

Introduction

Census '96 revealed that there are disparities in the labour market regarding population group, place of residence and sex. These disparities have been extensively documented in many publications of Statistics South Africa.

Data from Census '96 also show the effects of these factors in respect of the participation of youth in the labour market. In this chapter we show that, among the economically active youth, access to jobs also varies on the basis of population group, place of residence and sex. Among employed youth there are some variations in occupational status and income.

Labour market status of those aged 15-35 years

The total working-age population comprises people between the ages of 15 and 65. Below the age of 15 years, work is not legal. This chapter therefore focuses on the age group 15 to 35 years of age. A comparison is drawn between this age group and people in the age group 36-65 years, as well as the working age population as a whole, in order to highlight some disparities between these groups in relation to the labour market.

More than nine in every ten youth aged 15 years (93%) reported being at school in 1996. However a small proportion were in the labour market.

It can be seen in column 1 of Tables 5.1 and 5.2 that there were 15 million people aged between 15 and 35 years in South Africa in 1996.

Among the youth (Table 5.1), the labour market status of 7,7 million is given as economically active and of 7,3 million as not. Among the economically active, 4,5 million were employed and 3,1 million unemployed, according to the expanded definition of unemployment.¹ Among those who were not economically active, 0,7 million were housewives or homemakers, 4,8 million were students or scholars and 0,1 million were permanently disabled and thus unable to work.

¹ For an explanation of the expanded definition of unemployment, see Chapter 6.

Table 5.1: Labour market status of those aged 15-35 years by population group

	Total population aged 15-35 years	Economically active			Not economically active	Labour force participation rate ²	Labour absorption rate ³	Unemployment rate ⁴
		Employed	Unemployed	Total				
	(a) N	(b) N	(c) N	(d) N	(e) N	(f) %	(g) %	(h) %
African	11 813 442	2 812 890	2 838 616	5 651 506	6 161 936	47,8	23,8	50,2
Coloured	1 377 876	664 579	222 968	887 547	490 329	64,4	48,2	25,1
Indian	398 299	200 008	35 052	235 060	163 239	59,0	50,2	14,9
White	1 449 209	869 415	52 759	922 174	527 035	63,6	60,0	5,7
Total	15 038 826	4 546 892	3 149 395	7 696 287	7 342 539	51,2	30,2	40,9

Table 5.2: Labour market status of those aged 15-35 years by province

	Total population aged 15-35 years	Economically active			Not economically active	Labour force participation rate ²	Labour absorption rate ³	Unemployment rate ⁴
		Employed	Unemployed	Total				
	(a) N	(b) N	(c) N	(d) N	(e) N	(f) %	(g) %	(h) %
W. Cape	1 488 102	741 066	214 540	955 606	532 496	64,2	49,8	22,5
E. Cape	2 100 241	367 280	461 133	828 413	1 271 828	39,4	17,5	55,7
N. Cape	296 288	111 258	61 909	173 167	123 121	58,4	37,6	35,8
F. State	1 008 745	330 259	197 390	527 649	481 096	52,3	32,7	37,4
KZN	3 112 089	800 129	711 073	1 511 202	1 600 887	48,6	25,7	47,1
N. West	1 264 796	349 385	297 935	647 320	617 476	51,2	27,6	46,0
Gauteng	3 037 433	1 275 633	692 656	1 968 289	1 069 144	64,8	42,0	35,2
Mpumalanga	1 050 909	302 537	203 640	506 177	544 732	48,2	28,8	40,2
N. Prov	1 680 223	269 345	309 119	578 464	1 101 759	34,4	16,0	53,4
S. Africa	15 038 826	4 546 892	3 149 395	7 696 287	7 342 539	51,2	30,2	40,9

² The labour force participation rate (LFPR) (f) is the sum of those who are employed (b) and unemployed (c) expressed as a percentage of the total population under consideration (a).

³ The labour absorption rate (g) is the number of employed people (b) expressed as a percentage of the total population under consideration (a).

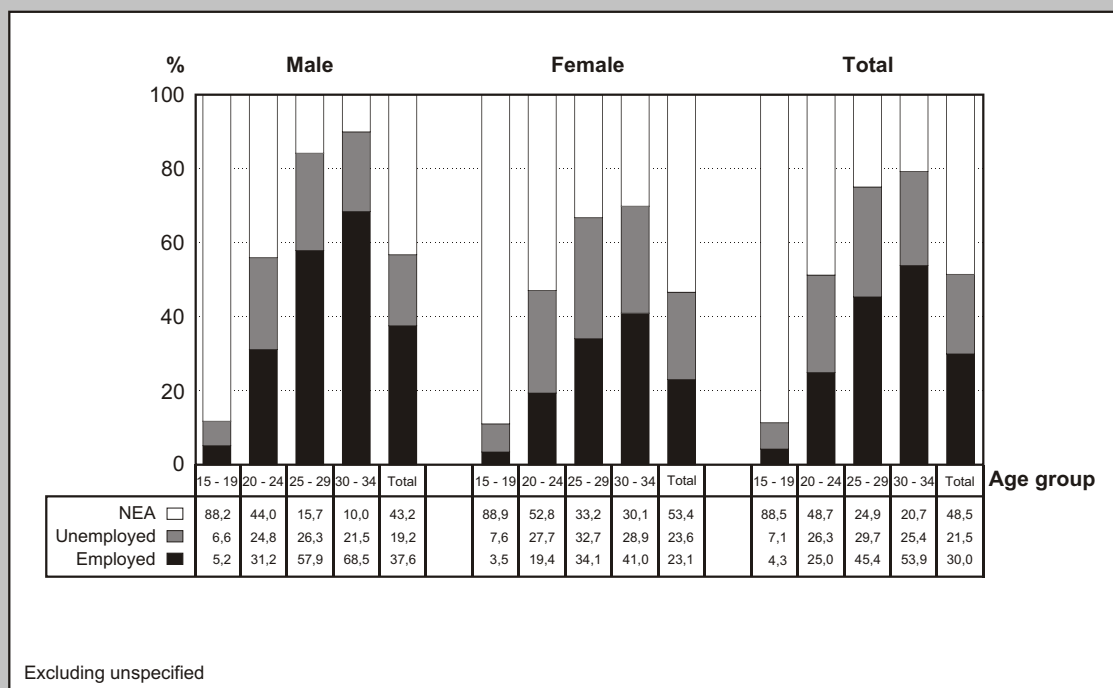
⁴ The unemployment rate (h) is the number of people who are unemployed (c) expressed as a percentage of the total economically active (d).

Figure 5.1 shows the labour market status of youth as a whole in five-year age categories from the age of 15 to 34 years by sex.

In comparing males and females, the figure shows that proportionately higher percentages of females were not economically active compared to males across all the five-year age categories. For example 44,0% of males aged 20-24 years compared to 52,8% of females in the 20-24 years age category were not economically active.

About 43,2% of male youth aged 15-34 years, compared with 53,4% of female youth, were not economically active.

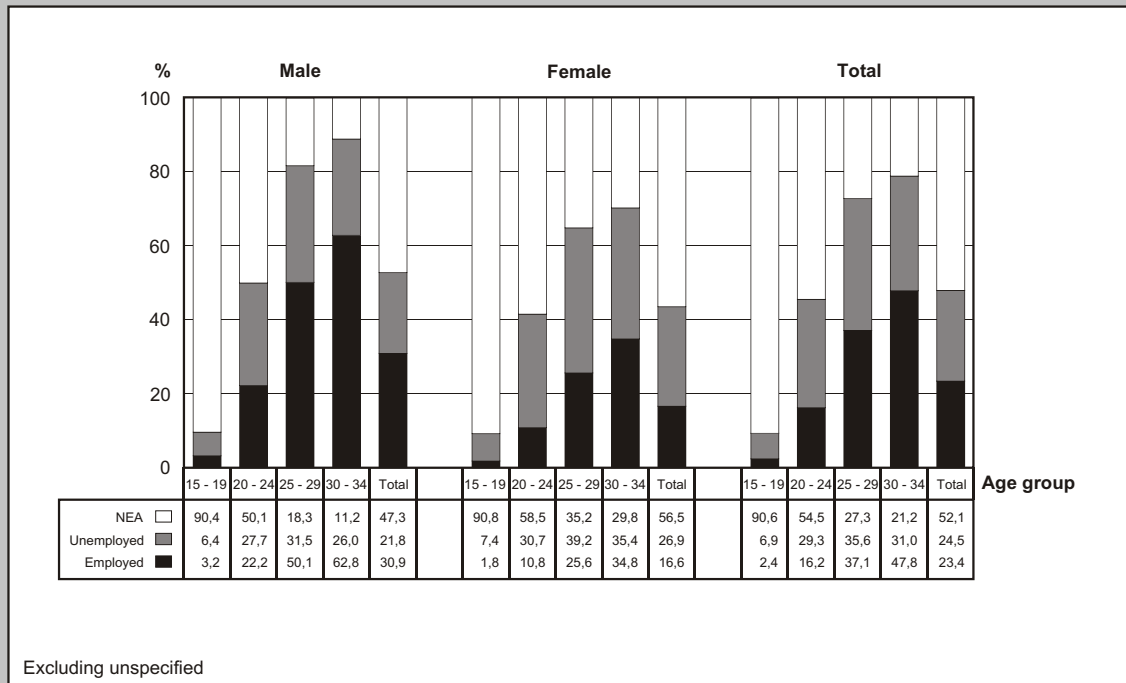
Figure 5.1: Labour market status of South African youth in five-year age intervals by sex



The proportions of youth that were not economically active tend to be larger among Africans than among the other population groups, particularly females, as Figure 5.2 indicates.

While 48,5% of all youth aged 15-34 years were not economically active (Figure 5.1), among African youth (Figure 5.2), 52,1% were not economically active.

Figure 5.2: Labour market status of African youth in five-years age intervals by sex



While, on average, a higher percentage of young African females (56,5%) were not economically active than of their male counterparts (47,3%), both percentages were higher than the national percentages of all youth of working age (43,2% among all males and 53,4% among all females).