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Labour force participation of youth (15-34) in South Africa 2014

Khuluvhe, Khaukanani Andrew

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KHULUVHE KHAUKANANI ANDREW: 753246

ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: Youth labour force participation (YLFP) measures the level of economic activity among the youth. It is measured as the sum of all young people who are employed, unemployed or looking for work, as a percentage of the youth population. The weakening of the global recovery in 2012 and 2013 further aggravated the youth jobs crisis and the queues for available jobs have become longer for young jobseekers (ILO, 2013). This study examines the association between the level of education and labour force participation among the youth in South Africa. It also seeks to examine other socio-demographic factors influencing YLFP in the country.

METHOD: Analysis of the data from a sample of 30144 youth aged 15-35 years who participated in the South African 2014 Quarterly Labour Force Survey was done using logistic regression models. In the multiple logistic regression, two models were used. Model 1 included the following variables: education level, age and gender whilst in model 2 this study controlled for: population group, type of residence and province because these socio-demographic factors influence youth labour force participation.

RESULTS: When controlled for potential confounding effects of age, gender, type of residence, population group and province, youth with higher education were more likely to participate in labour force as compared to youth who have no or have primary education [(Q1: OR[1] 4.28, 95% CI[2] 3.74 to 4.90); (Q2: OR 4.34, 95% CI 3.78 to 4.97); (Q3: OR 3.91, 95% CI 3.41 to 4.48) & (Q4: OR 3.88, 95% CI 3.38 to 4.45)]. The association between education level and youth labour force participation was found to be statistically significant.

[1] Odds Ratio
[2] Confidence Interval

CONCLUSION: Young people with tertiary qualifications in South Africa are more likely to participate in the labour force. The evidence from the study shows there is a higher risk of mismatch for youth at the bottom of the educational pyramid, which is reflected in relatively high unemployment rates for the low skilled in comparison with the high skilled.