countries to achieve a healthy labour market. For example, in Uganda, youth are said to be disproportionately affected by high unemployment rates (Haji & Haji 2007). Further work by Haji & Haji (2007) revealed similar observations in Tanzania and Kenya, where unemployment is said to be on the increase which is

further accelerated by urbanisation as the youth migrate from the rural areas to the cities of Dar es Salaam and Mombassa. Youth labour market imbalances have reached genuinely alarming levels, where unemployment is the major challenge in many countries.

The main difficulty or drawback for youth trying to enter the labour market for the first time is their lack of work experience and employment history. It is difficult for the prospective employers to appropriately judge their productivity because of lack of experience and references. The opportunity of an initial trial and error period with temporary contracts is advantageous for both the employer and the employee (Plantenga & Remery 2013). Youth in the labour market often lack both labour market information and job search experience. In many cases they only rely on informal placement methods typically through family and friends; beyond the word of mouth approach, they might not know how and where to look for work (Cling & Gubert 2007). It is also difficult to find work through references from previous employers because there is no work experience and hence, the majority of youth end up with no choice but to take informal jobs. According to Haji & Haji (2007:1) "youth labour market challenges are common and continue to prevail where large number of young women and men are exposed to long-term unemployment or short-term work in the informal sector".

Employment status has both a negative and positive impact on the living conditions of youth in the labour market. The employed are able to live a stable life and provide for their basic needs while the unemployed and the discouraged work-seekers become readily available for criminal activities and dangerous behaviour in order to financially support themselves or to cope with the difficulties of living in poverty (UNICEF 2012). According to the National Youth Service, Employability, Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Livelihoods (2013), social and psychological effects resulting from sustained unemployment have the potential to lead to the undesirable state of discouragement among youth.

## **2.3 THE DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DYNAMICS AMONG THE YOUTH IN THE LABOUR MARKET.**

The individual employment status is influenced by the demographic and socio-economic characteristics which include age differences, gender differences, population group, level of education attained, employment sector and level of income.

### **2.3.1 Age differences**

Age difference is one of the important factors that determine the category to which people belong. Brixiova & Kangoye (2013) found that the majority of the unemployed in Swaziland were aged between 20 and 24 years between 2007 and 2010, constituting more than 30% of total unemployment in the country. Further observation was the fast declining employment and labour participation rates among those aged 20 to 24 years. The same study revealed that half of the youth aged 15 to 24 years were

unemployed during the same period. As this phenomenon becomes more pronounced, the youth end up in the category of discouraged work-seekers.

Brixiova & Kangoye (2013: 7) further argued that "in 2007, three-quarters of young unemployed Swazis were available for employment; however jobs were not available for them". Discouragement is said to have affected mainly the rural youth as a result of long but failed job searches. Another observation has been the existence of a huge potential for long-term effects of unemployment such as total failure to access decent and formal employment beyond the age of 24 years. In South Africa, youth aged 15 to 19 years in 2008 accounted for the largest share in the working-age population of 15 to 34 years. However, over the years, their proportion declined. While there has been a slight increase for all other age categories (20 to 24, 25 to 29 and 30 to 34); many youth were not economically active due to the fact that the majority were still pursuing their education (Stats SA 2014).

### **2.3.2 Gender differences**

Gender differences also play a role in the individual employment status. Brinkley & Jones (2013) remarked that young women were better qualified than young men in recent times. The share of young women holding tertiary qualifications was reported to be higher compared to that of young men, resulting from the increasing number of young women entering higher education than young men. Plantenga & Remery (2013) revealed that in Southern Europe and some European Union countries, young women were more likely to stay part-time for an extended period of time, while on average, 40% of young men move into full-time jobs after one year of working on part-time employment. Plantenga & Remery (2013) further argued that at the end of part-time jobs, young women were quick to become discouraged if they could not find new jobs. The quick exit from employment often resulted in a reduced participation rate in the labour market among young women.

Although unemployment among youth was extremely high in South Africa, Stats SA (2007) argued that female youth were highly affected compared to male youth in all provinces. Stats SA further noted the decline in male youth unemployment between 2007 and 2014 in Limpopo province, while an increase was observed in the Free State during the same period. These disparities indicate that male youth had better chances of securing employment compared to their female counterparts by 2014 (Stats SA 2014). In South Africa, the participation rate was lower for young women as compared to young men. According to Rogan & Diga (2013), young women were more likely to face many difficulties in entering the labour market. While struggling to find decent employment, young women often ended up resorting to informal employment where salaries and working conditions were unfavourable but at least a survival mechanism. Jobs in the informal sector are poorly paid and insecure and are mostly taken by unskilled and semi-skilled young women as claimed by Casale and Posel (2002). In South Africa, in every age category, unemployment rates among women were higher than those of young men by a large margin except among youth

aged 15 to 19 in 2014, which declined from 70.5% in 2011 to 63.3% in 2014 (Stats SA 2014). It can be noticed from this review that gender is one of the key determinant factors in accessing and retaining employment, including the nature and quality of work.

### **2.2.3 Racial differences**

Characteristics of youth in the labour market differ from one race to the other; however, most African countries seem to be characterised by high unemployment rates among the youth as compared to those in South East Asia, where Africa's youth unemployment rate was four times higher (Brempong & Kimenyi 2013). As a consequence of the high unemployment rate among the youth, Brempong & Kimenyi concluded that the majority of black African youth were likely to be unemployed and discouraged and end up being affected by poverty, and associated diseases, and that migration could be their only option to better their circumstances. Given the legacy of apartheid in South Africa, differences in employment status across population groups are often of particular interest. Over the years, there has always been a huge disparity in employment status across white, black African, Indian and coloured communities in South Africa. This situation continues to affect the youth in the labour market. Stats SA (2014) observed that the unemployment rate among the black African and coloured youth groups in South Africa was the highest in the country by 2014.

A study conducted by Ardington & Case (2012) revealed that coloured youth had lower levels of non-participation in the labour market and higher employment than black Africans. However, it remained highest for African young men and women as compared to the other population groups. Race differences impact negatively on the socio-economic status of youth in the labour market, and affect both the formal and informal employment sectors, including the self-employed where some evidence was established that there was a low self-employed rate among black Africans when compared to other races (Leibbrandt & Woolard 2008).

Racial differences also have an impact on the location of people. For instance, the majority of whites will tend to locate in urban areas while other population groups may locate in less expensive areas. Garcia & Fares (2008) observed that rural youths are in a disadvantaged position; hence, lack of decent employment opportunities may continue to be one of the greatest challenges and concerns for many countries. They remarked that by virtue of location of rural youth, they often became vulnerable to different unfavourable situations, irrespective of whether they were working or looking for employment. Cling & Gubert (2007) highlighted that rural youth were likely to face many adverse economic, social and political challenges at different stages of their lives. Further observation was that "the absence or weakness of labour income negatively affects the welfare of the youth in a broad sense" and if the youth remain vulnerable, the probability of their becoming and remaining poor was increasing (Cling & Gubert 2007: 16).

#### **2.2.4 Educational circumstances**

O'Higgins (2003) argued that improving the educational level for the youth is likely to improve levels of employment at both individual and aggregated levels. The early transition from learning into the labour market and therefore wage earning, worsens the already bad labour market for the youth (Keep 2012). It makes the already overstretched, strained and unhealthy labour market to fail to meet the demand for jobs at an increasing rate, which increases the number of unemployed and discouraged work-seekers. Alman (2007) argued that, although education was important in resolving problems in the South African labour market, the challenge was highly on people's inability to conduct proper research on areas with skills shortages before embarking on career choices.

Brixiova & Kangoye (2013) observed that youth with tertiary education in Swaziland were seven times more likely to be unemployed and discouraged than their adult counterparts. The South African situation is, however, different from the experiences in Swaziland. According to Stats SA (2014), youth with tertiary education in South Africa had a better chance to be employed compared to those without. This observation shows that in the South African context, education was a key factor for securing employment opportunities for the youth.

In this section, definitions of key concepts as understood by a diversity of scholars were reviewed. According to the National Youth Commission, in South Africa, the youth population are those between 14 and 35 years. However, for the purposes of this study, the youth are those aged 15 to 35 years as described in the African Youth Charter. This definition is adopted in consideration of the labour force measurement in South Africa which excludes 14-year-olds. It was observed that there was some convergence between scholars on the labour market concept. The general overview of youth in the labour market focused mainly on demographic and socio-economic characteristics. The characteristics identified included age, gender, population group and educational information. The literature review also established the existence of some form of relationship between demographic and socio-economic characteristics of youth in the labour market and their employment status.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

The study area was Limpopo province and the analysis was conducted at different geographic levels, namely provincial, local municipality and main place-level. Limpopo is located in the far-northern part of the country, having international borders with Botswana, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. It is mainly rural, a typical developing area with many rural people practising subsistence farming (Bradshaw & Nannan 2000). The province has five district municipalities, namely Mopani (which was largely the former Gazankulu homeland for the Va-Tsonga people), Vhembe (which was the former Venda homeland for the Vha-Venda people), Sekhukhune, Waterberg and Capricorn (which fell under the Lebowa homeland for the Ba-Pedi people), and 25 local municipalities as shown in Figure 1.

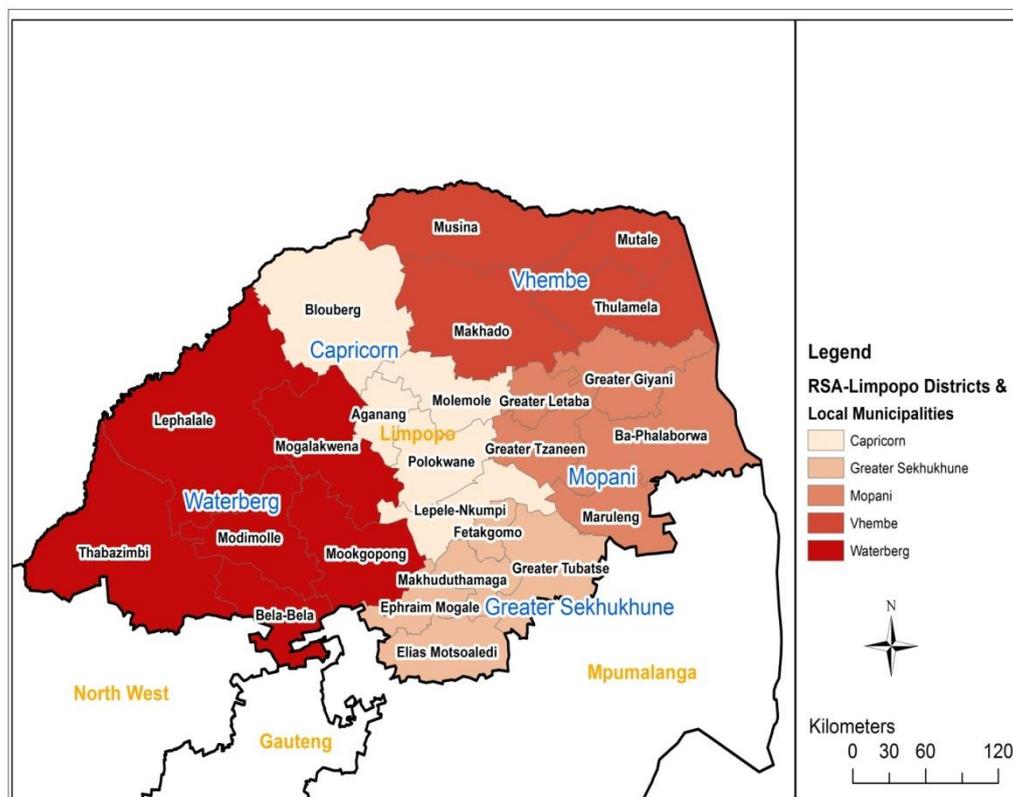


Figure 1 Distribution of districts and local municipalities in Limpopo province

#### 3.1 DATA DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The study was carried out using quantitative secondary Census 2011 data published by Statistics South Africa. The data were obtained from the SuperCross platform distributed free of charge by Statistics South Africa. Data presentation and analysis were done using MS Excel 2010 and SuperCross 2012 where necessary, and uploaded and analysed further using ArcGIS 10 of 2013. The unit of analysis was individual persons aggregated at provincial, local municipality and main place name levels.

Specific variables were carefully selected in line with the main purpose of the study. All variables that provided measurements for demographic and socio-economic characteristics identified were investigated.

Three different analytical techniques were used in the study, namely descriptive, inferential and spatial statistical techniques. The descriptive statistical methods were used to analyse and report on the demographic and socio-economic characteristics at provincial and municipal levels. Inferential statistical methods were used to generate regression and correlation models at provincial level in order to determine the relationship between variables. The independent variables selected for regression analysis and correlation were the demographic and socio-economic characteristics namely; age, gender, population group and educational status. The dependent variables included employment status (employed, unemployed and discouraged work-seekers), employment sectors and individual monthly income.

Upon establishment of the strength of the relationships between variables, hotspot analysis was performed for the variables that had significant relationships. To determine the degree of linear relationship between variables, the R-Square value was used in determining the goodness of fit of the model while the P-value was used to measure the level of significance and to isolate variables with significant relationships. Hotspot analysis was then performed for variables showing strong relationships using ArcGIS application. Getis-OrdGi\* statistics was used to identify statistically significant hotspots and cold spots features in the data. A hotspot was a feature (or municipality) with a high value occurrence of a particular feature surrounded by other features or cold spots. This method was also used to identify clustering of variables.

#### **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF THE CHARACTERISTICS**

The presentation of results focuses on the overall distribution of youth in the labour market at provincial and local municipality levels with a special focus on their demographic and socio-economic characteristics at first. The outputs for the regression analysis and correlation performed follow later to establish the nature of the relationship that may exist between the variables investigated. Lastly, outcomes of the hotspot and cluster analysis are presented at main place-name level.

#### **4.1 OVERALL DISTRIBUTION OF YOUTH IN THE LIMPOPO LABOUR MARKET**

Among the population of youth in the labour market in Limpopo, the employed (44%) accounted for a larger share as compared to the unemployed (42%) and discouraged work-seekers (14%). However; there was a narrow margin of about a 2% difference between the proportions of the employed and the unemployed. When looking at municipal level data, a comparison revealed similar trends prevailing at 13 local municipalities, with Thabazimbi and Lephalale local municipalities (LM) showing the highest segments of the employed at 71% apiece, which can be attributed to the dominance of mining and resultant infrastructure and other related developments leading to increased job opportunities in these two municipalities.

The unemployed as the second largest segment was dominant in 12 local municipalities, and among those municipalities; Fetakgomo (LM) had the highest proportion of unemployed at 60%. The third largest segment of the youth labour market, namely discouraged work-seekers, was found to be highest at Mutale and Fetakgomo (LM) with a 29% share of the youth total labour market within those municipalities. The high proportion of unemployed and discouraged work-seekers in these municipalities can be attributed to the rural nature of the municipalities as well as factors associated with poor educational status and the lack of availability of other services that stimulate employment opportunities.

Although the employed segment of the total youth labour market is slightly higher across the province, the proportion of the unemployed and discouraged work-seekers remains exceedingly high and of concern to policymakers and therefore cannot be left unattended. This therefore calls for policy interventions aimed at the creation of more employment opportunities in order to decrease the number of unemployed and discouraged work-seekers. Any attempt to ignore the problem through policy intervention has a high likelihood of increasing the number of unemployed and discouraged work-seekers even further.

#### **4.2 AGE PROFILE OF YOUTH IN THE LIMPOPO LABOUR MARKET**

Age analysis revealed that 39% of the total number of employed youth was aged between 30 and 35 years, while the other lower age categories had smaller proportions of employment across the province. Similar trends were observed in 22 local municipalities, with Fetakgomo (LM) having the highest proportion of the employed in the 30 to 35 years age bracket at 43%. On the other hand, the majority of the unemployed (33%) and the discouraged (33%) in the province were aged between 20 and 24. The highest level of discouragement as a proportion of the entire population across all age brackets was also observed to be prevalent among those aged 20 to 24 years at 21 local municipalities, and among those, Lephalale and Bela-Bela (LM) recorded the highest rates at 37 and 38 percent of the unemployed in this age group, respectively.

The reason for the high proportion of youth being employed late in life can be attributed to their inability to become economically active at early ages of 15–19 and 20–24 years due to educational commitments. Chances of getting employment increase supposedly after they have completed their studies. However; it appears that some continue to struggle to find employment even after they have completed schooling. Location appears to be a key factor to this phenomenon, particularly because of the rural nature of Limpopo province with fewer job opportunities and the increasing demand for jobs leading to the majority of youth either ending up in the unemployed or the discouraged work-seeker category. Another implication of this situation could be the unavoidable loss of young people due to migration to provinces such as Gauteng with a hope to find job opportunities. There is a need for targeted capacity and skills development programmes such as internships and learnerships, targeting particularly school-leavers to improve their chances of getting employment at a younger age. This will consequently help to decrease the high levels of unemployment, discouragement and migration.

### **4.3 GENDER PROFILE OF YOUTH IN THE LIMPOPO LABOUR MARKET**

Gender differences revealed that young females accounted for a marginally higher proportion (50.1%) of the labour market in Limpopo as compared to young males (49.9%). Gender analysis, however, revealed that male youths had a higher level of employment as compared to females. It was observed at both provincial and local municipality levels at 60% and 53% respectively. Thabazimbi had the highest proportion of employed male youths at 73%. In sharp contrast, the study revealed that unemployment was highest among females, accounting for 57% at provincial level and over 52 % across local municipalities. Mutale (LM) had the highest proportion of unemployed females at 61%. Among those discouraged, the proportion of females was the largest at 61% at provincial level and over 53% across all the local municipalities, with Musina reaching 64%.

The high employment levels among males and high unemployment and discouraged work-seeker levels among females could be associated with the dominance of mining, construction, transport and manufacturing, which are commonly male dominated sectors. As these sectors continue to grow and become highly endowed with more employment opportunities, especially in mining, males will naturally continue to dominate while the status of females remains either unchanged or they become discouraged. There is therefore a need for the formulation and implementation of policies that seek to improve the status of female youth and including gender balance, employment equity and targeted affirmative action and women empowerment. In areas where such policies exist, strengthening and enforcement of compliance become critical to ensure that females are sufficiently capacitated to perform responsibilities that were previously reserved for males.

#### **4.4 RACE PROFILE OF YOUTH IN THE LIMPOPO LABOUR MARKET**

The labour market at both provincial and local municipality levels is dominated by over 88% of black African youth compared to other population groups, white population (between 0.06% and 9.89%), coloured population (between 0.03% and 0.59%) and Indian population (between 0.17% and 0.85%). However, when it comes to employment, a sharp contrast was observed, with the minority white population group being highly dominant. The study revealed that the white population was the majority in the employed category at both provincial and local municipality levels, accounting for 89% and over 80% in 22 local municipalities respectively, and with Maruleng (LM) being the highest with 93% of the white population group employed. This could be explained by the fact that Maruleng (LM) is mainly a farming area where majority of the white population are farm owners.

The study further revealed that 43% of black Africans were unemployed at provincial level, while about 40% were unemployed across 19 local municipalities, with Makhuduthamakga being the hardest hit with 60% of its youth being unemployed. The discouraged work-seekers, on the other hand, accounted for 15% both at provincial level and across 13 local municipalities; with Mutale (LM) at the highest level of discouragement with 29%. The reason for black African dominance in the labour market can be attributed to the demographics of the province, where over 97% of the population is black African. This does not equate to employment due to factors such as quality and access to developmental and empowerment services and facilities such as libraries, mainly because of the majority of the black African population residing in rural areas where the delivery of these services is limited. The study revealed that there are serious disparities across population groups. However, any policy that seeks to address these disparities, and particularly target the black African group, should not create reverse disparities that may affect other population groups. There is, however, an urgent need for more responsive policy interventions to address the imbalances between the population groups.

#### **4.5 HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION PROFILE OF YOUTH IN THE LIMPOPO LABOUR MARKET**

Analysis of the highest level of education revealed that the most prevalent category attained among youth in all the labour market categories were those with some secondary education at both provincial and local municipality levels. The proportion of employed youth with some secondary education comprised 38% at provincial level and over 30% in all local municipalities combined, with Mokgoopong and Musina (LM) being the highest at 51%. Among the unemployed category, youth with some secondary education accounted for 49% at provincial level and over 43% across local municipalities, with Greater Tubatse (LM) being the highest at 59%. About 52% and 45% of discouraged work-seekers had some secondary education at provincial level and across all the local municipalities respectively, with Greater Tubatse (LM) being the highest with 60%. This could be as a result of high levels of school drop-outs

motivated by high levels of unemployment and therefore inability to afford higher education. To avoid perpetuating the situation, there is a need for skills development and capacity development programmes targeting the youth.

#### **4.6 SECTOR AND INCOME-SPECIFIC INFORMATION FOR THE EMPLOYED YOUTH**

At all levels, the formal sector was the major contributor of employment among youth, with a 66% share of total employment at provincial level, and over 48% in all the municipalities, with Thabazimbi (LM) being the highest at 75%. This can be attributed to the fact that industrial industries with a high potential for job creation form part of the formal sector for the province. The formal sector is also adequately measured while informal market-related activities are not fully covered. Existing jobs in the formal sectors should be maintained and strengthened and interventions that will further stimulate the creation of jobs in those areas are needed.

Results show that the majority of youth have a lower level of income, with those at the income bracket of R801 to R1 600 making up the largest share at provincial level (27%) and over 20% in all local municipalities, with Mokgoopong (LM) being the highest at 47%. On the other hand, there were fewer highest earning youth with income in excess of R204 801 per month, 0.10% at provincial level and over 0.03% at local municipality level with Polokwane (LM) being the highest at 0.17%. With the dominant highest level of education being some secondary education among youth, it can be concluded that the observed dominant income is a result of educational status attained. There is a need for youth to improve their levels of education so that they may get better opportunities that will increase their individual income levels.

#### **4.7 THE NATURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE VARIABLES INVESTIGATED**

Regression analysis and correlation were performed to establish the relationships between variables studied in order to ascertain the underlying associations and influences that may exist between dependent and independent variables. The independent variables included age, gender, population group, and educational status, while the dependent variables included employment status (employed, unemployed and discouraged work-seekers), employment sectors, and individual monthly income. As mentioned in the methodology, the R-Square value was used in determining the goodness of fit of the regression and correlation models, and the P-value was used to measure the level of significance. A P-value of below 0.05 represents a significant relationship, while a P-value of 0.05 or higher represents an insignificant relationship.

The R-Square revealed that 87.1% of the employment status among youth could be explained by their age; however, the P-value of 0.06639 indicated that there was no reason to believe that there was a significant relationship between age and the employment status.

In an analysis of the regression and correlation between population groups and employment status, the R-Square revealed that 99.8% of employment among the youth can be explained by their population group. This was further confirmed by the P-value of 1.40451E-05. It can therefore be concluded that a very strong linear relationship existed between employment status and population groups.

It was also established that a strong relationship existed between educational status and employment status, since the R-Square value measured revealed that 96.7% of the employment status can be explained by the level of education attained by the youth, which was further confirmed by a P-value of 0.00040. A strong linear relationship was also established between educational status and employment sector. The R-Square value showed that 96.5% of individuals employed in the formal sector can be explained by the level of education attained, which was further confirmed by the P-value of 0.00045. It was further revealed that the regression and correlation models fit the data perfectly since a strong linear relationship between educational status and individual monthly income existed. The R-Square indicates that 91.2% of individual monthly income can be explained by the level of education attained; however, the P-value of 0.33992 shows that the relationship was not significant. Results revealed that age influences employment status, however, such influence was not significant. It can therefore be concluded that youth of all ages have an equal chance to fall in any category in the labour market. The relationships established imply that gender, population group and educational status play an important role in influencing employment status among the youth. On the other hand, educational status also plays a crucial role in influencing the individual employment sector one is attached to and the monthly income they earn.

Based on the results, it can be concluded that males have a better chance of being employed as compared to females. Serious disparities in terms of the chances to procure employment across population groups existed. It can further be concluded that highly educated youth have improved and better chances to be employed than the less educated. Also, those with better education were likely to be employed in the formal sector and earn a higher income, while the less educated youth were more likely to be employed in the informal sector and private households and consequently earn a lower income.

#### **4.8 THE OUTCOMES OF THE HOTSPOT ANALYSIS AT MAIN PLACE-NAME LEVEL**

Since a strong positive relationship was established between population group and employment status and also between educational status and employment status, hotspot analysis was performed for the variables at main place name level. Figure 2 below shows the clustering of high values (hotspot, red on the map) and low values (cold spot, blue on the map) of the employed according to their population group at main place-name level. The figure revealed that hotspots (high levels of employment per race group) for employed white youth (in map B) were largely found at the main

places within all the local municipalities in the Waterberg District. The majority of the white population were found in the Waterberg District, and of the total white youth population in the district, 88% were employed. The dominant activities in this district are mainly mining, tourist attractions and farming, and the majority of the white population either own an establishment, provide specialised skills or are managing farm and mining establishments.

The cold spots (low levels of employment per race group) were located at main places within Blouberg and Aganang local municipalities (LM) in the Capricorn District, Mutale and Thulamela (LM) in the Vhembe District and Greater Giyani (LM) in the Mopani District. The municipalities with cold spots are mainly rural where the majority of the working population are engaged in informal work and practise subsistence farming. Hotspots for black Africans (in map D) were found mainly at the main places under Greater Tubatse, Ephraim Mogale and Makhuduthamaga (LM) in the Greater Sekhukhune District as well as Aganang, Molemole and Lepelle-Nkumpi (LM) in the Capricorn District. These are rural municipalities where over 92% of the employed population was black African. The cold spots were found at Musina and Makhado (LM) in the Vhembe District and Modimolle and Bela-Bela (LM) in the Waterberg District. Employment amongst the black population was also lower in those municipalities, indicating the likelihood that the youth in those areas were perhaps engaged in informal work that is not fully measured.

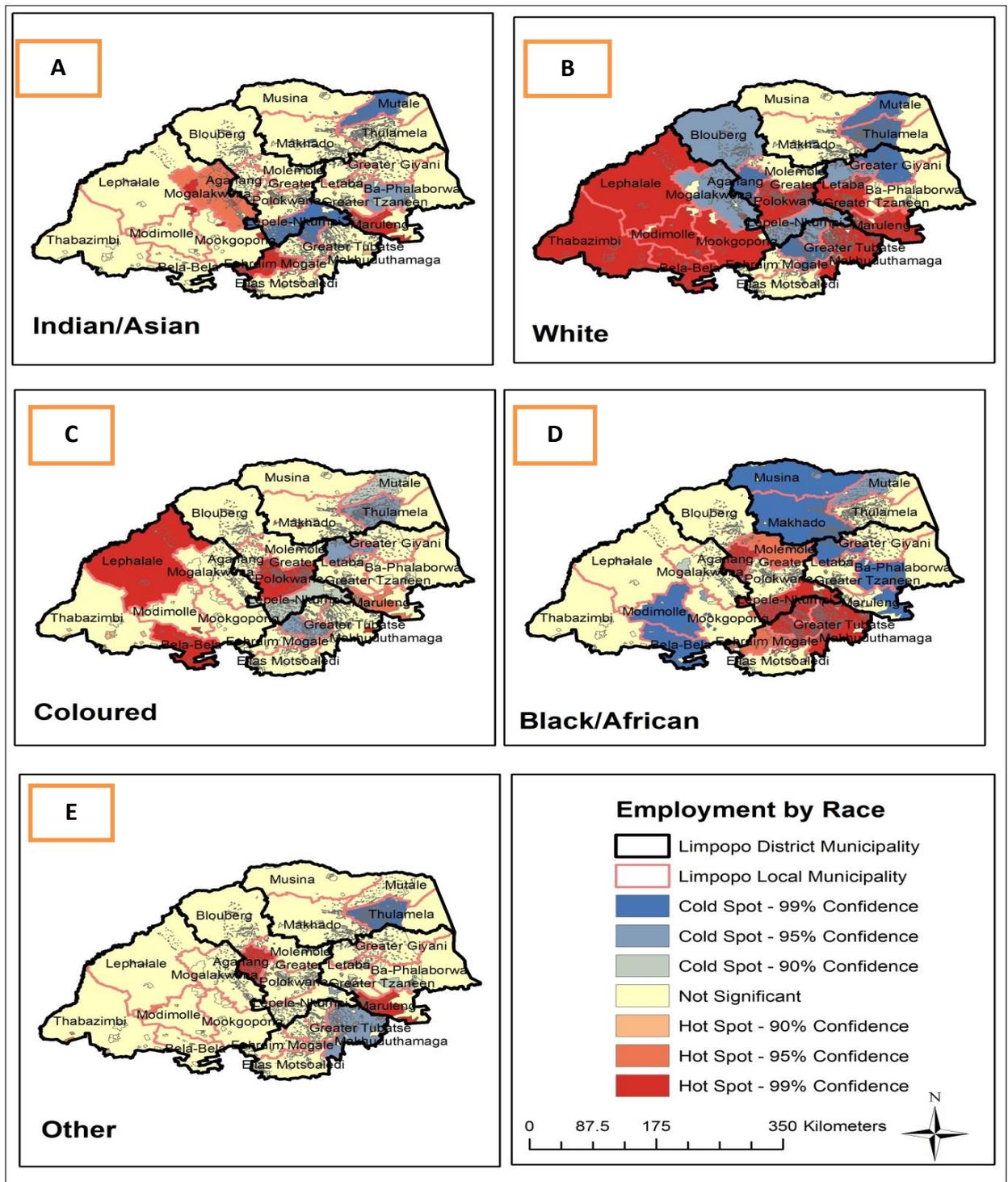


Figure 2 Employed youth by population group by main place-name

Figure 3 below shows the clustering of the employed according to their educational status at main place-name level. The highest level of education for the majority of youth in the labour market was among those with some secondary education. The figure revealed that hotspots (high levels of education) for the employed youth with some secondary education (in map D) were found at the main places in Mokgoopong (LM) in the Waterberg District, Greater Tzaneen and Maruleng (LM) in the Mopani

District and Greater Tubatse (LM) in the Greater Sekhukhune District. Those are mainly rural areas with lots of farms and mining operations requiring low-skilled labour. The majority of these employees are likely to be less educated farm and mine workers. The cold spots were located at main places under Polokwane (LM) in the Capricorn District. Polokwane is the capital city of the province and the hotspot for youth with Grade 12 and higher or a tertiary education, which shows that highly educated youth in Limpopo are clustered at main places under Polokwane (LM). This could be attributed to the availability of numerous opportunities the city provides for higher education with campuses of major universities and colleges operational in the city.

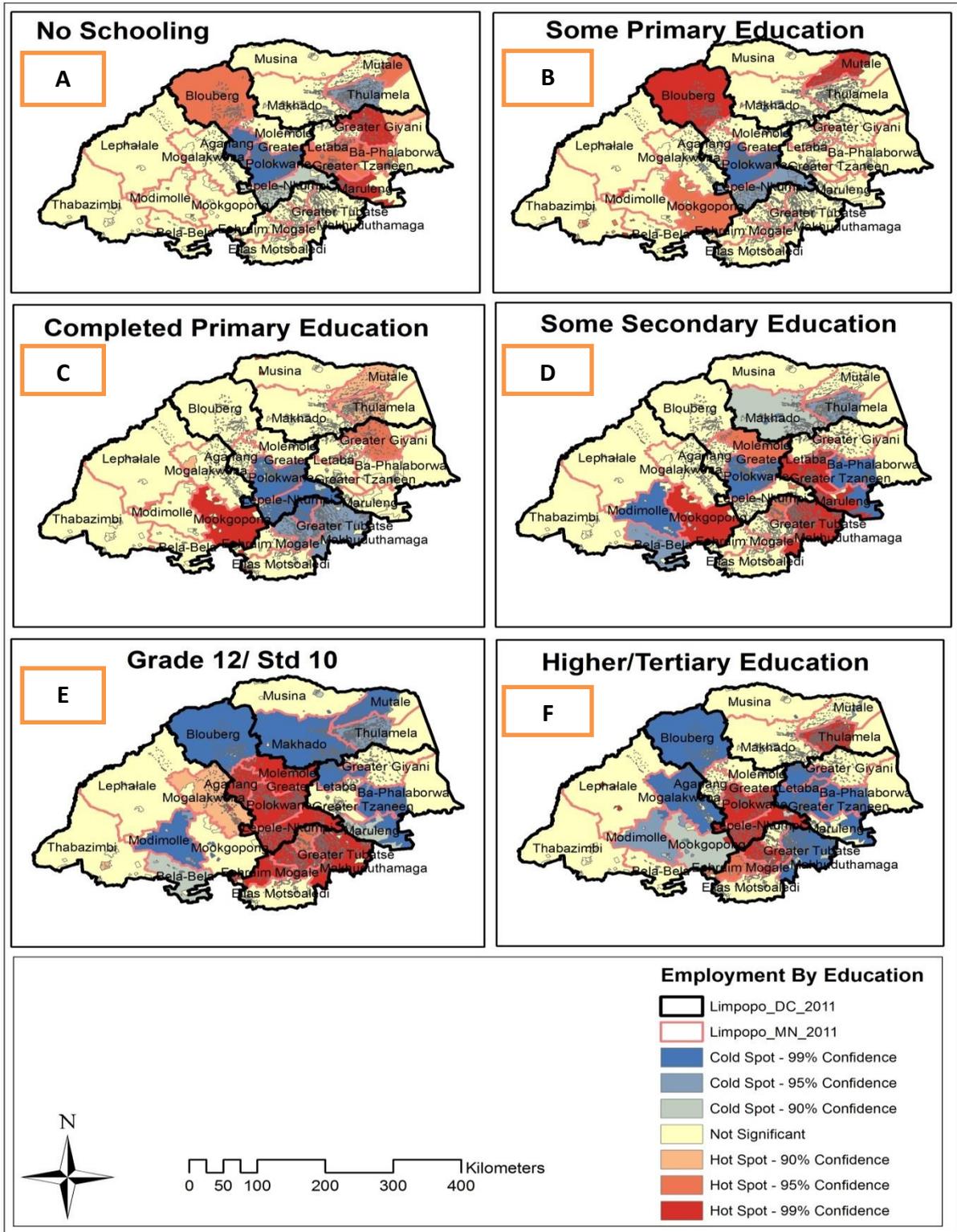


Figure 3 Employed youth by educational status by main place-name

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

The main aim of this paper was to investigate the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the youth in the labour market, which included the employed, the unemployed and discouraged work-seekers in Limpopo province as one of the poorest provinces in South Africa. The study was conducted across different geographical scales in the province. A profile of demographic and socio-economic characteristics of youth in the labour market in the province was compiled through this research. Literature was reviewed which revealed that demographic and socio-economic conditions among youth are influenced by their characteristics which included their age, gender, population group, educational status, employment status and individual monthly income. The study used quantitative secondary published data from Census 2011 results. The study area was limited to demographic and socio-economic characteristics of youth in the labour market in Limpopo province, its local municipalities and main places. Descriptive, inferential and spatial analytical methods were used for data analysis.

The results revealed that among the youth in the labour market, the employed accounted for a larger share at all geographical scales, and the majority were between the ages of 30 and 35 years, which is the last youth bracket, while the majority of the unemployed and discouraged work-seekers were between the ages of 20 and 24 years, which was the second youth bracket. There were more employed males than females, more unemployed females than males and again females appeared to be more discouraged than males. The black African youth significantly accounted for a larger proportion of the unemployed and discouraged work-seekers. However, when it comes to employment, a sharp contrast was observed, since the minority white population group was highly dominant in the employed category.

The study revealed that the white population was the majority in the employed category at all levels. The majority of youth in the labour market had completed some secondary school education. The employed appeared to be more educated as compared to the unemployed and discouraged work-seekers. The biggest employer in Limpopo was the formal sector, followed by the informal sector and lastly, private households. The majority of employed individuals were earning between R801 and R1 600 per month. On the other hand, there were fewer highest earning youth with a monthly income in excess of R204 801.

Regression and correlation were also performed to establish the relationship between independent and dependent variables. The R-Square value was used to determine the goodness of fit of the model. At provincial level, the study revealed that there was no significant relationship between age and employment status; however, there was a strong relationship between gender and employment status, population group and employment status, education and employment status, education and employment sector, and lastly, education and level of income. Two sets of variables, namely

population group and educational status, displayed the strongest relationship with employment status.

Hotspots (clustering of high values) of the employed youth by population group at main place level were found among the white population group clustered in main places within the Waterberg District and some parts of the Capricorn, Mopani and Greater Sekhukhune districts. Cold spots (clustering of low values) were located at main places within the Capricorn, Vhembe and Mopani districts. Hotspots (clustering of high values) for the employed youth with some secondary education as highest level of education were found at the main places within the Waterberg, Mopani and Greater Sekhukhune districts. The cold spots (clustering of low values) were located at main places within the Capricorn District.

## **5.1 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY**

One of the main objectives of the National Development Plan 2030 vision for South Africa is to reduce the unemployment rate from 27% in 2011 to 14% and 6% by 2020 and 2030 respectively. This means that an additional 11 million jobs should be created and total employment should rise from 13 million to 24 million (National Planning Commission 2012). This study provides important information to planners and policymakers to understand the underlying demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the youth in the labour market. It also provides sufficient evidence to inform policies and strategies that seek to address the unhealthy labour market, which consequently will assist towards the achievement of the NDP targets. Policy makers will be able to allocate budget and implement youth development programmes, policies and strategies that seek to address the unhealthy labour market, create employment opportunities targeting the youth population in order to reduce the rate of unemployment and discouragement.

## **5.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

There are existing community development projects and private institutions that are implementing programmes to stimulate job creation for the youth. There is also the role played by social security grants in uplifting the status of the youth. This study did not cover the extent of the contribution of these and other programmes; neither was the number of beneficiaries established.

## **5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

South Africa has a youthful population, however it was established that the proportion of the unemployed and discouraged work-seekers among the youth remains exceedingly high which is a concern to policy makers and therefore cannot be left unattended. In order to address the above concern, it is recommended that there should be targeted capacity and skills development programmes such as internships and learnerships to improve their chances of getting employment at a younger age.

There is also a need for the formulation and implementation of policies that seek to address gender imbalances, in the labour market. Imbalances between population groups are also an area of concerns which need policy interventions. Existing jobs in the formal sectors should be maintained and strengthened and interventions that will further stimulate the creation of jobs in areas are needed. There is also a need for youth to improve their levels of education should be improved for the youth to get better opportunities to be employed in the formal sector that will also increase their individual income levels.

Further studies are also recommended to investigate the contributions made by other institutions (such as South African Social Security Agency) and programmes in improving the standard of living for the youth in the province. Study of a similar nature in order to compare the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of youth in the labour market across all provinces and to have a complete national profile is also recommended.

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