



Determinants of Perceptions of Poverty; A Case of Townships in Gauteng Province of South Africa

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ABSTRACT

Poverty reduction policies and interventions are only effective if the poor themselves own the process and believe in the process being implemented. The way people perceive poverty is to a greater extent informed by their position and economic circumstances in society. The conservative theorist of poverty argue that the poor are lazy and hence would tend to blame the society and the structures thereof. Assertions in the culture of poverty by Oscar Lewis imply that the poor may become comfortable in their poverty and hence may ignore any efforts that would change their circumstances. The liberal theories on the other hand argue that those in poverty perceive poverty as a result of an evil and an unequal system. However, these are general expectations and yet they are not always the same across countries and regions. This paper examines the perceptions of the causes of poverty as conceived by the people living in selected South African townships. The paper used data that was collected in the Gauteng Province South Africa in 2019–2020. Based on the Feagin scale of perceptions of the causes of poverty, the main categories namely, fatalistic, structural and individualistic, are considered between the different households. The results show that the poor to a greater extent agree with the structural perceptions of causes of poverty whilst those that are above the poverty line assign their position to hard work and hence blame the poor for their own circumstances mostly agreeing with the individualistic perception of causes of poverty.

Keywords: Poverty, Perceptions, Households, Fatalistic, Structural, Individualistic

JEL Classifications: A10, D10, D13

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of poverty has been a central theme of many policy discussions globally and remains objective number one on the sustainable development goals list of priorities. The concept itself is agreed to a greater extent to mean the deprivation of basic necessities for a respectable life (Ghatak, 2015; The World Bank, 2018a). In as much as the severity of poverty is so great amongst many people around the world the extent is much more concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa where the numbers have not improved, in anyway, they have worsened in some countries (The World Bank, 2018b). Many countries in Asia have seen substantial improvements and have reduced the number of poor people by any standard or measurement. This is clear manifestation of the fact that poverty reduction policies have to be tailored to the

circumstances prevalent in a particular locality. As Bradshaw, (2006) pointed out, Poverty reduction policies and interventions are only effective if the poor themselves own the process and believe in the process being implemented. Thus, it can be extended that the way people perceive poverty is to a greater extent informed by their position and economic circumstances in society. The poor themselves understand poverty in a way that may be different from the policy formulators and implementers.

Davis and Sanchez-Martinez (2015) pointed out that the classical economic traditions contend that individuals are ultimately responsible for poverty, These are traditionally grouped as the conservative theories of poverty (Bradshaw, 2006) These theories of poverty argues that the poor need to take responsibility for their circumstances arguing that their way of life breeds tendencies that

are akin to the perpetuation of deprivations (Davis and Sanchez-Martinez, 2014; Davis and Sanchez-Martinez, 2015). On the other hand, there are those who consider themselves as the champions of the poor. These can be traced to the Marxian views, that as Davis and Sanchez-Martinez (2015) also pointed out consider class and group discrimination as central to poverty and assign a key role to the state in its intervention and regulation of markets, to avoid further exploitation of the poor. Thus, in trying to address poverty, Anti-poverty proposals or policies under their suggestions include minimum wages and anti-discrimination laws and in modern days a universal basic income.

The way the poor people view poverty therefore is paramount to the success of any policy or government intervention and needs to emanate from the foundations that are informed by what the poor themselves perceive to be the causes of poverty. Studies on the perceptions of poverty (Kreidl, 2000; Niemela, 2008; Grobler and Dunga, 2016) have mostly considered what is popularly known as the Feagin scale which has individualistic, structuralist, and fatalistic as the main perceptions of poverty. A number of statements are used to ask participants to agree or disagree with the statement and in so doing indicating their perception of the cause of poverty. The objective of this paper is first; to calculate an index based on the statements (discussed in detail in the methodology section) across the three perceptions. Further the paper will investigate the determinants of the perceptions by considering the characteristics of the respondents in terms of their score on the index. The rest of the paper is organized as follows; the next section is the literature review, followed by the methodology, the results and discussion and the conclusion.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Poverty is multifaced in nature as such to understand and explain poverty may differ in so many ways depending on an individual as well as by country. As such it is imperative to include the poor themselves when determining the perceptions of poverty. World Bank (2015) contend that by focusing directly on poor people's perceptions, it helps identify the interlocking dimensions of powerlessness and ill-being which emerge from narratives of the poor. But also, that poor people's perceptions can be used to communicate their priorities into policy debates and decision-making. In determining the importance of the perceptions of poverty, it is theoretically easier to show the linkage between the theories of poverty themselves and the perception of poverty. In literature, the theories of poverty, which are a succinct attempt to explain the causes of poverty, are viewed from two main angles. Firstly, is a group of perspectives traditionally referred to as the Conservative Theories of Poverty which attribute this condition to individual deficiencies (Ryan, 1976; Schiller, 1989; Bradshaw, 2006). The second group takes cognisance beyond the individual and attributes poverty to broader social phenomena (liberal or progressive) (Bradshaw, 2006). Accordingly, while the Conservative approach attempts to explain the causes of poverty in an individualistic dimension, the liberal approach focuses on structural dimensions in society and how those interactions may explain the existence of poverty, similarly, the liberal theories also perceive that the poor may not be responsible for their

own situation but rather of some external circumstances which play a role such as bad fate (Davids, 2010). However, these are general expectations and yet they are not always the same across countries and regions. The next sections detail the three theories of perceptions of poverty.

2.1. Perceptions of Poverty

This section highlights the theories behind the perceptions of poverty. Discussions in the understanding of poverty have continuously considered what those experiencing poverty and even those in proximity to poverty conceive it to be and what they perceive to be its main causes or deprivation as is understood in other contexts. Based on the literature there are a number of perceptions on the causes of poverty. Most literature identifies three subjective perceptions of poverty namely individualistic, structural and fatalistic causes of poverty (Blank, 2003; Bradshaw, 2007; Davids, 2010; Dunga, 2019). These are mostly considered in the light of the scale provided by Feagin (1975) in what is popularly known as the Feagin scoring scale. Table 1 presents the three perceptions of poverty in detail.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Methodology

The study employed primary data which was collected in the year 2020 from selected Households around Gauteng province. A household questionnaire was developed and piloted, and

Table 1: Perceptions of poverty

Perception of poverty	Explanation
Individualistic perception	The individualistic perception is categorised in the group of the conservative school of thought. In this regard the blame entirely points on the poor themselves as responsible for their situation (Grobler and Dunga, 2014). (Lewis, 1966) contends that poor people are entrenched in a certain way of life that they don't really seem to desire an improvement in their life that would change that way of life. (Ibid) further argues that the poor fail to realise the cause of their problems and are always blaming society. In summary the Individualistic factors are when individuals blame themselves for being poor.
Structuralist perception	The structural perception of poverty looks at poverty as a consequence of social injustices that are promoted by social structures. The society is in this case blamed for having structures and processes that include others and excludes others in the distribution of resources (Larsson et al., 2010; Rowlingson, 2011; Koczan, 2016).
Fatalistic perception	Fate which by definition entails occurrences that are beyond the control of an individual is considered as one of the main causes of poverty. Fatalistic factors are when individuals blame unexpected events, such as illness and accidents for being poor Davis, 2010. People especially children who grow up to be adults that encountered fate in terms of the death of their parents or guardians while they were young may perceive that their situation is due to fate (Niemela, 2008; Davids and Gouws, 2013). The fatalistic perception, therefore, considers poverty as something that is beyond the control of an individual or society.

subsequently used to collect the data from household heads in the study area. For measuring the three perceptions of poverty the study adopted the Feagin scale (Feagin, 1975) presented in Table 2.

3.2. Sampling Techniques

A sample of 587 questionnaires were found to be valid for analysis after data cleaning. To determine the sample size, the study followed the recommendation by Gujarati (2004) that for statistical purposes, especially when one applies the central limit theorem, any sample of 30 and above is considered large enough to perform basic statistical procedures. Some studies related to the current a similar study was also conducted in Malawi by (Dunga, 2019) who employed similar sample sizes of 350 and 580, respectively and produced good results. Selection of townships where data was administered was done randomly, Households were selected randomly whereby a fieldworker walked around the research area and selected every fourth house. This procedure was repeated until the required population was achieved. The survey was conducted by experienced enumerators who first received training on the relevant matters of interest. The respondents included only head of households.

3.3. Measuring Instruments

To measure the poverty status of household, the study used the 2019 South African poverty line which was then multiplied by the number of people in the household and further the results was subtracted from the total amount of monthly income, the results if negative meant the household was poor and if positive amount the household was regarded non poor the same was done to all households in the study.

The study also calculated the household food security status. In this regard an already developed scale of Household Food Insecurity Access Scale was employed. The HFIAS is a measure of food insecurity that was established by United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the project of Food and Nutritional Technical Assistance (FANTA) (Deitchler et al., 2010). Finally using excel a categorical household food security status was formulated dividing them between food secure and food insecure households.

The study also calculated an index for each perceptions of poverty namely individualistic, structuralist and fatalistic perception adopting a scale from (Feagin, 1975) using factor analysis to

Table 2: Questions on perceptions of poverty

Index	Reason for poverty
Individualistic	They lack the ability to manage money They waste their money on inappropriate items They do not seek to improve their lives
Structuralist	The society lacks social justice Distribution of wealth in the society is uneven They lack opportunities because they live in poor families They live in places where there are not many opportunities
Fatalistic	They have bad fate They lack luck They have encountered bad misfortunes They are not motivated because of welfare

analyse. The three factors were extracted from 12 statements about individual's perceptions of the causes of poverty. The reliability of the instrument to measure the perceptions was also tested. From the 5 Likert scale where 1 meant strongly agree and 5 strongly disagree, an index was created where the higher score represented disagree and lower score represented agree.

3.4. Model Specification

The main aim of the study was to analyse the determinants of perceptions of poverty in Gauteng South Africa. To achieve this aim, the study employed descriptive analyses, cross-tabulations and regression analysis. Three indices were calculated based on the responses as regards to the perceptions of the causes of poverty. The perceptions were adopted from the existing scale (Feagin, 1975) that contains questions on individualistic perceptions, structural perceptions and fatalistic perceptions as the causes of poverty as presented in Table 2.

Cross-tabulations were employed to compare the differences in poverty perceptions of households in question. A linear regression model was then applied to determine the perceptions of poverty from the selected households. The study follows the approach similar to the one adopted in studies by Davids and Gouws (2013) as well as Dunga (2016) in which three regression models were run for each perception of poverty. The linear regression model was formulated as follows:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{1i} + \beta_2 X_{2i} + \beta_3 X_{3i} + \dots + \beta_n X_{ni} + \epsilon_i \quad (1)$$

Where Y is the outcome variable, β_0 is the coefficient of the first predictor (X_1), β_2 is the coefficient of the second predictor (X_2), β_n is the coefficient of the nth predictor (X_n) and ϵ_i is the difference between the predicted and the observed value of Y for the i^{th} participation (Field, 2009). Applying the discussed model, the regression for the study will be as follows,

$$Index_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1(INCOME) + \beta_2(HFIAS) + \beta_3(POVERTY STATUS) + \beta_4(GENDER FEMALE) + \beta_5(EDUCATION LEVEL) \quad (2)$$

The Indexes were: Regression 1 Individualistic perception, Regression 2 structuralist perception and regression 3 Fatalistic perception. All three regression models employed the same independent variables defined in Table 3.

- The parameter β_0 is the constant or intercept,
- β_{1-5} are the coefficients for the independent variables

Table 3: Description of independent variables

Variable	Description
Log income	Income of household changed to Log Income
HFIAS	Household food security status (1 food insecure, 0 food secure)
Poverty status	Poverty status of household (1 poor and 0 non poor)
Gender	Gender household head (1 female 0 male)
Education level	Education level of household head

***Poverty status of household was calculated using the South African 2019 poverty line.

***Household food Insecurity Access scale was calculated using a scale developed by the Food and Nutritional Technical Assistance (FANTA) project under the United States Agency for International development

All independent variable which have categorical values were entered as dummy variables, where the number of dummies will be $n-1$; n being the number of categories.

4. RESULTS

This section presents results for the study, in sequence order the first results are the descriptive followed by the cross-tabulation results and lastly the regression results as follows;

Table 4 presents descriptive results for continuous variables in the study, it shows that according to household size, the minimum number of people in a household was 2 and maximum 16. A total of 43,000 rand per month was the maximum amount of income a household earned and the minimum of 100 rand a month. Highest age of household head was 88 and 20 the minimum.

Table 5 presents descriptive results for categorical variables in the study, it shows that by gender 54% of the households were headed by males and 46% by females. And by employment status, 51.8% were employed and 48% were not employed. Based on food security status of the household 80.4% of the household were found to be food insecure and 19.6% were found to be food secure the results were calculated using the Household Food Security Scale developed by Fanta. The last variable, poverty status of household head was calculated using the household size, total income and the poverty line to come up with the poverty status of household. 18% of the household were found to be non-poor and 81.9% were found to be poor household. The results between HFIAS status and Poverty status of the household reflect that the same households that were found to be poor also struggle with food security.

The descriptive results on perceptions of poverty are presented in Table 6, on individualistic perception, a majority of the population (average 95%) disagreed with the fact that they were to blame for being poor otherwise they believed being poor was attributed by foreign factors and not them. Results on structuralist perception, a majority (average 80%) of the population agreed that lack of proper structures attributed to them being poor and lastly with the fatalistic perception, a larger population perceived that fate played a role in them being poor. The results make sense as this is aligned to what the study found in previous results that most households who were found to be poor were also food insecure, hence it is unusual for such people to put the blame on themselves but rather shift the blame on someone else.

Table 7 presents cross tabulation and Chi-square results between food security and perception of poverty. The Chi-square test shows that there exist statistically significant differences between the food secure and food insecure households with regard to their perceptions of individual and structural and fatalistic causes of poverty as evidenced from the p values presented. Based on

individualistic perception of poverty, it shows that on average 80% of the food insecure households disagreed that they were to blame for being poor and the opposite most food secure believed in the individualistic perception. The results emanate from the view that since food insecure households are in poverty, they are unwilling to attribute their poverty to their own failures. With the structuralist perception, a majority of the food insecure household perceived that economic structures around their society are the main leading cause of poverty amongst them. This result could be linked to the perception by the food insecure people that their poverty is not due to individual problems. Instead, they prefer to blame the government and the economic climate. lastly on fatalistic a majority of the food insecure household agreed that bad fate was another cause of poverty amongst them.

Table 8 presents cross tabulation results between poverty status and perception of poverty. The Chi-square test shows that there exist statistically significant differences between the poor and non-poor households with regard to their perceptions of individual, structural and fatalistic causes of poverty as evidenced from the p values presented. Based on individualistic perception of poverty, it shows that on average over 80% of the poor households disagreed that they were to blame for being poor and the opposite most of non-poor believed in the individualistic perception. The results emanate from the view that the poor who are in poverty, are mostly unwilling to attribute their poverty to their own failures. With the structuralist perception, a majority of the poor household perceived that economic structures around their society are the main leading cause of poverty amongst them. This result could be linked to the individualistic perception of the poor that their poverty is not due to individual problems. Instead, they prefer to blame the government and the economic climate. lastly on fatalistic a majority of the poor household agreed that bad fate was another cause of poverty amongst them.

Table 9 presents the results for the Ordinary Least Squares regression model in which three different types of regressions were employed to analyse the determinants of perception of poverty. As discussed, the regressions were conducted based on the three main perceptions of the causes of poverty, as advocated by Feagin (1975). An ordinary least squares regression was used since the perceptions were constructed into an index measured on a scale of measure as a continuous variable, where a lower score indicated “strongly agree,” and a higher score “strongly disagree”. The results were as follows:

4.1. Income

Using the individualistic index where responses that are high indicate disagreement with the perception that individuals are to blame for their circumstances and vice versa. Income was the first independent variable employed in the study, based on individualistic perception it shows that income had a negative

Table 4: Descriptive for continuous variables

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Household size	587	2.00	16.00	6.4242	2.10208
Household Total Income	587	100.00	43000.00	5648.2794	6593.28477
Age Household head	587	20.00	88.00	43.1499	11.50225

coefficient of -0.218 and $P = 0.014$, denoting that the factor was significant at the 5% level. The negative coefficient indicates that an increase in income is associated with a decrease in the score. The higher the household income the lower the index score. Thus, households with higher incomes are more likely to agree with the individualistic perception of poverty. Meaning that people with higher income believe that poverty is a result of laziness and that the poor do not apply themselves to change their situation. On the other hand it means the poor themselves disagree with

the individualistic perception as they score higher implying that they do not assign the blame to themselves. Using the same variable on structuralists perception income had a coefficient of 0.761 and a $P = 0.001$ which was significant at 1%. The positive coefficient denotes that those with high income scored high on the scale hence they disagreed with the structuralist perception. The third regression shows income had a coefficient of 0.841 , with a $P = 0.00$ significant at 1%. This means that those with higher income were more likely to disagree while those with less income tend to agree that bad fate could be another reason of them being poor meaning that their poverty is not influenced by themselves but rather the structures and the fate surrounding them.

Table 5: Descriptive statistics for categorical variables

Factor	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender household head	Male	319	54
	Female	268	46
Employment status	Employed	304	51.8
	Not employed	283	48.2
Food security status	Food secure	115	19.6
	Food insecure	472	80.4
Poverty status	Non poor	106	18.1
	Poor	481	81.9

Table 6: Perceptions of poverty

Perception	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)
Individualistic perception		
They lack the ability to manage money	1.4	98.6
They waste their money on inappropriate items	1.2	98.8
They do not actively seek to improve their lives	2.6	97.4
They are exploited by rich people	88.4	11.6
Structuralist perceptions		
The society lacks social justice	93.4	6.6
Distribution of wealth in the society is uneven	87.7	12.3
They lack opportunities because they live in poor families	82.1	17.9
They live in places where there are not many opportunities	87.7	12.3
Fatalistic perception		
They have bad fate	8.5	91.5
They lack luck	5.8	94.2
They have encountered misfortunes	6.6	93.4
They are not motivated because of welfare	30.3	69.7
They are born inferior	3.6	96.4

4.2. Household Food Security

The second variable for the regression analysis was HFIAS, being categorical variable, a dummy was created defined as 1 food insecure 0 food secure. In regression 1 the variable had a coefficient of 0.387 and $P = 0.037$. Meaning that the food insecure are more likely to disagree with the individualistic perception. This can be expected since in most cases food insecure households are most likely to be poor, hence they do not want to blame themselves for their poverty. In second regression, HFIAS had a coefficient of -0.700 and $P = 0.008$ significant at the one per cent level. This result depicts that food insecure households are more inclined to structuralist rather than individualistic perceptions. This, in turn, portrays that they too, perceive that poverty is a result of the economic structures surrounding their society. And lastly in the third regression, food insecure had a coefficient of -1.322 and $P = 0.002$. The results indicate that the food insecure households were more likely to agree with fatalistic perception of poverty in that besides structures, bad fate also played a role in them being food insecure.

4.3. Poverty Status

The third variable for the three regressions was poverty status being categorical a dummy variable was created where defined as 0 non poor and 1 for poor households. In the 1st regression poor household had a coefficient of 0.435 $P = 0.023$ significant at 5%. The results mean that the poor were more likely to disagree with the individualistic perception this could be because they didn't not want to put the blame on themselves as to why they were poor.

Table 7: Poverty perception between food secure and food insecure household

Poverty Perception	Food Secure		Food Insecure		Chi-square test (p-value)
	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	
Individualistic perception					
They lack the ability to manage money	87.5%	18.5%	12.5%	81.5%	0.000
They waste their money on inappropriate items	85.7%	18.5%	14.3%	81.28%	0.000
They do not actively seek to improve their lives	60.0%	18.5%	40.0%	81.5%	0.000
They are exploited by rich people	15.4%	52.5%	84.6%	48.5%	0.001
Structuralist perceptions					
The society lacks social justice	18.4%	64.1%	81.6%	35.9%	0.008
Distribution of wealth in the society is uneven	19.3%	73.9%	80.7%	26.1%	0.007
They lack opportunities because they live in poor families	19.5%	80.0%	80.5%	20%	0.004
They live in places where there are not many opportunities	18.6%	73.6%	81.4%	26.4%	0.009
Fatalistic perception					
They have bad fate	6%	79.1%	94.0%	20.9%	0.005
They lack luck	2.9%	79.4%	97.1%	20.6%	0.000
They have encountered misfortunes	5.1%	79.4%	94.9%	20.6%	0.020
They are not motivated because of welfare	27.5%	83.9%	72.5%	16.1%	0.010
They are born inferior	4.8%	79.9%	95.2%	20.1%	0.000

Table 8: Poverty perception between poor and non-poor household

Poverty Perception	Non-poor		Poor		Chi-square test (P-value)
	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	
Individualistic perceptions					
They lack the ability to manage money	87.5%	17.0%	12.5%	83.0%	0.000
They waste their money on inappropriate items	85.7%	17.2%	0.2%	99.8%	0.000
They do not actively seek to improve their lives	60%	17%	40%	83%	0.000
They are exploited by rich people	13.7%	51.5%	86.3%		0.001
Structuralist perceptions					
The society lacks social justice	17%	66.7%	83%	33.3%	0.008
Distribution of wealth in the society is uneven	17.7%	73.9%	82.3%	26.1%	0.007
They lack opportunities because they live in poor families	15.7%	34.7%	84.3%	64.3%	0.005
They live in places where there are not many opportunities	16%	72.4%	84.2%	27.66%	0.003
Fatalistic perceptions					
They have bad fate	8.0%	81.0%	92.0%	19%	0.000
They lack luck	5.9%	18.8%	94.1%	81.2%	0.010
They have encountered misfortunes	10.3%	18.6%	89.7%	81.4%	0.000
They are not motivated because of welfare	20.2%	17.1%	79.8%	82.9%	0.000
They are born inferior	9.5%	18.4%	90.5%	81.6%	0.001

Table 9: Regression results on determinants of perception of poverty

Variable	Regression 1 Individualistic			Regression 2 Structural			Regression 3 Fatalistic		
	β	T	Sig	B	T	Sig	β	t	Sig
Constant	14.399	8.559	0.000*	5.299	8.495	0.000	12.951	3.516	0.000
Log-income	-0.218	-2.455	0.014	0.761	3.237	0.001	0.841	4.208	0.000
HFIAS	0.387	2.095	0.037	-0.700	-2.660	0.008	-1.322	-3.154	0.002
Poverty Status	0.435	2.286	0.023	-1.024	-2.956	0.003	-1.253	-2.893	0.004
Gender female	0.70	0.148	0.638	0.041	-1.493	0.136	-0.361	-1.072	0.284
Education lev.	-0.323	-1.947	0.001	0.844	3.421	0.001	1.122	2.970	0.003
Employment stat	0.368	2.168	0.031	0.681	2.939	0.003	-0.847	-2.537	0.111

With the second regression (coefficient -1.024 and $P = 0.003$), shows that the same poor people were rather more likely to blame the structures and surroundings around them for their poverty. Fatalistic perception was found to be insignificant.

4.4. Education Level

Education level was another independent variable in the three regression models. The variable was described as the number of years of schooling. Under the 1st regression, the variable had a coefficient of -0.323 and $P = 0.001$, denoting that the factor was significant at the 1% level. The negative coefficient indicates that households with more levels of education agreed with the individualistic perception of poverty. This disposition could be linked to their high levels of education and the benefits they have enjoyed from it, which lead them to perceive that poor and uneducated people deserve the blame. The structuralist perception shows a positive coefficient of 0.844 and $P = 0.001$, which suggests that educated people were more likely to disagree with the structuralist while the uneducated more likely put the blame on the structures around them as a contributing factor to them not being getting educated which later pushes them to the uneducated group. This also serves as evidence of the probability that the structures surrounding the poor may not be conducive enough for everyone to get the right education. Thus, escaping the poverty trap may be challenging for many in developing countries such as South Africa where educational infrastructure and facilities are inadequate. Under fatalistic perceptions, education level had a coefficient of 1.122 with a $P = 0.003$ significant at 5%. This means that those with higher education level were more likely to

disagree while those with less income tend to agree that bad fate could be another reason of them being poor meaning that their poverty is not influenced by themselves but rather the structures and the fate surrounding them.

Gender was another independent variable in the regression, but it was found to be insignificant in all the three regressions.

5. CONCLUSION

The main objective of the study was to analyse the determinants of poverty from residents in Gauteng townships. To achieve this objective the study employed a qualitative analysis using data that was collected in these areas. The study adopted Feagin's (1975) scale which classified the perceptions into three different types, namely individualistic perceptions, structuralist perceptions and fatalistic perceptions. As part of the analysis the study firstly conducted the descriptive analysis, cross tabulation and a linear regression model to classify the study populations' perceptions of poverty. This was done using the Statistical package for social sciences.

Results on perceptions of poverty of the study presented the following, from the three perceptions, a majority of the household heads disagreed with the individualistic and fatalistic approach, most of them agreed with the structuralist approach this is in line with results from descriptive analysis which showed that most of the households were poor and food insecure hence could not

have loved to associate themselves with their poverty but rather blame it on external sources. Cross tabulation results on poverty perceptions between food secure and food insecure households indicated that a majority of the food insecure household agreed with the individualistic and fatalistic perception and not the fatalistic perception. Similar results were also found on cross tabulation between the poor and the non-poor households where the latter agreed with individualistic and fatalistic perception and not the fatalistic perception.

The last results were from the linear regression, three independent regressions were run, where the three perceptions of poverty were employed as dependent variables and income, HFIAS, poverty status employment status as independent variables. The findings are similar to what has been found so far in the study that those with higher income, the food secure, those employed, and the poor households were more likely to disagree with the individualistic perceptions and fatalistic perception of poverty, but they were more likely to agree with structuralist perception. The results concur with the conservative theorist of poverty which argue that the poor are lazy and hence would tend to blame the society and the structures thereof.

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