

# **LAW SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

## **YOUNG LAWYERS SURVEY**

**27 JANUARY 2019**

DATA ANALYSIS AND REPORT BY



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Young Lawyers Survey was undertaken by the LSSA in the last months of 2018 and aimed to gain a thorough understanding of the experiences, perceptions and needs of young lawyers in South Africa and their expectations of the LSSA, especially in view of the changes in function brought about by the Legal Practice Act (LPA).

A total of 1 555 young lawyers participating in the survey which included in the definition of “young lawyers” those aged 35 and younger and those over 35, but who have been in practice for fewer than 5 years. The majority of respondents (75.9%) indicated that they were 35 years or younger at the time of the survey while 7.1% were over 35 but in practice for less than five years. The majority (61.7%) of the respondents were women and 37.9% were men. The largest population group was Black African (43.9%), followed by Whites (37.2%).

### ***The work life of young lawyers***

The young lawyers who participated in the survey were mainly working in firms based in Gauteng (45.1%), the Western Cape (17.0%) and in KwaZulu-Natal (14.1%). More than half (54.3%) of the respondents worked in incorporated companies. The majority were based in small firms with fewer than five attorneys. More than half (55.2%) were candidate attorneys (CAs), 18.1% had the designation “Professional Assistant” and 14.4% were called Associates. The majority of respondents (68.0%) reported that at the time of the survey they had been with their firms for less than two years.

Almost 30% of the respondents reported that they spent fifty hours or more on legal work.

In terms of the areas of practice in which they were involved, the majority (70%) of the respondents indicated that they were involved with litigation. This was followed by family law (54%), the administration of estates (42%) and debt collection. When asked to indicate the desired areas of practice for which they will need training, the respondents listed a wide range of areas with commercial and tax law, conveyancing and intellectual property law at the top of the list.

More than 70% of the respondents agreed that they had a good work environment and 15% found it hard to decide. A relatively small group (14%) disagreed with the statement. Most of the young lawyers who participated in the survey found their work to be intellectually challenging and the majority agreed that they had substantial control over their work. The respondents were given an opportunity to make some other general comments about their work life, for example, whether they have experienced sexual harassment, gender bias, race bias or abuse at work. The majority (65%) of the respondents did not react to this question. Those who did answer mostly complained about racial and gender bias or discrimination. These complaints were reported respectively by 7% and 5% of respondents. Other themes that emerged from these answers include some form of abuse or victimisation, poor or harsh working conditions, salary-related complaints, an organisational culture that is not conducive to training and sexual harassment by colleagues and/or clients.

### ***The work-life balance of young lawyers***

Young attorneys clearly experience pressure and tension in their work situations as more than 60% disagreed with the statement that the level of pressure or tension in their jobs is low and more than 15% were undecided. In terms of the effect of work on the quality of their lives almost 46% felt that

it had an effect while 19% was uncertain. Only 36% felt that their work did not affect the quality of their lives.

### ***The legal careers of young lawyers***

More than 40% respondents felt that it was highly unlikely that they would make partner/director. Women were less optimistic than men. Black African women were the most pessimistic about this prospect.

Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the statement “Your expectations are met regarding career satisfaction”. Almost a quarter was uncertain and said it was hard to decide while just more than 40% agreed with this statement.

More than 60% of the young lawyers indicated that their salary expectations are not met, just more than 15% were undecided and only about 20% were satisfied that their expectations are met.

When asked to react to the statement “You are likely to open your own practice within the next 2-3 years”, a third of the respondents agreed while almost a quarter were uncertain and found it hard to decide.

Respondents were also asked to indicate whether their expectations regarding advancement in the firms where they were placed, were met. Just more than a quarter indicated that it was hard to decide. Slightly more agreed that their expectations were met than disagreed.

When asked whether they are considering leaving the profession in the next two to three years, just more than half of the respondents seemed to be certain that they would not leave the profession in the near future:

### ***Expectations of the profession and from the LSSA***

When the respondents were asked to react to the statement “Your expectations as a young lawyer are currently met by your profession”, more than a quarter were undecided while just more than 40% agreed and a third disagreed.

When asked what the LSSA as professional representative body can do for young lawyers, only 69% of the respondents commented. The main areas where they felt the LSSA could play a role are:

- Training - The LSSA could be more involved with and exert control over the candidate attorney programme, provide training free of charge or at largely reduced cost, provide training in areas of practice not provided for by the firms in which they are working, provide on-line training and make training more accessible to lawyers in rural areas.
- Remuneration - Setting minimum salaries especially for candidate attorneys (CAs).
- Working conditions – Ensuring equitable working conditions for young lawyers that comply with the Basic Conditions of Employment Act.
- Functioning of the LSSA – Improving the LSSA ‘s administrative processes, creating forums specifically for young lawyers and ensuring representation of young lawyers in the LSSA’s decision making structures.
- LSSA membership fees - Lowering or waiving membership fees for young lawyers.
- Handling complaints from young lawyers and hearing their voices.



- Helping young lawyers to get access to work.
- Provide resources such as access to legislation and legislative changes.
- Providing networking and communication opportunities for young lawyers.
- Assisting with start-up of new practices.
- Providing guidance and support in terms of career advancement and work-life balance.

From the responses received in this survey it is clear that there is still a large amount of confusion regarding the implementation of the new Legal Practice Act (LPA) and the transitional period.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

The Law Society of South Africa (LSSA) is a voluntary association that represents 25 800 legal practitioners and 6 700 candidate legal practitioners in South Africa. In November 2018 the LSSA undertook a survey of its constituent young lawyers – those age 35 and younger and those over 35, but who have been in practice for fewer than 5 years. The link to an online survey was sent to all the lawyers on the LSSA database with the request that lawyers who meet the young lawyer criteria should complete the questionnaire. A total of 1 555 responses were received although not all the respondents answered all the questions.

The survey covered five broad areas: the demographic profile of the respondents, young lawyers’ work life, their work-life balance, their legal careers and their expectations of the LSSA as professional body. The findings of the survey are reported in this order.

## 2 PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

### 2.1 CATEGORY OF LAWYER

The majority of respondents (75.9%) indicated that they were 35 years or younger at the time of the survey while 7.1% were over 35 but in practice for less than five years. A relatively large percentage (16.7%) did not answer the question (Figure 2-1).

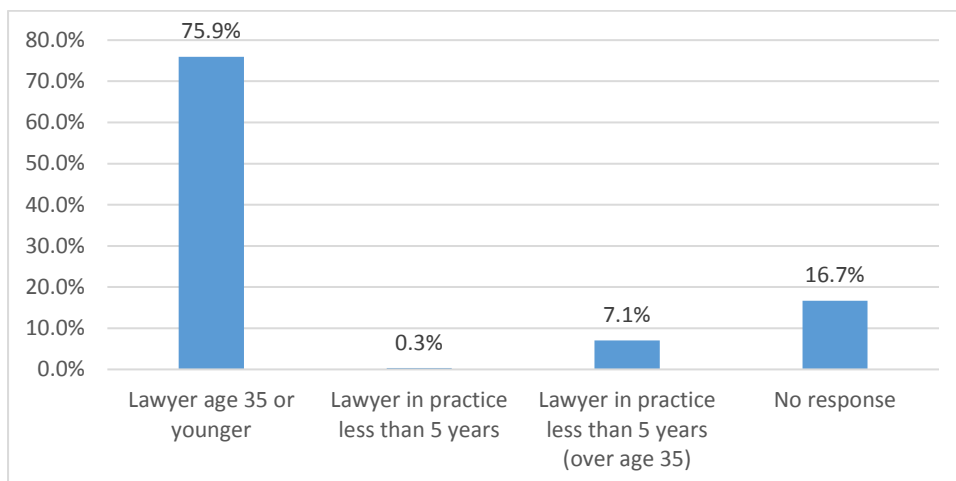
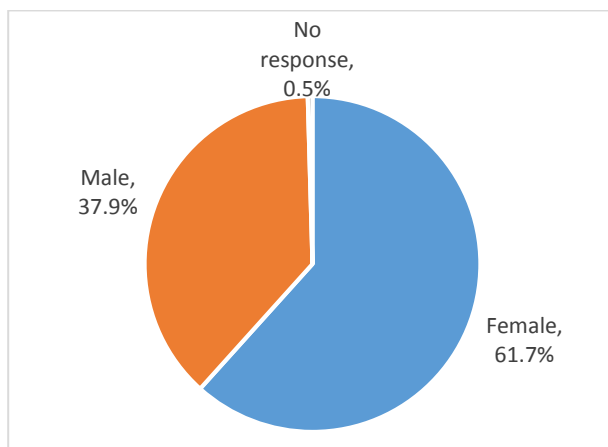


Figure 2-1 Category of young lawyers

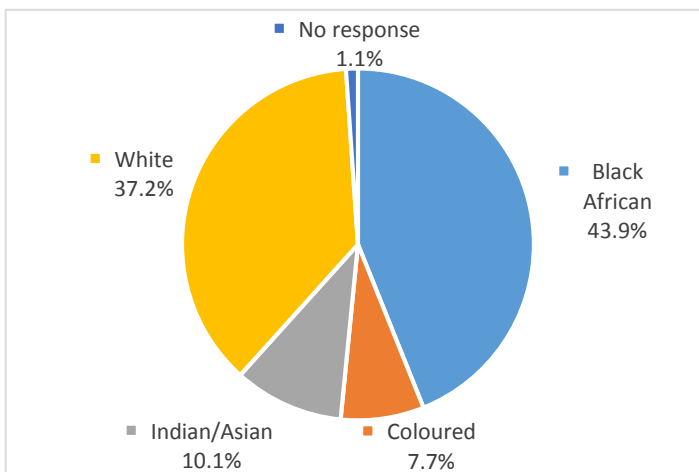
## 2.2 GENDER



The majority (61.7%) of the respondents were women and 37.9% were men (Figure 2-2).

Figure 2-2 Gender

## 2.3 POPULATION GROUP



The population group distribution of the respondents can be seen in Figure 2-3. The largest group was Black African (43.9%), followed by Whites (37.2%). Indian/Asian respondents constituted 10.1% of the total group and Coloured respondents 7.7%.

Figure 2-3 Population group

Table 2-1 provides a breakdown of the respondents according to population group and gender. Black African women formed 24.6% of the total group, White women 23.8%, Black African men 19.2% and White men 13.4%. Indian/Asian women

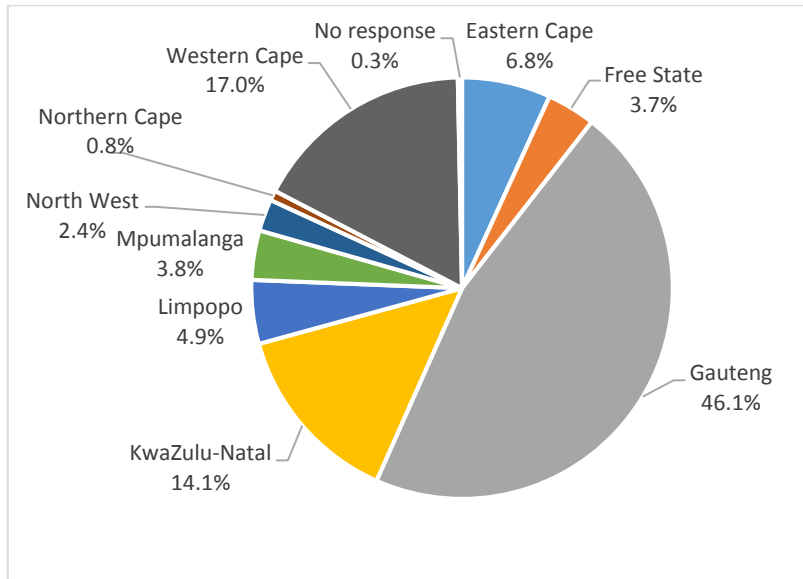
constituted 7.7% of the respondents and Coloured women 5.1%. The number of Coloured and Indian/Asian men was relatively small and these two groups formed only 2.5% and 2.4% respectively of the total respondent group.

Table 2-1 Population group and gender of respondents

Population Group	Female		Male		Unknown		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Black African	382	24.6	299	19.2	2	0.1	683	43.9
Coloured	79	5.1	39	2.5	1	0.1	119	7.7
Indian/Asian	120	7.7	37	2.4		0.0	157	10.1
White	370	23.8	208	13.4	1	0.1	579	37.2
Unknown	8	0.5	6	0.4	3	0.2	17	1.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>959</b>	<b>61.7</b>	<b>589</b>	<b>37.9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>1 555</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### 3 YOUNG LAWYERS' WORK LIFE

#### 3.1 PROVINCE



The young lawyers who participated in the survey were mainly working in firms based in Gauteng (45.1%), the Western Cape (17.0%) and in KwaZulu-Natal (14.1%). This was followed by the Eastern Cape (6.8%), Limpopo (4.9%), Mpumalanga (3.8%) and the Free State (3.7%). Only 2.4% of the respondents worked in North West and 0.8% in the Northern Cape (Figure 3-1)

Figure 3-1 Province in which law firm is situated

The majority of the law firms (88.9%) were situated in urban areas and 9.7% in more rural areas (Figure 3-2).

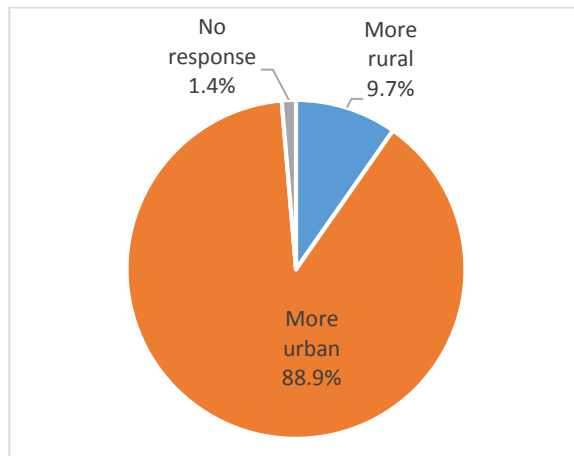
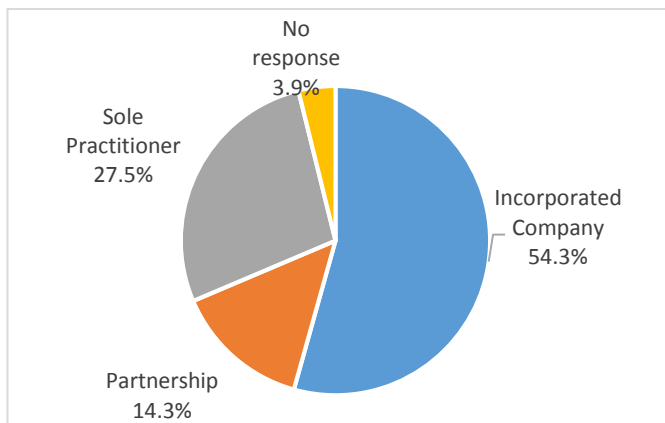


Figure 3-2 Area of law firm

#### 3.2 FORM OF BUSINESS



More than half (54.3%) of the respondents worked in incorporated companies. A relatively large group (27.5%) were working as sole practitioners and 14.3% worked in partnerships (Figure 3-3).

Figure 3-3 Form of business

### 3.3 SIZE OF FIRM

Figure 3-4 indicates the number of practising attorneys in the firms in which the young lawyers were working. The majority were based in small firms with fewer than five attorneys: 22.1% indicated that there was only one practising attorney in the firm and 39.6% worked in firms with two to four attorneys. A total of 21.7% worked in firms with five to 15 attorneys, 8.7% in firms with 16 to 50 attorneys and 6.8% in very large firms with more than 50 attorneys.

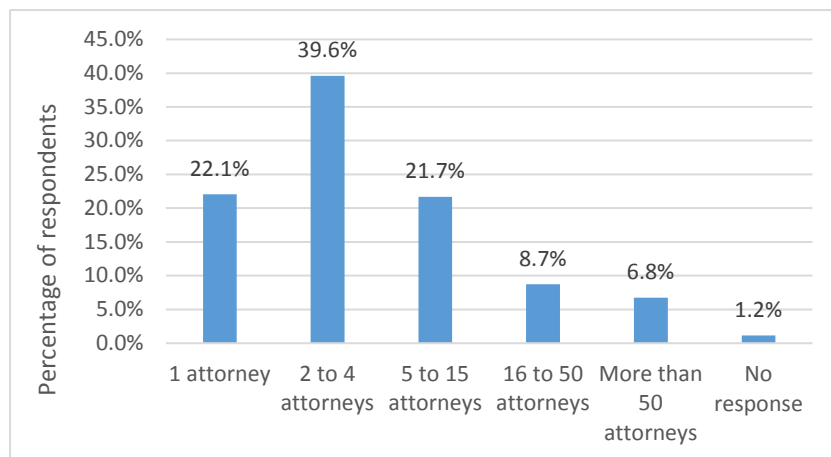


Figure 3-4 Number of practising attorneys in firm

### 3.4 DESIGNATION

Table 3-1 Designations of respondents

Designation	n	%
Advocate	7	0.4
Associate	224	14.4
Candidate Attorney	859	55.2
Consultant	28	1.8
Conveyancer	55	3.5
Notary	47	3.0
Partner/Director	123	7.9
Professional Assistant	282	18.1
Sole Practitioner	114	7.3
No response	11	0.7

The respondents were asked what their designations were at the time of the survey. They could indicate more than one designation if that was applicable. A total of 145 (9.3%) of respondents indicated that they had more than one designation. More than half (55.2%) were candidate attorneys (CAs), 18.1% had the designation of Professional Assistant and 14.4% were Associates. A total of 7.9% were Partners or Directors and 7.3% were Sole Practitioners. Only small numbers used the designations Conveyancer (3.5%), Notary (3.0%) and Consultant (1.8%). (See Table 3-1.) Candidate

Attorneys were also known as Professional Assistants and the designations Notary and Conveyancer were often used in combination.

### 3.5 YEARS OF EMPLOYMENT IN CURRENT FIRM

The majority of respondents (68.0%) reported that at the time of the survey they had been with their firms for less than two years (Figure 3-5). A quarter (24.8%) had been employed in their firms for a period between two and five years. A very small percentage (1.4%) had been with their firms for six to seven years and 3.3% had been there for more than seven years.

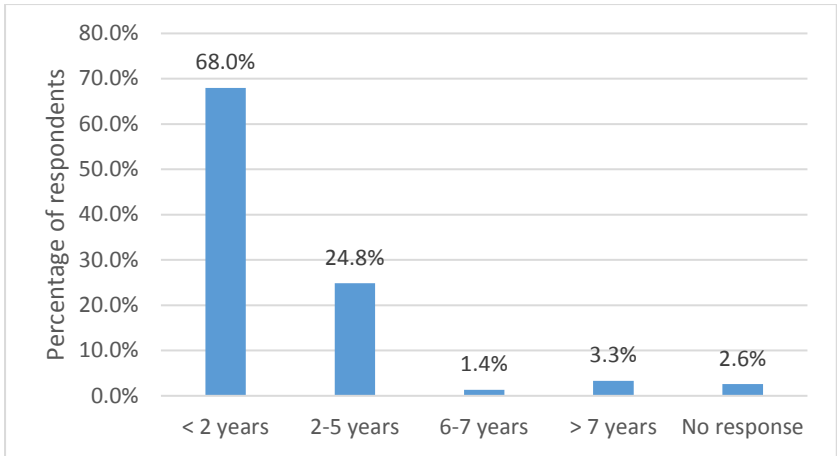


Figure 3-5 Years of employment in current firm

### 3.6 AVERAGE NUMBER OF HOURS PER WEEK DEVOTED TO LEGAL WORK

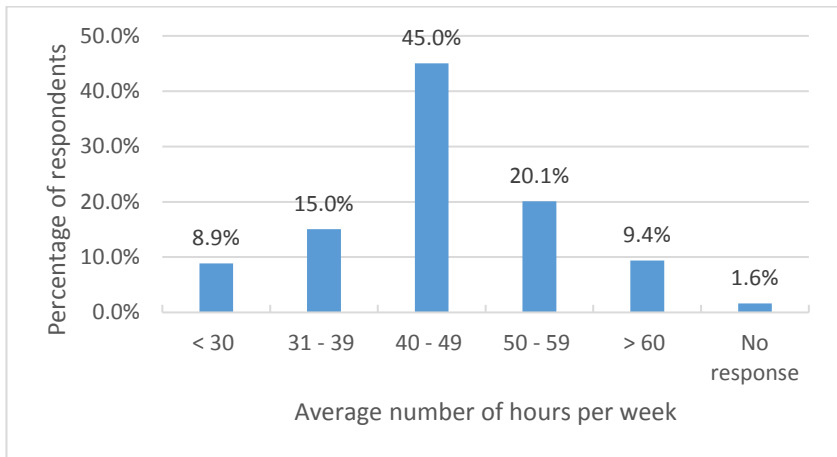


Figure 3-6 Average number of hours per week devoted to legal work

When asked about the average number of hours that they devoted to legal work, as much as 8.9% reported that they spent less than thirty hours per week on legal work. A further 15.0% said they spent between 31 and 39 hours doing legal work, while almost half (45.0%) said they spent between 40 and 49 hours. Almost thirty

per cent of the respondents reported that they spent fifty hours or more on legal work. Some, (9.4%) spent more than 60 hours per week on legal work.

### 3.7 INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY USED BY FIRM

When asked what kind of information communication technology the firms in which they work use, the majority (74.3%) indicated that they use electronic communication and 61.6% do online research. A total of 37.4% use law firm website update and development, 35.2% use social media, 19.4% use online training and 15.0% use mobile applications (Figure 3-7).

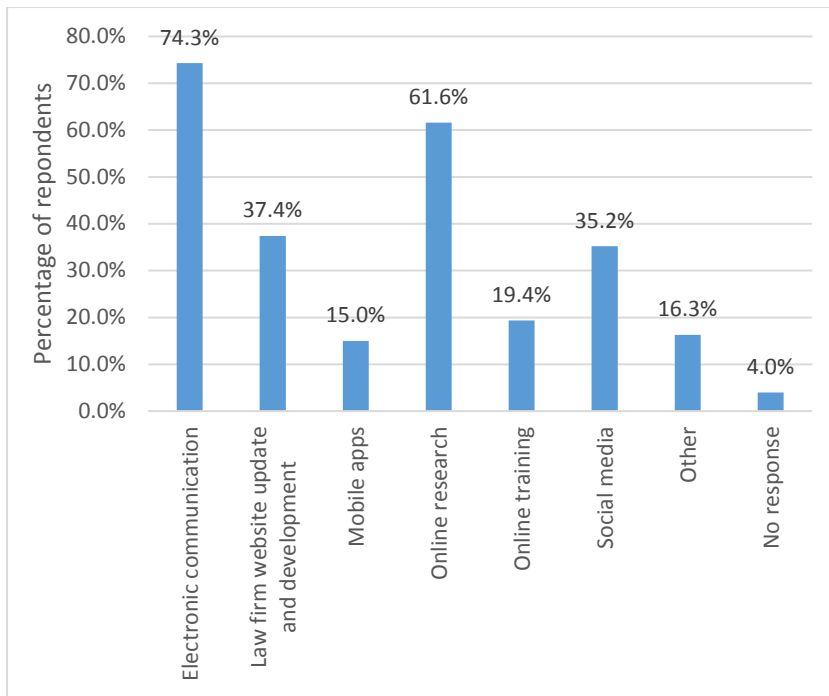


Figure 3-7 Information communication technology used by firms

### 3.8 AREAS OF PRACTICE

#### 3.8.1 Current areas of practice

Respondents were also asked to select their current areas of practice from a list of areas. Although they were requested to only select the top five areas, some of the respondents selected more than five. The majority (70.0%) indicated that they were involved with litigation (Figure 3-8). This was followed by Family Law (53.8%), the Administration of Estates (42.4%), Debt Collection (41.5%), Criminal Law (32.9%), Labour Law (32.7%), Personal Injury Law (31.0%).

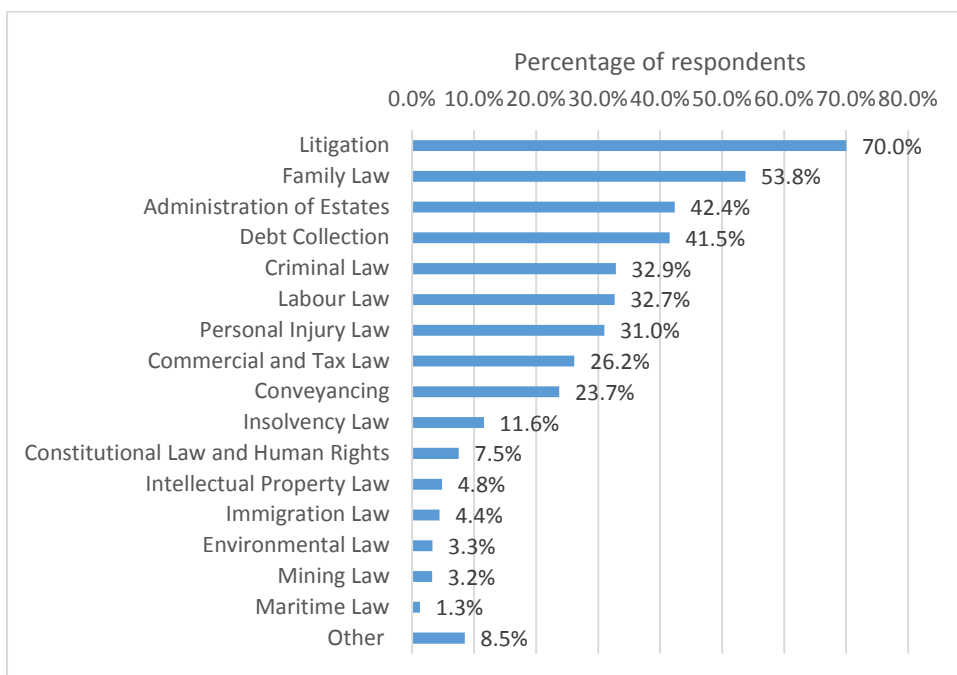


Figure 3-8 Current areas of practice

The last category on Figure 3-8 includes a variety of areas listed by the respondents in the open-ended section of the question. Some of these areas may overlap with the ones listed above, but it seems as if some of the respondents wanted to indicate a specific area within the ones in the list provided. The other areas of practice indicated by more than five respondents are listed in Table 3-2.

Table 3-2 Other current areas of practice

Area of Practice	n*
Corporate Law	19
Property law	13
Road Accident Fund (RAF)	13
Notarial law/services	9
Land reform and housing	7
Trust law and estate planning	7
Banking and Finance	6
Evictions	6
Insurance	6
Local government	6
Professional indemnity and negligence	6
Administrative Law	5
Construction Law	5
Public administration law	5

\*Only areas of practice mentioned by five or more respondents were included

### 3.8.2 Desired areas of practice

The respondents were also asked to indicate the desired areas of practice for which they will need training. The results are shown in Figure 3-9. At the top of this list is Commercial and Tax Law (38.2% of the respondents selected this area), followed by Conveyancing (37.7%) and Intellectual Property Law (25.8%). The areas most frequently listed under “Other” can be seen in Table 3-3.

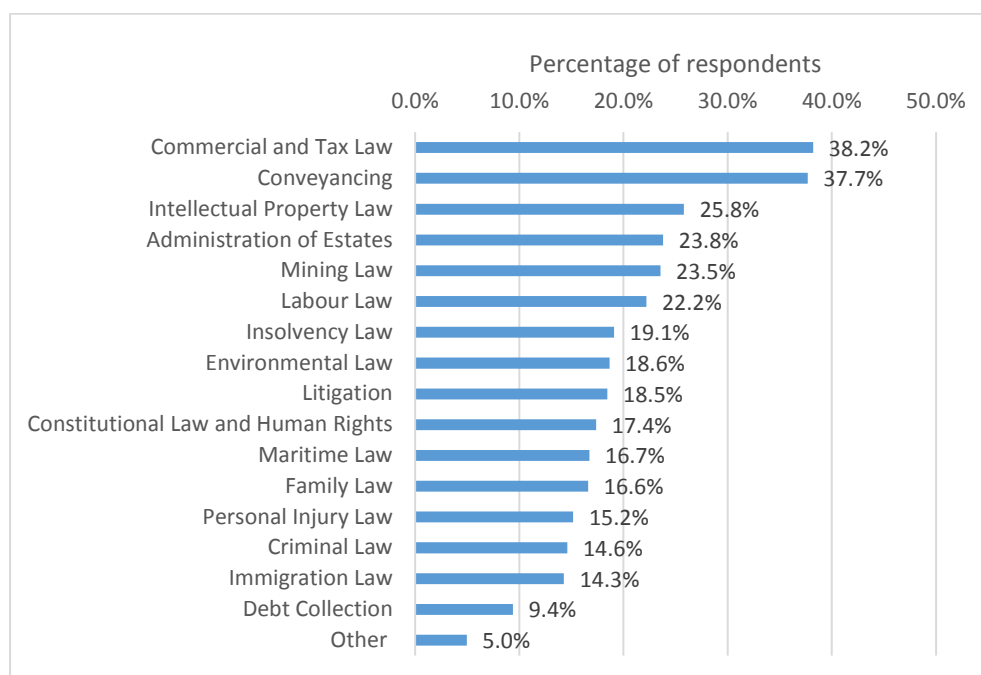


Figure 3-9 Desired areas of practice for which respondents will need training



Table 3-3 Other desired areas of practice

Area of practice	n*
Cyber and Information Communication Technology Law	24
Corporate Law	15
International law	15
Professional indemnity and negligence	13
Sports and entertainment law	13
Conveyancing and notarial practice	12
Banking and Finance	11
Entertainment and media law	8
Risk and Compliance	8
Administrative Law	7
Contract Law	7
Mediation and arbitration	6
Competition Law	5
Construction Law	5
Tax law	5

\*Only areas of practice mentioned by five or more respondents were included

### 3.9 EVALUATION OF WORK LIFE

#### 3.9.1 Work environment

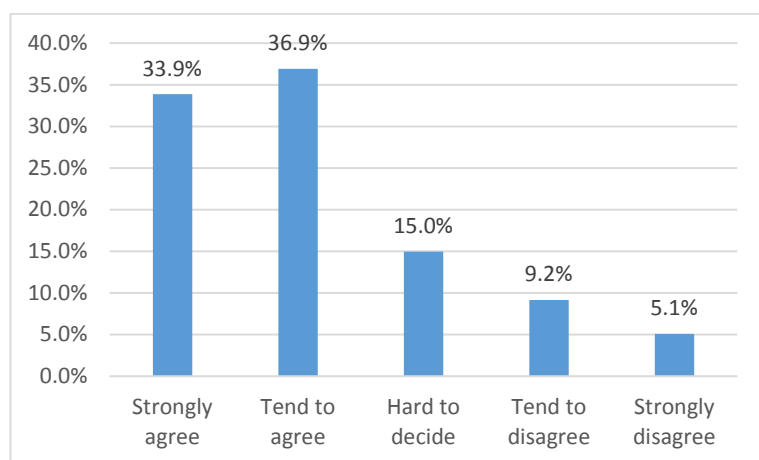


Figure 3-10 Response to statement "You have a good work environment"

The young lawyers who participated in the survey were asked to provide an overall assessment of their work environment by agreeing or disagreeing with the statement "You have a good work environment. The results are shown in Figure 3-10. More than 60% of the respondents agreed with this statement. A total of 33.9% strongly agreed and 36.9% said that they tend to agree. Fifteen per cent found it

hard to decide. A relatively small group (14.3%) disagreed with the statement. While 9.2% said they tend to disagree, 5.1% strongly disagreed.

In the tables that follow the respondents that said that they agreed and tended to agree were grouped together under the heading "agree" and those that said that they tended to disagree and strongly disagree were grouped together under "disagree". The responses were then analysed according to population group and gender and according to the size of organisation in which the respondent was working. The number of practising attorneys in the firm was taken as a proxy for organisation size.

Table 3-4 clearly shows the differences in the level of satisfaction experienced by female and male respondents and by the different population groups. Generally speaking, the women were less satisfied than the men. While 68.2% of all the female respondents agreed that they had a good work environment, 75.0% of the male respondents agreed. However, the differences between the population groups are much more pronounced. Only 58.3% of Black African women agreed with the statement as opposed to the 78.6% White women, 69.8% of Black men and 83.1% White men.

Table 3-4 Response to statement “You have a good work environment” according to gender and population group

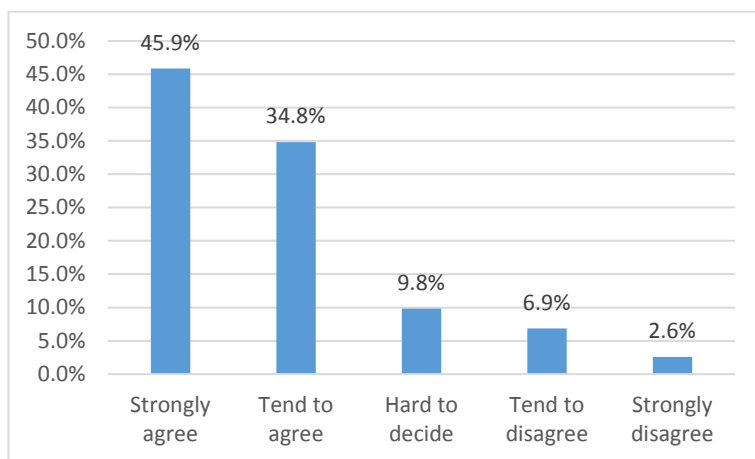
	Female					Male				
	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Total	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Total
	% of respondents in population group and gender category									
<b>Agree</b>	58.3	65.8	69.2	78.6	68.2	69.8	76.9	70.3	83.1	75.0
<b>Hard to decide</b>	19.8	17.7	15.8	10.5	15.5	20.8	10.3	10.8	6.3	14.3
<b>Disagree</b>	21.9	16.5	15.0	10.8	16.2	9.4	12.8	18.9	10.6	10.7

Organisation size doesn’t seem to have such an effect on the overall experience of the work environment. The group with the highest level of satisfaction is those that were working in relatively large firms with 16 to 50 attorneys.

Table 3-5 Response to statement “You have a good work environment” according to firm size

	1 attorney	2 to 4 attorneys	5 to 15 attorneys	16 to 50 attorneys	More than 50 attorneys
	% of respondents in firms of this size				
<b>Agree</b>	68.9	71.7	68.7	77.2	69.5
<b>Hard to decide</b>	18.8	15.0	12.5	9.6	17.1
<b>Disagree</b>	12.3	13.3	18.8	13.2	13.3

### 3.9.2 Intellectually challenging work



Most of the young lawyers who participated in the survey found their work to be intellectually challenging. Almost half (45.9%) strongly agreed with the statement and 34.8% said that they tend to agree. Only 6.9% said that they tend to disagree and only 2.6% strongly disagreed. (See Figure 3-11).

Figure 3-11 Response to statement “Your work is intellectually challenging”

Black African women found their work less intellectually challenging than any of the other of the other groups (Table 3-6).

Table 3-6 Response to statement “Your work is intellectually challenging” according to gender and population group

Population group	Female					Male				
	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Total	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Total
	% of respondents in population group and gender category									
<b>Agree</b>	74.6	78.5	77.3	84.8	79.2	81.9	89.7	81.1	84.6	83.4
<b>Hard to decide</b>	10.6	12.7	10.9	8.7	10.1	10.4	7.7	10.8	8.7	9.6
<b>Disagree</b>	14.8	8.9	11.8	6.5	10.7	7.7	2.6	8.1	6.7	7.0

More young attorneys working in very large firms (i.e. those with more than 50 attorneys) found their work intellectually challenging than those working in small practices (Table 3-7).

Table 3-7 Response to statement “Your work is intellectually challenging” according to firm size

	1 attorney	2 to 4 attorneys	5 to 15 attorneys	16 to 50 attorneys	More than 50 attorneys
	% of respondents in firms of this size				
<b>Agree</b>	78.0	82.4	77.8	79.4	91.4
<b>Hard to decide</b>	11.4	9.4	10.5	8.8	5.7
<b>Disagree</b>	10.6	8.1	11.7	11.8	2.9

### 3.9.3 Control over work

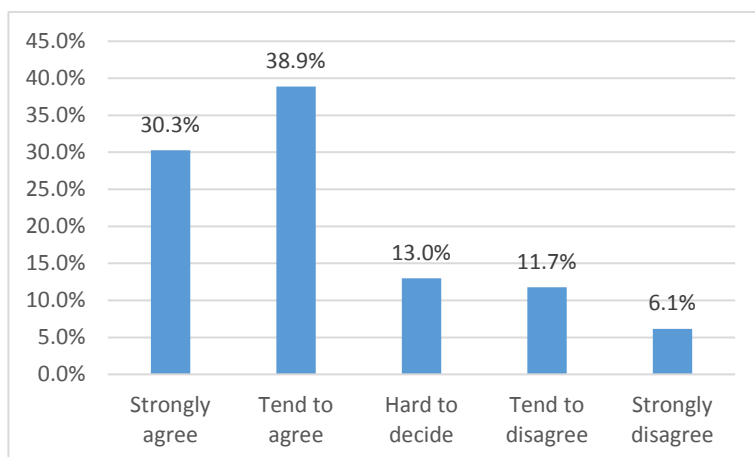


Figure 3-12 Response to statement “You have substantial control over your work”

The majority of respondents (69.1%) strongly agreed or tended to agree with the statement that they have substantial control over their work (figure 3-12). While 13.0% found it hard to decide, 11.7% tended to disagree and 6.1% strongly disagreed.

The group that felt the least in control of their work was Coloured men – only 59.0% agreed with the statement.

Table 3-8 Response to statement “You have substantial control over your work” according to gender and population group

	Female					Male				
	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Total	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Total
	% of respondents in population group and gender category									
<b>Agree</b>	66.0	69.2	69.2	70.2	68.3	73.2	59.0	64.9	69.2	70.3
<b>Hard to decide</b>	13.2	12.8	13.3	11.7	12.6	13.7	25.6	5.4	13.9	14.1
<b>Disagree</b>	20.8	17.9	17.5	18.2	19.1	13.0	15.4	29.7	16.8	15.6

Young lawyers working in large firms with more than 50 attorneys felt less in control of their work than their counterparts in smaller firms. Only 49.0% of them agreed with the statement, while 20.2% found it hard to decide and 30.8% disagreed.

Table 3-9 Response to statement “You have substantial control over your work” according to firm size

	1 attorney	2 to 4 attorneys	5 to 15 attorneys	16 to 50 attorneys	More than 50 attorneys
	% of respondents in firms of this size				
<b>Agree</b>	74.1	72.1	64.7	67.4	49.0
<b>Hard to decide</b>	12.0	13.1	13.9	8.9	20.2
<b>Disagree</b>	14.0	14.8	21.4	23.7	30.8

### 3.9.4 General comments about work life

The respondents were given an opportunity to make some other general comments about their work life, for example, whether they have experienced sexual harassment, gender bias, race bias or abuse at work. The majority 65.0% of the respondents did not react to this question but left it open. Another 8.4% commented that they had not experienced any of the things mentioned in the question. A further 2.8% used the space to write positive comments about their work environments while 23.6% wrote complaints about their work environments. Respondents who recorded more than one complaint were counted more than once. The complaints centred on nine main themes listed in Table 3-10. The themes that occurred most frequently were racial and gender bias or discrimination. These complaints were reported by 6.5% and 4.7% of respondents. Other themes include some form of abuse or victimisation (3.0% of respondents), poor or harsh working conditions (2.3% of respondents), salary-related complaints (2.1%), an organisational culture that is not conducive to training (1.8%), sexual harassment by colleagues and/or clients (1.7%), insufficient access to work and work opportunities (1.4%), a lack of respect for young attorneys from colleagues and clients (0.7%).

Table 3-10 Complaints about work environment

	n	% of those who complained	% of all respondents
Racial bias or discrimination	101	27.5	6.5
Gender bias or discrimination	73	19.9	4.7
Some form of abuse or victimisation	47	12.8	3.0
Working conditions	36	9.8	2.3
Salary-related complaints	32	8.7	2.1
Organisational culture	28	7.6	1.8
Sexual harassment	27	7.4	1.7
Access to work and type of work	22	6.0	1.4
Lack of respect	11	3.0	0.7

## 4 WORK - LIFE BALANCE

Young attorneys' work-life balance was assessed by looking at the pressure or tension of their jobs, and the effect of their work on their quality of life.

### 4.1 LEVEL OF PRESSURE/TENSION OF JOB

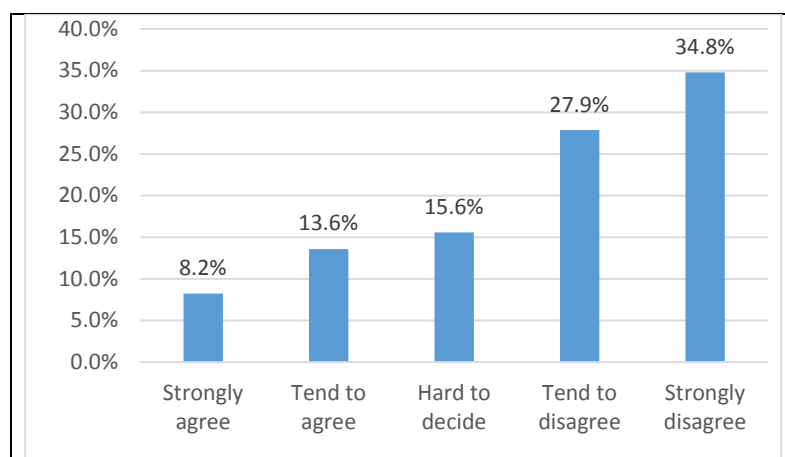


Figure 4-1 Response to statement "The level of pressure/tension of your job is low"

Young attorneys clearly experience pressure and tension in their work situations. Figure 4-1 illustrates the extent to which respondents agreed with the statement "the level of pressure/tension of your job is low". The majority (62,7%) either strongly disagreed (34.8%) or said that they tend to disagree (27.9%). Just more than 15% found it hard to decide while 13.6% said they tend to agree or strongly agreed.

As can be seen in Table 4-1, more White lawyers (both women and men) disagreed with the statement than their Black African counterparts.

The percentage respondents who agreed with the statement decreased with an increase in firm size. While 30.6% of the respondents in single-attorney firms agreed that the level of pressure/tension in their jobs was low, only 8.7% of those in large firms (with more than 50 attorneys) agreed (Table 4.2).

Table 4-1 Response to statement “The level of pressure/tension of your job is low ” according to gender and population group

	Female					Male				
	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Total	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Total
	% of respondents in population group and gender category									
<b>Agree</b>	27.5	20.3	14.3	17.1	21.2	30.6	17.9	21.6	13.0	22.9
<b>Hard to decide</b>	18.3	20.3	16.0	11.7	15.6	18.5	15.4	10.8	12.5	15.7
<b>Disagree</b>	54.2	59.5	69.7	71.3	63.3	50.8	66.7	67.6	74.5	61.4

Table 4-2 Response to statement “The level of pressure/tension of your job is low ” according to firm size

	1 attorney	2 to 4 attorneys	5 to 15 attorneys	16 to 50 attorneys	More than 50 attorneys
	% of respondents in firms of this size				
<b>Agree</b>	30.6	22.0	17.8	18.5	8.7
<b>Hard to decide</b>	16.5	16.7	15.4	11.9	9.6
<b>Disagree</b>	52.9	61.3	66.8	69.6	81.7

## 4.2 THE EFFECT OF WORK ON QUALITY OF LIFE

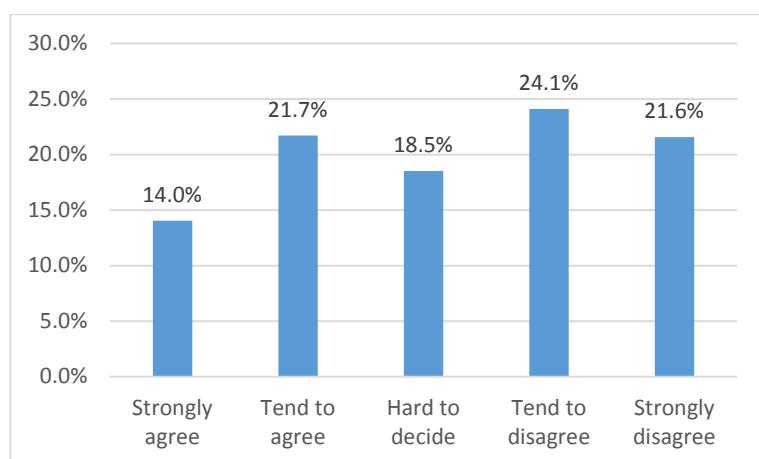


Figure 4-2 Response to statement “Your quality of life is not unduly affected by your work ”

The respondents were also asked to indicate how they feel about the statement “your quality of life is not unduly affected by your work”. Almost 46% disagreed while 18.5% found it hard to decide. Only 35.7% agreed with the statement. (See Figure 4-2.)

More White and Indian male lawyers disagreed with the statement than their Black African and Coloured counterparts (Table 4-3). The differences between women

from different population groups were not so noticeable. Marked differences can be seen in responses from young attorneys working in firms of different sizes. While only 39.3% of those working in one-lawyer firms disagreed, 64.4% of respondents working in firms with more than 50 lawyers disagreed (Table 4-4).

Table 4-3 Response to statement “Your quality of life is not unduly affected by your work” according to gender and population group

	Female					Male				
	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Total	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Total
	% of respondents in population group and gender category									
<b>Agree</b>	36.9	39.2	31.0	33.9	35.2	41.6	33.3	37.8	30.0	36.6
<b>Hard to decide</b>	16.2	24.1	18.1	18.4	18.0	20.1	28.2	16.2	18.4	19.8
<b>Disagree</b>	46.9	36.7	50.9	47.7	46.9	38.2	38.5	45.9	51.7	43.6

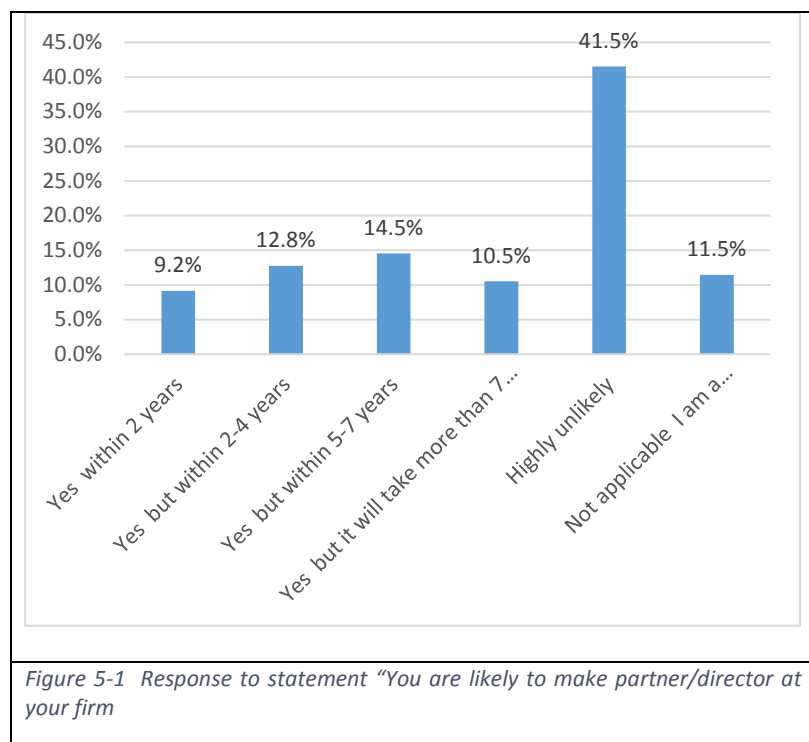
Table 4-4 Response to statement “Your quality of life is not unduly affected by your work ” according to firm size

	1 attorney	2 to 4 attorneys	5 to 15 attorneys	16 to 50 attorneys	More than 50 attorneys
	% of respondents in firms of this size				
<b>Agree</b>	45.3	35.8	32.2	31.1	22.1
<b>Hard to decide</b>	15.4	17.5	24.1	19.3	13.5
<b>Disagree</b>	39.3	46.7	43.7	49.6	64.4

## 5 LEGAL CAREER

In the assessment of young lawyers' career satisfaction and prospects, the following areas were explored: their perceptions of the likelihood that they will make partner, their expectations regarding career satisfaction, financial rewards and contributing to social good, the likelihood that they will open their own practices, their expectations regarding advancement in their firms and the possibility that they may leave the profession.

### 5.1 LIKELIHOOD TO MAKE PARTNER



When asked to respond to the statement "You are likely to make partner/director at your firm", 41.5% responded that it was highly unlikely, 10.5% thought it was possible, but will take more than seven years, 14.5% thought it was possible but only within five to seven years and 12.8% within two to four years. Only 9.2% thought that they would make partner within two years.

The differences in expectations between men and women and lawyers from different population groups can be seen in Table 5-1. Women were not as optimistic as men. Only 44.3%

of them thought that they would make partner some time in future while 51.0% of men thought that they would. Black African women were the most pessimistic about this prospect – 52.7% said it was highly unlikely that they would make partner. White men, on the other hand were the most optimistic as only 27.0% of them thought it was highly unlikely that they would make partner.

The viewpoints of respondents in different size firms can be seen in Table 5-2. More than a quarter (27.9%) of the respondents in one-attorney firms indicated that the question is not applicable to them as they are sole practitioners. Another 41.8% of the respondents in these small firms expected to make partner some time in future while 30.3% said it was highly unlikely. Respondents working in other small and medium firms (with two to fifty attorneys) were more pessimistic as almost half of them thought it was highly unlikely that they would make partner in their firms. In the very large firms with more than 50 attorneys only 30.8% thought that it was highly unlikely that they would make partner.



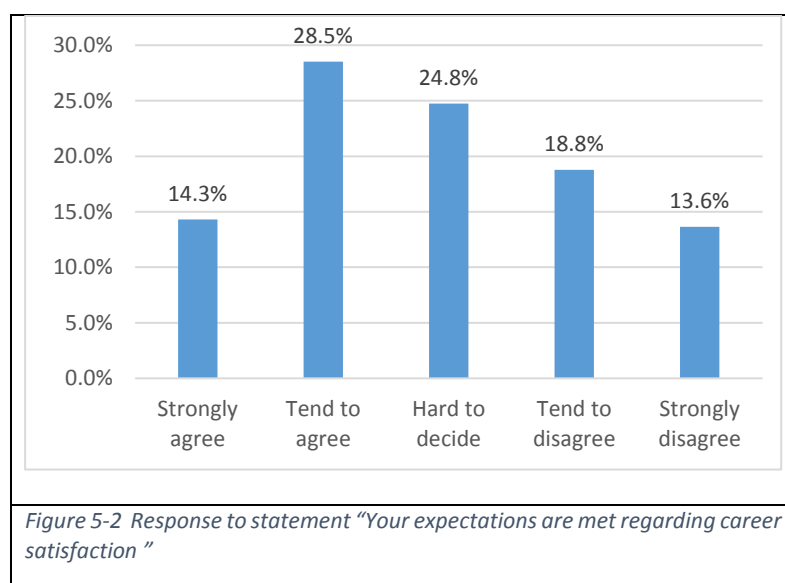
Table 5-1 Response to statement "You are likely to make partner/director at your firm" according to gender and population group

	Female					Male				
	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Total	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Total
	% of respondents in population group and gender category									
<b>Yes within 2 years</b>	9.1	3.9	10.2	7.4	8.1	12.2	10.3	8.1	8.3	10.5
<b>Yes but within 2-4 years</b>	11.8	9.1	10.2	11.5	11.3	17.3	5.1	8.1	15.7	15.3
<b>Yes but within 5-7 years</b>	9.9	19.5	13.6	19.5	14.9	9.9	10.3	18.9	19.1	13.8
<b>Yes but it will take more than 7 years</b>	8.0	9.1	8.5	12.6	10.0	6.5	20.5	16.2	16.2	11.5
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>38.8</b>	<b>41.6</b>	<b>42.4</b>	<b>51.1</b>	<b>44.3</b>	<b>45.9</b>	<b>46.2</b>	<b>51.4</b>	<b>59.3</b>	<b>51.0</b>
<b>Highly unlikely</b>	52.7	48.1	43.2	35.4	44.4	42.5	51.3	35.1	27.0	37.1
<b>Not applicable I am a partner/director/sole practitioner</b>	8.6	10.4	14.4	13.5	11.4	11.6	2.6	13.5	13.7	11.8
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 5-2 Response to statement "You are likely to make partner/director at your firm" according to firm size

<b>You are likely to make partner/director at your firm</b>	<b>1 attorney</b>	<b>2 to 4 attorney</b>	<b>5 to 15 attorneys</b>	<b>16 to 50 attorneys</b>	<b>More than 50 attorneys</b>
	% of respondents in firms of this size				
<b>Yes within 2 years</b>	16.3	9.2	5.4	3.8	4.8
<b>Yes but within 2-4 years</b>	13.1	15.3	11.4	9.0	6.7
<b>Yes but within 5-7 years</b>	6.5	13.7	17.2	17.3	31.7
<b>Yes but it will take more than 7 years</b>	5.9	8.1	13.0	18.8	22.1
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>41.8</b>	<b>46.4</b>	<b>47.0</b>	<b>48.9</b>	<b>65.4</b>
<b>Highly unlikely</b>	30.3	44.6	49.1	47.4	30.8
<b>Not applicable I am a partner/director/sole practitioner</b>	27.9	9.1	3.9	3.8	3.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## 5.2 EXPECTATIONS REGARDING CAREER SATISFACTION



Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the statement "Your expectations are met regarding career satisfaction".

Almost a quarter (24.8%) said it was hard to decide (Figure 5-2) (probably because they were still very early in their careers). A total of 14.3% strongly agreed with this statement and 28.5% said they tended to agree. A relatively large percentage (18.8% and 13.6% respectively) tended to disagree or strongly disagreed.

The group that responded most positively to this statement was White men (48.8% agreed and 27.5% disagreed) while the group who responded most negatively was Indian/Asian men – only 27.8% agreed and 44.4% disagreed. (See Table 5-3.)

*Table 5-3 Response to statement "Your expectations are met regarding career satisfaction" according to gender and population group*

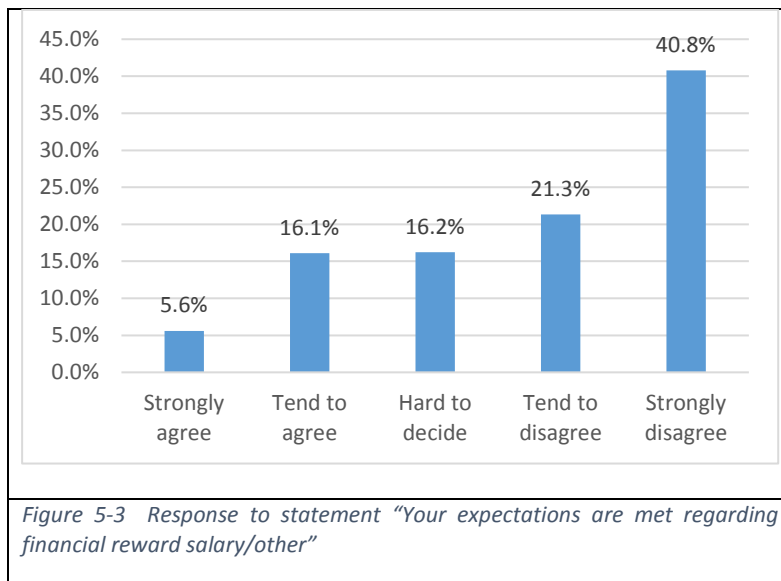
Population group	Female					Male				
	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Total	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Total
% of respondents in population group and gender category										
<b>Agree</b>	37.7	45.5	36.4	44.3	40.7	46.6	46.2	27.8	48.8	46.2
<b>Hard to decide</b>	25.5	20.8	26.3	26.6	25.6	22.6	23.1	27.8	23.7	23.4
<b>Disagree</b>	36.9	33.8	37.3	29.1	33.6	30.7	30.8	44.4	27.5	30.4

Young lawyers in one-attorney firms responded more positively than their counterparts in larger firms. Almost half (47.9%) of them agreed with the statement and only 30.2% disagreed (Table 5-4).

*Table 5-4 Response to statement "Your expectations are met regarding career satisfaction" according to firm size*

	1 attorney	2 to 4 attorneys	5 to 15 attorneys	16 to 50 attorneys	More than 50 attorneys
% of respondents in firms of this size					
<b>Agree</b>	47.9	42.5	39.1	36.0	43.7
<b>Hard to decide</b>	21.9	25.1	26.6	25.7	27.2
<b>Disagree</b>	30.2	32.5	34.3	38.2	29.1

### 5.3 FINANCIAL REWARD/SALARY



When asked to react to the statement "Your expectations are met regarding financial reward/salary/other", 40.8% strongly disagreed and 21.3% said that they tended to disagree. Only 5.6% strongly agreed with the statement (Figure 5-3).

The group that was unhappiest about their salaries or financial reward was Indian men. Only 13.5% of them agreed with the statement while 70.3% disagreed (Table 5-5).

*Table 5-5 Response to statement "Your expectations are met regarding financial reward salary/other" according to gender and population group*

Population group	Female					Male				
	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Total	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Total
	% of respondents in population group and gender category									
<b>Agree</b>	17.4	20.5	22.9	27.7	22.3	18.1	23.7	13.5	25.5	20.8
<b>Hard to decide</b>	17.2	14.1	16.1	15.9	16.3	17.4	15.8	16.2	14.9	16.4
<b>Disagree</b>	65.4	65.4	61.0	56.4	61.4	64.4	60.5	70.3	59.6	62.8

The respondents working in very large firms with more than 50 attorneys were clearly happier with their salaries than lawyers working in smaller firms. As many as 57.7% of them agreed with the statement while 32.7% disagreed.

*Table 5-6 Response to statement "Your expectations are met regarding financial reward salary/other" according to firm size*

	1 attorney	2 to 4 attorneys	5 to 15 attorneys	16 to 50 attorneys	More than 50 attorneys
	% of respondents in firms of this size				
<b>Agree</b>	18.7	14.4	23.2	27.2	57.7
<b>Hard to decide</b>	19.9	14.4	18.2	16.2	9.6
<b>Disagree</b>	61.4	71.2	58.6	56.6	32.7

## 5.4 ABILITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIAL GOOD

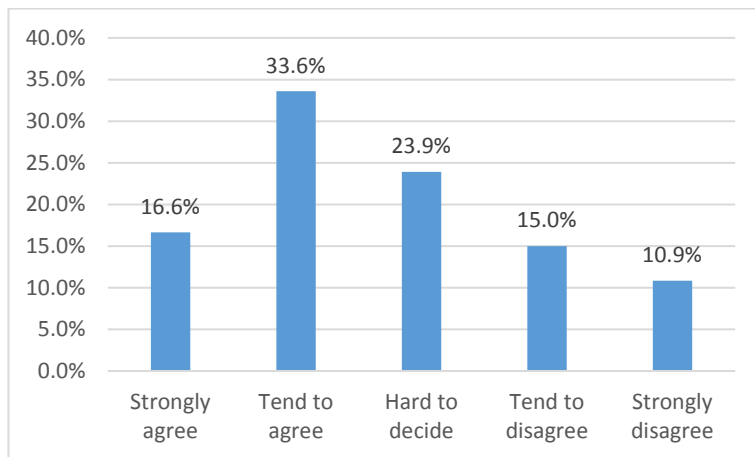


Figure 5-4 Response to statement “Your expectations are met regarding your ability to contribute to the social good”

The respondents were also asked to respond to the statement “Your expectations are met regarding your ability to contribute to the social good”. Almost a quarter (23.9%) was uncertain and said it was hard to decide. Almost half agreed with the statement – 16.6% strongly agreed and 33.6% tended to agree (Figure 5-4).

The respondents from different population groups did not differ vastly, although Coloured respondents (both men and

women) seems to be most satisfied with this aspect of their careers – 57.1% of the women and 57.9% of the men agreed with the statement (Table 5-7).

Table 5-7 Response to statement “Your expectations are met regarding your ability to contribute to the social good” according to gender and population group

Population group	Female					Male				
	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Total	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Total
% of respondents in population group and gender category										
<b>Agree</b>	44.7	57.1	48.7	51.4	48.8	53.7	57.9	45.9	51.7	52.8
<b>Hard to decide</b>	24.7	22.1	24.4	21.5	23.2	27.7	18.4	24.3	24.2	25.6
<b>Disagree</b>	30.6	20.8	26.9	27.2	28.0	18.6	23.7	29.7	24.2	21.6

Respondents in one-attorney firms felt more positive than their counterparts in larger firms as 55.5% agreed with the statement as opposed to the 45.2% from large firms with 50 or more attorneys who agreed (Table 5-8).

Table 5-8 Response to statement “Your expectations are met regarding your ability to contribute to the social good ” according to firm size

	1 attorney	2 to 4 attorneys	5 to 15 attorneys	16 to 50 attorneys	More than 50 attorneys
% of respondents in firms of this size					
<b>Agree</b>	55.5	49.4	49.1	44.9	45.2
<b>Hard to decide</b>	23.1	24.4	25.1	22.1	22.1
<b>Disagree</b>	21.4	26.2	25.7	33.1	32.7

## 5.5 LIKELIHOOD TO OPEN OWN PRACTICE

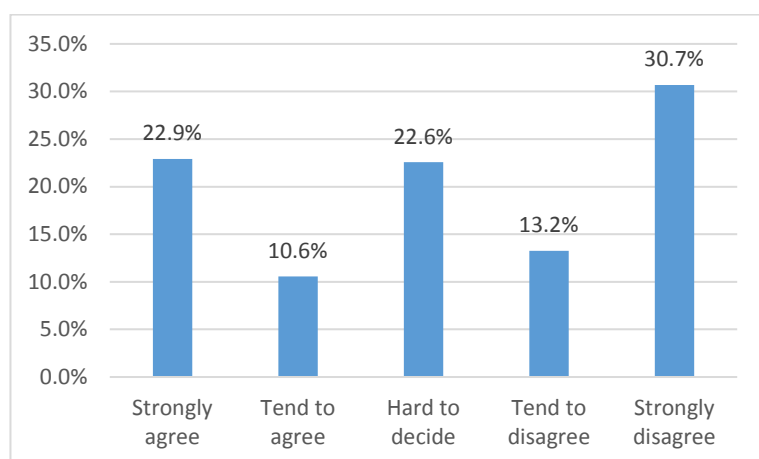


Figure 5-5 Response to statement “You are likely to open your own practice within the next 2-3 years”

When asked to react to the statement “You are likely to open your own practice within the next 2-3 years”, only 22.9% of the respondents strongly agreed and 10.6% said that they tended to agree (Figure 5-5). Almost a quarter (22.6%) were uncertain and found it hard to decide. A total of 30.7% strongly disagreed with this statement and 13.2% tended to disagree.

As Table 5-9 illustrates, Black African respondents were far more adamant that they would open their own practices in the next two to three years than any of the other groups. The majority (60.1%) of Black African men and 39.5% of Black African women agreed with this statement.

Table 5-9 Response to statement “You are likely to open your own practice within the next 2-3 years” according to gender and population group

Population group	Female					Male				
	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Total	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Total
% of respondents in population group and gender category										
<b>Agree</b>	39.5	25.0	18.5	19.4	28.0	60.1	25.6	25.7	23.7	42.4
<b>Hard to decide</b>	24.1	26.3	23.1	22.9	23.7	18.7	33.3	28.6	19.7	20.7
<b>Disagree</b>	36.4	48.7	58.3	57.6	48.3	21.2	41.0	45.7	56.6	36.9

Respondents working in smaller firms were far more positive about the possibility of opening an own practice than those in larger firms. This is clearly illustrated in Table 5-10. As the table indicates, 53.5% of those working in one-attorney firms agreed with the statement (in fact many of them have already opened their own firms) as opposed to only 8.7% of those working in practices with more than 50 attorneys.

Table 5-10 Response to statement “You are likely to open your own practice within the next 2-3 years” according to firm size

	1 attorney	2 to 4 attorneys	5 to 15 attorneys	16 to 50 attorneys	More than 50 attorneys
% of respondents in firms of this size					
<b>Agree</b>	53.5	35.9	26.9	15.7	8.7
<b>Hard to decide</b>	17.7	25.2	22.4	23.1	21.2
<b>Disagree</b>	28.7	38.9	50.7	61.2	70.2

## 5.6 EXPECTATION REGARDING ADVANCEMENT IN FIRM

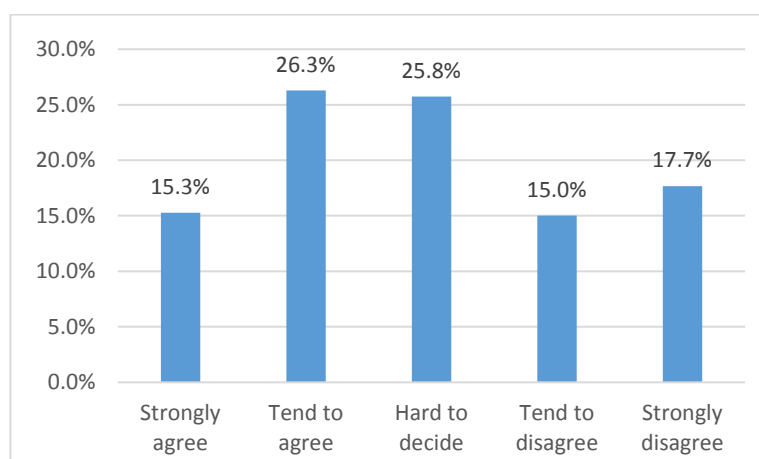


Figure 5-6 Response to statement “Your expectations are met regarding advancement in the firm”

Respondents were furthermore asked to react to the statement “Your expectations are met regarding advancement in the firm”. Just more than a quarter (25.8%) indicated that it was hard to decide (Figure 5-6). Slightly more agreed with the statement than disagreed. While 15.3% strongly agreed and 26.3% tended to agree, 17.7% strongly disagreed and 15.0% said that they tended to disagree.

The group that was most undecided about this aspect of their careers was Indian women. A third of them (33.0%) said it was hard to decide. The groups who were most satisfied with their advancement in their firms was White men and women with 47.0% of the men and 43.7% of the women agreeing with the statement (Table 5-11).

Table 5-11 Response to statement “Your expectations are met regarding advancement in the firm” according to gender and population group

Population group	Female					Male				
	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Total	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Total
% of respondents in population group and gender category										
<b>Agree</b>	37.1	35.1	32.2	43.7	38.8	46.4	41.0	44.4	47.0	46.1
<b>Hard to decide</b>	24.7	20.8	33.0	22.7	24.7	27.8	23.1	30.6	27.0	27.4
<b>Disagree</b>	38.2	44.2	34.8	33.6	36.5	25.8	35.9	25.0	26.0	26.5

The way in which respondents in different size organisations reacted to the statement can be seen in Table 5-12. The group that was unhappiest with their advancement in the firm was those in firms consisting of 16 to 50 attorneys. In these firms 40.4% of respondents disagreed with the statement as opposed to only 26.0% in one-attorney firms and 24.0% in firms with more than 50 attorneys.

Table 5-12 Response to statement “Your expectations are met regarding advancement in the firm” according to firm size

	1 attorney	2 to 4 attorneys	5 to 15 attorneys	16 to 50 attorneys	More than 50 attorneys
% of respondents in firms of this size					
<b>Agree</b>	48.9	41.9	36.8	32.4	43.3
<b>Hard to decide</b>	25.1	25.2	24.0	27.2	32.7
<b>Disagree</b>	26.0	32.9	39.2	40.4	24.0

## 5.7 LEAVING THE PROFESSION

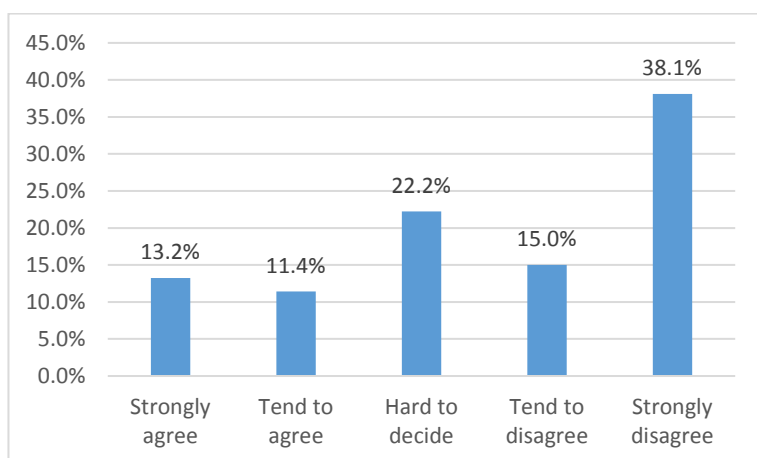


Figure 5-7 Response to statement “You are considering leaving the profession in the next 2-3 years”

When asked whether they are considering leaving the profession in the next two to three years, a total of 24.6% of the respondents indicated that this may be the case while another 22.2% said it was hard to decide. Just more than half of the respondents seemed to be certain that they would not leave the profession in the near future: 38.1% strongly disagreed with the statement posed to them and 15.1% tended to disagree (Figure 5-7).

Only 50.8% of the women disagreed with the statement that they may consider leaving the profession in the next two to three years as opposed to 57.1% of the men. The group that seems most likely to leave the profession is Coloured women (40.8% of them disagreed with the statement) while Black African men seems the most likely to stay (63.6% of them disagreed with the statement).

Table 5-13 Response to statement “You are considering leaving the profession in the next 2-3 years” according to gender and population group

Population group	Female					Male				
	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Total	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Total
% of respondents in population group and gender category										
<b>Agree</b>	31.7	27.6	22.4	23.4	27.0	18.9	17.9	24.3	24.2	21.1
<b>Hard to decide</b>	19.2	31.6	25.9	22.3	22.3	17.5	23.1	27.0	26.6	21.8
<b>Disagree</b>	49.1	40.8	51.7	54.3	50.8	63.6	59.0	48.6	49.3	57.1

Table 5-14 shows that young lawyers based in smaller firms are less likely to leave the profession than those in larger firms. While 61.2% of the respondents working in one-attorney firms disagreed with the statement, the figure systematically declines with an increase in firm size and only 41.3% of those working in firms with more than 50 attorneys disagreed with the statement.

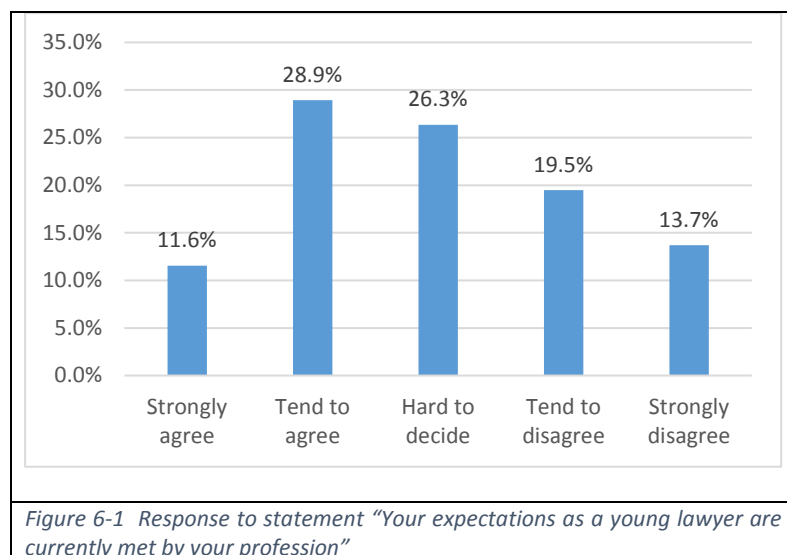
Table 5-14 Response to statement “You are considering leaving the profession in the next 2-3 years” according to firm size

	1 attorney	2 to 4 attorneys	5 to 15 attorneys	16 to 50 attorneys	More than 50 attorneys
% of respondents in firms of this size					
<b>Agree</b>	19.9	19.7	31.4	36.8	32.7
<b>Hard to decide</b>	19.0	23.6	22.5	21.3	26.0
<b>Disagree</b>	61.2	56.7	46.1	41.9	41.3

## 6 EXPECTATIONS OF PROFESSION

This section deals with questions aimed to gauge young lawyers' expectations of the profession and of the LSSA as their representative professional body.

### 6.1 EXPECTATIONS MET BY PROFESSION



The respondents were asked to react to the statement "Your expectations as a young lawyer are currently met by your profession". More than a quarter (28.9%) were undecided while 11.6% strongly agreed, 28.9% tended to agree, 19.5% tended to disagree and 13.7% strongly disagreed (Figure 6-1).

The respondents from different gender and population groups did not differ much in their

responses except for Coloured men of whom 64.1% agreed with the statement (Table 6-1).

*Table 6-1 Response to statement "Your expectations as a young lawyer are currently met by your profession" according to gender and population group*

Population group	Female					Male				
	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Total	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Total
% of respondents in population group and gender category										
<b>Agree</b>	35.9	35.4	34.2	42.0	38.0	43.6	64.1	37.8	44.4	44.9
<b>Hard to decide</b>	27.4	29.1	33.3	25.1	27.4	26.7	15.4	21.6	24.6	24.9
<b>Disagree</b>	36.7	35.4	32.5	33.0	34.6	29.7	20.5	40.5	30.9	30.2

Respondents from different firm sizes did not differ substantially in their responses to this statement (Table 6-2).

*Table 6-2 Response to statement "Your expectations as a young lawyer are currently met by your profession" according to firm size*

	1 attorney	2 to 4 attorneys	5 to 15 attorneys	16 to 50 attorneys	More than 50 attorneys
% of respondents in firms of this size					
<b>Agree</b>	44.0	41.2	35.7	36.6	43.7
<b>Hard to decide</b>	22.0	25.1	31.0	28.4	31.1
<b>Disagree</b>	33.9	33.7	33.3	35.1	25.2



## 6.2 WHAT CAN LSSA AS PROFESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVE BODY DO FOR YOUNG LAWYERS

When asked what the LSSA as professional representative body can do for young lawyers, only 68.6% of the respondents commented. Some of the respondents raised several issues. The broad areas in which they expect the LSSA to intervene and the number of responses related to these areas can be seen in Table 6-3.

Table 6-3 Areas in which LSSA can provide services to young lawyers

Areas for LSSA intervention	n	%*
Training	395	37.0
Remuneration	282	26.4
Working conditions	179	16.8
Functioning of LSSA	108	10.1
Access to work	102	9.6
Resources	77	7.2
Networking/communication	64	6.0
Start-up of own practices	48	4.5
Guidance and support	38	3.6
Other	39	3.7

\*Percentage of respondents who answered the question

### 6.2.1 Training

The young lawyers who participated in the survey had various suggestions as to how the LSSA should be involved with training. This include the following:

#### *a) More involvement with and control over the candidate attorney programme*

Several respondents asked for the LSSA to become more involved with the CA training programme. It was for example proposed that:

- Law firms that take on CAs should be provided with a prescribed programme that will ensure that CAs get proper exposure to all aspects of practice;
- Principles should be properly orientated and informed about the requirements of the CA programme;
- Mentors should be better selected and trained or orientated to fulfil a mentorship role;
- Regular meetings or workshops should be held with CAs and mentors;
- Firms should be monitored to ensure that CAs receive proper training and are not exploited.

A few respondents also commented on the board exams and requested better security around the papers to avoid the leaking of papers that require them to re-write the exam.

#### *b) Provision of training free of charge or at largely reduced cost*

Many respondents complained about the cost of training and asked that the LSSA provide free training to CAs and to young attorneys starting out in practice. The need for free training stems from the fact that CAs and young attorneys generally earn meagre salaries or stipends and cannot afford to pay for training courses. The position of attorneys working in areas outside the large cities is worse than those

of their urban counterparts as they have to pay travel and accommodation costs in addition to the course fees.

*c) Providing training in areas of practice not provided for by the firms in which they are working*

The respondents identified a wide range of areas in which the LSSA should provide training. Most of these correspond with the areas identified in Section 3.8.2.

*d) Providing on-line training*

Another request that came through frequently was that training should be made available on-line. Many of the respondents said that they could not afford to take time off during working hours to attend training courses. They would appreciate opportunities to study after hours and in their own time. This was specifically a request from young lawyers in their own practices.

*e) Making training more accessible to lawyers in rural areas*

Lawyers based outside the large centres of Gauteng, Cape Town and Durban complained about the fact that training was not accessible to them. Some asked that courses and workshops be brought to their areas such as Mpumalanga and Limpopo.

### 6.2.2 Remuneration

More than a quarter of the respondents who answered this question requested the LSSA to become involved with the remuneration of CAs and other young lawyers. Most of them requested that the LSSA set a minimum wage. From the comments it is clear that there are not only huge differences in the remuneration of young lawyers, but that many earn such small salaries that they battle to survive. A few of the respondents mentioned the actual amounts that they earned, i.e. between R2 500 and R4 000 per month. In cases where they were earning so little, respondents commented that:

- They felt humiliated and exploited especially as the amounts they earned were less than the basic minimum wage.
- They felt that, even though they were still in training, their remuneration was completely out of kilter considering their level of education, the level of work they performed and the long hours that they worked.
- They could not afford the transport cost for getting to and from work every day, let alone having money to pay for living expenses.
- They were still burdened with study loans that had to be paid back.
- While being paid so little, they were expected to have their own cars and use their own petrol to run errands for and to deliver court papers on behalf of the firms.

### 6.2.3 Working conditions

A third area where respondents felt the LSSA should intervene, is the working conditions of CAs and young lawyers. Poor working conditions and low wages were often mentioned in combination. The main areas mentioned by the respondents included:

- The regulation of working hours and payment for overtime.
- The regulation of the type of work assigned to CAs. (Many complained about having to perform administrative and support duties and not being exposed to proper legal work).

- Prescribing basic benefits such as those stipulated in the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (leave, sick leave etc.).
- Ensuring that young attorneys are well treated in their firms. (Some complained about being ignored by their principals and senior staff, subtle or overt racial and gender discrimination etc.)
- Preventing young black lawyers from being used as a front for BBBEE purposes by white principals who have no intention of developing them as professionals.
- Addressing transformation of the profession and weeding out race and gender bias and discrimination.

The overall feeling of these respondents was that the LSSA should set minimum conditions of employment for CAs and young attorneys, provide guidelines to workplaces as to how they should treat CAs and prescribe the kind of practical exposure that CAs should get. Once standards are set, the LSSA should monitor workplaces to ensure that they meet these standards and implement the guidelines.

#### 6.2.4 Functioning of the LSSA

Just more than ten per cent of the young lawyers who answered this question commented on the internal functioning of the LSSA. A wide range of aspects were brought to the fore including the following:

##### *a) LSSA administrative processes*

Several respondents commented that the LSSA (including the provincial law societies) can improve their administrative processes, guidelines with regard to registrations and overall assistance with administrative processes – especially those related to the registration of articles and admittance. A request was also received for regular reminders of looming deadlines and compliance requirements.

##### *b) Forums specifically for young lawyers and representation in LSSA*

Some respondents requested opportunities for direct communication between the LSSA and young lawyers (to address their specific needs) as well as opportunities for young lawyers to communicate with their peers on issues affecting them specifically. One respondent proposed that young lawyers should have their own professional body while a few asked for young lawyers to be represented in the LSSA governing structures.

##### *c) Membership fees*

It was asked that, in light of the low salaries that young lawyers receive and the financial burdens faced by lawyers starting their own practices, these members should pay reduced membership fees or they should be exempt from membership fees altogether.

##### *d) Handling of complaints from young lawyers and hearing their voices*

Several respondents commented that the LSSA should create a mechanism whereby young lawyers can complain about issues experienced in the workplace or the behaviour of their principals without fear of retribution. These respondents felt that the LSSA should be more receptive to the inputs from young lawyers, that it should “listen to their voices” and that it should take better care of the young members of the profession.

### 6.2.5 Access to work

Throughout the survey respondents referred in one way or another to the fact that supply of young lawyers entering the labour market exceeds the demand. Many Black respondents felt that they were at a disadvantage and that they did not have the same access to work that their white counterparts had. Requests for intervention by the LSSA referred to various aspects of the situation including:

- Finding placements for articles. Some, especially Black, respondents complained about job requirements that further disadvantage candidates that are already from disadvantaged backgrounds, for example the requirement that they should have drivers' licenses and their own cars or that they have to be proficient in Afrikaans.
- Forcing or incentivising large established firms to refer legal work to small (especially Black) start-up firms.
- Assisting young lawyers to find work (e.g. by creating a database of CVs of available young lawyers that employers can access and a database of all law firms that young attorneys can access).
- Prohibiting large financial institutions from providing legal advice.
- Relaxing the rules around advertising of legal services and touting.
- Promoting small and start-up firms in the corporate world.

Some of the respondents also felt that within firms they did not have access to meaningful work that would give them the necessary practical exposure. The LSSA should intervene by setting guidelines and standards for the CA training programme.

### 6.2.6 Provision of resources

The resources that respondents requested from the LSSA include:

- Financial and other resources (e.g. accounting and case management software) for young lawyers to start up their own firms.
- Bursaries for further studies.
- Free access to books and other relevant research material.
- Free access to and regular notification of changes in legislation and court notices.
- Better and more accessible information on the rules regarding ethical behaviour of lawyers.
- Subsidies to augment the salaries of young lawyers.
- On-line training for admission examinations.

### 6.2.7 Networking and communication

Several respondents asked for networking opportunities. Some expressed the need to interact with senior lawyers and mentors to gain knowledge of certain aspects of the law and legal practice, other expressed the need to network with their peers in specific interest groups such as Black women or young lawyers starting up their own businesses.

### 6.2.8 Assistance with start-up of new practices

In the previous sections the needs of start-up practices were mentioned several times. In addition to this, respondents also felt that the LSSA could assist new practitioners in private practice through:

- The provision of training and guidance on the setting up and management of one's own firm;
- Technical support – e.g. guidance on how to handle certain cases or matters;
- Access to financial support to start a new firm.

### 6.2.9 Guidance and support

Other forms of guidance and support that young lawyers require from the LSSA are:

- Guidance on career opportunities and career advancement.
- Guidance on how to better organise one's personal life and work, how to handle the work environment and how to manage stress and depression emanating from the work environment.

### 6.2.10 Other

Various other areas in which the LSSA can serve young lawyers have been identified by a few respondents each:

- Intervening in the relationship between candidate attorneys and their principals and ensuring proper disciplinary/grievance procedures in instances where the CAs are mistreated or where principals refuse to sign off on their articles.
- Intervening in the court system to ensure greater efficiency in the system and to ensure that young lawyers are better treated by court officials.
- Getting rid of the outdated attire (specifically the bibs) that attorneys are expected to wear in court.
- Deploying inspectors in courts to ensure that unqualified people don't appear as attorneys.
- Some respondents felt the LSSA should ensure a more equitable fee structure for attorneys while others argued against fixed fees because, as small practices they distinguish themselves from other firms through their negotiated fee structures with clients.
- Protecting attorneys from clients and assisting them when clients don't pay.
- Instructing law firms to pay correspondent attorneys when they don't do so out of their own.
- Opening up opportunities for non-South African graduates to pursue a legal career in the country.
- Protecting and promoting the independence of the profession and guarding against political interference.
- Promoting the image of the profession among the general public and restoring the pride of the profession.

## 6.3 HOW THE LSSA CAN REPRESENT THE INTERESTS OF YOUNG LAWYERS UNDER THE LEGAL PRACTICE ACT

When asked how the LSSA can represent the interests of young lawyers under the Legal Practice Act (LPA) just more than a third reacted. However, in most instances they repeated the issues referred to in the previous question (Section 6.2). At the top of the list of answers was the request to set a minimum wage for CAs and young lawyers.

A number of respondents expressed confusion regarding the implementation of the LPA and asked for clarity, information and clear guidelines in respect of the transition from the previous dispensation to the new.

A specific issue that was raised by a number of respondents was that the right of appearance of practitioners should be aligned with the Attorneys Act. It was felt that the requirements of the new LPA, i.e. that they can only appear after three years of practice, unduly affects young attorneys' careers. It has a detrimental effect on their employability and on small firms' ability to secure work.

Some of the Black respondents said that the LSSA should actively drive transformation of the profession.

It was furthermore requested that the LSSA should defend work areas reserved for attorneys and that it should play a role in areas where legal reform is needed, for example labour legislation where there is a need to establish the right of appeal from the CCMA.

Most of the respondents felt that the LSSA should fairly represent the interests of all lawyers, but especially those of young lawyers and that it should strive towards a fair and equitable dispensation for all irrespective of race, gender or age. That means that the LSSA should actively deal with all kinds of discrimination and unfairness identified earlier in the report. It should also listen to the young lawyers and create platforms for communication with them. Representation of young people in the LSSA was mentioned once again. One respondent even proposed that the LSSA should introduce an on-line voting system whereby members can participate in decision making (very similar to the current survey).

#### 6.4 OTHER COMMENTS FROM YOUNG LAWYERS

Finally, in the last question of the survey young lawyers were given the opportunity to raise any other concerns or to share anything else that the LSSA should know. Less than a third of the respondents used the opportunity to make further comments. Most of the comments reiterated the points made earlier.

The majority of comments referred to the poor remuneration, negative work environment, abuse and discrimination experienced by many CAs. A few of the comments made by CAs are quoted verbatim:

*“We are working as slaves. Working at a law firm is like working in hell. We walk around with our hills pretending to be professionals but we are broken inside. We are supervised by secretaries, we have to pick and drop our employer's kids. In order for us to show commitment to our work we have to work until 22: 00 at night, use our cars and petrol to finance the firm, not fall pregnant or start a family, not take a leave or fall sick. We need your help.”*

*“We are expected to respect the profession, however the profession does not respect CAs.”*

*“I as a candidate attorney I have endured abuse and harassment in various forms during my 6 months of articles thus far. I am unable to voice my concerns as I will be severely prejudiced. Until I am able to find another suitable firm to cede my contract of articles the abuse will continue. I am even willing to start my articles from fresh if I am able to find a suitable firm. As a law student in university I did not expect such degrading treatment in the legal profession. I wish that the LSSA will soon implement appropriate measures so that no other young legal practitioners will endure such abuse.”*

Some of the comments reflect young lawyers' general disillusionment with the law, the justice system and with the profession:

*“Law is simply a concept on paper. In practice the courts especially the clerks, thrive on bribery and corruption.”*

*“The legal profession is slowly losing relevance as the access to information has increased dramatically. Make it easier for practitioners to venture into business alternatives to make up for this reality.”*

*“The courts are incredibly ineffective. Administration at court is a complete nightmare and the court staff have a devil may care attitude towards their performance. Poor performance from court staff is hampering the administration of justice and affecting our practices negatively. The court management needs to be investigated and re-evaluated as the court managers are not doing their jobs properly. If management of courts were better registrars and clerks would not knock off at 13:00 and simply not return to work.”*

Some of the comments pertain to the LSSA itself – some were positive and complimentary of the work of the LSSA while others were extremely critical of the organisation:

*“I have been extremely satisfied with the level of service that the LSNP have provided to me. They have been very helpful from inception of my articles to my current career.”*

*“Keep up the good work.”*

*“A Law Society serves no purpose. The society has lost all sight of why it was established in the first place and should be abolished. The Fidelity Fund should absorb the society.”*

*“The LSSA has caused a lot of frustration for myself and many of my colleagues over my time in the profession owing mostly to bad communication and administration.”*

*“The process up till now for registering candidate attorneys has been s#\$. This needs to be improved drastically: Make the rules surrounding CA's more clear (when you may/may not write exams). Make registration frictionless and easy. Make sure that candidates have a contact person within the Society so that they deal only with one person and not an entire department.”*

*“There is no forum for candidates to safely express their grievances! There is a constant fear of reprisal and the Law Society has done nothing to assist!! Seriously there is no consideration for candidates within the profession. Case in point: the attorney admission examination for August 2018 was leaked. No thought nor consideration was given to candidates' regarding: inconvenience, travel costs, time, study efforts, lost leave from work, delaying of admission, candidates who couldn't rewrite because they were in another province! A rewrite is what was offered and we the candidates simply had to live with it! The profession is suffering and it has been for a while. That is the big picture which in my view has been avoided by the powers that be.”*

Lastly, amid the largely negative comments and complaints, one Black African woman summarised her attitude as follows:

*“I aspire to be one of the leading legal minds in the country. Although I come from a previously disadvantaged background my perseverance and resilient approach to my work has sustained me throughout and I am looking forward to going further in this profession.”*

## 7 CONCLUSIONS

The Young Lawyers Survey was undertaken by the LSSA in the last months of 2018 and aimed to gain a thorough understanding of the experiences, perceptions and needs of young lawyers in South Africa and their expectations of the LSSA, especially in view of the changes in function brought about by the LPA.

A very good response rate was obtained with a total of 1 555 young lawyers participating in the survey. Generally speaking, the questions were well answered and it seemed as if the respondents welcomed the opportunity to communicate with the LSSA through the survey.

The overall impression gleaned from the survey results is that although the majority of young lawyers are satisfied with the profession and their current work circumstances, there is also a large contingent who are hugely unhappy, who feel mistreated in and by the profession and who suffer financially because of the low wages paid by some firms. Many of them contemplate leaving the profession.

The need for transformation is a theme that occurred throughout the survey. The lack of transformation reported by the respondents took many forms and varied from observations about the race and gender composition of law firms to very blatant discrimination such as differences in exposure to work and differences in remuneration and conditions of employment, based on race and gender. Although Black women are clearly the group that feels most marginalised, White men and women also reported that they experienced discrimination on the basis of their race or gender.

It was also interesting to see that quite a large percentage of respondents are already practising on their own and that many think that they may start their own practices in the near future. However, many of the sole practitioners complained about the harsh realities facing small firms and about being unable to compete for work with the large established firms. They are specifically looking for inroads into the corporate client base and seem to need assistance in this regard.

The CA programme is clearly an area that needs the attention of the LSSA. It seems as if there is great need to standardise the learning programme and to provide clear guidelines to firms regarding the training and practical exposure required for CAs and their conditions of employment.

Another area that needs attention is communication regarding the transitional arrangements following the implementation of the LPA.

Finally, a few respondents expressed their appreciation for this survey and asked that the LSSA interact with young lawyers through surveys like this on a more regular basis.