Energetic But Jobless: Socio-Economic and Institutional Drivers of Youth Unemployment in the Okavango Delta, Botswana

Onkarabile Kemiso* and Oluwatoyin Dare Kolawole[§]

Abstract

Unemployment, inequality and poverty are the scaffoldings which conspicuously mirror the impediments to development in any human society. Of the three, joblessness or unemployment serves as the hinge on which other challenges rest. This becomes more problematic when an energetic youth population remains idle when they are not supposed to be. Thus the paper assesses the factors contributing to rural youth unemployment in the Okavango Delta, Botswana. It specifically analyses socio-economic and institutional factors influencing rural youth unemployment in the study area. A multi-stage sampling procedure was used to sample 105 youths aged between 18-35 years in two communities within the Okavango Delta area. Open and close-ended questionnaires were administered to elicit information from the respondents. We summarised the data obtained using descriptive statistics. Pearson product-moment correlation was used to test the directional relationship between youth unemployment and selected explanatory variables embedded in socio-economic and institutional factors. A non-parametric test was also conducted using Chi square analysis to determine the associations between the dependent and nominal variables investigated. The findings show that most of the youths (57.1%) were unemployed (57.1%) of which 65.6% of the jobless individuals constituted the female respondents. Correlation analysis indicates that level of education ($r = -0.208$; $p \leq 0.034$); training ($t = 3.831$; $p \leq 0.000$); access to information ($r = 0.315$; $p \leq 0.001$); acquisition of entrepreneurial skills ($r = -0.388$; $p \leq 0.000$) and youth perceptions towards government programmes ($r = 0.289$; $p \leq 0.003$) are explanatory variables influencing rural youth unemployment in the study area. Chi square analysis also shows that gender ($X^2 = 4.815$; $p \leq 0.05$) had a significant association with youth unemployment. Thus education or training, and access to relevant information are crucial policy issues for alleviating rural youth unemployment in the Okavango Delta, Botswana.

Keywords: youth, unemployment, socio-economic, institution, education, training, policy.

Introduction

The backdrop

Rural youth unemployment is a global concern. Most countries continue to progressively experience increased rural youth unemployment (see Broussard and Tekleselassie, 2012). This is particularly so for African economies, most of which are currently struggling to address the problem. Van der Geest (2010) analysed FAOSTAT and UNDP World Population Prospects 2008 Revision to predict that youth population would continue to increase in most of sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) until 2030 or 2040. For instance, the youth constituted 16 percent of the population in East Africa in 2005 (van der Geest, 2010). The youth aged 15-24 years will, therefore, continue to form a large part of the total population (which would make up to 20% in Eastern, Central and West Africa from now to 2030. High unemployment rate is of greater concern because youths are more likely to be unemployed than adults in many countries (van der Geest, 2010). Given the sustained upward trend in global unemployment, which has hit the youths so hard, it is likely that many of them will continue to be almost three times unemployed than

* Onkarabile Kemiso, Okavango Research Institute, University of Botswana. Email: onkkem@yahoo.com

§ Oluwatoyin D. Kolawole, Okavango Research Institute, University of Botswana. Email: tkolawole@ub.ac.bw

the adult population (ILO, 2002).

If well mobilised, however, youths are an important engine for economic growth and development of any economy because of their share number, drive, passion and innovative abilities (Msigwa and Kipesha, 2013). International Labour Organisation (ILO) statistics show that global youth unemployment increased by 3.4 million from 2007 to 2012 (ILO, 2013). The ILO statistics show that youth employment declined by 22.9 million in 2012 as compared to 2008. This is in spite of the increase in youth population by 12 million in the same period. In 2013 alone, a staggering 73 million young people whose ages range from 15-24 were estimated to be jobless. And by 2018, '...the global youth unemployment rate is projected to rise to 12.8 per cent...' (ILO, 2013). Thus economic problem such as labour market instability, erosion of the tax base, increased welfare costs and unused investments in education and trainings are fundamental to youth unemployment (ILO, 2013).

From a continental standpoint, youth unemployment rate is highest among the African middle income countries at 52.7% of the labour force in 2007. It is severe in countries like Swaziland having 26.3% and 26.8% in the years 2007 and 2010, respectively. While the youth stratum comprises a larger proportion of the labour force, with 50% in Swaziland, unemployment is highest among the youth, women and less educated (Brixiová and Kangoye, 2013). Tanzania's youth population constitutes 33% of the total, comprising 68% of the total active labour force. Youth unemployment rate in the country (i.e. Tanzania) had declined from 12.9% to 10.7% between 2001 and 2006, respectively (Msigwa and Kipesha, 2013).

There is no simple definition of unemployment because of its multidimensional and place-based nature (see Raj, 1976; Msigwa and Kipesha, 2013). Theoretically, unemployment manifests in various forms. These include classical, frictional, structural, technological, hidden, disguised and cyclical unemployment (see for instance, Hayek, 1989; Mankiw, 2003; Keynes, 2007) [1936]). Unemployment is said to be classical when government regulations set minimum wage above the market clearing level, thus leading to surplus in the supply of labour. Frictional unemployment is the lag that occurs between when people move from one occupation to another. Structural unemployment arises as a result of the mismatch between the skills of job-seekers and the skills required by the prospective employer. Technological unemployment occurs as a result of industrial reorganization, typically due to technological change. Unemployment is said to be hidden when statistics do not accurately capture jobless people who are not actively seeking jobs. Disguised employment is experienced when the worker is underemployed and as such receives wages, which are not commensurate with his or her level of training, technical skills or ability. Cyclical unemployment occurs when workers lose their jobs due to output fluctuations in the business cycle, which are as a result of low demand for goods leading to low capital re-investment. There is no source that has disaggregated unemployment data according to frictional, structural and cyclical unemployment in global, regional and local context. This may be due to the complexity associated with the process of calculating unemployment which demographers, economists and other social scientists often encounter (Mankiw, 2003).

Nonetheless, rural youth unemployment in Botswana (which manifests mainly in the forms of structural, disguised or hidden unemployment) is of great concern because many people reside in the countryside than in urban centres. Given the scenario, there is need to put in place mechanisms which encourage unrestrained participations of all major stakeholders in rural development activities, including those addressing job creation (see Agarwal, 2001). It is a mere platitude to say that the citizenry (either in rural or urban areas), government, parastatals and private sectors are the stakeholders of development initiatives including poverty alleviation and rural employment. The current realisation that the government can no longer shoulder full responsibility of job creation, therefore, calls for private

and individual concerns in entrepreneurial activities (see Kolawole, 2012; 2007; Kolawole and Ajila, 2015). According to the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Botswana has enormous agricultural growth potential, which can be successfully realised if agricultural production and associated activities are undertaken on a commercial basis to allow for re-investment and business expansion (MoA, 2011). This strategy would present the opportunity and unleash the potential of the rural youth to enable them make a living, create job for others (reduce youth unemployment), increase Gross Domestic Production (GDP), enhance rural development and by that means reduce rural-urban migration.

On the one hand, the ILO (2013) defines an employed person as someone within the working age group, who during the reference period performed some economic activity, either formally or informally. On the other hand, unemployed people are those [1] without a job, who want a job, have actively sought work in the last 4 weeks, and are available to start work in the next 2 weeks; or those who are [2] out of work, have found a job and are waiting to start it in the next 2 weeks (ILO, 2013). While the official working age as defined by the Botswana Ministry of Labour is age 18 to 60, the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture (MYSC) defines a youth as someone of within the age bracket 15 to 35 years. Nonetheless, the ILO defines a youth as someone aged between 15 and 24. However, youth unemployment scenario in this paper is construed as a situation in which youths of the age 18-35 are willing to work in the next two weeks, and have being actively seeking employment in the past four weeks.

The country-level problem

Unemployment rate is the percentage of people actively looking for jobs in relation to the total labour force in any given economy. In Botswana, unemployment rate increased from 17.80 percent in 2010 to 20 percent in 2013. Overall, it averaged 18.42 percent between1991 and 2013, 'reaching an all time high of 23.80 percent in 2006 and a record low of 13.90 percent in 1991' (Trading Economics, 2015). The unemployment rate in Botswana is highest amongst the age groups 20-24 and 25-29 in all the districts in Botswana (Central Statistics Office (CSO), 2013). Districts having high unemployment rate above 30% and higher contribution to total unemployment are Kweneng East, Southern District, Barolong, Kgalagadi South and Ngamiland East, which has a high working age population share of 4.2%. Botswana has a young population with many young people constituting a larger proportion of the total population (CSO, 2011). According to the African Economic Outlook (AEO) report for Botswana, unemployment is highest in urban villages (25 per cent), followed by rural areas (18 per cent) and lowest in urban towns (16%) (AEO, 2007). Unemployment is severe amongst females (23.9%) than their male counterparts (16.4%) in Botswana. Available statistics from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) suggest that youth unemployment amongst 15-24-year olds steadily increased from 33.0 percent in 2010 to 34.1 in 2013 (World Bank, 2015).Youth unemployment is, however, severe amongst female youths (48.0%) than male youths (34.6%) (Siphambe, 2007). Based on 2001 census figures, youth unemployment rate amounts to 40.7 percent just as rural unemployment rate is 17.7 percent (Siphambe, 2007). While it is generally acknowledged that [youth] unemployment and crime are positively associated (see for instance, Fougère and Kramarz, 2009; Bindler, 2015; Becker, 1968), it is instructive to note that increasing crime rate in Botswana has also been identified as having a direct association with youth unemployment (UNFPA, 2007). Full of zest for life, an energetic but jobless youth might, out of frustration, channel positive energy towards the realisation of illegitimate goals.

In their study of rural Scotland, Cartmel and Furlong (2000, pp. 1-12) affirm that lack of incentive for seeking education and training (which are institutional related issues), and environmental

or geographical related issues are some of the major factors aggravating rural unemployment. Thus a number of factors have contributed to the growing unemployment in Botswana. These include skill shortages (especially entrepreneurial skills), poor attitudes towards work that contribute to low productivity and lack of funds to start up a business (AEO, 2007). Indeed, structural and cyclical unemployment may have been implicated in the persistent problem of youth joblessness in the country. More often than not, many Batswana youths who trained in colleges and universities remain largely unemployed perhaps due to a mismatch between the skills they acquired and job placement requirements (see, for example, Broussard and Tekleselassie, 2012), and the incessant downturn in private businesses. Although there are similarities in the problems causing youth unemployment in both urban and rural areas, 'spatial isolation' and limited socio-economic opportunities are additional challenges faced by the rural youth (Cartmel and Furlong, 2000, p. 1).

Broussard and Tekleselassie (2012) identify government policies and initiatives that seek to address youth and women unemployment in Ethiopia. These include, among others, the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) and Food Security Programs (FSPs). Over the last 50 years, the government of Botswana continues to design and implement different development programmes, policies and strategies to create employment among the youth. These include National Service Programme (locally known as *Tirelo Sechaba*), Youth Development Fund (YDF), Young Farmers Fund (YFF), Art and Culture Grants (ACGs), the e-Innovation Youth Empowerment Programme (e-IYEP) and National Internship Programme (NIP). Despite government efforts and development initiatives implemented in Botswana, unemployment continues to rise amongst the populace and youth.

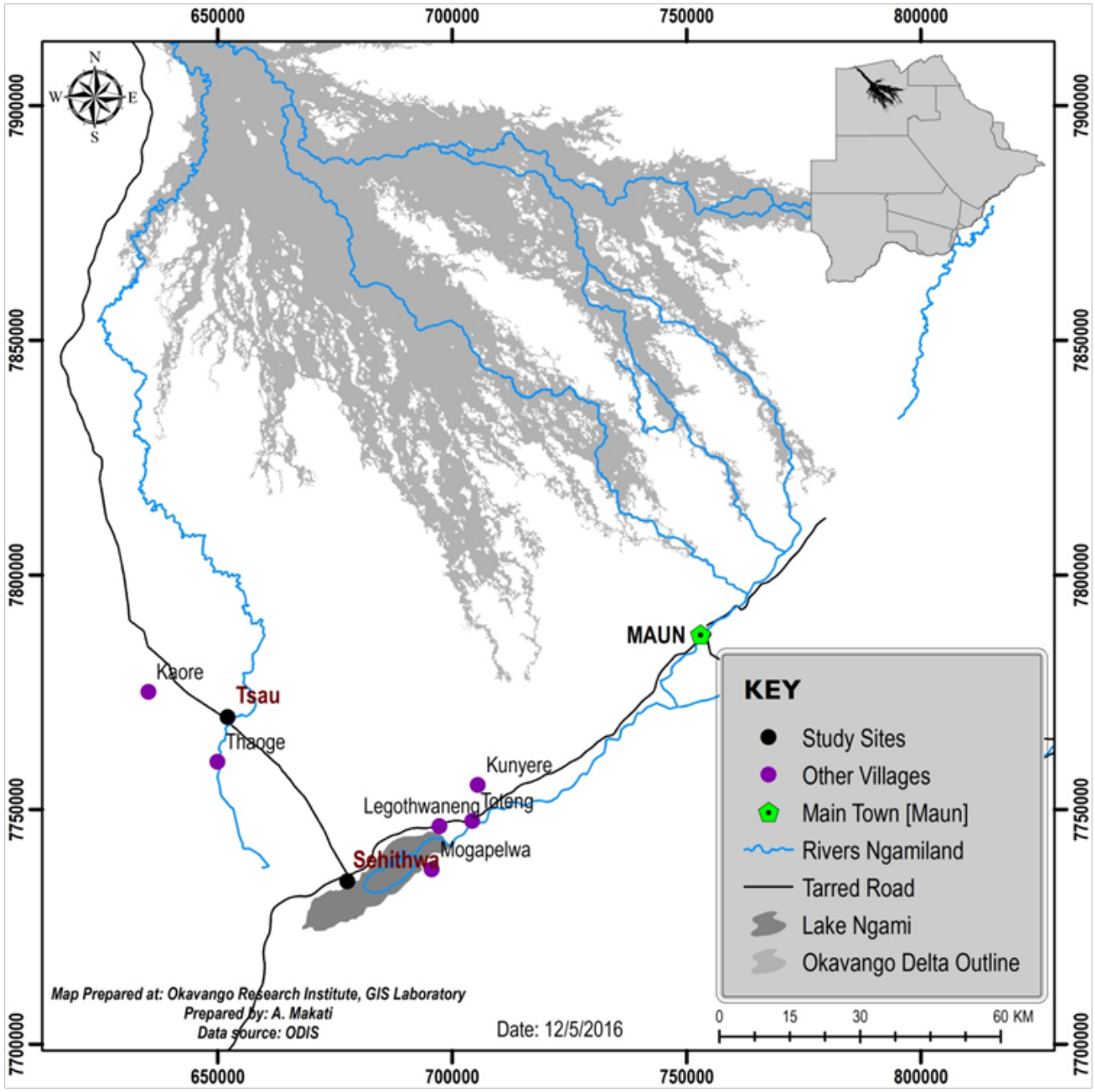
While there are substantial studies on youth unemployment, most of them tend to be more urban biased (Cartmel and Furlong, 2000, p. 1) with minimal or no attention given to rural unemployment. This research, therefore, intends to fill the gap in rural north-western Botswana. Over the years, discrepancies continue to exist between government efforts to alleviate youth unemployment problems and the results so far achieved. This study hypothesises that socio-economic (level and appropriateness of education, access to information, etc.), institutional (government policies/programmes and entrepreneur training) and environmental factors largely contribute to youth unemployment in the Okavango Delta. Amongst others, the paper answers the questions as to how: education affects rural youth unemployment; lack of access to information influences rural youth unemployment; lack of entrepreneurship skills influences rural youth unemployment; and youth perceptions towards implemented government programmes influence rural youth unemployment.

Methodology

Study area

The study was conducted in two selected villages, which are Sehithwa and Tsau located in the North-west District. The two communities are located closely to Lake Ngami in the Okavango Delta, Botswana (see Figure 1). Tsau and Sehithwa communities have a population of 2000 and 2748 people, respectively (CSO, 2011). The two villages are located near Maun, which is categorised as an urban village. By implication, these satellite communities are somehow dependent on the urban village for many amenities and services. Both Tsau and Sehithwa were chosen on the basis of their limited infrastructures and degree of rurality.

Figure 1: Map of the Okavango Delta showing the study areas



Sampling procedure

A multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select 105 youths from the two villages. First, proportionate sampling was used to select the number of respondents (youth) in each village based on their population (60 from Sehithwa and 45 from Tsau). Secondly, the quota method was used to identify wards in each village. Lastly, simple random sampling was used to select (15) youths, whether unemployed or employed youth in each ward. The intention was to determine the prevalence of the phenomenon in the study area. Based on the ILO definition, unemployed youths connote only those who, at the time of the interview, are of the working age group and have been actively seeking employment in the past 4 weeks.

Data collection techniques and tools

Data was collected through the use of open and close ended questions constructed in a validated questionnaire. Validation of the instrument was achieved first by subjecting the instruments to the evaluation of social science experts at the Okavango Research Institute and second, through a pilot study outside the study area where a pre-test exercise was carried out (to determine the instrument's consistency and reliability) before the commencement of the actual survey. The instrument comprised both quantitative and qualitative questions. The questionnaire was designed and administered to the respondents using face-to-face technique.

Measurement of variables

The dependent variable (youth unemployment) was measured by asking respondents whether they are currently and gainfully employed or not. While a 'Yes' response was assigned 1, a 'No' response was assigned 2. The independent variables were measured by focusing on selected socio-economic and institutional factors. For example, age was measured by the total number of years an individual had lived. Education level was measured by how far an individual progressed on the basis of non-formal (assigned 1); primary (assigned 2); secondary (assigned 3); and tertiary education (assigned 4). Access to information was measured by the frequency of which an individual received vital messages relating to job opportunities. Perceptions were measured on a 5-point Likert rating scale - a set of Likert items relating to how youth positively or negatively viewed employment-creating initiatives, which were implemented by the government in rural communities were scored. Thus the responses on perceptions were rated on a scale of 1-5 ranging from 'strongly disagree' (1 point), 'disagree' (2), 'undecided' or 'neutral' (3), 'agree' (4) and 'strongly agree' (5). Other institutional factors such as provision of rural entrepreneurship development initiatives within a community were measured as well.

Data analysis

This paper uses a descriptive and analytical study design to assess factors contributing to rural youth unemployment. Data were summarised through the use of descriptive statistics like frequencies, percentages and measures of central tendency (such as mean), charts and others. Deductions were made by employing inferential statistics such as Pearson product-moment correlation and Chi-square analyses. While correlation analysis was used to test the directional relationships between the dependent variable Y (unemployment status) and explanatory/independent variables $X_{1....n}$ (socio-economic and institutional), chi-square was employed to establish the associations between non-parametric variables. Qualitative data were processed by being thematically grouped and analysed using content analysis.

The general formula for Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient is provided below:

$$r = \frac{n(\sum xy) - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{[n\sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2][n\sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2]}}$$

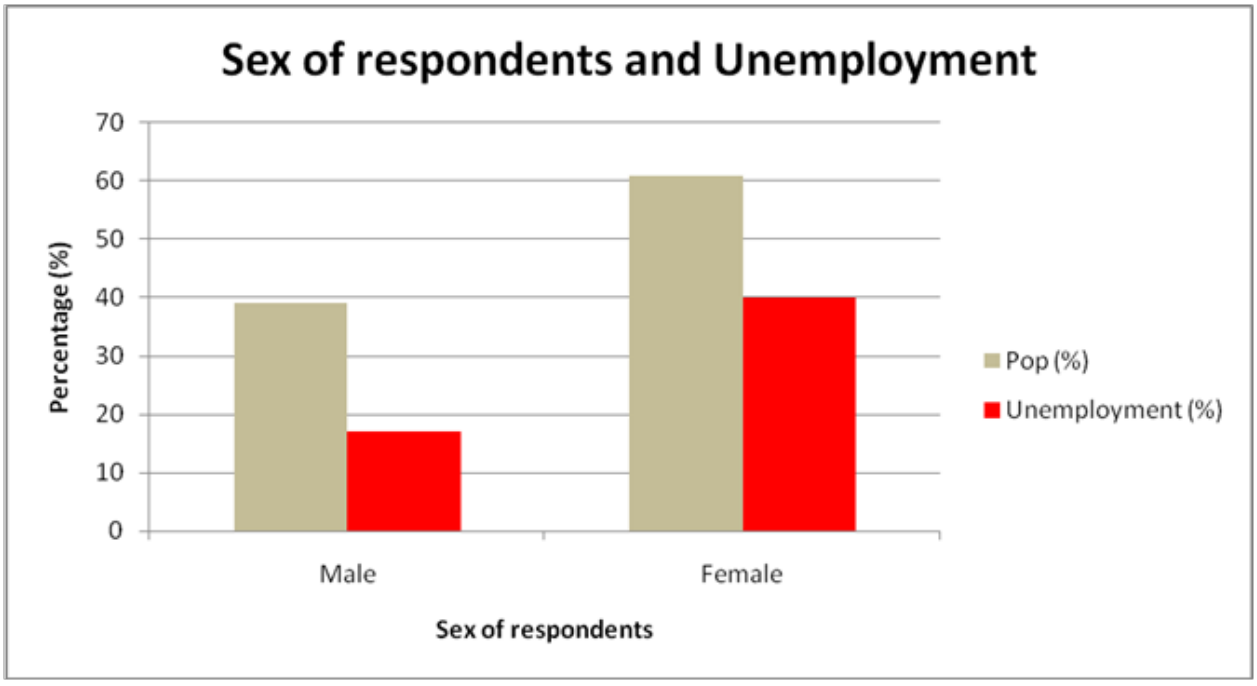
where r = Pearson correlation coefficient, n = sample size, x = independent variables, and y = dependent variable.

Chi square formula:

$$\chi_c^2 = \sum \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

where Oi = Observed number of cases in the category *i*, and E_i = the expected number of cases in the *i* category.

Figure 2: Bar chart showing the distribution of male and female youths and their unemployment status



Results

Demographic characteristics of respondents

Data in Table 1 and Figure 1 show that 61% of the youths were females and of which 65.6% were unemployed. Amongst the male youth who constituted 39% of those interviewed, about 43.6% of them were unemployed (Figure 1). The statistics indicate that female youths were less employed than their male counterparts. This buttresses Broussard and Tekleselassie's (2012) findings which affirm that females are less employed than their male counterparts in Ethiopia. Thus Chi-square test result shows that gender ($X^2 = 4.815$; $p \leq 0.05$) had a significant association with the unemployment status of the respondents. Those who were in the age bracket 24-29 years constituted 47.6% of the population. While the respondents between the ages of 18-23 years constituted 28.6%, only 23.8% of them were in the age bracket of 30-35 years. These are able bodied, young men and women who naturally have the energy to actively contribute to economic growth and development. While majority of the youths (70.2%) had secondary education, a relatively small number (17.3%) had tertiary or higher education. Some 12.5% of the youths only had primary education. Chi-square analysis also shows that there is a significant association between an individual's unemployment status ($X^2 = 7.443$; $p \leq 0.05$) and his or her level of education. Although considered as important avenues for overcoming both short and long term unemployment, education and training are not adequately prioritized in rural areas because

'seasonal and casual unemployment' are prevalent in local communities (Cartmel and Furlong, 2000: 12). Majority of respondents were never married (55.2%) just as those co-habiting constituted 43.8% of the population. Most respondents (86.7%) were Christians . While those who never practised any form of religion accounted for 10.5% of the population, a small percentage (2.9%) belonged to other faiths. Analysis also shows that majority of the able-bodied youths (57.1%) investigated were unemployed. They are individuals who in their prime remain jobless as a result of certain socio-economic and institutional drivers, which will be analysed in this paper. Findings also show that those who were employed engaged in self-employment businesses including livestock farming, poverty alleviation initiative (locally known as *Ipelegeng*), security work, bakery and catering.

Table 1: Demographic and socio-economic characteristics of respondents

Variable		Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Sex	Male	41	39.0
	Female	64	61.0
Total		105	100.0
Age	18-23	30	28.6
	24-29	50	47.6
	30-35	25	23.8
Total		105	100.0
Village	Sehithwa	60	57.1
	Tsau	45	42.9
Total		105	100.0
Education	Primary	13	12.5
	Secondary	73	70.2
	Higher	18	17.3
Total		105	100.0
Marital status	Not married	58	55.2
	Living together	47	44.8
Total		105	100.0
Religious affiliation	Christians	91	86.7
	Other faith	3	2.9
	No religion	11	10.5
Total		105	100.0
Employment status	Employed	45	42.9
	Unemployed	60	57.1
Total		105	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2014*

Pearson product-moment correlation analysis showing the relationship between explanatory variables and unemployment status

Data in Table 2 presents Pearson product-moment correlation analysis showing the relationship between explanatory variables $X_{1...n}$ (socio-economic and institutional-related) and the dependent variable Y (unemployment status of the respondents). At $p \leq 0.01$ level of significance, access to information ($r= 0.315$; $p \leq 0.000$), entrepreneurial skills ($r= 0.388$; $p \leq 0.000$), and youth perceptions towards govern-

ment programmes (r= 0.289; p≤0.000) had a positive and significant relationship with the individual's unemployment status. In sum, the less unfettered an individual youth is to accessing useful information on job availability, the less likely that the individual would become consistently jobless. The better the skills acquired by an individual in entrepreneurship development, the more likely s/he gets employed. While our *a-priori* expectation suggests that the more unfavourable youths perceive government employment-creating initiatives, the more likely they are to remain unemployed because of their possible *laissez faire* attitudes towards appropriating those opportunities, the test statistic of the analysis shows a positive relationship between youth perceptions and their unemployment status. This could, perhaps, be explained on the ground that the favourable perceptions of youths about government initiatives may not necessarily have translated to increasing their chances of being employed as suggested by their viewpoints that government does not adequately involve them in designing such programmes. Also, data show that at 95 per cent confidence level, there is a positive relationship between youths' education level (r= 0.208; p≤0.05) and their unemployment status. Contrary to our *a-priori* expectations, the results suggests that the higher the level of education of an individual youth, the higher their chances of being unemployed.

Table 2: Pearson product-moment correlation analysis showing the relationships between explanatory variables and unemployment status

Variable (X_{1-4})	**r-value**	**p-value**
1. Level of education	0.208**	0.034
2. Access to information	0.315***	0.001
3. Entrepreneurial skills	-0.388***	0.000
4. Youth perceptions towards govt programmes	0.289***	0.003

Source: *Field survey, 2014*

**** Significant at 99 % level (i.e. p ≤ 0.01)*

***Significant at 95% level (i.e. p ≤ 0.05)*

Discussion

This section primarily focuses on the analysis of institutional-related factors vis à vis the perspective of the youths in the study area. The implication of requisite education on youth unemployment, access to information on employment opportunities, training in entrepreneurship development skills and government initiatives on employment generation were analysed in relation to their utilisation by the rural youth. In sub-sections 4.1-4.4, we outline and analyse these pertinent, policy related issues based on their influence on the unemployment status of the respondents.

Education and youth unemployment

Descriptive analysis result indicates that the majority (83%) of the youths interviewed did not acquire higher education. As earlier indicated in sub-section 3.2 above, the result of Pearson correlation analysis shows that a positive correlation exists between a youth's level of education (r= 0.208; p ≤ 0.05) and their unemployment status in the study area. While the result of the test statistic seems to have contradicted all expectations, the finding, however, buttresses those of Broussard and Tekleselassie (2012) showing 'a positive relationship between educational attainment and unemployment', which they explain on the basis of 'educated unemployment problem' reflecting the 'mismatch between the education and training skills available and the requirements of the labour market' in Ethiopia. As pointed out by the authors, this directional relationship is more prevalent among Ethiopian male youths than their

female counterparts; there is less unemployment problem among females who had higher education than other females who had less educational attainment. While it is indeed logical to acknowledge Yabiku and Schlabach's (2009) viewpoint that higher educational attainment is the foundation for gainful employment for both women and men, systemic problems and peculiarities of places may have eroded the credibility of this claim. All things considered, basic secondary education is the basis for acquiring entrepreneurship skills, hence many rural residents will most likely be involved in self-employment activities in rural areas (Castel *et al.*, 2010).

Access to information and youth unemployment status

Analysis shows that the respondents who sometimes had access to vital information accounted for 57.1% of the population. While those who always had access to information constituted about 23% of the entire population, those who had no access to vital information accounted for 20%. Those who had no access to information accounted for 81% of the unemployed youth. This implies that those who lack vital information are more likely to be unemployed. According to a study by the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG), those who are unemployed and live in remote villages are likely to lack access to vital information as a result of socio-economic constraints and poor infrastructures, which in turn reduce their chances to find a job (IEG, 2013). Thus poorly educated youths often lack vital information about possible opportunities (UNESCO, 2011). Findings show that the majority (82.7%) of rural youths in the study area had only primary and secondary education which ordinarily does not meet the need of the current labour market dynamics, transition and requirements.

Entrepreneurship training and youth unemployment status

This sub-section focuses on the role, which training plays in an individual's ability to seek and get a gainful employment. Analysis shows that 69.5% of the rural youth had not attended any formal education, workshop or meeting on entrepreneurship skills or any business-related training. This may have significantly induced structural unemployment amongst the youths. About 70% of the unemployed youth indicated that they did not have any knowledge or skills on entrepreneurship. The negative but significant correlation existing between entrepreneurship skills ($r = -0.388$; $p \leq 0.000$) and unemployment status points to the fact that lack of acquisition of entrepreneurship skills promotes unemployment, all things being equal. Given that many youth were self-employed in the study area, those who had higher chances of success in their self-employed businesses were those who had basic education and entrepreneurship skills. This buttresses the claim by Zwan et al. (2013) that youths who took an entrepreneurship subject or course had higher "start-up intentions" than those who did not. Zwan et al. (2013) findings in 36 countries showed that entrepreneurship education increased the individual's probability of being self-employed by 2-3 percent. Entrepreneurship and unemployment have bi-directional relationship as the latter spurs entrepreneurship while entrepreneurship in turn reduces unemployment (Dujowich, 2011). The inference is that those who apply their entrepreneurship skills to start up businesses for self employment are likely to not remain in the class of the unemployed. Conversely, those who do not have entrepreneurship education or skills and are not employed (as in this case making 70% of the population) are likely to remain unemployed for a considerable period of time (i.e. long term unemployment). As individuals have different choices and risk preferences for being a wage worker or an entrepreneur (Parker, 2004), few entrepreneurs in rural areas would then mean fewer firms absorbing the teeming but potentially unemployed youths.

Youth perceptions towards government programmes and youth unemployment status

Analysis show that 68.3% of the youths agreed that implemented government programmes were useful to their needs and could make them better-off. While those who disagreed with this viewpoint comprised 21.1%, only 10.6% of the population had no opinion about the usefulness of government's employment-creating initiatives. The positive correlation between youth perceptions towards implemented government programmes and unemployment status ($r = 0.289$; $p \leq 0.013$) implies that the more unfavourable government initiatives are perceived (in whatever guise), the more the youths would most likely seek to not take advantage of available opportunities. Earlier findings of the International Council on Security and Development (ICOS) shows that a significant percentage of youths (>40%) was satisfied with implemented governmental initiatives while a relatively small percentage (20%) were dissatisfied with them (ICOS, 2010). While 69% of the youth generally agreed that they would apply for any youth programmes in the near future, 22.3% disagreed. Those who had no opinion on the subject accounted for 8.7% of the respondents. Inferential statistics showed that a positive and significant correlation exists between the youths' intention to utilise government's initiative and their unemployment status ($r = 0.254$; $p \leq 0.029$). While many Nigerian youths exhibited the sense of frustration and exclusion that government opportunities were not equally provided, largely ineffective or inappropriate (Banfield, 2014), the findings in this study indicate that government initiatives could promote youths' employment in rural Botswana. Nonetheless the respondents felt government could do much better by adequately involving or consulting the youths in the design, implementation and monitoring of government programmes designed for employment generation.

Conclusion

This study presented the assessment of factors contributing to incessant, rural youth unemployment in some selected villages of the Okavango Delta, Botswana. The youths studied were predominantly women (61%). Most youths (57.1%) interviewed were unemployed and many of them aged between 24 and 29 years. These were young, energetic individuals who remain jobless when they should not. Worst still, females constituted 65.6% of those unemployed amongst the youths, indicating some gender lopsidedness in job opportunities. Majority (70.2%) of these youths had secondary education. Apart from home-based self employment, most respondents depended on *Ipelegeng* and livestock farming as their means of livelihood. Over the last 50 years of its existence, Botswana has put in place many initiatives to address the needs of its youths but with a minimal transforming effect. Indeed, some of the government policies and programs on youth unemployment may have largely engendered both structural and 'disguised' unemployment as money earned through *Ipelegeng*, for instance, may not have been enough to lift individual youths out of poverty. While the youths predominantly belonged to the Christian faith, majorities (55.2%) of them were yet to be married and remained single. Majority of the youths had positive perceptions about implemented government programs and also opined they had chances of utilizing them in the future. However, only a few of the respondents (22.9%) always had access to relevant information on employment issues in their area. This may have been a reflection of poor infrastructural development (e.g. poor mass media coverage) in remote communities in the Okavango Delta (Kolawole, 2014).

Pearson product-moment correlation analysis showed statistically significant relationships between the investigated explanatory variables (socio-economic and institutional-related) and youth unemployment status. The positive relationship existing between level of education and unemployment status has policy implications for human development and structural unemployment in the study area. It is one thing to acquire some level of education. It is another thing to acquire the required skills necessary for doing the job. While education enhances easy acquisition of relevant training skills by any

individual, possessing such requisite skills further opens doors of opportunities for job placement. All things considered, the better the quality of training skills acquired by an individual, the better his or her chances of being gainfully employed. In sum, the findings indicate that factors driving high rural youth unemployment in the Okavango Delta area are low educational attainment and or lack of quality education among the youths; lack of access to information; lack of entrepreneurship skills and; seemingly negative perceptions towards government programmes.

While we admit that the study might not be truly representative due to the relatively small sample size, it is fair to point out that policy issues addressing training and skill acquisitions in entrepreneurship coupled with the implementation of awareness programs are imperative for surmounting the challenges of rural youth unemployment in the area. In a peculiar environment like the Okavango Delta where infrastructural development poses a threat to the pristine, natural environment, which the government strongly jealously protects, business villages could be set up in designated locations where necessary facilities for driving rural entrepreneurship are provided for the teeming youth population and potential entrepreneurs. Ultimately, Botswana can then relish an all round development progress in its 50 years of existence.

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