

LANCING ACT

mismatches, defined as discrepancies between the qualifications those required by their jobs, have been a growing concern says *Bongiwe Mncwango*.

work seekers with skills relevant to labour market demands and dissonances are sometimes attributed to the labour market's failure to create suitable jobs for all workers. Moreover, in a context of high unemployment, first-time labour market entrants have the most difficulty in finding jobs that match their qualifications. This increases the likelihood that workers accept initial employment positions that do not fully utilise their skills. Therefore, while these individuals have found positions in the labour market, job-qualification mismatches are a

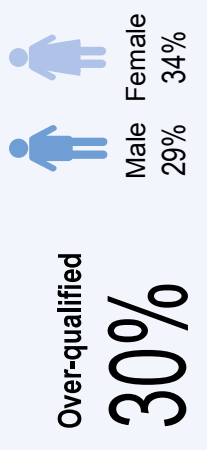
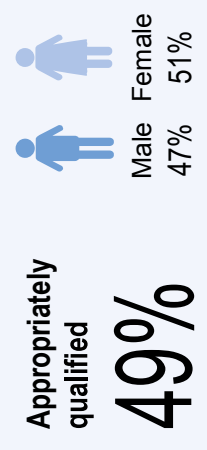
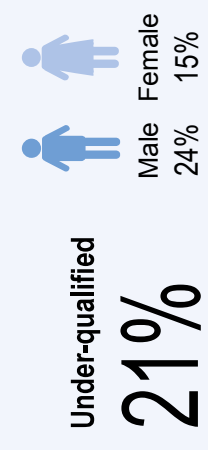
gaps can block goals for attaining inclusive economic growth. A neglected dimension to enhance understanding of qualification mismatches in the economy is the extent to which employed South Africans perceive whether their educational attainment corresponds with the skills required to successfully execute job responsibilities.

Job-qualification mismatches are a cause for concern

HSRC's 2013 South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS). We used responses from a third, 30% (850), of over-16-year-olds who indicated that they were employed. We relied on self-reported data to compute over-qualification or under-qualification by comparing each worker's highest level of educational attainment with minimal prerequisite standards identified by workers as necessary for performance of the current job.

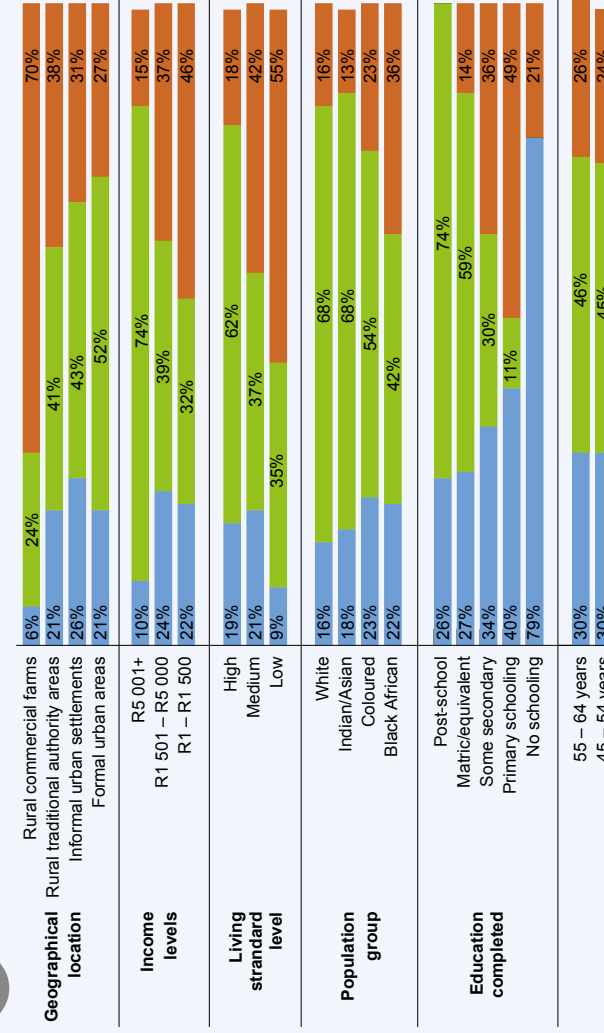
The incidence of perceived mismatches among South African workers

More than half of workers (51%) were found to have experienced a job-qualification mismatch. Over-qualification is more prevalent than under-qualification, with almost a third reporting they are overqualified, and a fifth identifying as underqualified. Based on South African evidence, we know that better educated work seekers are three times more likely to find employment compared with



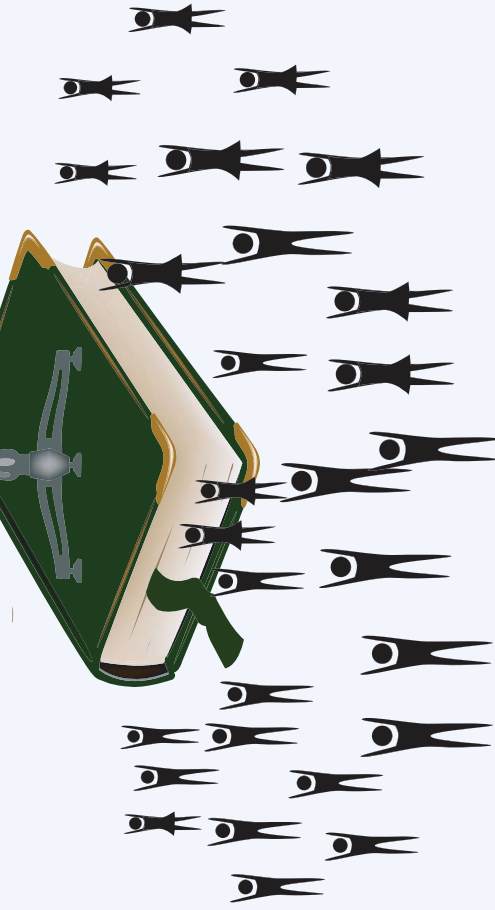
Source: HSRC 2016

Fig 2 Incidence of perceptions of over-/under-qualification by socioeconomic characteristics (%)



APERSIS I EN challenge

Improving the access of previously marginalised groups (intermediate and high-level) occupations is vital to grow African economy and to make strides towards a labour characterised by less inequality. However, deepening gender language inequalities persist as challenges in artisanal South Africa, explain *Angelique Wildschut* and *Tamlyn*



Being better-educated increases the odds of workers being well matched.

outcomes. Indeed, being better educated increases the odds of workers being well matched. Apart from workers with no formal education, the incidence of over-qualification increases with the level of education completed.

Unanswered questions

Recognising that this study was exploratory, there are still a number of questions that remain unanswered. Which occupational groups are more likely to be mismatched? Are these states temporary or permanent? How long does it take mismatched workers to transit into a better or well-matched job? What are the causes of these mismatches in the South African labour market?

For now, we conclude that whether under-qualified or over-qualified, being mismatched in the labour market can have enduring adverse effects for the

individual, the labour market and the economy. It is therefore critical to achieve a match between workers' skills and job requirements, to avoid human capital wastage and to ensure that workers' skills are appropriately utilised. The study findings include compelling evidence for the urgent need for continued investment in lifelong learning and on-job training programmes, to ensure that skills are kept up to date with what is required in the workplace

Authors: Bongiwwe Mncwango, chief researcher in the Education and Skills Development (ESD) research programme, HSRC.

This article is based on Mncwango B. (2016) *Public Attitudes to work. An LMIP*

Publication: Human Sciences Research Council. Available on www.lmip.org.za

What the numbers say

Levels of inequality have been declining in terms of race; however Africans continue to be slightly under-represented in artisanal employment (Figure 1). The 2015 mid-year estimates put Africans at 80.5% of the total population, while constituting 78% of artisanal employment.

Examining trends in the representation of men and women reveals that gender inequality in artisanal employment not only persists but has strengthened over the last few years (Figure 2).

However, the quantitative picture does not reveal the full story of inequalities in artisanal employment, nor why they persist and may even intensify.

Fig 1 Employment in craft and related trades workers 2008 and 2015 (%)



Source: Labour Force Survey (2008 and 2015)

Fig 2 Employment in craft and related trades workers gender, 2008 and 2015 (%)



Gender inequality in artisanal employment not only persists but has strengthened over the

It is critical to achieve a match between the skills obtained by workers and job requirements to avoid