

Exploring the Impact of Unemployment on the Standard Of Living in Katutura Central, Windhoek

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of unemployment on the standard of living in Katutura Central, Windhoek. The study analysed the impact of unemployment on the standard of living in Katutura Central, Windhoek, a highly concentrated urban township typically shaped by socio-economic exclusion. Despite government efforts to stem unemployment at a national level, the area is still confronted with affectedly higher rates of unemployment among the 19- to 59-year-old age group. Employing a qualitative research approach, the study employed open-ended questionnaires to examine the lived experience of the unemployed residents as well as the impacts of unemployment on housing, education, health, and overall well-being. The findings are that the underlying causes of unemployment in Katutura Central are structural, such as low education levels, limited access to formal employment, and insufficient public facilities, these issues cause a decrease in living conditions, such as the existence of overcrowded informal settlements, inadequate coverage of clean water and electricity, as well as increased exposure to health and social risks. The study is rooted in the search and frictional theories of unemployment, which explained in depth the challenges of labour market mobility and employment matching in low-resource city environments. Discoveries stress the necessity of evidence-based policy interventions such as vocational training, in-place employment support, and inclusive labour law. By focusing on an underrepresented group in national statistics, the research provides critical data regarding the connection between unemployment and standards of living, making evidence-based recommendations for boosting socio-economic resilience in Katutura Central and other urban settlements.*

Keywords: Economic, education, government policy, healthcare, Katutura Central Windhoek, standard of living, unemployment

I. INTRODUCTION

Unemployment has become a major concern impacting the standard of living in Katutura Central, Windhoek, thereby limiting people to be able to afford for basic needs, such as electricity and water, forcing them to relocate to rural areas such as Katutura Central, Windhoek. Across the world, unemployment occupies a geographically supportive space in its destructive capability, both socially and economically (Safarli & Abdullayev 2023). The rate of unemployment has been rising over the last ten years, and there are several reasons for this, including the advancement of technology and the globalisation of trade, which has led to the replacement of traditional jobs by robotics and technology. It is important to remember that mental health issues might arise from unemployment because of lost income and inability to pay for necessities. Any nation's economy suffers from unemployment since unemployed individuals become consumers rather than producers. According to Barreiro-Gen (2019) standard of living is "the ability to live comfortably for a certain socioeconomic class in a given location is measured by the quantity and quality of goods that the individual is free to use, free to do anything, and the value of life".

The most immediate and tangible effect of unemployment is loss of income, which can lead to a variety of negative effects on an individual's ability to meet basic needs like housing, food, healthcare, and education. In addition to the initial economic penalties caused by job loss, there are also broader implications for normative psychological and social functioning that create a host of problems for individuals and communities more generally. Although all economies grapple with issues around employment, developing countries face the further burden of not merely significant unemployment, but structural constraints on accessing the labour market and finding employment. Unemployment, according to the definition, is people who have not worked for a certain amount of time but are willing to work and are actively looking for a job. The aim of this study is therefore to explore and evaluate strategies to improve the impacts of unemployment on the living standards in Katutura Central, examining the origins of unemployment, discussing its effects

on housing, education, health, economic well-being and evaluating strategies to improve the employment rate. The findings enable informed solutions on government policy, business approaches towards community-led initiatives which improve employment opportunities thereby improving living conditions for the residents of Katutura Central, Windhoek.

The population of Katutura Central, Windhoek consists of a substantial portion of unemployed, illiterate individuals living in unsuitable living conditions. Countless slum areas surrounding Katutura Central, Windhoek, in most cases there is only one water point available for majority of individuals, almost no electricity and a lack of infrastructure. It is also observed that migrants usually arrive penniless and find shelter in unsteady improvised housing made of corrugated sheets, slats of wood and a cover of plastic, the constant influx increases misery every day with limitation of one water tap that must suffice for nine huts made of corrugated sheets or cardboard. Additionally, sewerage and electricity remain a struggle, thereby affecting children and people living in these area (Rohwer, 2017). The increasing rate of unemployment has a huge impact on the standard of living, especially on the individuals in Katutura Central, thereby making it difficult to afford basic needs such as clean water, electricity, and proper housing, most are forced to live in corrugated zinc houses which makes it cheaper to rent without utilities.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The population keeps increasing while employment keeps decreasing, the imbalance between the two makes it very difficult for people with the right skills, degrees and experience to get jobs in the market, not to mention the advancement of technology replacing people's jobs, which in turn increase the unemployment rate. The more jobs are lost the more income is lost which then deteriorates the living standards of people. Unemployment is one of the key socio-economic challenges facing Katutura Central, Windhoek, and in return has a significant impact on the standard of living. Everyone is entitled to work, free choice in employment, fair and comfortable working conditions, and unemployment insurance. However, People cannot claim these rights anywhere in Katutura Central, Windhoek due to lack of jobs. According to Article 6 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Article 23(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, residents of Katutura Central, Windhoek have a legally guaranteed right to work and an expansive interpretation of the right to life. However, the absence of decent work opportunities in Katutura Central, Windhoek reflects broader underlying challenges and policy gaps, this situation calls for better institutional accountability and more approachable labour legislation. In accordance with international standards, the right to decent work ought to be prioritised in national labour frameworks to ensure inclusive economic participation and social protection (Economic and Social Justice Trust, 2023).

Although there are attempts made by the government to rectify the unemployment situation through the empowerment scheme, unemployment continues to remain stubbornly high, amongst those aged 19 – 59 as well as individuals who are low-skilled, unemployment does not just mean the absence of a financial footing. It functions on a scale by placing barriers or limits between structures people may need like, healthcare, education, housing, and basic needs (Matondo, 2022). As per the survey conducted in 2020 by the Namibia Labour Force (Namibia Statistic Agency, 2023), a rate of 46.1% adults aged 19 -59 face significant barriers to employment due to high school dropout rates, insufficient skills, and limited job opportunities. Few empirical studies done observed unemployment in a place-based, township-specific context, particularly making known how unemployment determines people's standard of living in a densely populated township like Katutura Central, Windhoek that has unique socio-economic indicators. In contrast, there are few localised studies done that provide updates about the direct relationship between unemployment and standard of living within informal settlements, indicating little economic safety. According to Mpako and Ndoma (2024), social problems including substance misuse, criminality, and worsening living conditions in informal settlements are also exacerbated by high unemployment rates. Unemployment crisis does not only result in social issues, such as rising crime rates, but also places economic strain on the government. Exploring the degree of unemployment, its consequences on living standards, and remedies to lessen its detrimental effects are the goals of this study. The study addresses gaps by detailing the unemployment issues in Katutura Central, Windhoek, looking at strategies that might help improve employment opportunities and living conditions. The study does so by focusing on the living conditions of unemployed individuals in Katutura Central, Windhoek to inform policymakers of policy-orientated solutions and a better understanding of the community customs that can help mitigate such unemployment issues and related pain. Furthermore, identifying the primary causes of unemployment and examining their effects on various aspects of the standard of living, including income levels, education, healthcare, and housing will assist in evaluating existing and potential strategies for reducing unemployment, with a focus on improving economic stability and enhancing overall living conditions.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the impact unemployment on the standard of living within the community of Katutura Central, Windhoek. The study fills a key gap in the literature rather than merely adding to it. Additionally, this study raises awareness of a community that is frequently disregarded in the national conversation on unemployment by focusing on Katutura Central and its distinct socioeconomic setting.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In literature, previous research were examined to place the study in the context of larger scholarly and policy discussions. It starts out by clarifying the impact of unemployment and standard of living using both globally accepted definitions and Namibian specific context specific interpretations. It then looks at empirical research that showed how unemployment and living standards are related, bringing to light both regional and global trends. From structural economic limitations and skills mismatches to governance and policy gaps, special attention is paid to the causes of unemployment and how these factors interact to sustain social exclusion and poverty. Furthermore, for interpreting the dynamics seen in Katutura Central, the review also considered theoretical frameworks such as the search theory of unemployment and frictional unemployment theory. This chapter pinpointed the knowledge gaps that this study filled by fusing theoretical insights with empirical data. By doing this, it not only lays the groundwork for the study but also emphasises how urgent it is to create plans that will significantly increase job prospects and, consequently, the standard of living for people living in Katutura Central.

IV. THEORETICAL LITERATURE

Recent research conducted by Pohlen (2024), provided insights on how employment and unemployment affect social exclusion across Europe. Pohlen (2024) stated that unemployment in Germany results in long-term decreases in material well-being, social participation, and perceived social standing, with income losses lasting up to four years following job loss. These impacts are more prominent among people with a lower level of education, a history of unemployment, and limited job opportunities. Even reemployment cannot completely heal the psychosocial wounds of unemployment, indicating that job loss has long-term effects for social integration (Pohlen, 2024). Unemployment is regularly seen as a major impediment to economic progress and social development in SSA. According to Uma (2024), who explored numerous studies and discovered that Unemployment in the region reduces income, savings, investment, and national productivity, contributing to a drop in GDP. The study also noted that unemployed people are more vulnerable to social marginalisation and may engage in dangerous behaviours, posing greater concerns to society stability. Scholars have paid close attention to the paradox of economic progress existing with high unemployment and low human development in SSA. Despite the region's vast natural and human resources, the promised developmental gains, notably in terms of job creation, are yet to materialise (Akinyele et al., 2022). Sunde and Akanbi (2016), using a Structural Vector Autoregression (SVAR) model, found that macroeconomic shocks, such as decreased investment and limited industrial variation, have long-term implications for unemployment due to rigour in the labor market. The study emphasised that Namibian unemployment is not merely cyclical but also has its foundation in structural bottlenecks that limit the combination of labor. On the contrary, a study conducted by Shigwedha (2020) examined the effect of government expenditure, money supply, and unemployment, the findings were that, even if public expenditure has been increasing, it has not translated into successful employment growth, particularly in urban informal settlements.

The causes of unemployment and its effects on the standard of living

People's lack of education, experience, and pertinent skills are the root cause of unemployment, so is the effect of corruption on economic progress. Institutions with subpar policy implementation and inadequate governance are to blame for inadequate training and education. It demonstrates the government's inadequate delivery of high-quality education and its failure to engage with underserved communities to provide unemployed adults with marketable education. Consequently, there is a vicious cycle of unemployment since people without jobs are less likely to get employment since they lack experience (Siboyi, 2023). On the other hand it is noted that, although some people may be educated, skilled and experienced, there are reasons as to why educated people remain unemployed, which is due to the fact that the labour demand, especially for jobs requiring highly trained labour, has not been able to keep up with advances in educational attainment (Gemetchu et al., 2022). As opposed to the above statements it is also noted that persistent unemployment is rapidly shredding society, making people armed in bandits rather than development agents. According to the wealth of available material, this unfavourable development has undoubtedly resulted in widespread poverty

among the populace as well as major security problems because a lack of employment has caused people's idle minds to turn into criminal activity (Onyekwere, 2021).

Although the literature currently in publication recognises several factors that contribute to unemployment, such as a lack of education and skills, corruption, bad governance, and imbalances between the supply and demand for labour, most of these studies are still quite general in nature and concentrate on regional or national patterns. They frequently overlook localising the analysis to historically marginalised urban communities, like Katutura Central, where socioeconomic and historical factors influence unemployment. Including both individual and systemic factors that contribute to unemployment in a single framework, paying special attention to the interactions among labour market mismatches, educational deficiencies, and systemic governance failures. Looking at the real-life experiences of unemployed adults outside of youth cohorts, particularly those between the ages of 19 and 59, whose exclusion from the workforce has unique social and economic repercussions. Putting research results into practice by assessing current interventions and suggesting community-informed, context-specific solutions that consider both short-term demands and long-term structural changes. Additionally, by utilizing resources and knowledge from both industries, strengthening public-private partnerships can promote job creation. Furthermore, investing in green technologies and infrastructure is a crucial tactic since it not only solves urgent environmental issues but also generates jobs.

The relationship between unemployment and standard of living

The connection between unemployment and well-being has garnered significant and increasing attention from a variety of academic fields, including public health, work and organisational psychology, sociology, and economics. Everyone agrees that having a job entails more than just making a livelihood, it also confers social standing, provides structure to the day, allows people to interact with others, and gives life a meaning. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that empirical research demonstrates the ongoing detrimental consequences of unemployment on wellbeing (Gedikli et al., 2022). Additionally, Hirbaye and Kalkidan (2020), have stated that unemployed people are more likely to experience mental health issues like depression. Middle age is a period of switch from adolescence to maturity, including from education to employment, depressing syndromes are utmost customary mental health issues and the main foundation of disability, which are linked with a minimal quality of life besides a complex risk of extending physical well-being matters, as it has a great impact on their standard of living. Moreover, due to the enormous demand for work created by the great increase in population, there is an extensive and emerging problem of unemployment in Katutura Central, Windhoek. In addition to having negative effects on several social phenomena, unemployment can contribute to crime, drunkenness, and family dissolution, it also generally affects homelessness and poverty, primarily affecting the unemployed people (Mayumbelo, 2020). Furthermore Onyekwere (2021) states that, people live on the streets every day looking for work where none exists, going to bed hungry, lacking access to appropriate clothing or shelter, and lacking health care facilities. It is obvious that the psychological effects of unemployment have grown to be quite severe, leading to social evils that cause self-destruction and harm in the Nigerian society.

Even though previous research has demonstrated the negative impacts of unemployment on mental health, social stability, and general well-being. These analyses frequently underrepresent middle-aged unemployed adults, who deal with stressors, like family obligations, job stagnation, and health vulnerabilities. Additionally, there are not many studies that combine the psychological effects of unemployment with its socioeconomic repercussions, like homelessness, crime, and family dissolution, in a single context-specific framework. By producing place-based evidence on the relationship among living standards, mental health, and unemployment in Katutura Central, this study fills these gaps.

Strategies for improving unemployment to enhance the standard of living

A diversified strategy is needed to effectively address unemployment; it demands a thorough comprehension of the root causes and the application of focused interventions. With an emphasis on both conventional and innovative methods, the focus is to try and attempt to investigate different tactics and laws intended to improve job creation. The aim is to give a thorough overview of how unemployment can be addressed in the fast-paced economic environment of today by analysing successful case studies, looking at policy frameworks, and evaluating the roles of various stakeholders. Evaluating how well economic policies with an emphasis on monetary and fiscal measures promote the creation of jobs. According to Radha et al. 2024 who stated that the necessity of complementary structural reforms to maintain long-term job creation, the connection between employment and education contending that lowering unemployment depends on matching educational objectives with labour market demands. Radha et al. (2024) stresses the value of curriculum development and vocational training in giving people the tools they need to succeed in today's labour markets. Focusing on strategies such as effectiveness of vocational training and education programs, impact of tax incentives, and

infrastructure investments are but a few recommendations made for policymakers to optimise job creation efforts, addressing the need for policymakers to improve access to vocation training and education with the urban and rural areas.

Additionally, Radha et al. (2024) concluded that by utilising resources and knowledge from both industries, strengthening public-private partnerships can promote job creation. Thus, investing in green technologies and infrastructure is a crucial tactic since it not only solves urgent environmental issues but also generates jobs. Supporting remote work and putting in place flexible work schedules can aid in adjusting to the changing labour market. In the end, establishing a resilient and sustainable labour market requires cooperation between the government, firms, and academic institutions. The strategies can increase job creation and decrease unemployment by giving priority to creative and flexible approaches, which will strengthen economic growth and improve societal well-being (Radha et al., 2024).

Although research by Radha et al. (2024) and others sheds light on a variety of job-creation tactics, such as tax breaks, infrastructure spending, public-private partnerships, vocational training, and green economy projects, there are still several significant gaps in knowledge. Structural Implementation Barriers are being investigated. Despite the widespread support for tactics like public-private partnerships and vocational training, little is known about why these interventions frequently fall short of reaching or helping marginalised communities. Ignoring Katutura Central's informal work patterns and the ways in which they interact with official job creation policies. Assessments of the effects of monetary and fiscal policies, green investments, and flexible work arrangements on communities with low skill levels, inadequate infrastructure, and high unemployment rates are lacking. This study aims to address the gaps by using Katutura Central as a case study to produce evidence based on place regarding the viability and efficacy of job creation tactics in an urban area that has historically been underprivileged. Documenting the real-world obstacles to obtaining education, vocational training, and job opportunities by documenting the lived experiences of unemployed adults 19–59. Additionally, the study examines limitations at both the structural and individual levels, such as inconsistencies between training and labour market demand, governance quality, and gaps in policy implementation. Furthermore, analysing the applicability of national and international strategies (such as flexible work schedules, green economy employment, and public-private partnerships) considering Katutura's socioeconomic circumstances. Finally Giving policymakers, non-governmental organisations, and private sector actors practical, situation-specific advice based on community viewpoints and empirical data to ensure inclusive, practical, and long-lasting interventions.

Empirical literature

The existing empirical literature reveals significant gaps in the understanding of unemployment and its impacts on standard of living, which this study directly addresses. For example, Matondo (2022) highlights the issues encountered by unemployed graduates in Windhoek, however the study focuses solely on youth and does not extend to the larger adult population aged 19-59, nor does it investigate the lived realities of informal settlements such as Katutura Central. Similarly, Uma (2024) highlights Sub-Saharan Africa's rapid population increase and unemployment crises but provides no insight into how these macro-level processes affect localized everyday survival, service access, and community resilience.

Theoretical framework

A study done by Nabiyeva (2019), stated that although frictional unemployment is normally considered a natural feature of dynamic labour markets, its consequences are more severe in under sourced informal settlements. The study applied the following theory:

Search theory of unemployment

Fitzgerald (1998) proposed this theory, which argues that labourers have specific ability requirements such as, workers must find attractive jobs with a good wage while firms need to find the most productive workers. According to Fitzgerald (1998), workers and firms do not operate with all the information they require about the practical options they have, which requires them to engage in a search process. In any case, search is costly and time consuming, therefore firms and workers will need to expend some of their resources to find a job match. In relation to workers, despite the efforts of people seeking for employment, they are unable to find desirable employment. Since it is essential to creating effective labour market policies, economists and policymakers are primarily concerned with understanding the causes of this fact. In addition to causing suffering for those it affects; unemployment also is a huge reservoir of untapped financial resources. The goal of the search theory of unemployment is to comprehend unemployment within a model where an equilibrium rate of unemployment is produced by workers' and firms' optimising behaviour. Additionally, the theory helps explain the startling reality that businesses are simultaneously trying to fill millions of job openings while millions of workers are unemployed (Fitzgerald, 1998). Thinking about a jobless individual who visits local businesses, who peruses help

(temporary Jobs) wanted advertisements, to find employment, the worker has a lot of job options but does not know where the best ones are located. Therefore, the worker must invest time and resources in searching in hope of finding a better opportunity as soon as possible.

On the other hand, the employee might be offered a job at a certain wage during any given week, having to choose between accepting that offer and giving up the chance to find a better job or keep looking in the hopes of being lucky enough to receive a better offer soon (Fitzgerald, 1998). However, it is assumed that people only search for job when they are not employed, thus, a worker is in an environment that involves uncertainty just as firms are. When a worker has a wage offer for example, a decision has to be made whether to accept or continue searching for a better offer, because to accept the offer means forgoing the option of a higher wage offer at a later date, while continuing the search means losing the wages to be earned if the offer was accepted and would have started working (Emmanuel, 2017). Search theory of unemployment offers a helpful perspective for comprehending why unemployment rates are so high in areas like Katutura Central, even though there are open positions, according to the theory, matching skills to jobs is expensive and time-consuming because both employees and businesses have incomplete knowledge of the opportunities that are available (Fitzgerald, 1998). While companies struggle to find the most productive candidates, workers must choose between accepting an immediate offer, often at a low wage while searching in hope of finding better work. These search difficulties are made worse in Katutura Central by a lack of information about the labour market, a mismatch in skills, the financial and practical costs of looking for a job, like application fees and transportation. Consequently, numerous residents are unable to obtain favourable employment, resulting in extended durations of unemployment that diminish household income and lower living standards. The search theory indicates that unemployment is the result of rational but limited decision-making by both workers and employers, alluding to policies that close information gaps, lower search costs, and improve skills alignment are needed policies that can relate to improving livelihoods in the study area.

Frictional theory of unemployment

Reder (1969) stated that, people who are frictionally unemployed are between jobs for a brief time, the length of these periods of unemployment depends on how the labour market is set up. Frictional unemployment refers to short-term joblessness required to locate a position that fits the worker's qualifications (Irmen, 2009). Further stating that it is very common in all economies, where people who are either unemployed due to a change in employment or who have already found a job and will shortly begin working who are brought together by this sort of unemployment (Nabiyeva, 2019). During the period that people are unemployed they return to job searching to seek for opportunities, the theory of frictional theory goes in hand with the search theory. Frictional unemployment theory, as delineated by Reder (1969), Nabiyeva (2019), refers to temporary unemployment experienced by individuals who are transitioning between jobs or are actively pursuing employment opportunities that align with their skills and qualifications. In line with search theory, it posits that unemployment during this period is a natural consequence of the duration needed for job seekers and employers to identify an optimal match.

In the context of Katutura Central, this theoretical framework is especially pertinent for comprehending the experiences of individuals who are unemployed due to recent job transitions, relocation, or the conclusion of training, while still being engaged in the labour market. Although such unemployment is framed in the theory as temporary, these periods can be prolonged by structural constraints, such as high competition, limited job availability, skills mismatches, and inadequate access to labour market information. Due to the direct effect of unemployment, this has prolongation on household income, food security, and general living standards, frictional unemployment is an essential part of analysing the socioeconomic realities of the population under this study. The research sheds light on the macro-level obstacles and micro-level job-matching dynamics that affect the length and consequences of unemployment in low-income urban environments by placing frictional unemployment within the larger search process.

V. CONCLUSION

The Chapter provided a thorough assessment of available literature related to unemployment and its impacts on the standard of living, including unique focus on the socio-economic circumstances in Katutura Central, Windhoek. The discussion began by explaining key concepts and situating unemployment at both the global and Namibian levels and highlighting its multi-faceted impacts on incomes, food security, shelter, health, and social order. Empirical studies were reviewed to identify the key causes of unemployment, including inequalities in skills, the inferior capacity of the labour market to provide jobs for the population, governance-related challenges, and structural economic constraints, while recognising the scarcity of studies focused on historically oppressed urban populations. The literature then reviewed policies suggested in the research literature to lower unemployment through vocational training, alignment of the curriculum labour markets, public-private partnerships, and selective investment in infrastructure while noting the

continued obstacles to implementation in poor settings. The theory consolidated the search theory, and frictional theory of unemployment, to describe both the microlevel job-mismatching dynamics and the macroeconomic causes and consequences influencing the duration and incidence of unemployment. In bringing together the empirical research and theory, the chapter established foundation for comprehension of the experience of unemployment in Katutura Central and for identification of context-specific responses aimed at improving household livelihood and better well-being.

Method

The selected sampling method is purposive, as it allows the researcher to elicit a lot of information from the group of data the researcher collected. Additionally, the researcher has defined the primary effect findings on the population.

The data collected were analysed qualitatively to identify the patterns and themes, secondary data from case studies were also employed to supplement and contextualise the findings. Quite simply, data analysis is converting the gathered raw data into significant facts and conceptions to be interpreted either qualitatively or quantitatively, it is examining the tabulated material to discern inherent facts or meanings. It entails deconstructing existing complex factors into simpler components and combining the components into new configurations for interpretation purposes, (Dibekuku, 2020).

Findings

The study “exploring the impact of unemployment on the standard of living in Katutura Central, Windhoek” highlights a negative impact. The research confirms that unemployment in Katutura Central, Windhoek is not just an economic condition but a complex problem affecting people, households, and the broader society. It is distressing to note that, the lack of access to basic services, leads to mental and emotional well-being as well as reinforces poverty and exclusion cycles. Despite the varied educational achievements among respondents, the persistent unemployment indicates existing structural barriers in the labour market and systems of governance. The common experiences of participants demonstrate that unemployment is not only an effect but also a contributing factor to falling living standards, particularly in historically marginalised urban communities. The study has demonstrated the imperative need for localised, inclusive, and pragmatic solutions beyond policy rhetoric. Addressing unemployment in Katutura Central requires collective effort comprising of development of vocational training centres, investment in infrastructure, and employment through communities. It requires a re-examination of education, experience, and opportunity connections in Namibia's labour market as well.

The causes of unemployment and its effects on the standard of living

Within this section the researcher discusses the findings of the study in relation to the research objectives, having integrated a thematic insight from the data analysis with existing literature, to offer a contextualised understanding of how unemployment impacts the standard of living in Katutura Central, Windhoek.

Data revealed a complex interplay of individual and systematic factors contributing to unemployment, where respondents cited the lack of work experience, limited access to vocational training programs to gain skills required, financial constrained which makes it hard to have access to transport as key barriers to employment, as well as corruption.

Findings from the literature review

The findings are consistent with the study done by Siboyi (2023), which stated that people's lack of education, experience, and pertinent skills are the root cause of unemployment, so is the effect of corruption on economic progress. Institutions with subpar policy implementation and inadequate governance are to blame for inadequate training and education. It demonstrates the government's inadequate delivery of high-quality education and its failure to engage with underserved communities to provide unemployed adults with marketable education. Consequently, there is a vicious cycle of unemployment since people without jobs are less likely to get employment since they lack experience (Siboyi, 2023).

Although the literature currently in publication recognises several factors that contribute to unemployment, such as a lack of education and skills, corruption, bad governance, and imbalances between the supply and demand for labour, most of these studies are still quite general in nature and concentrate on regional or national patterns. They frequently overlook localising the analysis to historically marginalised urban communities, like Katutura Central, where socioeconomic and historical factors influence unemployment. Include both individual and systemic factors that contribute to unemployment in a single framework, paying special attention to the interactions among labour market mismatches, educational deficiencies, and systemic governance failures. Many respondents expressed the desire for meaningful jobs that could provide for their families, with specific interest in nursing, accounting, agriculture, mechanic, and various technical skills.

The relationship between unemployment and standard of living

The study found a direct and supporting relationship between unemployment and the living standard, based on the data collected from the respondents of Katutura it is noted that unemployment limited respondents the ability to afford basic needs such as water and electricity, healthcare, housing and the ability to further their education thereby reducing their overall quality of life. Citing with Gedikli et al. (2022), who stated that, the connection between unemployment and well-being has garnered significant and increasing attention from a variety of academic fields, including public health, work and organisational psychology, sociology, and economics. Everyone agrees that having a job entails more than just making a livelihood; it also confers social standing, provides structure to the day, which allows people to interact with others, and gives life meaning.

Moreover, respondents stated due to unemployment they live in stressful situations where sometimes they think of committing suicide thereby affecting their mental health. Most of the respondents live in informal settlement with inadequate infrastructure, the lack of formal housing and basic services was not merely a consequence of poverty but rather a structural outcome of exclusion from the formal economy. Furthermore, the data highlighted generational nature of unemployment, where respondents described households of multiple members were unemployed, which in the end leads to shared economic strain and limited prospect for the future generation. The findings align with what Hirbaye and Kalkidan (2020), have stated that unemployed people are more likely to experience mental health issues like depression. Middle age is a period of switch from adolescence to maturity, including from education to employment

Strategies for improving unemployment to enhance the standard of living

There seems to be lack of government intervention when it comes to employment opportunities or training programs which indicates a lack of visibility and effectiveness from the policy makers. Although Radharet et al. (2024), stated that a diversified strategy is needed to effectively address unemployment. It demands a thorough comprehension of the root causes and the application of focused interventions. With an emphasis on both conventional and innovative methods, the focus is to try and attempt to investigate different tactics and laws intended to improve job creation. The aim is to give a thorough overview of how unemployment can be addressed in the fast-paced economic environment of today by analysing successful case studies, looking at policy frameworks, and evaluating the roles of various stakeholders. There is a need to evaluate how well economic policies with an emphasis on monetary and fiscal measures promote the creation of jobs. To stress the necessity of complementary structural reforms to maintain long-term job creation (Radhaet al., 2024).

Recommendations

To help reduce the rate of unemployment thereby enhancing the standard of living practical recommendations have been drawn which are aimed at addressing unemployment and improving the standard of living in Katutura Central, Windhoek.

- Policy makers should provide free utilities within the community of Katutura central, Windhoek to allow access to clean water and basic needs. This aligns with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) especially, SDG 3 that speaks to good health and well-being, SDG 6 stating clean water and sanitation and SDG 11, sustainable cities, and communities. Given the need for people to have access to basic services. Additionally, the government can build a big solar plant in Katutura Central that enables the community to always have access to electricity since the sun shines brightly in Windhoek. As well as providing free public transport daily that will assist those with transport needs, to go and submit applications or those that need to attend interviews. To eliminate the challenges faced by the community of Katutura Central, when having to apply for jobs
- Universities in Windhoek can reduce unemployment by sending a list of names with all graduates to different industries, a collaboration between private and public sectors to allow for people to get opportunities that ensures everyone gets an opportunity to attend interviews, this will eliminate the constraints of transport cost. In turn this will elimination or rather reduce the gap between the job market and those with degrees just sited at home. This recommendation aligns with SDG 4 which alludes to quality education, SDG 8, decent work and growth and SDG 16, which alludes to peace, justice, and strong institutions, thereby allowing everyone to be treated fairly. Similarly, due to the mismatch between the job industry and education, incubation programs can be an initiative introduced within the community of Katutura Central seeing that there are opportunities for those willing to start and run their own business, while just needing the assistance of infrastructure and basic knowledge on running a business. Furthermore, the government can establish community employment hubs with free access to job postings, application support, and career counselling to guide those with degrees in the

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required field of work, to bridge the gap of unemployment and empower the residents to pursue opportunities more effectively. Implanting community-based training programs will assist in localising skill development within the community of Katutura Central, to equip the unemployed adults with practical, market relevant skills by keeping tuition free or low.

- Tailoring skill development programs that matches the local labour market requirements, by developing and building on vocational training and adult education projects which focuses on practical, employment skills in industries such as construction, manufacturing of soap, and renewable energy.

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