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project Proposal

TITLE: Rising Youth Unemployment and Its Social Consequences

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Abstract

Youth unemployment remains one of the most pressing socio-economic challenges confronting Ethiopia today, threatening national development, social stability, and the wellbeing of millions of young people. Despite improvements in educational access, infrastructure expansion, and recent attempts to diversify the economy, the pace of job creation has not matched the rapid growth of the youth population. This research proposal seeks to investigate the underlying causes of rising youth unemployment in Ethiopia and to examine its wide-ranging social consequences, particularly among urban and rural youth, recent graduates, and young women. The study argues that youth unemployment in Ethiopia is driven by multiple, overlapping factors, including a demographic surge, limited structural transformation, skills mismatches, weak private-sector performance, and inadequate institutional support for entrepreneurship and innovation. The proposed research further explores how unemployment extends beyond economic hardship, shaping social behavior, psychological well-being, and community stability. Youth unemployment is increasingly linked to illegal migration, rising crime, substance abuse, delayed household formation, and a growing sense of disillusionment among young people. These consequences not only undermine the social and emotional health of individuals but also endanger broader societal cohesion. The research will provide a detailed analysis of the sectoral and regional distribution of youth unemployment, highlighting disparities in urban versus rural labor markets and the challenges faced by vulnerable groups such as young women and unskilled laborers. So we think through a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews, and document analysis, the study aims to produce comprehensive evidence on the root causes and consequences of youth unemployment. Findings from the research will inform policymakers, educators, and development practitioners, offering insights into effective strategies for improving youth employability, strengthening labor-market institutions, and preventing the social risks associated with prolonged unemployment. Ultimately, the study seeks to contribute to national efforts to harness Ethiopia's demographic potential by ensuring that young people are equipped, supported, and empowered to play an active role in economic transformati

1.Introduction

1.1 Background

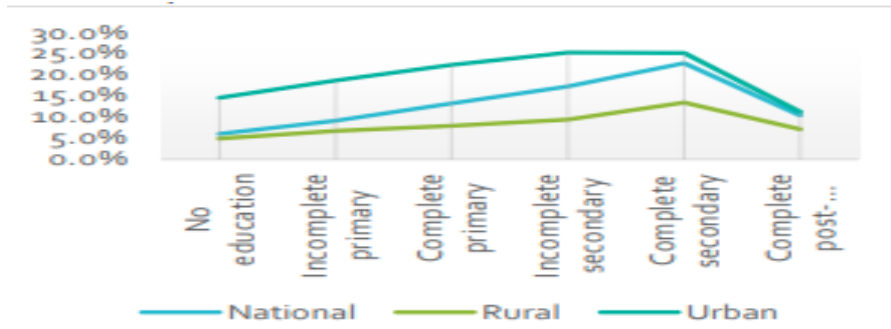
Youth unemployment has become one of the most critical socio-economic challenges facing Ethiopia today. As the country undergoes demographic changes, the proportion of young people within the population continues to rise, placing increasing pressure on the labour market. Ethiopia has one of the youngest populations in Africa, with young people aged 15–29 representing a significant segment of society. This youthful demographic has the potential to serve as an engine for national development, innovation, and economic transformation. However, when opportunities for gainful employment are limited or inaccessible, this demographic advantage risks turning into a serious social, economic, and political burden.

In recent years, reports from the Ethiopian Statistics Service (ESS) and periodic labour surveys have highlighted the persistent increase in youth unemployment rates, particularly in urban areas. Youth unemployment rates have generally remained higher than the overall unemployment figure, indicating that young people face more severe barriers to accessing stable and meaningful work. For many Ethiopian youths, the challenge is not only the scarcity of jobs but also the mismatch between the skills they acquire through formal education and the actual demands of the labour market. Despite improvements in access to education, the transition from school to work has remained difficult, leaving thousands of graduates and school leavers without job opportunities that match their skills or aspirations.

Rapid population growth also amplifies the unemployment challenge. Each year, large numbers of young Ethiopians enter the labour market, yet job creation has not kept pace with this expansion. Although Ethiopia has undertaken various development strategies aimed at stimulating economic growth — including agricultural modernization, infrastructure development, and industrialization efforts — the formal sector has struggled to absorb the growing number of job seekers. As a result, many youths resort to the informal sector, where work is often unstable, poorly paid, and lacking social protections. While

informal employment may offer temporary relief, it does not provide sustainable income, career growth, or long-term security for young people. This situation makes unemployment — or underemployment — a persistent challenge for many Ethiopian youths.

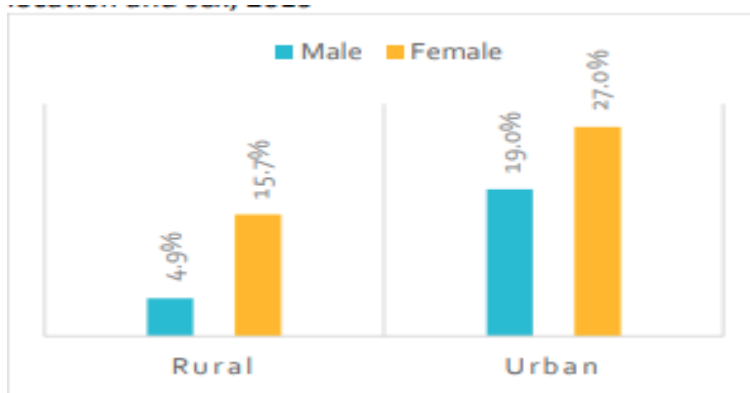
Figure: Unemployment rate by the level of education



Source: ESS, 2019

In addition to economic pressures, urbanization has contributed to rising unemployment among the youth. Many young people migrate from rural areas to towns and cities in search of better opportunities, education, or modern lifestyles. However, urban labour markets are already saturated, leaving migrants with limited options. Competition for jobs becomes intense, and many of these young migrants end up unemployed or engaged in insecure informal activities. The expansion of higher-learning institutions has also produced a large number of graduates, yet the economy has not expanded at the same rate to accommodate their expectations. As a result, graduate unemployment, once a relatively minor concern, has become a growing issue in Ethiopia's socio-economic landscape.

Figure : Unemployment rate by location and gender



Source: ESS, 2019

Youth unemployment is not simply an economic statistic; it is a multi-dimensional problem with far-reaching social consequences. Young people without productive engagement often face psychological stress, hopelessness, and reduced self-esteem. Employment is more than a source of income — it is a pathway to personal development, independence, social identity, and participation in community life. When young people lack opportunities to work, they may feel socially excluded, undervalued, or marginalized from society. This emotional and psychological impact can extend to families who may feel the burden of supporting unemployed youth for prolonged periods.

Several research studies conducted in Ethiopia have identified specific social consequences linked to youth unemployment. These include increased involvement in crime and risky behaviours, mental health challenges such as depression and anxiety, substance abuse, and reduced participation in social and civic activities. Without employment, young people may spend long periods idle or searching unsuccessfully for work, which can expose them to negative influences or reduce their motivation to pursue personal development. Families may also experience tension and frustration when financial responsibilities increase due to unemployed household members.

Furthermore, prolonged unemployment can undermine trust in public institutions, educational systems, and government development initiatives. When young people feel that their education does not lead to meaningful job opportunities, they may lose confidence in formal education or

government policies aimed at promoting youth development. This can create dissatisfaction, resentment, and, in some contexts, vulnerability to political manipulation or participation in unrest. In economically strained urban communities, youth unemployment has also been linked to rising crime rates and social instability, as unemployed youth may resort to illegal activities for survival.

Youth unemployment also affects social cohesion and community stability. Unemployed youth may feel excluded from the social and economic fabric of society, leading to weakened community ties. Joblessness often delays important life milestones such as marriage, starting a family, or contributing to household income. This delay is not merely personal — it affects broader social norms and expectations within Ethiopian culture. In communities where adulthood is closely associated with financial independence and family responsibility, unemployment creates identity conflicts and emotional strain among the youth.

Another consequence is the erosion of aspirations and long-term goals. Young people who remain unemployed for extended periods may lower their ambitions or give up on seeking formal employment altogether. This wasted potential represents a broader national loss. Ethiopia depends on its youth to drive development, but when large numbers are unemployed, poorly utilized, or socially disconnected, national development goals are hindered.

The economic cost of youth unemployment is also substantial. Unemployment means lost productivity, reduced consumer spending, and increased dependency ratios within households. When households spend more resources supporting unemployed youth, their ability to save, invest, or improve their livelihood declines. Youth unemployment also reduces the tax base and limits government revenue

that could support social programs and development initiatives. Over time, these economic effects accumulate, restricting national growth and creating cycles of poverty that are difficult to break.

For Ethiopia to achieve sustainable development and social stability, addressing youth unemployment is essential. Understanding the social consequences is critical for designing effective interventions. While job creation is often discussed as an economic issue, addressing the social dimensions — such as mental health support, community development programs, skills training, and youth empowerment initiatives — is equally important. Policymakers, development partners, NGOs, and community institutions must all understand the full scope of the problem to design holistic solutions.

Given the complexity and urgency of this issue, the present research aims to examine rising youth unemployment in Ethiopia and its social consequences. By focusing on the lived experiences of young people and the effects of unemployment on their social and psychological wellbeing, the study seeks to contribute to ongoing discussions on how to create inclusive, sustainable, and youth-friendly development strategies. The findings will be relevant for educators, policymakers, community leaders, and organizations working with Ethiopian youth, offering insights that can support targeted interventions and responsive policies.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Youth unemployment remains one of the most pressing socio-economic issues in Ethiopia and globally. Despite national policies aimed at job creation, a significant portion of young people struggle to find meaningful employment. As noted, the youth unemployment rate in urban areas of Ethiopia stands at 27.2%, with Addis Ababa experiencing the highest rate of 30%, and female youth disproportionately affected at 35%. These figures indicate that a substantial segment of the young population is unable to transition successfully from education to employment.

The impact of youth unemployment goes far beyond economic statistics. When young people cannot find work, they are more likely to fall into poverty, face social exclusion, and struggle with mental-health issues such as stress, anxiety, and depression. Many are pushed into informal or unstable jobs just to survive, which lowers overall productivity and traps them in a cycle of economic vulnerability. In urban areas, long periods of idleness among youth have been linked to rising crime rates, substance abuse, and social unrest.

A growing concern is the decline in motivation toward education. As more youths—and even graduates—remain unemployed, many begin to feel that education no longer leads to real opportunities. This perception is spreading throughout society, causing some families and communities to question the value of education itself. As a result, young people may lose interest in school, drop out early, or prioritize short-term income over long-term learning.

The effects are also visible in the increasing number of youths turning to risky behaviors and illegal migration. Faced with limited options, some young people become vulnerable to

criminal networks or attempt dangerous journeys abroad in search of better opportunities. These responses not only endanger their lives but also create broader social and security challenges.

There is high unemployment condition of youth in Ethiopia. Taking into account the existing situation of high youth unemployment rate, in recent times, the government has formulated new strategies to decrease the problem through promoting entrepreneurship mainly small scale enterprise, and creating awareness for the youth to change the attitudes of youths towards job preference and involving in the development activities of the country .

1.3 Objective of the study

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study is to examine the causes, consequences, and potential solutions to youth unemployment, with particular emphasis on its local and global dimensions.

1.3.2 Specific objective

The study aims to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. To identify the key factors contributing to youth unemployment in Ethiopia, including skill mismatches, economic constraints, and social barriers.
2. To analyze the economic, social, and psychological consequences of youth unemployment on individuals and communities.
3. To assess the effectiveness of existing local and international policies and programs designed to reduce youth unemployment.
4. To create hope and stability in the education system and the schooling path to achieve

Education based development.

To propose strategies and interventions that can enhance employment opportunities, promote entrepreneurship, and reduce the adverse effects of unemployment among youth.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it addresses one of the most urgent socio-economic challenges in Ethiopia and beyond. By analyzing the causes and consequences of youth unemployment, the study provides insights that can inform policymakers, educators, and stakeholders in designing effective interventions.

Locally, the findings can guide programs aimed at reducing youth unemployment, addressing gender disparities, and aligning educational curricula with labor market needs. Understanding the challenges faced by female youth, who experience unemployment rates as high as 35% in urban centers, can help in developing targeted initiatives that promote gender equality and inclusive economic growth.

Globally, the study contributes to broader discussions on sustainable development and youth employment, aligning with the United Nations Sustainable Development , which emphasizes the promotion of inclusive and productive employment for all. By proposing evidence-based strategies to reduce youth unemployment, the study aims to empower young people, strengthen economic productivity, and foster social stability. Ultimately, addressing youth unemployment is not only an economic imperative but also a critical factor in ensuring sustainable development, social cohesion, and the wellbeing of future generations.

The current levels of youth unemployment need to be understood in the context of increased labor market flexibility.

This finding will be helpful for better understanding of the determinant of youth unemployment in Ethiopia. This study will be helpful for the formulation of policies and

strategies towards youth unemployment. Finally, the findings and conclusion for this study can be used as the basis for further research on the area of youth unemployment.

2.Literature Review

2.1 Concept of Youth Unemployment

Youth unemployment refers to the situation in which individuals aged 15–35 are willing and able to work but cannot find gainful employment. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2022), youth unemployment is generally higher than adult unemployment worldwide due to factors such as lack of experience, education-job mismatch, and labor market rigidities.

Several scholars (Bell & Blanchflower, 2019; World Bank, 2021) argue that youth unemployment is not only an economic issue but also a social and developmental concern. Young people without employment may face delayed independence, reduced social participation, and long-term career disadvantages. The youth population represents potential human capital that, if not properly engaged, could become a social burden.

2.2 Causes of Youth Unemployment

2.2.1 Education-Job Mismatch

A significant cause of youth unemployment is the mismatch between education and labor market needs. Studies in Ethiopia and other developing countries indicate that many graduates possess theoretical knowledge but lack practical skills demanded by employers (Gebremariam, 2018; Tsegaye, 2020). This mismatch reduces employability and prolongs job search duration.

2.2.2 Rapid Population Growth

Ethiopia has one of the fastest-growing youth populations in Africa, with approximately

41% of its population under 25 (UNDP, 2021). Rapid population growth increases the number of job seekers entering the labor market annually, while formal job creation lags behind, leading to heightened unemployment pressure (World Bank, 2021).

2.2.3 Urbanization and Rural-Urban Migration

Urbanization contributes to youth unemployment as large numbers of rural youth migrate to cities seeking better opportunities (Kassahun, 2019). Urban labor markets are often saturated, leading to intense competition for limited formal jobs. Consequently, many youth end up in informal or precarious employment with low wages and little security (ILO, 2022).

2.2.4 Economic and Structural Challenges

Structural economic challenges, such as limited industrialization, low investment in labor-intensive sectors, and economic shocks, exacerbate youth unemployment in Ethiopia. The formal sector cannot absorb the growing number of job seekers, forcing youth to rely on informal and low-quality employment (Gebrehiwot, 2020).

2.3 Social Consequences of Youth Unemployment

Youth unemployment has profound social consequences, affecting not only the individual but also families, communities, and the broader society. Existing literature highlights several key areas:

2.3.1 Psychological and Emotional Effects

Unemployment among youth often leads to **stress, anxiety, depression, and reduced self-esteem** (Blanchflower & Freeman, 2018). In Ethiopia, studies indicate that unemployed youth report feelings of hopelessness, frustration, and loss of social identity (Tsegaye, 2020;

Fekadu, 2019). Long-term unemployment may also result in diminished aspirations and reduced motivation for personal development.

2.3.2 Crime and Risky Behaviors

Several researchers have linked youth unemployment to increased involvement in **crime, drug use, and other risky behaviors** (World Bank, 2021; Kassahun, 2019). In urban areas, unemployment often drives youth toward petty theft, illicit trade, or substance abuse as coping strategies. Studies in Ethiopia reveal a correlation between unemployment and youth participation in informal and illegal economic activities (Fekadu, 2019).

2.3.3 Family and Social Relations

Unemployment affects family dynamics and social relationships. In Ethiopia, extended family systems often bear the burden of supporting unemployed youth, creating financial strain and social tension (Gebremariam, 2018). Social exclusion is another consequence, as unemployed youth may feel marginalized within their communities.

2.3.4 Political and Social Instability

Prolonged youth unemployment can undermine trust in public institutions and lead to political dissatisfaction (ILO, 2022). Studies suggest that communities with high youth unemployment are more susceptible to social unrest and political manipulation. In Ethiopia, urban youth unemployment has occasionally been linked to demonstrations and community tensions (World Bank, 2021).

2.4 Global and African Perspectives

Globally, youth unemployment is recognized as a pressing issue. According to ILO (2022), the global youth unemployment rate is nearly three times higher than the adult unemployment rate. In Africa, youth unemployment is particularly high due to structural economic challenges, educational mismatches, and demographic pressures (UNDP, 2021).

In countries like Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa, research indicates similar social consequences: crime, substance abuse, reduced social cohesion, and mental health challenges among unemployed youth (Adepoju, 2018; Chukwuemeka, 2020). Comparing Ethiopia's context to these countries highlights shared patterns but also emphasizes Ethiopia-specific challenges such as rapid rural-urban migration and limited industrial job creation.

2.5 Theoretical Frameworks

2.5.1 Human Capital Theory

Becker (1964) posits that investment in education and skills increases employability and productivity. When youth education does not match labor market demands, unemployment rises. This explains the education-job mismatch seen in Ethiopia.

2.5.2 Social Exclusion Theory

Social exclusion theory (Silver, 1994) explains how unemployed youth experience marginalization, reduced participation in community life, and limited access to social resources. Youth unemployment is not only economic but also a form of social exclusion.

2.5.3 Strain Theory

Merton's (1938) strain theory posits that lack of legitimate opportunities to achieve societal goals can lead individuals to engage in deviant behaviors. This theory helps explain why some unemployed youth resort to crime or risky behaviors.

2.6 Empirical Studies in Ethiopia

Several studies focus on youth unemployment in Ethiopia:

- Gebremariam (2018): Identified high graduate unemployment and skill mismatches in urban Ethiopia.
- Fekadu (2019): Highlighted social and psychological impacts, including depression, stress, and family tension.
- Tsegaye (2020): Found rural-urban migration intensifies urban youth unemployment and informal sector engagement.
- World Bank (2021): Reported structural economic challenges and inadequate job creation for Ethiopia's growing youth population.

2.7 Research Gaps

Despite growing literature, gaps remain:

1. Limited integration of quantitative and qualitative insights into youth unemployment in Ethiopia.
2. Few studies focus on the lived experiences and social consequences of unemployment beyond economic effects.
3. Existing studies often cover large cities in Ethiopia, but there is limited focus on secondary cities like Bahir Dar, which face unique labor market and social challenges.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Approach

This study uses a mixed-methods research approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods to examine the problem of rising youth unemployment and its social effects in Ethiopia, particularly in Bahir Dar city. A mixed-methods approach fits this study well because youth unemployment is not just an economic figure, it is also a complex social issue with psychological, emotional, cultural, and behavioral aspects. To understand unemployment, we need both statistical data and an exploration of personal experiences.

From a quantitative perspective, unemployment can be measured by its prevalence, duration, demographic distribution, and links to other social and economic factors. Quantitative methods allow researchers to gather numerical evidence that shows how big the problem is. This helps reveal patterns like the percentage of youth who are currently unemployed, education levels tied to unemployment, differences in unemployment rates between genders, and how often unemployment leads to behaviors like substance abuse or petty crime. These numerical patterns serve as the basis for analysis based on evidence.

However, unemployment also has emotional and social effects that numbers alone cannot fully show. For example, being out of work can lead to feelings of hopelessness, stress, depression, and low self-esteem among young people. It can also put a strain on family relationships, limit social participation, and contribute to feelings of isolation or loss of identity. These effects are deeply personal and vary from person to person. They become clearer through qualitative research. Qualitative methods, like interviews and focus group discussions, let participants share their experiences in their own words. This helps uncover the subtle and often overlooked aspects of unemployment.

The complementary nature of quantitative and qualitative data means that one compensates for the limitations of the other. While quantitative data offers breadth and generalizability, qualitative data

offers depth and insight. By integrating both, the study ensures a holistic understanding of youth unemployment and its social impacts. Mixed-methods research also strengthens the validity of the study because triangulating data from different sources enhances credibility, clarity, and robustness of findings.

Furthermore, mixed-methods approaches are recommended in social science research when the research problem includes both objective realities (e.g., unemployment rates) and subjective experiences (e.g., feelings, attitudes, perceptions). Youth unemployment is precisely such a problem. Therefore, the methodological decision to employ mixed methods is justified and

aligned with the nature of the research topic, the research objectives, and the need to generate comprehensive knowledge that can inform policymakers, community leaders, and development practitioners.

3.2 Research Design

To operationalize the mixed-methods approach, the study employs two complementary designs: a descriptive research design for the quantitative component and a phenomenological design for the qualitative component. Each design contributes differently to the overall understanding of the research problem.

3.2.1 Quantitative Research Design: Descriptive Design

A descriptive research design is used for the quantitative component. This design is appropriate because the study seeks to “describe” the current state of youth unemployment in Bahir Dar and its associated social consequences. Descriptive research aims to systematically present the characteristics of a population or phenomenon without manipulating variables. It allows the researcher to gather factual data on the demographic distribution of unemployment, duration of unemployment, associated behaviors, and perceived social effects.

In this context, descriptive research enables the study to:

- Profile the demographic characteristics of unemployed youth (age, gender, education level, migration background, etc.).
- Measure the prevalence and patterns of unemployment.
- Identify common social consequences experienced by unemployed youth.
- Compare unemployment conditions across sub-groups (e.g., by gender or education).
- Present the nature, severity, and frequency of social impacts.

Descriptive design is also flexible enough to incorporate multiple forms of data presentation such as tables, charts, and frequency distributions. It provides a structured and organized method for summarizing large sets of data in a meaningful way.

3.2.2 Qualitative Research Design: Phenomenological Design

For the qualitative dimension, the study employs a **phenomenological research design**, which focuses on exploring lived experiences. Phenomenology is suitable because the research seeks to understand how youth interpret, make sense of, and respond to the social consequences of unemployment. The design allows participants to discuss their internal feelings, struggles, coping strategies, and personal interpretations of unemployment.

Phenomenology is grounded in the belief that individuals construct meaning based on their lived experiences. In the case of youth unemployment, each young person may experience unemployment differently depending on personal history, socio-economic background, family

support, and community environment. For example, while one individual may experience unemployment as a temporary challenge, another may view it as a long-term source of depression or stigma. Such differences can only be explored through qualitative, phenomenological inquiry.

This design allows the study to capture:

- Emotional and psychological impacts (stress, depression, hopelessness).
- Social challenges such as stigma, isolation, and exclusion.

- Family and community relationships.
- Identity-related challenges (loss of purpose or motivation).
- Social behaviors influenced by unemployment (substance abuse, crime, migration intent).

By combining descriptive and phenomenological designs, the study aligns with the principles of mixed-methods research, ensuring that both objective and subjective dimensions of the topic are sufficiently addressed.

3.3 Population and Sampling

3.3.1 Target Population

The target population for this study consists of youth aged 15 to 35 years in Bahir Dar city. This age group is chosen because it aligns with the definitions of youth provided by the Ethiopian government, the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, and the International Labour

Organization (ILO). Youth in this age range are typically transitioning from education to the labor market, making them particularly vulnerable to unemployment.

Bahir Dar is selected because it is one of the largest cities in Ethiopia and serves as a regional commercial and administrative hub. Despite its economic activity, the city faces high rates of youth unemployment due to rapid urban migration, limited job creation, skills mismatch, and the expansion of informal employment sectors. The population includes individuals with diverse socio-economic backgrounds, making it suitable for studying various dimensions of unemployment.

3.3.2 Sampling Technique

Given the mixed-methods nature of the study, different sampling techniques are used for the quantitative and qualitative components.

3.3.2.1 Quantitative Sampling: Stratified Random Sampling

Stratified random sampling will be used to select quantitative respondents. This technique divides the population into subgroups (strata) based on important characteristics such as gender, educational level, or employment history. From each stratum, respondents will be randomly selected to ensure representation of different categories. Stratification enhances precision and reduces sampling bias by ensuring that all subgroups of interest are included proportionately.

For example:

- Gender: male and female youth
- Education: primary, secondary, TVET, university
- Employment status: never employed, previously employed, recently unemployed

Stratified sampling ensures diversity and makes the findings more generalizable within the study area.

3.3.2.2 Qualitative Sampling: Purposive Sampling

Purposive sampling will be employed for qualitative interviews and focus groups. This non-probability sampling method intentionally selects individuals who possess experiences relevant to the research topic. In this case, participants must be unemployed youth or individuals who have experienced unemployment within the last two years.

This technique ensures that participants can provide detailed and meaningful insights into the social, psychological, and emotional consequences of unemployment. Purposive sampling is common in phenomenological studies because it prioritizes information-rich participants rather than representativeness.

3.3.3 Sample Size

3.3.3.1 Quantitative Sample Size

Approximately **50–100 respondents** will participate in the quantitative survey. This sample size is manageable for the researchers given time and resource constraints. It is sufficient for generating descriptive statistics and identifying basic patterns among unemployed youth.

3.3.3.2 Qualitative Sample Size

- In-depth Interviews: 15–20 participants will be selected for semi-structured interviews. This number is appropriate for phenomenological research, which emphasizes depth rather than breadth.
- Focus Group Discussions: 2–3 focus groups will be conducted, each consisting of 6–8 participants. FGDs provide collective perspectives and allow participants to build on each other's ideas.

Together, the quantitative and qualitative samples provide comprehensive insights into the issue.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

3.4.1 Quantitative Data Collection

Quantitative data will be collected using a structured questionnaire administered to the sampled youth. The questionnaire will contain close-ended items and Likert-scale statements covering four main areas:

1. Demographic Information

- Age
- Gender
- Educational background
- Marital status
- Migration history
- Household background

2. Employment Status and History

- Current employment status
- Duration of unemployment
- Previous work experience

- Job-search strategies
- Training or skill-development participation

3. Economic Impacts of Unemployment

- Income sources
- Financial dependency
- Household contributions
- Economic pressures and constraints

4. Social Consequences of Unemployment

- Crime involvement
- Substance use patterns
- Social isolation or exclusion
- Community participation
- Mental health indicators (stress, frustration, depression)

The questionnaire will be pre-tested with 10–15 individuals to ensure clarity, relevance, and reliability.

3.4.2 Qualitative Data Collection

Qualitative data will be gathered through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs).

3.4.2.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews will allow participants to discuss their experiences freely, supported by guiding questions. Key themes include:

- Emotional and psychological impacts of unemployment
- Experiences of stigma or discrimination
- Family relationships and social networks
- Daily life challenges
- Coping strategies and resilience mechanisms

Interviews will last 30–45 minutes and will be audio-recorded with consent.

3.4.2.2 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

FGDs will capture collective experiences and societal perspectives. Group interaction often stimulates richer discussion and reveals shared experiences. Each FGD will last 1–1.5 hours, moderated by a trained facilitator, and will follow a discussion guide.

3.5 Data Analysis Techniques

3.5.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics, including:

- Frequencies
- Percentages
- Tables
- Graphs (bar charts, pie charts)

Analysis will focus on highlighting patterns in:

- Employment status
- Education and unemployment
- Social behaviors
- Economic conditions

Microsoft Excel will be used to enter, clean, organize, and analyze the data. Visual representations will help readers interpret findings clearly.

3.5.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data will be analyzed using **thematic analysis**, which involves:

1. **Transcription:** Converting audio recordings into written text.
2. **Coding:** Highlighting significant statements or ideas.
3. **Categorization:** Grouping codes into broader themes.
4. **Theme Development:** Identifying patterns such as economic hardship, stigma, coping, mental health effects, and crime involvement.
5. **Interpretation:** Linking themes to research objectives and existing literature.

The results will be integrated with quantitative findings to provide a comprehensive understanding of youth unemployment.

4.Expected Outcomes

One of the major expected outcomes of this research is a clear and accurate understanding of the prevalence and distribution of unemployment among Ethiopia's youth. The analysis is expected to confirm that youth unemployment remains significantly higher than adult unemployment, with the widest gaps appearing in urban areas where labor markets are saturated and where many young people migrate in search of better opportunities.

The findings will likely show that unemployment is not evenly spread across all young people. Instead, it disproportionately affects certain groups—such as young women, recent graduates, and youth from low-income households. Although both rural and urban youth face unemployment, the study is expected to reveal that urban youth experience higher levels of joblessness due to rapid population growth in cities, limited formal job opportunities, and the decline of traditional informal jobs that once absorbed many job seekers. These insights will form a foundation for identifying the groups most in need of targeted support and intervention.

Another important expected outcome is a deeper understanding of the structural and economic factors driving youth unemployment in Ethiopia. A recurring theme is likely to be the slow pace of structural transformation. Despite national efforts to industrialize, the economy remains dominated by low-productivity agriculture, while the manufacturing sector is still too small to absorb the growing number of young job seekers entering the labor market each year. The study is also expected to highlight demographic pressures as a major contributing factor: Ethiopia's young and rapidly expanding population produces far more job seekers annually than the economy can accommodate—even during periods of economic growth. This dynamic is anticipated to emerge as one of the most significant structural barriers to employment.

The research is also expected to shed light on the mismatch between the skills young people gain through the education system and the skills required in the labor market. Interviews with youth,

educators, and employers will likely reveal that many graduates lack the practical, technical, and soft skills needed in modern workplaces. This skills gap is expected to appear among both university and TVET graduates, pointing to weaknesses in the curriculum, limited access to hands-on training, and insufficient collaboration between educational institutions and industries. Employers may report that graduates are often unprepared for real-world tasks, while young people may feel that their education has not equipped them to compete effectively. These findings will emphasize the need for comprehensive reforms in education quality and alignment with market needs.

5. Timeline

Week	Activity	Equipment
1-4	Proposal development	- Laptop/Computer - Stable internet access - MS word
5-8	Detailed literature review	-laptop/computer -internet connection -external storage for saving sources
9-10	Research design and tool development	-laptop/computer -google forms -audio recorders(we use smartphones) -printer to print consent forms and questionnaires
11-14	Data collection	-smartphones for digital surveys -paper questionnaires -smartphones to record interviews -consent form copies -transportation
15-18	Data analysis	-laptop/computer -MS excel
19-22	Writing and chapter development	-laptop/computer -MS word -citation tools -printer -internet connection
23-24	Review , editing and finalization	-laptop/computer -proofreading tools -printer

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Appendix A: Draft Research Questionnaires (Survey Instrument)

Target group: Youth aged 15–35

Purpose: To assess causes and social consequences of youth unemployment

Section 1: Demographic Information

No. Question Response Type

1. Age ☐ 15–19 ☐ 20–24 ☐ 25–29 ☐ 30–35
2. Gender ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other
3. Highest Education Level ☐ Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ Diploma ☐ Degree ☐ Masters+
4. Marital Status ☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐ Widowed
5. Residence ☐ Urban ☐ Rural
6. Household Members _____
7. Currently Employed? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Section 2: Employment Status

No. Question Response Type

1. Duration of Unemployment ☐ <6 months ☐ 6–12 months ☐ 1–3 yrs ☐ 3+yrs
2. Ever Employed Before? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Section 5: Mental Health and Well-being

No. Question Response Type

1. Depression/Anxiety due to joblessness? ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Self-esteem level ☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low
3. Social support available? ☐ Yes ☐ No
4. Social relationship affected? ☐ Yes ☐ No
5. Hope for employment future ☐ Very hopeful ☐ Hopeful ☐ Not sure ☐ Hopeless

Section 6: Proposed Solutions

No. Question Response Type

1. Government measures to reduce unemployment _____
2. Promote entrepreneurship training? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe
3. Would you start business if funded? ☐ Yes ☐ No
4. Skills needed in job market _____
5. Suggestions to solve unemployment

Appendix B: Draft Interview Questions

Section 1: Demographic and Background Information

1. Can you tell me a bit about yourself? For example, your age, education level, where you grew up?
2. What is your marital status, and do you have any dependents?

Section 2: Employment Status and History

3. Can you describe your current employment situation? If you're unemployed, how long has it been since you last had a job?
4. What education or training have you completed? Do you feel it prepared you for the job market?
5. What do you think are the main reasons for youth unemployment in Bahir Dar or Ethiopia?
6. Have social barriers, such as gender expectations or discrimination, played a role in your job search?

Section 3: Economic Impacts and Daily Challenges

7. How has unemployment affected your daily life financially? For example, how do you manage income or expenses?
8. Have you engaged in informal or underemployed work? How does it compare to what you hoped for in terms of stability and pay?

Section 4: Social and Psychological Consequences

9. How has being unemployed made you feel emotionally? For example, have you experienced stress, frustration, hopelessness, or low self-esteem?
10. How has unemployment impacted your relationships with family, friends, or your community?
11. Have you noticed any changes in your behavior or habits due to unemployment? For example, involvement in risky activities, substance use, or crime?
12. How has unemployment affected your participation in social or community activities? Do you feel more or less connected to society?

Section 5: Coping Strategies and Resilience

13. What strategies have you used to cope with unemployment? For example, job-search methods, skill-building, or support networks.
14. Have you considered options like entrepreneurship, further training, or migration? What barriers or opportunities do you see?

