REASONS WHY AT-RISK HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS FORFEIT BECOMING COMMITTED TO APPROPRIATE CAREER CHOICES: A CASE STUDY

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to Sophy and Kabelo, my parents who gave me love, composure and happiness of being the person I am, Dimakatso and Dintletse, my sisters and Lerato my younger sister for the love and affection they provided me with and rakgadi Lebo for the role she played in my life. Not forgetting ba tlogolo Lebo and Tshepo for spicing up my life. Your love and support is greatly appreciated.

What is knowledge without the love of God? One needs to count his/her successes through the blessings of being alive.

DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation hereby submitted to the University of The Free State (Qwa Qwa Campus) for the degree Magister in Administration has not been previously submitted for a degree at this University or any other academic institution and that it is my own work in design and in execution and that all reference material therein has been duly acknowledged.
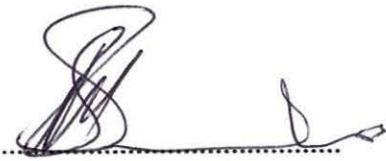
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ABSTACT

Career decision-making is a delicate process that needs to be followed enthusiastically. Emphatically it is the corner stone of building an individual future. Lack of commitment and a prodigious incorrect information, leads to living a life of utter luck and not taking prospects in creating opportunities. This investigation looked into what could be the root cause of such a lack of commitment.

It is evident that learners are not making informed career decisions or career choices. This results in bad career decisions that stall in time. The situation is aggravated by the fact that they are not fully informed or orientated towards career decision-making processes. It is found that there are no proper measures in place to help these 'at-risk' learners. The career guidance offered by the S.A Education Department is not realistic and lack objectivity. On the other hand career guidance teachers/counselors are not qualified to match the task at hand. Therefore, in most instances these learners rely on mythical information that lacks sources of reference. Therefore, it is of importance that the programme is refurbished and career guidance teachers/counselors be properly trained.

CHAPTER
ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

Sometimes decisions are as easy as choosing a TV channel or picking a flavor of ice cream. These daily decisions have a modest impact on the way one lives his/her life. Other decisions have greater ramifications on life and thus one may be hesitant to decide, feeling less fulfilled or happy. Examples of these kinds of decisions include choosing a spouse or determining what one wants to do with one's life with regards to a career. There are also a variety of career myths that can interfere with one's effective career decision-making. An individual may take a look at the decision-making process, tasks and styles and factors that can complicate such decision-making. The next step concerns investigating decision-making techniques and suggestions for establishing decision-making confidence with regards to the significant choice of what to do with the career portion of one's life.

It is most important for one to plan his/her life. A planned life does not only provide the individual an opportunity to develop spiritually, socially, psychologically and otherwise, but also provides one an opportunity to develop his or her skills and abilities. It is therefore not merely a means to achieve a clearly chosen career, but also an important ingredient of having a clear direction of what one wants to achieve in life and how to achieve it.

In the very same breath, it seems to be evident that most learners are *"wishful-thinkers"* in choosing a career. It is the researcher's experience that they lack knowledge of the requirements to achieve those careers and what those careers exactly entail.

The need to understand career dynamics is crucial for enlightening learners to arrive at appropriate career decisions. The dynamics should be understood in the following respect. First, an appreciation of principles underlying careers can help one to manage his/her career more effectively. Secondly, organizations can profit from understanding career decisions and dilemmas that confront their employees or prospective employees (Greenhaus & Callan, 1994, p7).

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It is crucially important that the sooner the youth are encouraged to embark on self-exploration to make realistic career choices, the better. It's a known fact as purported by Greenhaus et al, (1994, p9) that a "career does not remain a static or constant variable". This is due to development, maturity, change in attitude, and acquiring more knowledge, among other factors that make an individual unique. It is for the above mentioned reasons that the youth should be encouraged to take their studies seriously, due to the fact that decisions taken early can impact positively or negatively on one's life at a later stage.

The above scenario leads to the question, whether there are any appropriate resources available to enlighten learners about possible avenues to venture into in accordance with their skills and abilities?

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

There seems to be a lack of relevant information and consequent commitment amongst learners to arrive at suitable career choices, because they are not sufficiently informed about the requirements to arrive at realistic career choices in spite of the available career guidance programs for Grades 7-12 learners. This state of affairs is confirmed by the researcher's casual observations.

The researcher's experience was that learners were not exactly sure of what career field to follow during tertiary education. Most important, they confused their choices and decision-making. Learners made choices but failed to take appropriate career decisions. This is confirmed by what has been said in prior paragraphs, that is, they seem to be "wishful-thinkers". To make a suitable career decision one needs to implement or put into action the techniques to achieve the chosen goal.

It is from the above argument that the researcher purported that at-risk learners foreclose their career choices through mythical information. They are not fully informed in terms of their immediate surroundings pertaining to work environment in relation to their self worth. In short, this means that learners make choices, but do not take the final

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appropriate decisions, and therefore are not orientated towards self-exploration as well as environmental-exploration.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The general objective of this study is to investigate the commitment of high school learners towards choosing and making decisions about suitable and appropriate careers. Since there is no research known on high school career choices around Qwa-Qwa, the research will concentrate on the following aspects in this region:

a) Status of vocational exploration, lack of commitment and a tendency to foreclose attitudes amongst high school learners.

b) Status of vocational identity, need for occupational information, and barriers to occupational goals of high school learners.

c) Presence and reliance on career myths that cloud high school learners in making realistic career choices and the impact of such myths.

d) The state of affairs with regard to available qualified school councilors.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The contemporary vocational world has become complex due to psychological, sociological, economical and technological inventions and innovations. These enormous developments have an impaired impact on the vocational expectations of learners. It is therefore, rational to argue that previous solutions to vocational problems are no longer applicable to contemporary vocational problems confronting present-day learners. Technological advances have affected every phase in organizations, from operations and sales to financial and other forms of management. Computer technology has upgraded the skill requirements of many jobs and eliminated the existence of others. In addition,

technology, in combination with shifting demands for products and services, will create new occupations. Because of these technological changes, some of which are unpredictable, career management has become more crucial. That is to say, the problems faced by learners today are decades apart from those of the previous generation and have acquired new dimensions (Borchard, 1988, 27).

It is important to examine the occupational choice process and the commitment learners have towards the process. Learners are faced with challenges not only with regards to career choices during tertiary education, but also with regards to employment challenges emerging from the socio-political changes now occurring in South Africa. It is therefore necessary to identify the factors that inhibit or influence students with regard to making career choices and proper decision-making.

Most high school learners, who are about to enter tertiary institutions or the labor market have a number of unresolved vocational problems, which allow indecisiveness to creep-in. These "at-risk" learners need to be assisted, specifically so, since many are uncertain about what is expected of them and what they should expect in the corporate world. More than ever before the expectations are higher and learners have to perform or deliver irrespective of psychological, social and physical changes. These aspects imply that the requirements are elevated and an individual has to perform exceptionally well to be employed (Borchard, 1988, 29).

The goalposts have changed, without considering the newly existing shortfalls of human nature. These being the types of life-styles people are anticipating for, and the new challenges that are facing them in particular towards the requirements for employment. And these factors have a direct or indirect bearing on any form of a career decision-making process. Therefore, in this rapidly changing and uncertain world, career success and satisfaction will most likely be achieved by individuals who understand themselves, know how to perceive changes in the environment, create opportunities for themselves, and employ an effective career decision-making process (Greenhaus et al, 1994, p10).

Rettig (1974, p 69) states that "choosing your occupation should not mean taking the first job that comes along. Choosing an occupation should mean finding the best possible match of a person with a particular kind of work". Therefore the basic value of this research will be to unfold and address the career decision-making influencing myths, barriers to occupational goals and to establish the commitment of learners towards the career development process.

This topic is chosen because career information, even though appearing to be an important means of occupational decision-making, has received scanty representation in both the scholarly literature and in everyday practitioner debates (Rettig, 1974, p70).

The three core elements of careers that are rarely distinct in practice are work-guidance, information and education. That is why the difficulty in defining the information content lies in determining where or how it differs from work-guidance and education. Career education that until recently has barely featured as a goal of higher education advisory services, is raising its profile, thereby reducing the salience of information (Rettig, 1974, p70).

However, no precise delineation of relationship and relative significance of these core elements could by itself achieve a satisfactory definition since what counts as career information depends partly on its usage.

1.5 HYPOTHESIS

A general hypothesis will be tested to fulfill the above aims of the research:
At-risk high school learners rely mostly on mythical information for career choices and decisions because of a lack of suitable and relevant career guidance.

The following specific hypotheses will be tested to verify the above stated general hypothesis:

a. High school learners have a tendency to foreclose without commitment to vocational exploration.

b. High school learners are not orientated towards vocational identity or need for occupational goals.

c. High school learners' decisions are clouded with career myths they hold.

d. There are no qualified vocational or career counselors in the high schools in Qwa-Qwa.

1.6 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

The following definitions of concepts in contrast to conceptual definitions will be to close the gap of understanding between the researcher and the reader of research. It is therefore important for both to have the same understanding of appropriate concepts. The definitions should be understood within the framework of the entire topic.

a) At-risk: Learners from the underdeveloped communities who are following a career choice process that will mislead or which is unrealistic.

b) High-School: The institution of learning where the learners at-risk are enrolled.

c) Learner: A person who will be enrolled at the institution of learning (High school) as a learner and who is abiding by the rules and regulations of the institution. Pupils mentioned in above institution are regarded as at-risk.

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d) Forfeit: To miss an opportunity or loose out. Learners loose sight of future expectations in the world of work.

e) Commitment: The dedication and motivation displayed towards the process of decision-making in respect to realistic career choices. A systematic planning of a particular process (decision-making) with enthusiasm. The commitment to the career choices process reflects ones certainty about various career choices and implies self-confidence and a stable sense of vocational future.

f) Appropriate: Proper or near to perfect relevance. The suitability of intended purpose.

g) Career: Career covers a sequence of positions, jobs, or occupations that one person engages in during his/her life. "The pattern of work-related experiences that span the course of person's life" (Greenhause et al, 1994, p5).

h) Choices: Deliberate decision-making action towards a preferred career path. To compare and contrast different occupations and single out one that will suit an individual as a career to pursue.

1.7 LAYOUT OF CHAPTERS

This document will consist of six chapters. Chapter one is an introduction to a problem that has caught the attention of the researcher. The discussion will rally around the problem statement, aims of the research, significance of the study and the formulated hypotheses.

Chapter two will focus on a literature review. It will deal with the career concepts that need to be considered when making an informed career decision. Aspects like what necessitate the exploration for career-decision making, the impairing realities of the career-decision making process and the rapid social changes, and related topics will be discussed.

Chapter three presents career development theories. It discusses theories of Frank Parson, Ginzberg, Super, Holland and Krumboltz. It then closes on viewing processes of choosing an occupation.

Chapter four deals with research design and the applied research methodology.

In chapter five the population, data and results are described. This chapter displays the results as portrayed and chapter six focuses on elucidating the results. The discussion is on relating the findings and providing recommendations based on what emanates from the results.

1.8 SUMMARY

The investigation focused on the mythical aspects that stick out in the way of making an informed career decision. The study will try to discover what these myths are and how they influence the decisions of the at-risk learners. The benefit of the expected results will be helpful to the learners and career guidance teachers/councilors.

The general outcome of results might have a positive impact on institutions and organizations realizing that, if career choices are made early on an informed basis, it might curb the loss of skills invested in individuals who are following their hearts in career decision-making.

Chapter two will concentrate on the literature review, on aspects that impaired the reality for at-risk learners and factors that exert pressure on their decision-making procedures.

CHAPTER
TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Career decision-making is an important procedure an individual has to follow for his life expectations to be fulfilled. This can be termed a blue print for achieving ones desired life style and envisaged career. Even though it might look simple, the reality is that there are a number of stumbling blocks that always derail proper career-decision making.

This chapter will outline the following factors: the pressure involved in taking a decision, the social changes, personal development and growth, and the growing complexity of the occupational world. The way these problems have been approached in other countries will also form part of this chapter.

A workable understanding of what career information involves may be reached by examining a variety of sources. These will embrace publications by free agents and by professional bodies and employers, newspapers and magazines, independent and governmental reports, television and radio programs, audio and videocassettes and computer software (Green, 1992, p183).

Much of the literature on student career exploration and graduate recruitment identifies problems whose solutions lie in making effective use of information. It is suggested that the guidance needs of many students can be met largely through career information services (Green, 1992, p185).

2.2 WHAT NECESSITATES EXPLORATION OF CAREER DECISION-MAKING?

Career concerns occur throughout ones lifetime and one of the most important aspects of one's personal happiness is affected by ones career choice (Levinson, 1986, p11).

Young people become aware of career opportunities and choices around them as they identify with friends and people around them, parents' occupations and role models, from

watching television programs, and from participating in school programs, church and community activities, etc. (Krumboltz, 1994, p171).

Because this exposure becomes broader and deeper throughout high school it is almost impossible for students not to be overwhelmed by the many occupations and choices around them. In fact after high school temporary and transitional occupations are often chosen, with continued adjustment throughout one's life span for better career satisfaction (Sharf, 1990, p98).

The process whereby individuals engage in a variety of methods of searching for career direction is as old as the human race. Evidence has been obtained to substantiate the proposition that an individual's self-concept can be modified through career guidance and that an individual's career development can and should be guided on the basis of proven theories and sound practices (Baker & Popowicz, 1983, p87).

Even though many authors lamented that career education has almost floundered because of lack of definition and nebulous image. Parnell (1990) suggests that "school guidance councilors and teachers should lead the way in devising opportunities for students to explore a variety of career clusters". Even if several counseling practitioners lamented over the difficulties and frustrations associated with students in career planning due to lack of understanding of different career development theories and models. Based on forgoing, a discussion of some career development theories and their implications for career counseling in high school seems appropriate.

The career development process should be viewed as a total concept, which includes personal career development. An individual and an organization are two separate entities, both having identified needs – goals, likes, dislikes, objectives, desires, wishes, and so on which are compatible. The overlap area is where individuals maximize their growth and development and the organization can utilize the individual's talents to produce maximum results. Secondly one has to see himself or herself as two separate entities: as a

person needing work and as a person needing fulfillment. One needs to look at himself or herself as a productive human being (Deckens, F.Jr., Deckens, J.B., 1991, p378).

The overlap area represents how much satisfaction one receives from one's work. When the overlap area is very small, one should ask oneself the following:

- To feel fulfilled, what do I need and desire?
- Do these needs and desires fit the task I perform?

Figure 2.1 The inevitable fusion of individual and organization
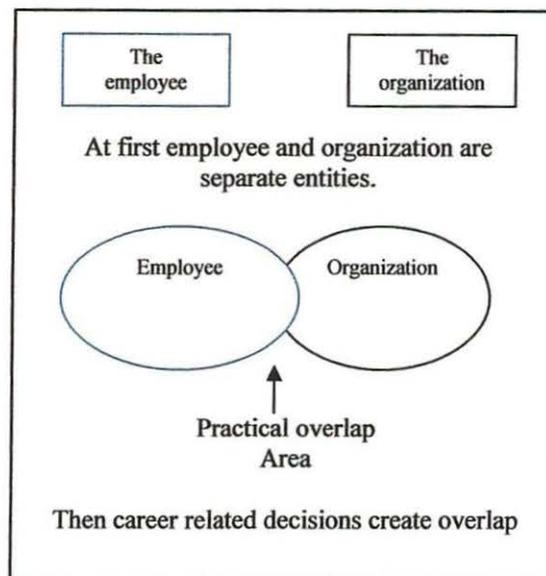
There has to be a reasonable overlap in these areas - If there isn't, one should go on to ask two more questions:

- Do my job tasks fit my career goals and desires?
- Do my career goals and desires fit the needs and desires of my organizations?

Again there has to be some compatibility here. If the overlaps are small, this might give a probable reason for a stalled career, might be evidenced by lack of professional growth, inappropriate job results, and lack of job satisfaction (Deckens et al, 1991, p380).

Deciding on a major subject and finding a satisfying career are important steps. Being uncertain and not knowing what one want to do is uncomfortable. Surprisingly though, many learners are unsure of what they want to major in or what career to pursue. Luckily, there are steps they can take and resources available to help them discover what they want to do.

Following is a description of the career development process, steps you can take to help you find what you want to do. It's important to remember that career development is a process and can take time (Deckens et al, 1991, p 380).

Figure 2.2 The inevitable fusion of work and individual job satisfaction
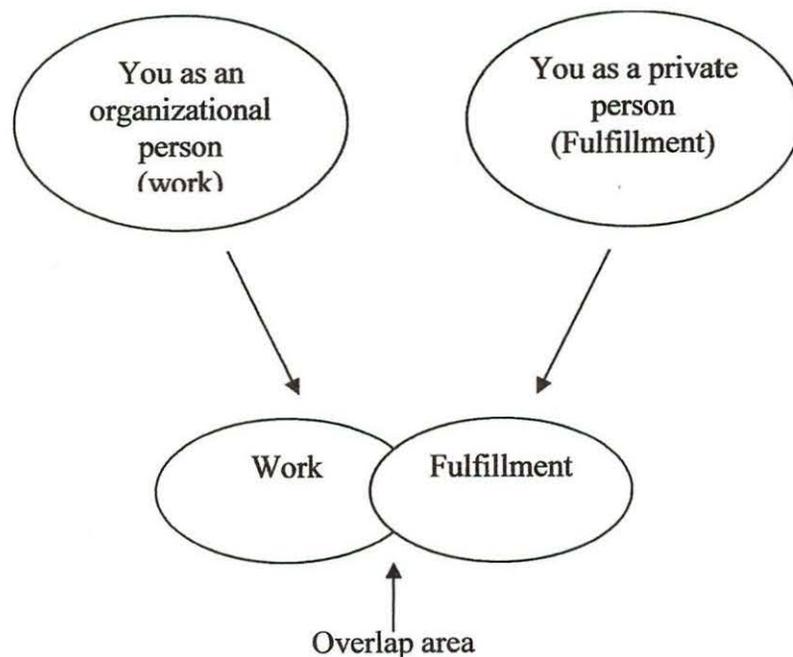
The career development process includes the following four steps.

- Self assessment
- Occupational exploration
- Career decision-making and choice
- Career implementation

(Deckens et al, 1991, p 380).

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In each of these steps, there are things one can do to enhance one's ability to make effective decisions. Gaining more information about the career development process can help one make more effective and informed decisions (Deckens et al, 1991, p381).

Identification of variables influencing career success has received considerable research attention from organizational scholars. Comprehensive models of career success have included a number of individual variables. There are models, which show that demographic, human capital, and motivational variables are associated with career success. Most research on career views individuals as passive and malleable, emphasizing the influence of situation on human behavior. In contrast to this perspective, Bell and Stow argued that personality, through the process of personal control, can ultimately affect outcomes that appear to be determined by environmental forces (Crant, Kramer, Seibert, 1999, p416).

There is a strong theoretical rationale, related to the nature of careers, to suggest that personality variables should be included in models of career success. Career success is a cumulative outcome, the product of behaviors aggregated over a relatively long period of time. Personality is more likely to be a determinant of aggregate or cumulative outcomes, such as career success, than any single act or behavioral measure (Crant et al, 1999, p416).

2.3 VOCATIONAL PLAY BY THE UNDECIDED

Traditional career counselors tend to view the counseling process as one in which clients seeks advice, information and support for a career decision. As a result of this assumption, counselors direct their energies, advice and support in a rather straightforward manner and assume that clients will internalize the information, assimilate the advice or support, and begin a career-goal direction (Rosenberg, 2000, p229).

Vocationally undecided individuals play the nine of most prevalent games as follows:

- "Look how hard I've tried"

The clients playing this game will usually bring evidence to a counselor that he or she has been making tremendous efforts to arrive a career decision. The evidence they present is frequently in the form of results from vocational test taken three or four times in previous years. Occasionally a person may support his or her case by talking about the wide range of academic courses taken or the number of years working to "find" oneself. With the recent popularity of career educational programs, students may soon be supporting their case of how hard they have tied by expounding on the number of shadow experiences undertaken or individuals visited (Rosenberg, 2000, p230).

- "If I only knew"

The behavior of clients playing this game resembles that of an individual contemplating a vision from heaven. Instead of investigating self-interest, abilities, and needs, the person waits for the magic words to come. Frequently these individuals do not seek counseling (either physically or mentally) (Rosenberg, 2000, p230).

- "Where the jobs are"

Clients who play this game enter counseling somewhat undecided but leaning toward occupations in which jobs are plentiful. Frequently they will ask the counselor which occupation will give them a chance for a job. This questioning is primarily intended to confirm what they read in newspapers or magazines. Without really considering interests, aptitudes or personalities, these people quickly choose an occupation offering high employment prospects. Counselors, glad that someone has finally reached a decision, will often overwhelmingly reinforce this choice. Unfortunately people, who are not really having interest or ability for the chosen occupation, often do poorly in related coursework. A conflict may then arise between staying in a field they dislike that offers good employment opportunities and choosing something corresponding with their interests and abilities (Rosenberg, 2000, p231).

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- "Time crunch"

Clients who play "time crunch" always appear to be in a hurry and never have much time to spend on making a career decision. Sometimes they come late for appointments, keep asking what time it is during the counseling session, and leave several minutes before time. Their behavior lets the counselor know there is not much time for counseling. Frequently, these people come in for counseling the day before or during registration and try to make a career decision (Rosenberg, 2000, p231).

- "Career hide-and-seek" or "Test and tell"

Clients, who play this game intentionally, withhold relevant personal information from the counseling process and then expect a quick career decision. Sometimes they say little or nothing, other times they give irrelevant information and feelings. Generally we see them saying to a counselor, verbally or non-verbally, "you tell me" (Rosenberg, 2000, p232).

- "Yes, But"

This game is clearly described in Games People Play (Berne, 1966) and is frequently played in conjunction with "Career Hide-and-Seek". When a counselor suggests a potential occupations, "Yes, But" appears. The client simply rejects all alternative suggested by a counselor (Rosenberg, 2000, p232).

- "Leap then look"

Clients who play this game are constantly making the "final" and "perfect" career choice of their life. First they decide to pursue an occupation and later they find what it is about. After discovering the reality of the occupation or educational requirements, they then jump to another choice. Within a year, these people often have made definite and final decisions on four or five radically different occupation (Rosenberg, 2000, 232).

- "Magic occupation"

Clients playing this game are seeking an occupation that will be beautiful and help them become self-actualizing. During a counseling session they may talk about the beauty of

being an artist or a philosopher. Frequently, they describe Sartre or Picasso as a career ideal (Rosenberg, 2000, p233).

- "Trapped"

Clients who play this game avoid making decisions because of "Career Claustrophobia". During a counseling session they are often nonverbal or reject occupation. It may take a while to discover their fear of being trapped within an occupation. Frequently they avoid counseling or career decision-making until the last moment (Rosenberg, 2000, p233).

2.4 THE IMPAIRING REALITIES OF CAREER DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

Many career development theories are narrowly defined and deal almost exclusively with occupational choice. Super (1990, p112), views career as the series of work and non-work roles that people play across their life span including student, worker, homemaker, citizen and 'leisurite'. To understand adolescent career development, it is important to know how motivated youths are to pursue various life career roles and why they want to pursue them (Munson, 1992, p 361).

Although career indecision, like most psychological disorders, could be conceptualized as a complex, multidimensional disorder, there has been a tendency to think of career indecision as a routine development task. This conceptual approach to career indecision must be based, at least to some extent, on the fact that thousands of students each year make the transition from high school to college, encountering identifiable demands from their new environment to make significant long-term career decisions (Fuqua & Hartman, 1983, p 27).

Career indecision is a complex, multidimensional problem based on much more than clinical impression. In a series of studies it has been consistently confirmed that career indecision is related to a series of psychological problems, including situational and

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characteristic anxiety, self-perceptual problems, and externalized attribution (Fuqua et al, 1983, p 28).

2.4.1 Pressures on the youth and career decision-making

In their work, Leung, Wright and Foster (1987, p 179) found that there were a number of factors that operate to influence an adolescent's post-secondary career plans. These include perceived parental influence, the personality of the adolescent and peer influence, among others.

They believed that parental concern and encouragement for school achievement was a very important source of influence on an adolescent's post-secondary career plans. They suggested that adolescent's who perceived their parents to be concerned about school performance, felt school was important for them and encouraged them to do well in school, were more likely to go on to college than those who did not perceive their parents similarly (Leung et al, 1987, p176).

This suggests that adolescents need parental guidance and support in deciding what to do after high school. In the absence of adequate parental guidance and support, adolescents may find it difficult to decide what to do after they finish high school. (It should be noted that these interpretations are based on a causal link that goes from parent to children), (Leung et al, 1987, p177).

The findings discussed above, suggest that parental concern and encouragement for school achievement predispose adolescents for a college education, while parental concern and encouragement for school achievement in conjunction with poor school records predispose adolescent towards seeking a job (Leung et al, 1987, p178).

Given that parents are the primary source of information about the world of work for their children, they play a central role in children's socialization about work. Consistent with social learning theory, the transmission of this information takes place in one of two ways, or both. Parents may verbally express to their children how they feel about their

work, or they may communicate their feelings indirectly through mood or changes in behavior (Barling, Dupre & Herpburn, 1998, p437).

As a result, children develop clear perceptions of the world of work. From as young as five years of age, children understand such concepts as pay, labor dispute, unemployment, and welfare. Children between the ages of ten and seventeen years can describe accurately their parents' work conditions; they are knowledgeable about the concepts of job loss, physical work, work environment and hard work. These perceptions of the world of work are especially relevant at this point, given that the adolescent and early-adult years are characterized by high susceptibility to attitude change, after which attitudes tend to stabilize. Consequently, any attitudes toward the world of work developed during this period are likely to persist well into adulthood (Barling et al, 1998, p437).

Research by Barling, Dupre`, and Herpburn (1998, p112) showed that children are accurate observers of their parents' job insecurity. Moreover, believing that their fathers are insecure in their jobs, affected children's own work beliefs and work attitudes.
Also, children's identification with their fathers functioned as their moderator, such that the relationship between perceptions of their fathers' job insecurity and their own work beliefs were significantly greater conditions to highly (rather than lower) identify with fathers. However, similar relationships did not emerge for mothers.

It is also possible that perceptions of parents' job insecurity affect other variables, and one possible outcome is children's school performance. Focusing on school performance may be especially important. It is noted that high school dropouts are most likely to find themselves unemployed, suggesting that any link between perceptions of parent's job insecurity and children's school performance would be of considerable social relevance.

In related studies, Barling and Mendelson (1999, p438) showed that perceptions of parents' job insecurity were indirectly and negatively linked with undergraduate students' grades through the mediating effects of beliefs in an unjust world and a negative mood.

Barling, Zacharatos and Herpburn (1999, p439), suggest that the relationship between perception of parents job insecurity and school performance is mediated by cognitive difficulties. Exposure to over-arousing stressors results in cognitive fatigue and cognitive distraction. They further suggest that watching one's parents experiencing job insecurity would be experienced as stressful, and would elicit feelings of uncertainty and powerlessness in children. As such, these stressors would be over-arousing for children, and the energy consumed would be distracting and would detract from that required for optimal performance on different tasks such as school performance.

Summarily Leung et al (1987, p179) conclude that perceived parental concern and encouragement for school performance leads to indecisiveness. The post- secondary career plans will be either to get a job, or continue with their education following completion of high school.

With multiple occupations to choose from, it is not surprising that many young people are undecided about what they want to do with their lives. In most cases such decisions are accompanied by pressure generated and accelerated by individual expectations and by peer group anxieties tied to an unfortunate lack of reality testing and verification (Noeth, R.J., Egen, H.B., Noeth, P.E., 1984, p247).

It is equally important to remember that adjustment can always be made. A career is an ever-evolving thing, and some changes will be inevitable. As one grows, one develops new interests and new skills. One will discover new talents and meet new people. One's values will also change. It is, therefore, not unusual for a person to have more than one job in one's work life. The most important consideration is to select a field of study one is interested in and has the ability to pursue (Rainbow, 1998/9, p13).

Early decisions are very important. It is vital to realize that one may limit oneself in one's career choices if one makes wrong decisions as early as grade 9 (Std 7). One's choice of study subjects may have serious implications for one's future career. For example, many pupils do not enjoy mathematics at school. They decide to drop the subject prior to

preparing for matric, only to find that when applying for a place at university or technikon math's is a compulsory subject for entry to many courses. Their further education study options have therefore already been reduced. Such a situation can often be put right, but at the extra cost of time, money and study (Rainbow, 1998/9, p14).

There is a mistaken notion that early occupational education necessitates an early irrevocable occupational choice. It is a generally accepted fact that the average age at which a person chooses an occupation has been rising. This is universally viewed as a desirable trend. We rightly view with horror the days when students were forced to leave school even before the eighth grade to accept employment because the family needed additional income. Traditions of other countries, which require that a boy's occupation be identical to his father's, are repugnant, and yet we have gone to the extreme. It has become an upper class ideal that a boy or girl should complete the baccalaureates degree before thinking about an occupation, and this ideal is too often being achieved (Evans & Herr, 1978, p54).

Unfortunately, two completely different concepts have been mixed up in this type of thinking. Early occupational education or even early occupational choice is very different from early occupational decision, which is unalterable. Many students do make an early occupational choice. The school and parents can, and should, capitalize on this fact by encouraging the student to read, write, and talk about it. Almost everything taught in the elementary school has an occupational application. Many of these applications should be pointed out to the students, and they should be encouraged to discover additional ways in which general education has value in the occupation they tentatively have chosen. Of course it will be wrong for parents or the school to discourage students from exploring other occupational opportunities by regarding the student's early occupational choices as immutable. Parents tend to do this more overtly than teachers. The student's who have said for some time that he or she wants to be an engineer may have considerable problems with parents if he or she later decides to be a plumber (Evans et al, 1978, p55).

Noeth et al (1984, p248), assert that school guidance counselors should lead the way in devising opportunities for students to explore a variety of career cluster. Even though, a conference devoted to counseling and career planning in high schools, by several counseling practitioners, displayed only the difficulties associated with assisting students in career planning. Practitioners assign these difficulties largely to a lack of understanding of different career development theories and models.

2.4.2 Rapid social change and the individual

The other feature, seen by Leana and Tylor (1969, p5) is the instability generated by the rapid changes that are occurring in our way of life. Sociologists as well as poets have labeled this as an "age of anxiety". Various writers have called attention to factors creating insecurity in the individual, factors ranging all the way from broken homes to the threat of atomic obliteration.

There are no statistical results, which permit us to compare the incidence of even the major psychoses from century to century. Nevertheless, in the books we write and the pictures we paint there is much to suggest that the prevailing mood of our times is one of uncertainty and apprehension. The most serious of the social instabilities for the individual, if the conclusions of psychiatrist and other mental health workers are sound, is the threat to the family (Leana et al, 1969, p5).

Many other social problems of our time are reflected by the rapidity with which urbanization has brought into the incredibly complex city environment, large numbers of individuals whose upbringing has not prepared them to cope with it. The constant threat of unemployment arising from technological changes hangs over men and women most of whom have no control over their own jobs. The emphasis a competitive society places on success inevitably produces anxiety in persons who cannot be sure that they are 'winners' (Leana, 1969. p6).

While some of the learner's battle with choosing an occupation and finding their first full-time job, others are faced with choosing a college and a course of study that will lead

to a satisfying career. As the youth of today strive to find places for themselves in the world of work, they are faced with considering not only the kind of job they will hold, but also the kind of work environment that will provide them with personal satisfaction and growth. As the work becomes more complex, and technologically dynamic, the career decision-making process the youth undergo also becomes much more complex. Determining what to do next in their lives remains an important but laborious developmental task for the youth leaving school (Maduakalon, 2000, p214).

In response to pressure to make a definite career choice, some youth commit themselves prematurely. They tell the world what they would like to be, without any idea of whether they have the required talents or special aptitudes and whether their training is compatible with their chosen field (Stone & Wang, 1990, p 41-54).

2.4.3 The complexity of the occupational world

Leana and Tylor (1969) agreed that, the quality of the modern scene is the nature of the occupational structure we have built. With more than thousands of separate occupations to choose from and new one's emerging every year, it is obvious that a person who attempts to make an intelligent decision faces no easy task.

Our democratic ideals, as denoted by Leana and Tylor (1969), add to the difficulty created by the sheer number of occupational possibilities. We place a high value on the principle that any individual has a right to fill any position for which he can qualify. The most reactionary of us would hardly be willing to advocate that only the children of professional men are admitted to professional schools or that the children of unskilled laborers should invariably be shunted into unskilled jobs.

We believe that it is the individual's right or even his duty to improve his position and achieve as much as possible. These attitudes are part of a cultural heritage that each child internalizes and automatically adopts as his or her set of values. They constitute subtle but strong determinants of his vocational ambitions. The complexity is a matter of attitude as well as the result of a situation that no simple means of disseminating

occupational information or giving aptitudes tests can possibly meet. An individual can be handed a test profile that makes perfectly clear what his or her pattern of abilities is like, be informed about occupations in which such abilities are most applicable, and yet be totally unable to grasp the significance of these facts because of the network of ambitions, family expectations and self-doubts in which he or she is enmeshed (Leana et al, 1969, p3-4).

2.5 FORCES AND FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE CAREER CHOICES

A recurrent theme in all theories of career development is that several factors are at work in all of us and that at several different times, each of us must choose an occupation, either in conjunction with these forces or as a response to them. Here are some of these factors and forces (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979, p270).

2.5.1 Individual differences

As we learn more about ourselves and about occupations, we come to understand that we differ from others in some respects and that occupations differ as well. Each of us has a unique pattern of abilities, interests, and other responsibility traits. In like manner, each occupation has a pattern of traits that it requires of those who work in it. The personal traits of an individual are broad enough for the typical person to meet the patterns required in a variety of jobs. On the other hand, the pattern of skills and traits demanded by a specific job is broad enough to accommodate a wide variety of prospective jobholders. A few individuals and some jobs do have unique characteristics that permit only a few possible matches at any given time. Other characteristics are so widely held and the job demands so uncomplicated that practically every person meets at least the minimum requirements. Most people and most jobs fall somewhere between these extremes. Therefore, some consideration must be given to balancing personal traits against those required in an occupation (Bourdieu et al, 1979, p279).

2.5.2 Ability and aptitudes

Although a wide range of abilities are represented in nearly every occupation, ability or propensity remains a major factor in education and career choices. By itself, an ability- or aptitude test score cannot furnish the answer about the choices of one specific occupation or even a family of occupations. But aptitude- test results can be of considerable use in exploring occupations and in career planning. We can compare the test's estimate of person ability with what is known about the ability needed in a given occupation. Aptitude-test scores that are low when compared to those needed in an occupation give some idea of the probable failure. If an employee enters an occupation in which most workers have higher abilities than he/she has, that employee will find himself/herself at a disadvantage in competing with them. But if one enters an occupation in which most workers have intelligence ratings below him/her, one may find that neither the work nor the co-workers are satisfying (Bourdieu et al, 1979, p271).

2.5.3 Education and training time

A college education is almost always required to enter the professions. It is also needed for most occupations classed as semi-professional, and it is considered highly desirable for managerial positions. College graduates average well above the total population in intellectual ability. Although there is much overlapping from one specialized field to another, certain fields require superior intellectual ability than others do. Many studies have shown that students in some fields have higher intelligence-test scores than students in other fields and that some fields attract students of a higher intelligence level than other fields do (Bourdieu et al, 1979, p272).

Training time includes the amount of general educational development and the specific vocational preparation needed for the worker to acquire the knowledge and skills needed for average performance in a specific job. General educational development includes elementary and secondary as well as further education that is not directed toward a specific job (Bourdieu et al, 1979, p272).

Specific vocational preparation is a term used to describe the time required to learn the techniques, acquire information, and develop the facility needed for average performance in a specific job. This preparation might be obtained in school, at work or from other sources. Although the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* (DOT) indicates the length of time that training may take, it does not give specific educational prescription.

The opportunity and the ability to secure education and further training are important factors in career planning. The "ability" to do so involves such matters as money, geographic location, motivation, as well as aptitude (Bourdieu et al, 1979, p273).

2.5.4 Interests

Interest is defined as relatively constant, positive or negative directions towards a specific activity and is based on the whole personality. Simply understood, it is the likes and dislikes of an individual. They can be intense feeling, concern, or curiosity about some object. Interests are important when you are planning a career because it has been found that people in particular occupations have similar sets of likes and dislikes. Their interest patterns are different from those of people in other occupations and from people in general. Most research in vocational interests has been done on professional, semi-professional, and managerial occupations (Bourdieu et al, 1979, p75).

Interests should not be confused with aptitudes. Research indicates that there is not much relationship between interests and abilities. Professor of education at Boston College, William C. Cottle, has identified five pairs of opposite interests. These pairs are:

- Things versus people,
- Business contact versus the scientific,
- Business detail versus the abstract and creative,
- Social welfare versus the non-social,
- Prestige versus the tangible and productive

A liking for a specific type of activity is associated with a dislike of its opposite (Bourdieu et al, 1979, p275).

2.5.5 Temperaments

It is generally accepted that certain people are genuinely unsuited to some types of occupations and that personality factors are of major importance in determining this. A particular occupation may demand personality traits or temperaments from its workers that are quite different from those demanded by another occupation. In fact, studies of the demands made by an occupation on a worker show the primary importance of personality traits over all other types of occupational information. Despite the importance of other factors in planning an occupation, the relationship of personality to success in various occupations, is not as clearly understood as the relationship of aptitudes or interests (Bourdieu et al, 1979, p275).

In review, some theorists have suggested that individuals choose certain occupations because of their personality make-up. Studies have shown that members of given occupations tend to be more like each other and less like people not in that occupation in one or another personality trait, measured in one another way. Some theorists have suggested that people choose occupations that give them an opportunity to express that part of their personalities that they want to reveal publicly on the job. They choose occupations, then, with a view of how the world looks at them and how they will look in the eyes of the world (Bourdieu et al, 1979, p277).

When prospective employees try to match their personality traits to those reported for members of an occupation, however, they should remember that there are also wide personality differences among members of an occupation. Moreover, much of the "matching up" has to be done on the basis of incomplete information, for we cannot possibly know all about ourselves nor can we know all about the members of an occupation. Nevertheless, if their personal traits appear to be widely different from those of members of a given occupation, they should question whether they would be satisfied in that occupation (Bourdieu et al, 1979, p279).

2.5.6 Gender

Gender difference appears to be a diminishing factor in choosing an occupation, although it still requires some consideration. The social and psychological differences of gender have more influence than the physical aspects. A much larger percentage of women are working today than ever before. Even though this trend is still expected to continue, there is still resistance to the entrance of women in the labor force. The resistance to women appears in three forms: (a) Women are paid less than men for the same or similar work (a form of discrimination now prohibited by legislation), (b) Women are typically encouraged to enter only in certain occupational fields, (c) Promotion opportunities for women are restricted (a form of discrimination being ruled against in courts of law) (Bourdieu et al, 1979, p281).

Men have dominated some occupations. Others have been dominated by women and are viewed as "natural" fields for women, for example, nursing. This job labeling persists, and it often bars women from higher-level, higher paying-jobs. Girls are sometimes encouraged by their families, teachers, or counselors to enter women's occupations. They are discouraged from entering such occupations as engineering. In no occupation is one gender completely excluded, but in a few the fields' ratio of males to females do runs higher. These social pressures, although not always applied directly, influence choice of occupation (Bourdieu et al, 1979, p281).

2.5.7 Environmental forces

The socio-economic inheritance may have a more direct and important consequence on the occupations open or eye-catching to us than does physical inheritance. The family may support entry into some occupation while discouraging entry into others. The children of professional families may be opposed if they decided not to go to college or not to enter a white-collar occupation. On the other hand, children of blue-collar families may be discouraged from going to college. Our families' origin does a great deal to determine what we ourselves consider to be an appropriate vocational choice (Bourdieu et al, 1979, p282).

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2.6 REGIONAL COMPARATIVE PROBLEMS (CASE STUDY)

In democratic countries students can make a choice of a course of higher education. At the same time the state and the society as a whole are interested in some degree of adjustment of higher education to the labor market so that both unemployment of graduates and lack of an educated labor is avoided. The state and the system of higher education can use different means to influence the choices that students make.

2.6.1 The Malawian situation

The need for guidance and counseling in Malawi's secondary education is being recognized more now than ever before. A description is provided of what and how guidance and counseling services are being utilized in the secondary schools. A survey was conducted on 20 school counselors (age 28 - 60). Data were collected with the use of semi-structured questionnaires and an oral interview with each counselor. The school counselors were fulltime classroom teachers and had no formal training in guidance or counseling (Maluwa-Banda & Dixie, 1998, p288).

The services offered to students varied from school to school. The main problems encountered by these counselors were examined. It was evident that school guidance and counseling in Malawi was in the fantasy stage. There was a strong need for the Ministry of Education and Culture to give a clear rationale and guidelines for the program. Furthermore, the role of the counselors should be clearly defined to administration counselors, teachers, and students (Maluwa-Banda et al, 1998, p290).

2.6.2 The Danish experiment (Theories of students' choices)

Most theories on how young people get into one or other course in education are either sociological or psychological. The sociological theories stress either selection or reproduction. Selection theories view the course of education and the jobs of society as placed in a hierarchy of prestige and by selection the most able persons ideally are placed at the top positions. Many studies of selection have demonstrated that in fact social background is often more important than aptitude. This has inspired the reproduction

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theories, claiming that the educational system reproduces the social class structure (Bredo, Foersom & Laursen, 1993, p64).

The sociological theories are problematic because they tend to explain the distribution of education among individuals mono-causally by reference to one variable (social class) or by means of a few social variables. Most empirical studies of choice of education seem from the individual point of view demonstrate that many variables are important.

The psychological theories are of two main types:

- Life pattern theories view the choice of a course of education in connection with the previous life history of the individual,
- Trait theories study the statistical connection between individual traits (intelligence or grades in secondary school) and their choice of a course of education or job (Bredo et al, 1993, p64).

The psychological theories are incomplete because they only see the individuals as actors. Modern educational systems are acting to influence the allocation of subjects to new generation. Both the institutions of education and central educational authorities try to influence the choice that individuals make. Choices of a course of education are made in an educational system. Several authorities have stressed the need to develop theories that integrate both the sociological and the psychological aspects of educational choices (Bredo et al, 1993, p65).

The state and the system of higher education can use different means to influence the choice that students make. Denmark had a nationally planned system of restricted admission, with grade-point averages from secondary school as the major admission criterion. This system encouraged a special kind of student behavior concerning choice of higher education. The behavior was rational from the individual point of view but at the national level it had some unintended consequences that forced the Ministry of Education and Research to implement another policy of admission. The study was made during a period when the Danish Parliament and Ministry of Education and Research decided to

introduce a fundamental change in the policy of admission to higher education (Bredo et al, 1993, p64).

Until 1991 admission was based on grade point average from secondary school certificates and there was a centralized national system of allocation. The Ministry of Education decided to implement a restricted number of places at each institution each year. The number of places was calculated on the basis of labor market prognoses. The applicants with the best grade-point averages were admitted. From 1991 only about half of the applicants were admitted on the basis of secondary school grades. The other half obtained admission on the basis of an individual evaluation of their qualifications using a mix of criteria. In 1992 a decision was made in principle to expand the system of higher education aiming at free admission (Bredo et al, 1993, p65).

It has been demonstrated that the individual choice of a course of education must be explained multi-causally, that subject matter, interests and reason for applying are important and that the individual choices are made in response to certain conditions of the educational system. The admission policy in the Danish system of higher education used the grades from secondary school as the central admission criterion and has restricted the number of places according to labor market prognoses. This central role of the grades is reflected in the Danish admission policy model and it has led to a number of unintended consequences: it has often been reported from the admission offices of Danish institutions that many students choose the course that gives the maximum "credit" for their grade point average. The students climb as high as possible on the ladder of courses that are in greater demand, which seems to many applicants to be more important than their personal interests (Bredo et al, 1993, p70).

2.6.3 The Taiwanese experience
The current need for a career-counseling program for female college students is increasing in importance in Taiwan. Researches have shown that in the last two decades career counselors have become more sensitized to women's career development as a

process separate and different from men's career development (Fitzgerald & Betz, 1983, p83).

Generally speaking, in Taiwan most of the students choose their departments based on their entrance examination scores. No matter whether they are male or female, there are some college students who show a tendency to have broad but indefinite, career goals and have career related problems (Peng & Herr, 2001, p275).

Little attention is paid to the fact that one-half of college students and two thirds of adult college students are women. Based on education statistics in Taiwan (Ministry of education, 2000), one-third of the graduate students are women. The societal trend indicates that there will be more female college students or female graduate students than men for the foreseeable future (Peng et al, 2001, p278).

In Taiwan, women seeking professional careers are strongly affected by their intentions related to marriage timing and a birth control plan. Getting married or the first pregnancy usually turns out to be a turning point in the dilemma of choosing between family and career by married women. The employment pattern of the career woman is closely related to her birth cycle. Lan in the seminar of *Approaches to family life, education development* stated that, the employment profile of Chinese married women could be described by an M-pattern. This indicates that regardless of their employment motivation, the influence on employment by family factors is greater than that from financial factors. The M-pattern describes the employment curve as gradually rising from the age of 16 up to 24 years, and then declines at the age of 25 due to household activities and nursing a baby (Peng et al, 2001, p667).

2.7 SUMMARY

In examining the relationship between career choice and anxiety, Hartman, Fuqua and Blum (1985) indicated that career indecision has been shown to be associated with the

state of trait anxiety. Originally Brown and Strange (1981) found that students having already decided on a career direction exhibit lower state anxiety than those who had not.

Collanan (1992) found that career-decided groups held more positive work attitudes and rated life stress lower than career-undecided groups. Peng's et al study (2001) of undecided female students indicated that they had an increased mean rating of confidence after participating in two different types of career-counseling groups, but that a cognitive reconstructing intervention was more effective than training in decision-making in enhancing confidence about their careers.

There are a number of aspects that work coherently to emulate obstacles towards following a proper career development program. The different authors cited above have described these as hiccups. It is therefore important for individuals needing to make career choices to engage in self-exploration and environmental exploration so as to overcome these obstacles. A better-informed career choice goes a long way in satisfying an individual, and will also give one job satisfaction

Chapter three will take a different angle; it will discuss career development theories. However, the chapters will reiterate what authors in this chapter have enlightened.

CHAPTER
THREE

CAREER DEVELOPMENT THEORIES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

There are a number of career theories developed to appraise the career decision-making process. The aim of these theories was to establish a systematic and reliable method in assisting career decision makers.

This chapter will examine theories developed by different authors that help in the process of choosing an occupation. The theories are views and systematized strategies by these authors.

3.2 CAREER DEVELOPMENT THEORIES

It is important to know that prior to the development of reliable, systematic methods of assessing career pursuits, questions about career choices were placed before several experts, including graphologists, palmists, phrenologists, and other diviners of predetermined forces (Walsh & Osipow, 1988). During the early 20th century, as the career guidance movement gained momentum, these methods of identifying a fitting pursuit for individuals received criticism from more prudent writers. The search for a wise choice and a more systematic method of vocational assessment prompted the development of career theories and practices. Frank Parson proposed the first career development theory in the early 1900s.

3.2.1 Frank Parson's Trait and Factor Theory

Parson's concept of career guidance became the foundation for what later became known as Trait and Factor Theory (Parson, 1909; Sharf, 1997). "Trait" refers to characteristics of an individual that can be measured through testing, while "Factor" refers to a characteristic required for successful job performance. Therefore, the terms, "trait and factor" refer to the assessment of characteristics of the person and the job.

Parson (1909, p43) proposed that, to select an occupation an individual should have:

1. *a clear understanding of him or herself (attitudes, abilities, interests, ambitions, resource limitations, values, preferred life-styles and their courses);*

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2. *a knowledge of the requirements and conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities and prospects in different lines of work;*

3. *true reasoning on the relations of these two groups of facts.*

Simply stated, Trait and Factor Theory (TFT) of career development means matching the individual's traits with the requirements of a specific occupation, subsequently aid in solving a person's career-search problems (Zunka, 1990, 189).

This theory is greatly influenced by the study of job descriptions and job requirements in an attempt to predict future job success from the measurements of traits that are job related. Fundamental to this theory is the assumption that individuals have unique patterns of ability or traits that can be objectively measured and correlated with the requirements of various types of jobs (Zunka, 1990, 189).

There is little research supporting or refuting TFT as a viable theory of career development. Studies conducted focused more on relating trait factors to one another, and on the other hand, the validity and reliability of measurement of traits and factors, which tests developers, have been correlated with each other. As the oldest and most widely used of all career development theories, TFT focuses on the match between an individual's aptitudes achievements, interests, values and personality, and the requirements and conditions of occupation (Zunka, 1990, 190).

3.2.2 Ginzberg's General Theory of Occupational Choices

Ginzberg, Ginsberg, Exelrad, Hermo (1951) published the first comprehensive theory of occupational behavior that resulted from an empirical study. The research purpose was to establish generalizations about the types of occupational choices young people make before and after college. From their findings, they concluded that the process of occupational decision-making could be analyzed in terms of three developmental stages (fantasy period, tentative period and realistic period) that could be differentiated by the way an individual translates his or her impulses and needs into an occupational choices.

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3.2.2.1 The Fantasy Period

They call the first stage the fantasy period. During this period (ages 6 to 11), a child identifies a desire for an occupation and tries out a variety of adult situations by playing make-believe work roles. Because the child makes multiple choices without knowing the barriers likely to stand in his or her way, the word "fantasy" was chosen by Ginzberg to express the nature of choices at this stage. The outstanding characteristic of the fantasy period is that the choices are arbitrary and are made without reference to reality, abilities, and potential "...the three most important ingredients, which Ginzberg identified in the occupational choices process" (Bailey & Stadt, 1973, p66).

3.2.2.2 The Tentative Period

The second stage, the tentative period (ages 11 to 17), marks increasing concern about the conditions of reality. This period, which is further divided into interest, capacity, value, and translation stages, is characterized by the recognition of the problems of deciding on a future occupation, selection of activities primarily in terms of likes and interests, evaluation of one's ability to function in areas of interest, awareness of factors that have to be taken into account in making occupational choices and a shift from subjective factors; *interest, capacity and values to reality conditions*. The transition stage is a pivotal point in the individuals' development and it corresponds to the end of high school.

3.2.2.3 The Realistic Period

The final stage, the realistic period (age 18 and above), which is divided into exploration, crystallization and specification, is characterized by acquisition of the experiences and education the individual needs to resolve occupational choice, the ability to synthesize the many forces, internal and external, that have relevance for one's decision and planning with one's areas of choice.

The significance of Ginzberg's research and resultant theory is the conclusion that occupational choice is not a single decision, but a developmental process, which takes place over a period of ten or more years. The theory also states that the process of

occupational choice is largely irreversible and that it ends in a compromise. So, during the years leading up to choice, the individual tries to achieve a balance between a series of subjective elements and the opportunities and limitations in the real world.

A person becomes aware that he/she must fashion out a compromise between his/her desires and the existing opportunities in the real world. Although Ginzberg continued to uphold the concept of compromise, because he believed that no individual ever makes an occupational choice that satisfies all his/her principal needs and desires, he conceded to "optimization" as a more relevant formulation since every career decision entails "comparing the likely gains against the probable costs" (Bailey et al, 1973; p68).

3.2.3 Super's Developmental Self-Concept Theory

Super (1937, 1963, 1990, and 1994) derived the basic assumptions that allowed him to develop his theory, the life-span theory of career development, as a basis for setting up a model for this study. Super (1937) synthesized previous generalizations of life into *growth stage* (birth to 14), *exploration stage* (ages 15 to 24), *establishment stage* (ages 25 to 44), *maintenance stage* (ages 45 to 64), and *decline stage* (age 65 and above).

Basic to his theory is the assumption that psychological aspects such as genetic predisposition, along with the geographic aspects (such as place of origin) have an impact on other aspects of career development. These aspects include the development of psychological characteristics and the socio-economic structures of the environment, which are all incorporated into the self-concept. Psychological characteristics (*needs, interests, intelligence, ability, and special aptitudes*) lead to the development of a personality for an individual, and to his/her accomplishments. Socio-economic factors (one's community, school, family, peer groups, state of the economy and the labor market, etc) influence the job structure and the employment practice. The combination of a psychological and socio-economic factors result in the development of the self.

At the core of Super's developmental theory is self-concept (how individuals view themselves and their situation) in contrast to the TFT, which emphasizes objective measures of self. Self-concept refers to individuals' view of themselves and society and is

subjective. For Super, vocational development is a process of developing and implementing one's self-concept as a "combination of biological characteristics and the social roles individuals have to perform" (Sharf, 1997, p 148; Super, 1990, 1994). How individuals perceive themselves and interact is a reflection of personality, needs, values, and interests, and these perceptions change over a person's life span.

The exploration stage (ages 15 to 25), (efforts to have a better idea of occupational information, to choose career alternatives, to decide on an occupation, and start to work) it is characterized by the following sub-stages:

   i)   *crystallization* (the stage where people clarify what they want to do),

   ii)   *specification* (the stage where young people specify their preferences so they may find an employer) and

   iii)   *implementation* (the last phase prior to working during which people make plans to fulfill their career objectives).

Following 'exploration' is the *establishment stage* (ages 25 to 44), (this is the time of getting established in one's work by starting on a job that is likely to mean the start of one's work life) It includes the tasks such as:

   i)   *stabilizing* (settling down in a job and meeting the job requirements that will ensure stay in the field),

   ii)   *consolidating* (the individual becomes more comfortable with the job and makes an effort to show that he/she is competent and can be relied upon by others)

   iii)   *advancing* (moving ahead into a position of more responsibility with higher pay –may occur many times).

The *maintenance stage* (ages 45 to 65), (individual maintain their status in their work, and this varies depending on individuals and company policies and other factors) is made up of:

   i)   *holding* (concern with holding onto the secured position),

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ii)   *updating* (updating one's knowledge and skills in the field to maintain the status),

iii)   *innovating* (making progress or new contribution in the profession).

The final stage, the ***disengagement stage*** (age above 65), (disengaging from work due to lack of up-to-date knowledge and skills, physical health, etc) includes:

i)   *deceleration* (slowing down one's work responsibilities or spending less time doing work),

ii)   *retirement planning* (dealing directly with a retirement plan during later life – includes activities such as planning and planning activities to do in retirement), and

iii)   *retirement living* (dealing with concerns such as friends, home and family, use of free time that may come with retirement and activities [leisure, community service, etc] during retirement, usually in the late 60's).

Super (1953) believed that career choices are continuous throughout life: they represent an adjustment mechanism and cannot be separated. He felt that a person strives to implement his/her self-concept by choosing an occupation that permits self-expression. A person selects an occupation whose requirements provide a role consistent with his/her self-image. The process of developing a self-concept is identified as the process of formation, translation, and implementation. The formation stage further includes exploration of the world and of the self, self-differentiation, self-identification, role-playing and reality testing.

Translation is achieved through various ways. For instance awareness of one's attributes that are important in a certain field may lead to an investigation of that occupation. The implementation of self-concept, which is the end result, involves the beginning of training, completing one's education, and eventually entering the world of work. The process of forming a concept of self begins in infancy and is essentially an "exploratory process, which goes on throughout the entire course of life span" (Super, 1953, p11).

Super believed that the amount of satisfaction people derive from their careers depends on the extent to which they were able to implement their self-concept. His theory is based on two concepts: that vocational development is "an on-going process and generally irreversible process" and that it is "an orderly, patterned process" (Super, 1953, p 42).

Figure 3.1 Developmental stages as portrayed by Super

SUPER'S DEVELOPMENTAL SELF-CONCEPT THEORY

Growth stage (birth to 14)

The child learns what is taught to him or her

Exploring stage (15 to 24)

Crystallization
Clarify what one wants to do

Specification
Specify preferences to find employer

Implementation
Last phase: People make plans to fulfill career objectives

Establishment stage (24 to44)

Task of stabilizing
Settling down: meeting job requirements

Consolidating
Confirm competency and reliability

Advancing
Moving ahead into the position of responsibility

Maintaining stage (45 to 65)

Holding
Hold on to secured position

Updating Update skills and knowledge to maintain status

Innovating
Make progress or new contribution in the profession

Disengament stage (65 and above)

Deceleration   Retirement planning

Retirement living

3.2.4 Holland Personality Theory of Vocational Choice

John Holland (1959, 1973) developed the personality Theory of Vocational Choice, through the integration of existing knowledge about the career choice process. The theory assumes that, when career choice is made, an individual becomes the product of an interaction between his/her specific heredity with a variety of cultural and personal forces that may include peers, parents, and significant adults, social class, culture and the physical environment. On the basis of these experiences, the individual develops a hierarchy of preferred methods of dealing with environmental tasks. In the process of choosing a career, the person looks for situations that satisfy his/her adjective orientation.

Holland (1959, 1973) used the occupational environment as a framework for organizing and classifying knowledge about occupational choice. As an exploration of the theory, he developed a parallel classification system for major classes of occupational environment and individual personal orientations within six dimensions. The six dimensions are assumed to cover major kinds of work environments and to classify various data about self, e.g., interest, and values of interpersonal skills.

Holland's six personality types, and environmental models and their brief explanations are:

a) *Realistic*

"Such a person enjoys activities requiring strength, is aggressive, possesses good motor organization, lacks verbal and interpersonal skills, prefers concrete to abstracts problems, and is unsociable".

b) *Investigative*

"This is a person who is task orientated, thinks through problems, and attempts to organize and understand the world".

c) *Social*

"This person prefers teaching or therapeutic roles, etc".

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d) Conventional

"Such people prefer performing structured verbal and numerical activities and subordinate roles, and achieve goals through conformity".

e) Enterprising

"Enterprising people prefer verbal skills in situations providing opportunities for domination, selling or leading others".

f) Artistic

"Such people prefer indirect relationships and use the artistic media to deal with environmental problems".

In choosing an occupation, one seeks an environment that will enable him/her to deal with work tasks that are in harmony with his/her major personal orientation. According to Holland (1973), the choice of an occupation is an expressive act that reflects the person's motivation, knowledge, personality, and ability. Important terms used by Holland include, "Differentiation", which means that people and environments may differ in terms of how well they belong to one or more types, and "Identity", which means the clarity and stability of a person's current and future goals.

Figure 3.2 Interactive concepts by Holland's vocational theory

HOLLAND'S PERSONALITY THEORY OF VOCATIONAL CHOICE

Specific heredity		Cultural and personal forces

Interaction

Peers
Parents and significant adults
Social class
Cultural and physical
Environment

Hierarchy of preferred methods to
deal with environmental tasks

Six dimensions of work environment and classification
of various data about self to choose from

Realistic	← →	Investigative
Social	← →	Conventional
Enterprising	← →	Artistic

3.2.5 Krumboltz's Social Learning Theory

John Krumboltz and his colleagues developed a theory of career choice that "emphasizes the importance of behavior (action) and cognition (knowing or thinking) in making career decisions" (Sharf, 1997, p 324). Their social learning theory differs from other career

development theories in that its focus is on teaching people career decision-making techniques and helping them to use such techniques effectively in selecting career alternatives. In developing the theory, Krumboltz (1994) and his colleagues asked questions such as: why do people choose one major rather than another? Why do people choose the occupation they do? Why choose one college and not another college? To answer these questions, they examined four primary factors that play important roles in the eventual selection of specific career alternatives: genetic endowment, environmental conditions learning experiences and task-approach skills. An important distinction between other career development theories (some of them address inherited abilities and environmental events) and this social learning theory they emphasize the importance of learning experiences and task-approach skills in choosing and maintaining a career.

According to this theory, genetic endowment refers to those aspects of the individual that are inherited or are innate (skin and hair color, height, predisposition to certain illnesses, special abilities in specific areas, etc) rather than learned. Environmental conditions are those arrays of conditions that are generally outside geographic, social, cultural, political and economic considerations.

Mitchell and Krumboltz (1996) described some conditions and events, which they categorized as social (changes in society, available career options), educational (parents educational background, school attended, effect of teachers and resources, training opportunities, financial assistance, etc) and occupational (factors affecting jobs and the job market) that affect a person's career decision-making. These conditions may be planned or unplanned, but they are usually beyond the control of the individual (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996, p233; Sharf, 1997, p330).

Relative to learning experience, Krumboltz believed that:
 a) One's career preferences are a result of his/her prior learning experiences.
 b) Individuals have prior learning experiences that eventually influence their career decisions.

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How individuals apply their prior learning experiences and innate abilities has a direct effect on career choices.

According to Sharf, individuals may make observations on themselves and their environment and they will then use that to make career decisions. Observations about self include observations about capabilities or abilities, interests, and work values; and generalizations about the world include the world of work as well as other events outside oneself (Sharf, 1997, p336).

Task approach skills such as goal setting, value clarification, generating alternatives, and obtaining occupational information are important to career decision making, noted Krumboltz. Interaction among genetic endowment, environmental conditions and learning experiences leads to skills in doing a variety of tasks. Krumboltz's social learning theory presents a specific career decision-making model that emphasizes a behavioral orientation, with some cognitive components.

3.3 SUMMARY OF THEORIES

For more than 20 years practitioners and scholars in the school-counseling field have advocated for the role and priority of program evaluation to support guidance and counseling programs. The benefits of sound program evaluation, which include program improvement, accountability data regarding student outcomes, and documentation of what counselors actually do in schools, continue to be compelling, particularly given the tenuous role school counselors have historically endured in the academic environment of the school (Trevison & Hubert, 2001, p81).

Implementation of program evaluation activity by school counselors remains illusive (Bredo; Cady and Bryson, 1978; Schoffer and Atkinson, 1983; Trevison, 2000). These authors have argued that, lack of time and training as well as a mistrust of the evaluation process has prevented the school-counseling field from embracing the potential of sound program evaluation.

The emergence of the comprehensive, developmental, guidance and counseling program as a systematic means of integrating the work of school counselors into the school environment has reinforced the argument for sound program evaluation activities on the part of school counselors. In particular, since the program focuses on the student competencies and provides interventions, the program model "requires the support of continual program evaluation as part of an ongoing program development, renewal, and improvement process" (Trevison et al, 2001, p87).

A common element in all the theories is that each person chooses an occupation at a given point in his/her life. If a good occupational choice is made, the individual finds satisfaction and remains in the occupation. Poor choice leads to failure and dissatisfaction.

A point stressed in many theories is that career development is a long-range and gradual process. It involves acquiring information about the self, about occupations, and about trends. Recognizing that the career-choice process takes time should be helpful to the student because too many people think that it can be condensed into a single afternoon.

3.4 AN OUTLINE OF SIX VIEWS OF THE PROCESS OF CHOOSING AN OCCUPATION

3.4.1 Error and accident

Some authors concluded that two factors, error and accident, are important in determining the work people do. Error occurs because career choices are made at high school when students are far away from the world of work. Moreover, choices are made on the basis of school performance, which calls for different abilities and interests than those needed for a job (Shertzer, 1981, p261).

According to Theodore Caplow, a sociologist, the accident of birth often plays a large role in determining what occupation people choose. Children follow their parents' occupations. The parent "passes" an occupation on to the child. Furthermore, such factors as time and place of birth, race, nationality, social class, and the expectations of parents

are all accidental, that is, not planned or controlled by the child. They all influence the choice of occupation. Many people have long believed that occupational selection was a matter of being in the right place at the right time or knowing the right person who can pull the right strings. Although this is sometimes the case, those who want to manage their lives prefer planning to gamble (Shertzer, 1981, p261).

3.4.2 Economic factor

Economists believe that job earnings influence choice of occupation. They acknowledge that people place varying emphasis on income, but point out that some workers tend to move from one occupation to another because of changes in salaries. The supply and demand of workers have much to do with wages, which in turn influence people to choose certain careers. However, all barriers to occupations will have to be removed before career choices can be explained by economics alone. There is little question that economic factors have some influence on occupation. But to picture them as the major or most important reason goes against the soundest of folk wisdom, "Man does not live by bread alone" (Shertzer, 1981, p261).

3.4.3 Personal needs

Robert Happock proposes that occupations are selected to meet personal needs. Here are some of the major points that make up his theory of career development:

- Occupations are chosen to meet needs. Every person has many needs. Some of them are physical, like the need for food, rest, and shelter. Other needs are psychological like the need for acceptance and success.

- Occupational choice begins when we first become aware that an occupation could help meet our needs. As we became aware of a variety of occupations, each of us gradually comes to realize that certain occupations provide experiences that are satisfying, whereas others involve unpleasant activities. At this point, occupational choice actually starts for each of us.

- The occupation that we choose is the one that we believe will best meet the needs that most concern us. Career choice is not based on the satisfaction of a single need.

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Instead, all of us experience many needs, and career choice is influenced by the order of their importance.

- Occupational choice improves, as we become better able to see how well a prospective occupation will meet our needs. This understanding depends upon knowledge of occupation, and our ability to think clearly. We choose better if we know our own personal traits and needs and spend some time exploring the nature of occupations.

- Job satisfaction depends on the extent to which the job that we hold meets the needs that we feel it should meet. If the job meets these needs, we are satisfied. If it does not, we feel frustrated and will look elsewhere.

Occupational choice is always subjected to change when we believe that a change will better meet our needs. Each of us is constantly changing. Needs or wants change, and we may seek a different job that will better meet those new needs (Shertzer, 1981, p262).

3.4.4 Expression of Personality

Several psychologists believe that people select occupations through which they can express their personalities. John Holland, a psychologist, has built such a theory. These are some of his ideas:

- People express their personalities through their vocational choices.
- People are attracted to occupations that they feel will provide experiences suitable to their personalities.
- People who choose the same vocations have similar personalities; and react to many situations and problems in like manner.
- Because people in an occupation have similar personalities, they create environments that are like them.
- People search for environments and vocations that permit them to exercise their skills and abilities, to express their attitudes and values, so as to take agreeable problems and roles, and to avoid disagreeable ones.

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Career satisfaction, stability, and achievement depend on the agreement between personality and environment (created largely by the people with whom the work is done) (Shertzer, 1981, p 265).

3.4.5 Developmental events

Several people have tried to determine how developmental stages – childhood, adolescence, and adulthood – influence choice of occupation. An early group of investigators developed the following ideas:

- Four factors that influence vocational choice include (a) reality factor, or the way a person responds to the pressures of making choices, (b) the quality and the quantity of education available to the individual, (c) emotional factor, or the personality aspects that bear upon vocational choice, and (d) personal values that influence the nature of choices made by the individual.

- People generally fall into two groups – work-orientated and pleasure-orientated. Work-orientated people place great importance upon work and gain satisfaction from it, while the second group place importance on things other than work.

- Occupational choice is a process that takes place over a minimum of six or seven years and, more typically, over ten years or more.

- Because each decision is related to an individual's experience up to that point and in turn has an influence on the future, the process of decision making is largely irreversible, that is, once set in a certain direction it cannot be easily turned back.

- Occupational choice is a compromise between opportunities available and realities to be coped with.

- Deciding on an occupation takes place in stages. Ginzberg and his fellow workers picture the vocational-choice process as covering three main periods: fantasy, tentative, and realistic (Shertzer, 1981, p 266).

3.4.6 The Self-concept

When we express a vocational choice, we put into occupational terms our ideas of the kind of people we are, according to Donald Super. An occupation makes it possible for

each of us to play a role appropriate to our self-concept. Some of Super's major ideas about choosing an occupation are presented here:

- People differ in abilities, interests and personalities.

- On the basis of these characteristics, each person is qualified for a number of occupations. Within the make-up of each person are things needed for success in several occupations, not just one. Few occupations require a great number of special abilities, interests, skills, or traits.

- Every occupation requires a characteristic pattern of abilities, interest and personality traits. However, within that pattern there is room enough for workers who have these abilities, interests, and traits in varying degrees.

- Vocational preferences and skills, situations that people live and work in, -and hence their self-concepts, change with time and experience. These factors make choice and adjustment a continuous process. As the self-concept changes, people may find that the job they once considered satisfactory is no longer fulfilling. Any of these changes may lead them to adjust that job or look for a new work situation.

- The process of selecting an occupation is summed up in a series of life stages; growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline.

- Parental socioeconomic level, mental ability, personality characteristics, and the opportunities to which the worker is exposed determine the nature of any career patterns. Many factors in people's backgrounds influence their career. They often think anyone can attain any goal if only one tried hard enough. The truth is that there are many factors over which people have little or no control that often set limits that can be surpassed or extended only by great effort, if at all.

- The process of career development is essentially that of developing and implementing the self-concept. During the development and maturation process, each person acquires a mental picture of the self, the self-concept. All of us try to maintain a favorable picture of ourselves.

- Work satisfactions and life satisfactions depend on the extent to which we find adequate outlets for our abilities, interests, personality traits and values (Shertzer, 1981, p 266-8).

3.5 SUMMARY

It is a common element in all the theories referred to that each person chooses an occupation at a given point of time in his/her life. The theories try to indicate that a process of occupational choice or career decision-making should be taken seriously and one should commit him/herself in it to yield positive results.

The six views of the process of choosing an occupation are a realistic factor that works coherently in an individual's life, and they need to be looked at critically. It is therefore of importance for a career decision maker to be prepared to challenge this obstacles head on. This means one should be more informed about her/himself and her/his immediate surroundings. Furthermore, one has to develop a feedback mechanism so as to monitor his/her career progress.

The following chapter deals with data collection methods applied in this study. The chapter will serve as a blue print of how events evolved in gathering the required information.

CHAPTER
FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Bless and Higson-Smith (1995, p63) purport that, "scientific research design can simply be termed a blueprint of desired activity by a researcher". It can be understood as the planning of any scientific research endeavour from the first to the last step. In this sense it is a program to guide the researcher in collecting data, analyzing and interpreting observed facts. Very often this process is described as research management or planning.

A second and more specific definition of a research design, the one adopted here, relates directly to the testing of hypotheses. It is a specification of the most adequate operations to be performed to test specific hypotheses under given conditions (Bless et al, 1995, p64).

4.2 METHODOLOGY

A combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods was used in this project. The aim was to have conclusive and quantified results. The choice of a qualitative method is logical because concerns and questions contained in the problem statement (chapter one) required the exploration of a process not yet identified and not yet encompassed in theory.

The research had to build from openness to the unexpected, to new findings, and it retains a flexible design that fosters the exploration of nuances of meaning in a complex, tacit process (Marshal & Rossman, 1995, p30).

4.2.1 Sampling

The following important points should be kept in mind when identifying a sample:

1) The accuracy of prediction is not necessarily determined by the sample size, and,

2) the sample must be representative of the population if it is to be used to predict the population characteristics.

The above also shows how important it is to develop a sample that is least biased in making inferences about the population (Hood-Williams, Mundy & Stuart, 1996, p213).

It's important for a researcher to be able to generalize the conclusions obtained from studying the sample into statements about the population. This must be done with the help of statistics if the section of the sample is based on a probabilistic strategy. Such generalization involves errors, since it is practically impossible to select a sample that represents completely all the behaviors and relationships in the population. However, the extent of probable error was known to the researcher, and guided him in interpreting his results with regard to the population with a known degree of confidence (Hood-Williams et al, 1996, p214).

There are types of probability sampling which were utilized in this research, the first being simple random sampling. In simple random sampling each subject has an equal chance of appearing in the research, as does every combination of subjects. The next is stratified random sampling. In stratified random sampling the researcher stratifies the population, or breaks it down into groups, according to the categories of one or more variables, and then randomly selects samples from each group; each stratum.

Stratified random sampling has two important advantages over simple random sampling.
- It makes possible a proportionate sample size from different strata, and
- It takes into account crucial variables by using them to define the strata (Hood-Williams et al, 1996, p216).

The above is a special form of simple or systematic random sampling, in which the population is divided into a number of strata and a sample is drawn from each stratum. These sub-samples can be proportionate or disproportionate to the target population.
A stratified sample is employed when there is a need to represent all groups of the research in the sample, and when the researcher has a specific interest in a stratum. In these, the method is very economical, offers accurate results and a high degree of representativeness (Sarantakos, 1997, 145).

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The sample for this study was drawn from the population by means of probability sampling. To be more specific, stratified random sampling was used. The different schools selected in this case formed the strata. This ensured that different school environments were taken into cognizance.

The second set of subjects were teachers, and their distinctive characteristics were that they were offering the subject "career guidance" to one or more of the grades, 10 to grade 12.

4.2.1.1 Subjects

The characteristics of subjects used were as follows:

They were Std 8-10 (grade 10-12) learners from high schools around QWA-QWA. These schools were identified from the previously (a) disadvantaged and (b) public schools which were populated by students from a low socioeconomic echelon. Then lastly, the participating learners should have been attending the same high school from Std 8 (Grade 10). The reason was to identify the consistency of the guidance program within the same school. These learners were selected randomly from these high schools, which were also selected randomly.

The researcher required the participation of qualified counselors (career guidance teachers). They were supposed to have been in the school for a period of not less than four years and at least have offered the subject for not less than one year.

The above requirements were compromised with those cases where there were no available career guidance counselors/teachers with the relevant experience and the required number of years in the same school. This was done to sustain gathering information for backing up the Career Belief Inventory test results and prove the effectiveness of the current schools' career development programs.

4.3 THE TASK AND THE MATERIAL OR INSTRUMENTS

The first set of subjects (High School Learners) was given a questionnaire to answer. These subjects were required to be involved in a pencil and paper type of exercise. The questionnaire used was a CAREER BELIEF INVENTORY (CBI) developed by John D. Krumboltz (1999).

4.3.1 The contents of CBI

The CBI is composed of 96 simple questions. These questions are grouped together into 25 scales. Questions per scale range from two to eight at most. These scales are further divided into five headings to understand individuals' scores better for interpretation. These headings consist of scales, with at least three and at most seven.

4.3.1.1 Background of the CBI

The CBI was first published for general use in 1991 (*Career Beliefs Inventory; Application and Technical Guide*, 1999). There are 96 items answered on a five-point rating scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". It yields 25 scales plus an administrative index to estimate response accuracy. The CBI is a logical outgrowth of prior research and theory in the field of career counseling. Theoretically, the CBI is an application of cognitive psychology and cognitive therapy. Basically it assesses the schemas with which people have learned to organize their approach to career problems. A schema is a belief about oneself and one's relation to the outside world.

Krumboltz distinguished two types of schemas, both of which are included in the CBI but not categorized as such:

- Schemas that refer to personal characteristics are labeled "self-observation generalization".
- Schemas that relate to self-observation generalizations of the environment to make inferences about the future are called task approach.

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Krumboltz noted that schemas of both types may or may not be accurate. He pointed out that challenging an inaccurate schema might be difficult, even when it might be blocking effective action. He even purported further that the inaccuracy of a schema is not necessarily a problem.

4.3.1.2 Who should use the CBI?

The CBI is designed for counselors and other career professionals who are helping people plan transitions in their lives – their future education, employment, and/or retirement. It has proven to be particularly useful for students planning their careers during high school or college and adults involved in midlife career transitions.

People who might find the CBI particularly valuable include those who are:

- Planning their future career
- Choosing a college major
- Making career transition
- Planning a recovery from being laid off
- Expanding career aspirations
- Reacting to feelings of job burnout
- Planning retirement years

Professionals who might find the CBI particularly valuable for their clients include the following:

- School counselors
- Employment counselors
- College and university counselors
- Career counselors
- Outplacement counselors
- Counseling psychologists
- Clinical psychologists
- Industrial and organizational psychologists

- Personnel administrators
- Social workers
- Psychiatrists

4.3.1.3 Counseling with the CBI

Almost everyone needs help in making and implementing career transitions, and most people have at least some career beliefs that may act as barriers in this process. When used sensitively the CBI can help people identify the beliefs that might be blocking them. The CBI enables career professionals to open up important areas that are typically ignored in traditional forms of career counseling. Even though it cannot possibly assess every specific belief that might be blocking a person from every possible career decision, it can identify categories of beliefs that have blocked others.

The CBI gives candidates an opportunity to expose their set of beliefs in regards to their careers. They can then determine whether their assumptions are accurate and alter their views if they find contradictory evidence. Thus, their career decisions will be based on a more accurate view of themselves and the world of work.

The CBI takes no position on what constitutes a wise decision. It does not tell people whether their beliefs are accurate. Instead, it helps people bring to the surface assumptions that may not have been examined and that could be preventing them from achieving their own desires. It legitimizes the exploration of crucial assumptions that heretofore have been overlooked by many career professionals.

4.3.2 The scales

Beliefs are neither good nor bad. Career professionals need to avoid language that implies that anyone has a "wrong" belief. However, there may be beliefs that are getting in the way of what a candidate wants. The scales of the CBI are designed to help identify what these beliefs may be. A low score on a scale indicates that a belief related to scale may be blocking a person's career path. The career professional sees a low score as an indicator of an area where some exploration might be fruitful.

The 25 CBI scales are organized under five headings to aid in the counseling process. Each scale can be interpreted by itself, before or after any other scale. The five headings are not based on factor analytic studies, and the scales within them are not necessarily correlated with each other.

The headings and a brief description are as follows:

i) The current career situation.

This grouping determines the basics; current employment, status of career plans, any anxiety about career planning, and willingness to talk.

ii) What seems necessary for my happiness?

This grouping examines some of the requirements that clients may be placing on themselves. How important is high achievement, a college education, having interesting work tasks, the desire to excel over others, or a structured work environment?

iii) Factors that influence my decisions.

This grouping helps in examining what the clients are taking into account as they make decisions.

iv) Changes I am willing to make.

This grouping helps the career professional to evaluate clients' flexibility.

v) Effort I am willing to initiate.

This grouping helps to explore if anything may be inhibiting clients from taking action to solve their problems.

4.3.3 Administration

The administration of the CBI is virtually self-explanatory, regardless of which version is used. The direction asks respondents to circle the number that most closely represents their belief. It takes about 25 minutes to answer the items and another 25 minutes to "self score" or score the responses.

Since the items are non-threatening and not confidential, examinees may complete the questionnaire in any convenient location.

4.3.4 Reliability of the CBI

Reliability refers to precision and consistency of measurement. It encompasses two related but distinct ideas: stability of scores over time, and the internal consistency of the items that constitute each scale.

4.3.5 Validity of CBI

Validity is the extent to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure. An instrument's validity cannot be determined directly, so several types of indirect evidence are collected instead.

4.3.5.1 Face validity of the CBI

How accurate do CBI scores represent peoples true beliefs? This type of validity cannot be evaluated in any objective manner. Beliefs are impossible to observe directly. Asking people to report their beliefs is the most straightforward way of discovering them. The CBI items are direct statements with which examinees can agree or disagree. There are no trick questions or items worded to disguise their intent.

4.3.5.2 Concurrent validity of the CBI

How are CBI scores related to the criteria of career and school satisfaction? People who are successful and happy in their careers may be entertaining a number of false assumptions that never interfere with their work; therefore, one should not assume that every career belief must be correlated with satisfaction. Nevertheless, it may be instructive to correlate the CBI scores with self-reported measures of job satisfaction.
General questions about satisfaction are included among the CBI items themselves. Thus it is possible to estimate the concurrent validity of the CBI scales for self-reported measures of job satisfaction.

4.3.5.3 Construct validity of the CBI

Construct validity is based on the extent to which an instrument's scales are independent of, or related to those of other assessment instruments. When evaluating instrument construct validity it is important to take into account the purpose of the scales and the purpose of the scales to which it is being compared.

4.3.5.4 Consequential validity of the CBI

Consequential validity refers to the social consequences of measuring what an instrument purports to measure. The intended social consequence of using the CBI is a dialogue between the client and career professional in which the client clarifies his or her beliefs, examines the usefulness of those beliefs in achieving his or her goals, and lays the groundwork for constructive action. Therefore the CBI consequential validity rests, at least in part on how well it performs this function.

Messick (1980, p1012) has been persuasive in calling attention to the importance of consequential validity and purports that "justification of test use by an appeal to empirical validity is not enough; the potential social consequence of the testing should also be appraised, not only in terms of what it might entail directly as costs and benefits but also in terms of what it makes more likely as possible side effects.

4.4 QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

The second sets of subjects (teachers) were given a questionnaire to answer. The subjects filled the questionnaire on their own time.

Formulated questions attempt to identify the relevance of the existing career programs that are presently offered in high schools. Secondly, they seek to establish the ability of this program to assist the learners in making their career decisions. Then, lastly, the questionnaire asks to expose the difficulties that are inherent within this program, and how these difficulties impact on the initial aim of the program itself.

Fowler (1993, p69) argues that designing a question for a survey instrument is designing a measure not a conventional inquiry. Good questionnaires maximize the relationship between the answers recorded and what the researcher is trying to measure. In one sense, survey answers are merely responses that are elicited in an artificial situation, which is orchestrated by the researcher.

Questionnaire layout is important for both the interviewer and the interviewee. As far as the interviewer is concerned, a questionnaire is a working document, a protocol for one side of the interactions. A questionnaire should not just be a list of relevant questions but also include instructions about how the interview should proceed to ensure that all interviews follow the same path (Burton, 2000, p340).

Open-ended questions provide a response format that gives respondents the freedom to provide any answer, which they care to make. The researcher then has to make sense of the responses given, construct appropriate categories and then code the categories so that the data can be statistically analyzed (Burton, 2000, p339).

The open-ended questions were used to gain confidence and cooperation of participants in different ways. These types of questions relieve the anxiety of participants for giving "false" answers since they could express themselves freely, even though they were structured to also assure participants to recognize that they are able to answer questions without difficulties (Bless et al, 1995, p63).

The major difficulty in the use of a conventional questionnaire to collect information on the thoughts and feelings or attitudes of individuals stems from the complexity of the enterprise. This makes it difficult to test the reliability of the item. The use of a set of questions rather than a single item would increase reliability. In assembling a number of items that relate to the phenomenon, the effects of, say, one unilateral bias in one of the items or of an idiosyncratic response to one of the questions is reduced (Brown & Dowling, 2001, p69).

The questionnaire consists of four pages; the first page is a letter indicating the research topic and displaying the authenticity of the project in by means of supervisors' signatures. The second page required biographical details of persons completing the questionnaire. Then most importantly is to indicate the highest qualifications in relation to career guidance and experience in regard to offering the subject.

Thirdly, two pages of questions follow which are divided into three sections, first the positive aspects of the career guidance program, then the negative aspects of the program and lastly, the opinions to address the negative aspects of the program.

The questions are divided into three categories.

The first category is to identify the strong points of the composition of the program. The aim of this portion of questions will be to identify the relevance of the program towards addressing the basic necessary information in relation towards career development.

The second category is to investigate where the program fails. These questions seek to reveal whether the program is defective, and whether the subjects are aware of these defects.

The last category is to investigate what envisaged change does the subject think might improve and correct the shortfalls of the program. This question asks for individual opinions on the remedies that can be applied to the short falls they have identified in the previous set of questions.

The questionnaire was assessed in provisos of understanding the questions from the career guidance councilors/teachers and how they were answered. The overall inferences were made in terms of the general understanding of individual question as answered by the majority of the subjects. This means inductive reasoning method was applied.

Induction is defined as genuine supporting evidence (as expressed in the premises) and can only lead to a highly probable conclusion. In other words, in an inductive argument supporting statements merely lend gradual support (from little to a lot) to the conclusion (Mouton & Morais, 1994, p111).

4.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

There are a number of concerns in field experience. Research studies always have an impact on the subjects. The researcher feared that there would be a mood of un-acceptance or un-cooperativeness due to the fear of exposing the dealings or conduct within the school environments.

The researcher came head-on with principals who insisted that the researcher should follow the protocol of The Education Department if research had to be conducted within their school premises, only to find that it was an excuse to prevent the researcher from conducting an investigation. The other problem was that of under qualified teachers (career guidance councilors) who feared that they would find themselves in trouble with the authorities, hence only a small number completed the questionnaire. The last, and most crucial limitation of this study was that since the samples were drawn from schools around Qwa-Qwa only, resulted in limited generalization of the results.

4.6 SUMMARY

In this chapter the researcher tried to explain the blue print of the research as deemed necessary. The sample drawn was specifically limited due to the time needed to score and interpret the CBI test. However, the representation was not compromised. Lastly, the questionnaire was to complement all the loopholes that might be created by the sample due to its minimal size.

These two instruments (Questionnaire and the CBI) were used in combination mainly to substantiate results of the CBI and to identify the myths that emanated as beliefs for at-risk high school learners.

The following chapter deals with the presentation of data, and a description of the results. The chapter gives feedback on what has been gathered by the research.

CHAPTER
FIVE

DATA PRESENTATION AND
RESULTS LAYOUT

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter looks into the data collected. The main focus will be on displaying the data and the description of the results as collected. Presentation is based on the investigation of *Reasons why at-risk high school learners forfeit becoming committed to appropriate career choices*, using the CBI test to examine the beliefs or myths that cloud learners' decision-making processes.

The learners were required to write an inventory test. It was administered within a specified period for the first set of subjects. The second sets of subjects (the career counselors or career guidance teachers) were then required to fill-in a questionnaire. This was done during the subjects' own time, and it required their opinions on an available career program.

5.2 SAMPLE INVESTIGATED AND THE RESULTS.

Table 5.1 A frequency distribution of subjects according to their stratum.

GRADES	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTALS OF GRADES
GRADE 12	13	27	40
GRADE 11	19	35	54
GRADE 10	15	17	32
TOTALS	47	79	126

Table 5.1 displays the number of learners at-risk in accordance with their grades. Most subjects were taken from the grade 11 learners, due to the fact that the grade 11 total populations were the biggest in accordance with the distinction of the strata. The totals are for the at-risk learners who took the CBI test administered to them. 100% test sheets were filled in correctly. The tests were divided so as to obtain a comparative analysis of different sexes and the grades, as they were readily available strata's.

MEAN COMPUTATION FROM RAW SCORES

The arithmetic mean is the most familiar and probably the most useful measure of central tendency. The mean (commonly known as the average) is found by summing all the scores and dividing by the number of scores (Johnson, 1983, p13).

"A mean is the sum of the scores or values of a variable divided by their number" (Runyon, 1980, p76).

Table 5.2 Raw scores and means of boys in grade 10 to 12.

Scales	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Scores	1070	1180	1035	1551	1940	1325	1638	1035	1290	1535	1466	1220	1429	1568	895	1252	1504	1624	1235	1828	1537	1520	1736	1744	1472
Mean	23	25	22	33	41	28	35	22	27	33	31	26	30	33	19	27	32	35	26	39	33	32	37	37	31

Table 5.3 Raw scores and mean of girls in grade 10 to 12.

Scales	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Scores	1367	1500	1525	2308	2715	1750	2458	1367	1855	2290	2082	1670	1971	2144	1360	1736	2115	2325	1580	2716	2414	2435	2586	2630	2263
Mean	17	19	19	29	34	22	31	17	23	29	26	21	25	27	17	22	27	29	20	34	31	31	33	33	27

Table 5.4 Raw scores of the total participants (both boys and girls) and their means.

Scales	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Scores	2459	2680	2560	3859	4655	3075	4096	2402	3154	3825	3548	2890	3400	3712	2255	2988	3619	3949	2815	4544	3951	3955	4322	4374	3735
Mean	20	21	20	31	37	24	33	19	25	30	28	23	27	29	18	24	29	31	22	36	31	31	34	35	30

The above tables indicate the mean scores of the total participants who wrote the test. The mean was calculated thus $\bar{x} = \sum x/n$. $\bar{x}$ representing the mean, $\sum x$ standing for the sum of x scores and **n** the total number of participants.

The following graph reflects the scores of the three groups.

Graph 5.1 Distributions of scores from different grades
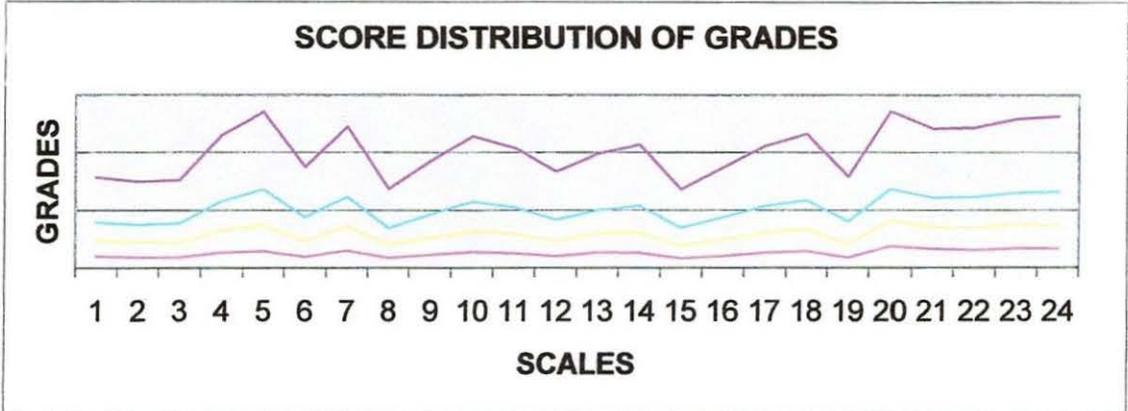
Graph (5.1) shows how the mean scores of learners differ with regard to their different grade levels. The lines from bottom upwards represent from line one grade 10's; line two the grades 11, and the third line is for the grade 12. The fourth line represents the mean scores of all the learners together. The top line indicates the overall distribution of scores over the whole sample.

5.3 SCALES SCORES

Strongly agreeing with a positively worded item yields a score of 5, while strongly disagreeing with an item yields a score of 1. Intermediates are weighted 4, 3, and 2, respectively. Negatively worded items are reversed scored so that strongly agreeing is weighted 1 and strongly disagreeing is weighted 5.

Scales range from 10 to 50, thus they differ from item scores by a factor of 10, and this relationship is a result of how scores are calculated.

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5.4 Understanding results (Scales interpretation)

It is advised that particular attention should be paid to lower scores because of the likelihood that some troublesome assumption may be lurking behind them.

5.4.1 My current career situation

These scales help to identify ones' current needs and expectations.

1. Employment status   scores between 10 and 39

<div style="text-align:center">

```
┌─────────┐
│   20    │
└─────────┘
```

</div>

scores between 40 and 50

Unemployed. It will be of importance to take advantage of this time to attend school, do voluntary work, practice new skills and/or engage in active job search strategy.

2. Career plans   scores between 10 and 39

<div style="text-align:center">

```
┌───────┐
│  21   │
└───────┘
```

</div>

scores between 40 and 50

Plans already decided. There is comfort in having made a decision but you may want to reconsider. You have a chance to think through your options carefully. Keeping an open mind increases the probability that you will find what you want.

3. Acceptance of uncertainty   scores between 10 and 39

<div style="text-align:center">

```
┌───────┐
│  20   │
└───────┘
```

</div>

scores between 40 and 50

Should have decided by now. Now is the time to explore the next possible steps. Your friends and colleagues have already made career decisions. It is useful for you to try out alternatives until you find something you like.

4. Openness   scores between 10 and 39

31

scores between 40 and 50

Keep reason for choices private. You feel reluctant to disclose your thinking about career choices. You do not trust certain people with information. You do not want to raise false hopes in others in case you change your mind.

5.4.2 What seems necessary for my happiness?

These scales identify the condition you should consider to find a satisfying career.

5. Achievement   scores between 10 and 39

37

scores between 40 and 50

Motivated by goals other than achievement. You may feel uncertain about the importance of achievement in your life. Other values may be more important (family, security, love, etc). You have a chance to think through what is important to you now and what might be even more important to you in the future.

6. College education   scores between 10 and 39

24

scores between 40 and 50

College is necessary for a good job. To some extent you think college is necessary. In reality not everyone with a college degree has a good job.

7. Intrinsic satisfaction

scores between 10 and 39

33

scores between 40 and 50

Work is a means to other goals. You may not feel that work activities themselves need to be satisfying. Financial security and/or prestige resulting from the job are enough for you. You may find your joys in life outside of work.

.

8. Peer equality

scores between 10 and 39

19

scores between 40 and 50

Desire to excel others. Many people have been raised with the desire to excel others. Competition exists everywhere, but it creates constant pressure and often creates conflict an alternative is to compete against yourself. Work to the best of your ability and try to improve your own skills.

9. Structured work environment

scores between 10 and 39

25

scores between 40 and 50

Prefer flexible work hours with no supervision. Unstructured work sounds liberating and it may be. However recognizing you have to please many bosses, clients and/or customers, and that you will need to structure your work hours.

5.4.3 Factors that influence my decisions

These scales help you decide how much power to grant to others and how much to keep for yourself when planning your future.

10. Control   scores between 10 and 39

$$\boxed{30}$$

scores between 40 and 50

Career path is influenced by others. You believe others affect your career choices. You are unhappy about this, you will have to identify who is influencing you and in what ways.

11. Responsibility   scores between 10 and 39

$$\boxed{28}$$

scores between 40 and 50

Experts' help can determine the best career choice. Be careful here. Experts can lead you through a process and can offer testing, information, options, and opinions. But expects cannot know what is best for you. Only you can decide.

12. Approval of others   scores between 10 and 39

$$\boxed{23}$$

scores between 40 and 50

Approval is important. You would like the approval of others. Ask yourself, who are the people I am trying to satisfy their wishes?

13. Self-other comparison   scores between 10 and 39

$$\boxed{27}$$

scores between 40 and 50

Compare self with others. Like most people you tend to compare yourself with others if those comparisons make you feel bad, perhaps you are comparing yourself with experts only. An alternative is to compare yourself now with whom you want to be in the future.

14. Occupation / college comparison   scores between 10 and 39

$$\boxed{29}$$

scores between 40 and 50

See similarities among colleges and among workers within an occupation. You realize that such differences may be important in choosing a college that gives you what you really need. You also see that you might fit well into a variety of occupations because each occupation can accommodate people with unique differences.

15. Career path flexibility   scores between 10 and 39

$$\boxed{18}$$

scores between 40 and 50

Certain steps must be followed in a proper sequence. You may be limiting your options by thinking that there is only one way to reach your goals.

5.4.4 Changes I am willing to make

These scales tell you whether or not you are willing to consider making major changes in your life.

16. Post-training transition   scores between 10 and 39

<div style="text-align:center">

24

</div>

scores between 40 and 50

The job must be consistent with initial training. You may be worried that the time you invest in training would be wasted if you were to take a difference kind of job. Would you want to spend the rest of your life doing something you dislike just for being consistent with a previous training decision? Training is never wasted it often proves useful in unexpected ways.

17. Job experimentation   scores between 10 and 39

<div style="text-align:center">

29

</div>

scores between 40 and 50

Need a consistent career path. You may be unhappy in an occupation but reluctant to change. Be open to alternative possibilities.

18. Relocation   scores between 10 and 39

<div style="text-align:center">

31

</div>

scores between 40 and 50

Would not move for a better job. You have doubts about the wisdom of moving. What is stopping you, family? Before you rule out a possible move, think about what you might gain, not just what you might lose.

5.4.5 Efforts I am willing to initiate

These scales help you to identify anything that may be preventing you from putting forth your best efforts during the career exploration or transition process.

19. Improving self   scores between 10 and 39

<p style="text-align:center">22</p>

scores between 40 and 50

Satisfied with performance. Feeling good about your own performance so far is quite satisfying. But ask yourself, how I could improve. The world is changing rapidly and workers will need new skills.

20. Persisting while uncertain   scores between 10 and 39

<p style="text-align:center">36</p>

scores between 40 and 50

Need clear goals to work hard. Perhaps you have a tendency to say to yourself as soon as I know what to do, I will start working hard.

21. Taking risks   scores between 10 and 39

<p style="text-align:center">31</p>

scores between 40 and 50

Better not try if failure is possible. You may not be willing to take the risk of failing.

22. Learning job skills

scores between 10 and 39

31

scores between 40 and 50

Dislike job training. Maybe you have had some negative experiences with job training, perhaps a training instructor.

23. Negotiating/Searching

scores between 10 and 39

34

scores between 40 and 50

The right job is impossible to find. You feel discourage. No job is perfect but asks yourself, what am I doing to improve my current situation?

24. Overcoming obstacles

scores between 10 and 39

35

scores between 40 and 50

Obstacles are blocking progress. You are aware of something blocking you from achieving your career goals.

25. Working hard

scores between 10 and 39

30

scores between 40 and 50

Success is unrelated to effort. You may feel that some people succeed without working hard and that your hard work has had little pay off.

5.5 Understanding the questionnaire

The following relates to how questionnaires were handled for the teachers or the career counselors.

Table 5.5 Distribution of questionnaires issued

Questionnaires	Frequency	Percentage
Returned/answered	8	66.6
Not answered	2	16.6
Not returned	2	16.6
Total	12	100

Table 5.5 above represents the number of questionnaires given to the subjects to fill in. 66% answered questionnaires were returned, while 16% did not return and 16% of questionnaires were returned unanswered.

Table 5.6 Distribution of qualifications for subjects.

Highest Qualifications	The frequency	Percentage
BA – FDE	2	25%
BA	2	25%
FDE	3	38%
Not disclosed	1	12%
Total	8	100%

Table 5.6 indicates the highest qualification of the subjects. A constant percentage over the two qualifications was identified, while there is 38% had education diploma and 125% of the subjects did not disclose their qualifications.

In relation to career guidance, only 25% had the required qualifications, 63% did not have the necessary qualification and 12% did not disclose their qualifications.

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5.5.1 Experience (duration offering career guidance)

Only 25 percent of career guidance counselors/teachers had two years or more experience offering the subject, 25 percent had only one-year experience and 50 percent had no experience in offering the subject.

5.5.2 The response to the questionnaire

These are the encapsulate responses of all the subjects who answered the questionnaire. Immense concern was taken not to leave anything behind and not to exhibit individual interpretation of the answers.

5.5.2.1 What is the strong point of the current career development program?

Current career development strong points are allowing people from outside to assist learners in terms of career guidance, enabling learners to choose careers relevant to their subjects and lastly, it teaches learners to make the best choices of suitable careers.

5.5.2.2 What important aspects of career decision-making process does it cover?

The program helps learners to choose subjects relevant to their career choices, it gives learners a broader knowledge of different careers, and lastly, it teaches entrepreneurship skills.

5.5.2.3 How flexible is the program towards contemporary problems of career choices?

The program is not flexible because it covers only one period/session per week, then it is classical in content and approach. It does not offer learners and the councilors an opportunity to be innovative.

5.5.2.4 Does the program address the Self-exploration concept in details?

The self-exploration concept is not addressed; it only highlights the need for self-exploration.

5.5.2.5 In regard to Environmental-exploration, does the program contemplate the concept retrospectively or take future assumptions into cognizance?

Environmental-exploration is not addressed; the retrospective or progressive component of the program is not known.

5.5.2.a What aspects does the program fail to address?

The program does not empower the career guidance councilors/teachers, it again does not offer guidance councilors/teachers an opportunity of individual attention to learners on career choices and lastly, some schools do not even have or use a program as an offered subject.

5.5.2.b What are the short falls of the program in its whole entirety?

The short falls of the program are: it does not have a straightforward work program, it is based on the textbook only and then lastly, there is no clear guide, because standards are being set by individual teachers separately.

5.5.2.c Any difficulties you would like to bring to the attention of the researcher?

There is no career program within the school, there are no trained councilors/teachers to offer the subject, and there should be a textbook to be used as a work program that will address the needs of today's learners. Furthermore, this subject needs to be taken seriously and not as a subject offered to learners during free periods.

5.5.2.I Having highlighted abilities and relevance's, and the difficulties can you give out envisaged redress of the program.

There are many rural schools that do not have the program even though curriculum 2005 policy document stipulates clearly that career guidance should be offered as part of life orientation. However, lack of training makes it difficult for the educators to implement the program as stipulated. The program should be drawn in consultation with career guidance councilors/teachers. Then lastly, the curriculum must be uniform so as to attain the same level of standard in regard to the tuition offered.

5.6 SUMMARY

This chapter presented the data as collected from the subjects' learners and teachers. Most of the responses received were displayed in tables. This was basically done to quantify data, and to avoid distortion and misinterpretation of the responses. The responses of the CBI inventory were also presented in accordance to the scorebook format.

In the forthcoming chapter results of this investigation will be interpreted. The chapter will also arrive at conclusions and submit recommendations on how to plan an effective career development program and what impact it could have. Lastly, information for further research on the importance of early commitment to career choices and development will be provided.

**CHAPTER
SIX**

**INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS
CONCLUSION
AND
RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will concentrate on data that has been collected. The main focus will be to interpret data displayed in the previous chapter and make recommendations. Basic interpretation will be to test the specific hypotheses in chapter one. Verification will be done through the analysis of results obtained. The results of CBI will be interpreted independently and results of the questionnaire will also be interpreted independently. Lastly, both will be linked to one another and make inferences about the overall research.

6.2 THE INTERPRETATIONS OF CBI RESULTS

Career belief inventory is a measuring instrument that helps in understanding the beliefs that are usually encroaching on individuals when they are to make career related decisions.

6.2.1 Introduction

The purpose of exploring career beliefs is to help individuals who are facing an important career transition, decision, or challenge. An individual may be wondering how to:

a) decide what college to attend

b) pursue a satisfying career direction

c) take best advantage of opportunities available.

Whatever an individual's concerns, they are making certain assumptions about the world of work. Some of individuals' assumptions might be right on target and might help an individual's quest for a suitable career, others might not.

6.2.2 Scales Interpretations and recommendations

There are twenty-five scales used to interpret the beliefs referred to above, the basic aim is to group information into small meaningful chunks that can analyses and explain explicitly individual way of thinking in relation to career choices and myths withheld.

Scale.1. Employment status: The learners were currently unemployed. They had to asses the occupation they would like to follow. Most importantly, to know what these occupational requirements were. They had to plan and take advantage of this time to develop their skills to achieve their desired occupational goals.

The myth was that they thought they would be readily employable, without taking consideration of their current school subjects. In short they were not vocationally informed.

While most people do not enjoy being unemployed, there can be some benefits. They have an opportunity to investigate what they want to try next. They may try some part-time jobs or do some volunteer work. Then lastly they may choose to work with counselors to explore their options

Scale.2. Career plans: The learners already had in their minds what occupation they wanted to follow. Wishfully, they offloaded the stress of committing themselves to develop an individual career program. They should be using the time to think through their career options with open minds.

They hold a myth that occupations are limited and they should follow the ones they had already planned on.

Individuals making career plans are often caught between feeling the need to make a decision and the need to keep their options open. It is sometimes important for these learners to narrow choices, but a premature decision may limit their options and prevent them from responding to changing circumstances. The developing interests, skills, and beliefs may combine with new career opportunities and lead to reconsidering present plan. Maintaining an open mind increases the probability of finding satisfaction.

Scale.3. Acceptance of uncertainty: Most believed at their stage they should have decided on a career. They were not accepting the fact that it is normal to be uncertain about the career to be followed.

They hold a myth that, they will be working in a work environment with opportunities to be creative; working with people, or even an occupation that pays randsomely or have prestige. Briefly they decided on work environment first before choosing occupations that might match their aptitudes.

In this fast-paced world, people often feel the need to make a quick decision. Before deciding, it may be helpful to gather more information, weigh the pros and cons, and take ample time for serious deliberation. In fact, remaining uncertain may actually be preferable to making quick decisions. Another way to look at the decision-making process is to ask, "Why make a decision at all?" Instead of making a decision, you may choose to think of yourself as an experimenter.

Scale.4. Openness: Most were keeping their career decisions to themselves. They preferred to spend time in quite concentration. They enjoyed contemplating their job search. They were introverts in terms of career development program.

The myth they held was that, they did not want to raise false hopes. This in essence led them to be less informed and not being conscious about possible failures.

Some people are comfortable discussing their career goals with others, while others may be reluctant to do so. It might be beneficial for one to discuss his/her career goals with someone whom he/she considers to be supportive. Talking out loud about one's thoughts help test one's ideas and clarify his/her own thinking.

Scale.5. Achievement: They felt uncertain about the importance of achievement. They embrace other values to be more important. They did not rely on informed judgment. They preferred to take enough time to consider the possible options and to maintain patience.

They hold a myth that, to take care of their values was necessary and important, and then everything will obviously fall into place. In short they did not use informed judgment but assumed that career will take care of itself.

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Some people are highly motivated to achieve in their careers. Others may have values that have little to do with career achievement. Therefore, it will be important to start exploring values that are important to an individual. One will want his/her work satisfies his/her values. Individual career decisions are provided when one knows his/her purpose.

Scale.6. College education: They were convinced that a college was necessary for a good job. To some extent it is true, but in reality not everyone with a college degree has a good job. This is another reason to complement their failure after high school.

They hold a myth that, college education was a necessity for a good job that will lead to a better life.

Some people feel they must complete college even if they dislike it because they think it is the only route to a good job. A college education may be valuable to one for many reasons. But one can become successfully employed in a "good job" without having earned a college degree; many people have done just that. One does not have to feel obliged to go to college. Alternatives exist, so explore and find ways to learn that are best.

Scale.7. Intrinsic satisfaction: Learners maintained that work was a means to achieving other goals. They felt that work activities were not necessarily to be satisfying, the financial security and prestige resulting from work was satisfying. They did not have a passion for the work they envisage to hold.

They were convinced by a myth that, their satisfaction will not come from work but work will help them in achieving their other goals. Summarily, work was just a vehicle towards achieving goals that were to satisfy them.

For some people, a high salary or job security is so important that it does matter if the work tasks are satisfying. Some may perceive job as a means to other goals. On the other hand some enjoy the best of both, interesting work plus other benefits. Why not explore whether one could arrange to enjoy his/her work?

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Scale.8. Peer equality: These learners demonstrated a desire to excel others. They made decisions by considering personal values implicated rather than by thinking about objective consequences. They followed feelings rather than thinking objectively.

They held a belief that they were equal to others. They competed to be on the same level as others, but without taking career implementing related action.

Some people feel the need to excel others, while others do not. The attitude that one needs to excel others is rewarded in some work environments that could be termed competitive. But in other work environments that may encourage a cooperative approach, the competitive person could experience conflict with co-workers.

Scale.9. Structured work environment: These learners preferred to be employed in situations where there was flexible work hour's with no supervision. To them, unstructured work sounded liberating, and it may be. They wanted a work environment that would give them a lot of self-supervision.

They hold a myth that work should accommodate their individual whims. They have a kind of work environment and picture of the office they will be working in, within their minds.

A common dream is to be one's own boss and set one's own hours. Increasingly, there are more opportunities to turn this dream into reality. There are companies that offer flexi time and give employees more freedom to design their work tasks, and/or more people are becoming self-employed. Keep in mind that all jobs require some structure, whether self-imposed or provided by others.

Scale.10. Control: These learners did not have control over their career paths. Others influenced them. They were unhappy about their situation, and they wanted to identify who were influencing their decisions and in what ways.

The myth that they hold was that there must be people who should help them in choosing careers.

Although it is important to get input from others about one's career choice, one must be a person who ultimately bears the responsibility for his/her career decisions.

It is important to find out who is exerting influence, how it is being expressed, and how it affects one. One might decide that it is important for one to continue to have others influence his/her career path, or might decide that one must exert more control on the situation. It may prove helpful for one to reflect on his/her current situation.

Scale.11. Responsibility: These learners shifted their responsibility by believing that experts would determine the best career for them. Experts can only lead one through a process and could offer test, information, options and opinions. Individuals can decide for themselves.

The myth they hold was that, experts are there to determine the best career choices for them.

Many people think it would be much easier if something or someone could tell them what to do. It is important and often helpful to listen to others, but it is also important to recognize that one is the best person to make choices about his/her own life. One can receive useful information and suggestions from career inventory results, friends, and relatives, but it is up to an individual to evaluate this input and decide how much weight he/she will give in decision-making.

Scale.12. Approval of others: To these learners, it was important to experience approval. This approval was to confirm a shift of responsibility on career choices they have made. In actual fact they were trying to please others. They should be asking themselves whom they are trying to please.

When individuals face career decisions, they often hope that other people in their lives will approve of their choices. In some circumstances, it is very important to gain the approval of other people. While some people easily gain support and approval from family and friends, other people face disapproval and must deal with the effect of that disapproval in their decisions. It could be important for one to discover from whom he/she is trying to gain approval and why.

Scale.13. Self-other comparison: These learners compared themselves with others. Even then, those comparisons make them feel bad. They thought perhaps they were comparing themselves with experts only. These comparisons were made to evade pressure of career choices.

In a competitive society one is often compared with others, sometimes positively and at times negatively. Practically everyone compares himself or herself with someone else from time to time. Such comparison can be helpful if they inspire one to identify qualities in others they would like to learn. However comparisons can be damaging, if one constantly compares him/herself unfavorably to others and conclude that he/she lack competence, charm, intelligence, or other qualities they value.

An alternative is to compare one with oneself; look at how one change over time.

Scale.14. Occupation/College comparison: The learners saw similarities among colleges and among workers within an occupation. They realized that those differences were important in choosing a college that offered them what they really wanted. But they believed they could fit well in a variety of occupations, because each occupation could accommodate people with unique differences.

It is not unusual to generalize about occupations and colleges. Some generalizations may be quite accurate on the average but overlook important exceptions. People with a wide variety of interests and personalities are successfully employed in any occupation.

Emphasizing only the similarities could cause one to assume that everyone in a certain occupation have the same qualifications. One might be assuming that he/she needs the same qualities when, in fact, they may not.

Colleges also differ widely in characteristics such as their philosophies, goals, curricula, and financial-aid policies. Emphasizing college similarities might lead one to overlook a different kind of training program that could be well suited to his/her particular needs. It is important to investigate the differences.

Scale.15. Career path flexibility: These learners thought that for a flexible career path only certain steps must be followed in a proper sequence. In this sense they limited their options to reach/achieve their desired goals.

There is an old joke about a person asking for direction to a certain town, which was answered, "You can get there from here". We laugh for this answer, because no matter how hard it may be to provide direction, you can get anywhere from anywhere else if you want to exert the effort. To some extent the same thing applies to careers.

The danger of believing certain steps must be followed in a particular sequence is that one might conclude that he/she is forever excluded from doing what he/she wants just because they have been diverted from the typical career path. Here are a variety of ways to get what one wants. If the first step is blocked, the individual task is to locate another one of the many possible routes.

Scale.16. Post-training transition: The learners' understanding was that, their envisaged jobs must be consistent with their initial training. Their belief was that the time they would have invested in training would be wasted if they were to take different kinds of jobs. They were not considering the reality of spending the rest of their life doing something they dislike just to be consistent with previous training decisions.

Training for a job requires the investment of time, money, and energy. This sizable investment can make one feel that he/she should work in the job one was trained to enter. There may be some very desirable career alternatives, however, that do not closely fit the logical or expected direction that one originally considered.

It may be useful for one to consider nontraditional or unexpected options before one make a firm decision about what careers he/she might and might not consider.

Scale.17. Job experimentation: Learners believed the decisions they made in terms of career, should allow for a consistent career path. There is no indication that they had an understanding that there should be job experimentation. They showed that even if they might be unhappy with their occupations at a later stage, they might be reluctant to change occupations.

Many individuals made radical changes in their career paths. They discovered new interests and anticipated rewards. Not every career switch is a happy one. One may have a tendency to believe that he/she should only explore occupations consistent with the path they so far have taken in their careers. If one was content with his/her current line of work, one might not want to look at any other occupation right now. But if one was dissatisfied and sticking with this work simply because he/she had prior experience with it, it might be time to look at some alternatives.

Scale.18. Relocation: For these learners, their career decisions rally around surroundings that are known and comfortable to them. They won't even consider moving to follow a better career. They are being stopped by other values like, family. They do not think of what they might be benefiting when they move, but what they might loose when they move.

Some attractive job opportunities might appear in locations one had never considered, and then one could feel uncertain or reluctant about moving from his/her present location.

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Such reluctance is normal. Moving is not only difficult and expensive, it also separates one from comfortable friends and family contacts.

On the other hand, a new location could give an individual a fresh start. One might find a better job opportunity than any of the opportunities available to him/her where he/she lives now. Before one automatically rules out other areas of the country, one may want to think through the issue carefully.

Scale.19. Improving self: These learners felt satisfied about their performances up to that far. They were not content with the rapidly changing world, in terms of skills and aptitudes.

One might be quite proud of his/her performance in some areas but want to improve in other areas. Our changing world demands that one constantly learn new skills, develop new interests, challenge our beliefs, examine our values, and keep up with technological developments. One must be careful that his/her pride in one's past accomplishments does not discourage him/her from learning new skills and ideas.

Scale.20. Persisting while uncertain: They had a tendency to say as soon as they know what to do they will start working hard. They did not struggle forth if they were uncertain of what they are supposed to do.

Consistently working hard, even if one does not know where he/she wants to go, can open up new career possibilities. There is at least a tendency for one to believe that he/she need clear goals to justify working hard. But working hard at a task enables one to discover his/her own goals and clarify one's interests in particular tasks. If one work hard and practice the task, one might get better at it, and once he/she is better at it, one might enjoy the task more.

Furthermore, a good performance even at tasks one dislikes, can earn an individual an excellent reputation and important rewards. These rewards and the process of working hard might lead one to experiences that might help one to define some clear goals.

Scale.21. Taking risks: These learners were not willing to take the risks of failing. They believed it was better not to try if failure was imminent.

A tough choice in career planning is deciding which risks are worth taking and which to avoid. Some people exert little effort so that if they fail they can say that the failure was due to lack of effort, not a lack of ability. No one is suggesting that they should take foolish risks, but everything we do is risky to some extent since we never know the outcome in advance. One way of looking at these risky situations is to think of them as opportunities to learn more about oneself. One does not know what he/she can do until one give it his/her best shot!

Scale.22. Learning job skills: These learners had negative experience with job training, or had a fear to be trained.

Learning new job skills can be either pleasant or painful, depending partly on the instructor and partly on an individual. There may not be much one can do about the instructor, but one might do a lot about him/herself.
Think optimistically. One next learning experience might be much more pleasant. In addition, one probably needs to learn new skills. Changes in technology and organizational structures require people with multiple skills. It may be useful for an individual to examine why he/she developed distaste for learning job skills and then see what he/she must do to overcome it.

Scale.23. Negotiating/Searching: These learners felt discouraged. They thought the right job was impossible to find. They had an idea that no job is perfect for them, even though they were not doing anything to improve their current situation.

Everyone sometimes finds himself or herself in an unpleasant or unrewarding situation. Some people are confident that they can change and improve their situation, while others may be discouraged. It can be very difficult to improve a situation. But if one believes he/she can do nothing, one will not want to try. Sometimes just trying to make a change works better than one might expect. One has the power to change.

Scale.24. Overcoming obstacles: The learners were regarding obstacles to be blocking their progress. They were even aware of something blocking them from achieving their goals, but were not willing to addressing the situation.

Just about everyone faces obstacles at one time or another. Some people believe they can overcome almost any obstacle in their pursuit of an important goal. Some times believe that something is blocking you from achieving your career goals. One may have doubt whether he/she can overcome the obstacle. It will be important for one to identify the specific obstacles and begin to explore if and how they can be overcome.

Scale.25. Working hard: These learners were convinced that success is unrelated to working hard. They contend that some people succeed without working hard. This result in learners concluding that their hard work had little pay-off.

The world at times deals one some tough knocks and makes one feel that none of our hard work will ever pay off. Although some individuals who have attained success in their careers modestly claim they were simply lucky. However, looking beneath the surface, one will most probably find they actually have put a lot of time, energy, and hard work into their accomplishments. Some people disguise their efforts to fool you into thinking they just possess natural talent. While there are no guarantees that hard work will bring success, one can count on the fact that exerting no effort will bring no success.

6.2.3 The CBI headings interpretation and recommendation

The CBI headings further explain and interpret what was covered in scales but from a different angle of which is the individual exertable efforts.

6.2.3.1 My current career situation

The subjects were currently not working and were still students. They are mostly decided on what they want to do, just to unload the agony of indecision. The decisions are made to offload the pressure of career decision-making.

Learners do not usually accept their uncertainty because they believe decisions have to be made. The decisions are made without exploring the possible next steps. Then they keep reasons for their career decision-making private. They are afraid of raising false hopes in others in case there is a change of mind.

6.2.3.2 What seems necessary for my happiness?

Learners are not achievement motivated but by other goals. They believe in other values (family, religion, love, security, leisure, etc) to be more important compared to achievement. It is important for them to think about what is important to them now and what might be even more important to them in future.

Mostly they believe college or tertiary education is necessary for a good job. They do not look at other alternatives like technical programs and apprenticeships. They regard matric qualifications as high and technical skills advancement programs as low. They also hold an understanding that work is just a means of achieving other goals. They do not look for job satisfaction in work.

Learners aspire to surpass others, but usually they fail to employ those efforts that will enable them to achieve it. They fail to consider that competing with themselves would enable them to achieve their desires. This is due to contemplating that competition creates conflict among individuals.

They believe that they have to work flexi time without supervision. Unstructured work sounds liberating. The reason is, they are preparing to work close to themselves.

6.2.3.3 Factors that influence my decision

Usually they do not have control over their career decisions. They understand that they do not have much of an impact towards their career choice. Even if they are unhappy about it they do not take time to address this problem.

They know the experts can help them to determine the best career choices, but do not want to take the responsibility. This means they are knowledgeable in this regard but the responsibility they have to take, ultimately making the choice, they shun it.

In confirming the latter, belief, they view approval of others as important. Their main objective for admitting or needing approval is to please those who approve.

For them to feel secured, they don't compare to improve or use others as yardsticks, but they use comparison to have a safety net and to justify their staled development. Their comparisons don't only end with individuals; they also extend to college and occupations similarities.

Then in terms of career path flexibility they believe certain steps must be followed in a proper sequence. This limits their options in the sense that several leads might lead to goal attainment.

6.2.3.4 Changes I am willing to make

Seemingly they hold a belief that the job must be consistent with initial training. They worry that the time invested in training would be wasted if one were to take a different kind of job. They again believe that, there should be a consistent career path. They are not prepared to do job experimentation. They might be unhappy in an occupation but will be reluctant to change job.

They have a problem with relocation. This means they are not willing to move for a better job. Their thinking is that they have doubts about the wisdom of moving, because they fear what they might lose, and they do not think about what they might gain.

6.2.3.5 Efforts I am willing to initiate

They are satisfied with their performance up to now. They do not have a desire to improve performance because they're afraid of change. This is so because they are comfortable and at the same time overlooking the rapidly changing world. They believe for them to work hard, there should be a clear goal to work on. They are not prepared to take risks. They believe it is better not to try if failure is possible. Even the most competent people fail sometimes.

They are not prepared to learn job skills. That is to say, they do not believe in job training, they somehow feel incompetent. They also believe that a right job is impossible to find. Consequently they feel discouraged and they are not willing to negotiate or search for new jobs.

They are unable to overcome obstacles. They believe obstacles are blocking progress. Even if they're aware they are not willing to or have the confidence of working through them satisfactorily.

Then lastly, they are not hard working people. Their belief is that success is unrelated to effort. They feel some people succeed without working hard, and their hard work has little payoff.

6.2.4 Summarized guidelines and recommendation of the CBI

The test results as interpreted signified that there were many myths that lead to uninformed career decision-making of the at-risk high school learners. The myth's have a varying degree of influence on career decision-making. The scales tried to outline the reasons that lead to the development of these myths. Learners do not use their unemployment status to their advantage. Instead, they dream about having posh life styles. This is why they are not concentrating on their studies, and end up with criminals as their role models.

These learners should plan their careers, and this will only be realized when they admit their unemployment status. This will mean they would understand why they have to attend school. This will also enable them to accept the uncertainty in whatever career choices they might have. To accept this uncertainty will lead to these learners to open-up about their envisaged career plans. They will then enjoy access to more relevant information towards career decision-making. Briefly this might be their first achievement.

When these learners become conscious of their education and the subjects they follow, they will be able to make decisions about which tertiary institution to register with. This will give them the satisfaction they will feel at a later stage when they have achieved their career goals.

When they have entered this stage, learners will become in control of their destiny in regard to career decision-making. This will be displayed by a responsibility to have reached this level of the career development process. As a consequence they will be empowered to conclude on their own without firstly needing the approval of others.

These learners will now be able to explore the flexibility of their career paths. They will be able to realize that a career cannot only be achieved through orthodox paths or through similar procedures. They would want to improve their self-performance reliance at all times. This means to persist while uncertain and not waiting to achieve a clear defined procedure to attain a goal.

Learners will then be in position to take risks, rather than to believe it would be better not to try, if failure is possible. In short, these learners will be skilled to overcome obstacles in pursuit of their career goals and they will work hard towards it.

6.3 QUESTIONNAIRE INTERPRETATIONS.

These interpretations are about the questionnaire individual career guidance teachers/councilors had to fill. The basic aim was to look at influences from the information delivered in regards to structures and programmes that were already in-place and the level of training for those who offered the information to the learners.

6.3.1 Qualification discussion and recommendations by teachers

The need to identify the qualification was to ascertain whether there are qualified people to offer the program. This portion of the questionnaire indicates that the school career development is offered but without appropriate personnel. Mostly the career guidance counselors/teachers are not orientated towards executing the program.

6.3.2 Experience (Duration Offering Career Guidance) discussion and recommendation

The heading 5.5.1 displays the experience of career guidance counselors/teachers. There is an indication of 25 percent of career guidance counselors/teachers who have two years and more experience. Then there is about 25 percent of counselors/teachers who have a year and above experience in offering the subject as they have termed it. Lastly there is 50 percent who have no experience or haven't offered the subject for a year.

The conclusion from this situation is that these educators are not trained to offer the subject. Even though some have experience in offering the subject, they all started without appropriate training. Therefore, will it in all fairness be possible to say that those who have the experience are sure of what they are doing?

6.3.3 The interpretation of a Questionnaire response

These are summarized responses as per individual subjects who took part in this investigation. Great care was taken in interpreting questionnaire responses (under heading 4.4 Questionnaire Design, last paragraph on p66) "the questionnaire was assessed in provisos of understanding the questions from the career guidance

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councilors/teachers and how they were answered. The overall inferences were made in terms of the general understanding of individual question as answered by the majority of the subjects. This means inductive reasoning method was applied", the method was taken not to leave behind the essence of what the subjects were putting forth and not to include the researchers' interpretation of the answers.

(1) What is the strong point of the current career development program?

In essence the current career development program seems to have strong points at face value. Teachers think that having assistance from outside school premises the program would be effective, because students are able to make choices, (even though not informed); they thought the program was a workable program.

(2) What important aspects of career decision-making process does it cover?

The program is not realistically relevant towards career development. The program seems to integrate life skills aspects, which are not impacting on efficacy and workability of the career development program. Information on knowing different occupation does not mean it equips learners with vocational identity.

(3) How flexible is the program towards contemporary problems of career choices?

The program is not flexible at all due to the fact that the career guidance counselors /teachers are not informed themselves with regards to the career development aspects. Also there are a lot of technicalities toward offering the subject, of which time allocation and the negative attitudes are some.

(4) Does the program address the self-exploration concept in details?

The concept is not known to the career guidance counselors/teachers. To only highlight the concept is not enough and is not the way to deal with the concept. Therefore, it is evident that the program does not address the concept. This should be the corner stone of the program, due to the fact that the decisions are life long and not easily reversible.

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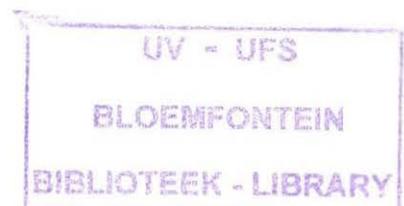
UNIVERSITY OF THE NORTH
QWA-QWA CAMPUS

FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND HUMAN SCIENCES
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Date ....

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: RESEARCH PROJECT BY MASTER'S STUDENT ON:
REASONS WHY AT-RISK HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS FORFEIT
BECOMING COMMITTED TO APPROPRIATE CAREER CHOICES

Dear Sir /Madam

It is hereby certified that the questionnaire being circulated in the above regard is the work of a student enrolled for the Masters degree at this University. He is conducting a research project for this purpose and he is doing it under the supervision of the undersigned. The investigation is confidential and no identifiable information will be disclosed.

We need your assistance by filling in the questionnaire attached to this letter. So, please respond to all the questions as honestly as possible. You will receive feedback of the results of the investigation once it has been analyzed and interpreted – on an anonymous basis. It is possible that these results could of value to your institution.

The student sees this as an interesting and challenging endeavor; the student envisages utilizing the outcome of it as part of community outreach. I shall therefore appreciate it if you would assist in us this regard.

Yours sincerely,

_____
Dr CP Van WYK
Senior Lecture (Faculty of Human Sciences)
Registered Psychologist

University of the North
Qwa-Qwa Campus

Faculty of Management and Human Sciences
School of Social Sciences

The general aim of this study is to investigate the commitment to career choices among high school learners. This questionnaire is to investigate the relevance, and the difficulties of the existing program.

<u>Biographical details of person completing the questionnaire</u>

Date ....

Surname & Initials ....

Highest Qualifications ....

Additional Qualifications information (relating to career guidance)
....
Experience (duration offering career guidance)
....

Position ....

Name of School ....

School address ....
....
....
....

Tel ....

APPENDIX C

1. What is the strong point of the current career development program?

   ----

2. What important aspects of career decision-making process does it cover?

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3. How flexible is the program towards contemporary problems of career choices? ------
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4. Does the program address the self-exploration concept in details?----------------------
   ----
   ----

5. In regards to environmental-exploration, does the program contemplates the concept retrospectively or take future assumptions into cognizance?

   ----

a) What aspects does the program fail to address?

   ----

b) What are the short falls of the program in its whole entirety?

   ----

c) Any difficulties you would like to the bring to attention of the researcher?

(I) Having highlighted abilities and relevance's, and the difficulties can you give out envisaged redress of the program.

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(5) In regards to environmental-exploration, does the program contemplates the concept retrospectively or takes future assumptions into cognizance?

This concept is closely related to the concept of self-exploration. The environmental-exploration is also not known or the program does not give any attention to it. The decisions are not rallying around the concept; therefore it is visible that this program is only highlighting the existence of career development.

(A) What aspects does the program fail to address?

This program is not empowering career guidance counselors/teachers. It does not offer these educators time for individual attention to learners. Career related choices are not tailor-made to accommodate every individual on the same wavelength.

(B) What are the short falls of the program in its whole entirety?

The basic shortfall of this program is the fact that it does not have a particular straightforward work program to work from as a scope of limitation. The textbooks that are being used are the only point of reference, and are not reviewed often enough. Standards are then determined and set by individual teachers.

(C) Any difficulties you would like to bring to the attention of the researcher?

The program is not offered in most schools, and there are no trained career guidance counselors/teachers in the ones that the program is offered. The textbooks that should be used need to be a work program and have to address the needs of today's learners as they face new and dynamic problems of this era. There should be enough time that is allocated, and the subject should be taken seriously.

(I) Having highlighted abilities and relevances, and the difficulties can you give envisaged redress of the program?

It will be of utmost importance for every school to offer the subject as the policy document stipulates. Aims and objectives of the program should be clearly underlined and not to be confused with the life orientation skills. There should be consultation and

impeccable involvement of professional career counselors when drawing the framework program. Finally, there should be a set curriculum to maintain uniformity and the same standard level in terms of offered tuition.

6.3.4 Summarized Guidelines and recommendations of questionnaire

This investigation has given an insight to the aims of the questionnaire. These results are to be interpreted in light of addressing the content of career development programs in schools. The program should focus on the three aspects as cited by Gitterman (1995), self-awareness, opportunity awareness, and decision and transition learning. These components form the core of an effective career education model. In order to implement this vision of career education, schools need to have clear and specific outcomes for each component.

In providing self-awareness, learners will be able to analyze changing personal attitudes, values, interests, and aptitudes in relation to career choice decision-making. This will lead further to enable them to recognize and develop ways of dealing with stereotypes, and lastly, empower them to apply skills of time management, planning, goal setting and developed personal responsibility.

Opportunity awareness will heighten the understanding of economy and work, market forces, responsibilities and commitment of employers and employees. This will also demonstrate the attitudes necessary for work and learning, and finally describe how gender role stereotyping, bias and discrimination limit career choices, opportunities and achievement.

Lastly, the two aspects indicated above will enable, decision and transition, to be achieved with ease. This will help learners to understand opportunities for high school and post high school education and training in both immediate and long-term success. They will be able to identify ways of making decisions and apply the knowledge, and finally how to develop an action plan to accomplish occupational, educational, leisure

and/ or family goals. In short they will be able to make transition from high school into the corporate world and will know how to deal with unexpected situations.

Therefore, for these aims to be realized the two elements (information and education) of the three career elements cited by Rettig (1974) should form part of training for career counselors/teachers. This will help to put into perspective and implement what Parnell (1990) purported, that "school guidance councilors and teachers should lead the way in devising opportunities for students to explore a variety of career clusters".

What has been indicated above is confirmed by the fact that skilled human resources that will ensure South Africa's economic competitiveness have been clearly stated in policy documents relating to the enhancement of S.A economy. Even though the need for career information and guidance has been repeatedly stated in policy documents like the *White Paper* on Education and Training, and public discussion documents in the form of *Education for all*, there is as yet no formal curriculum available. Guidance teachers and counselors have to rely on sources and material developed outside the formal school environment to assist them with career guidance and information (Du Toit & Davids, 1998, p4).

6.4 SPECIFIC AND GENERAL HYPOTHESES CONCLUSION

Realizing the magnitude of the topic, the following specific hypotheses were formulated with an aim of collecting data that will prove or disapprove the general hypothesis. More so, the reason was to achieve objectives (Chapter 1, p4) of the study and develop a blue print that will lead to research finding answers.

High school learners have a tendency to foreclose without commitment to vocational exploration

In chapter 5 (p 73) under heading 5.4.1, the CBI indicates the position of learners in relation to their commitment to career choices. Three factors are identified, which they

are supposed to take advantage of. Firstly, *Unemployment status* is not used to attend school so as to maximize their opportunities and probabilities in following desired careers. Secondly, visualized *career plans* are uninformed, because they find placate in having made the decisions. Then lastly, this uninformed career plans are further exacerbated by their high level of the *acceptance of uncertainty*. They believe a learner in grades (10-12) should know or knows what they would like to accomplish in life.

High school learners are not orientated towards vocational identity or need for occupational goals.

Looking at chapter 5 (p 80), factor23, *negotiating/searching* indicate a believe that the right job is impossible to find. Considering an aspect like job satisfaction, one can conclude that acknowledged professions or careers are the only careers that are easily identified with. This is further confirmed by the aspect on page 77, *occupation/college comparison*. A believe that they can fit into various occupations indicated lack of specific occupational goals. Finally on page 76, *control* and *approval of others*, further show the occupation is not for individual purpose, but to please those who are close to an individual and have control over one's life.

High school learners' decisions are clouded with career myths they hold.

There are number of myths as indicated in paragraph 6.2.2, "scale interpretation and recommendation" on page 86. This shows there is a relatively misleading information learner's use to pre-conclude on their career choices. The impact of such myth is visible in the outcome of career choices they make.

There are no qualified vocational or career counselors in the high schools in Qwa-Qwa.

Taking a look at table 5.6, distribution of qualifications for subject in chapter 5 (p 81), one can easily identify a necessity for qualified career counselors in schools around Qwa-Qwa. Further confirmation is under the heading 5.5.2.4 and 5.5.2.5 in pages 82-83, the

educators are unskilled due to the fact that they are not familiar with the concept of self and environmental exploration.

At-risk high school learners rely mostly on mythical information for career choices and decisions because of a lack of suitable and relevant career guidance.

Under the heading summarized guidelines and recommendations of the CBI (p105), it is indicated that there are many myth's that leads to uninformed career decision-making of the at-risk high school learners. That reiterated the fact that most learners are *"wishful-thinkers"*, even though these myths have varying degrees of impact on individual learners.

Lack of suitable and relevant career guidance should be looked from the Gitterman (1995) perspective. This author proclaimed that career programme should focus on three aspects, that is, self-awareness, opportunity awareness, and decision and transition learning. It was evident from the questionnaire distributed to teachers/career counselors that the programme was not structured along the lines indicated by Gitterman and it was not helpful to learners. Therefore in short it is true that at-risk high school learners rely mostly on mythical information for career choices and decisions because of a lack of suitable and relevant career guidance.

6.5 CONCLUSION

Chapter 5 displays the results of the CBI test applied to the learners and the questionnaire for the second set of subjects as presented by the teachers. The test scores were outlined in detail and the questionnaire responses were interpreted "inductively". The primary focus of chapter 5 was to arrive at conclusive results of the research and recommendations.

This investigation was encouraged by the empirical observation of the researcher; the way high school learners were exercising their career choices. This and many other

unanswered questions caught the researcher's attention. The basic question was, are there a lack of relevant information and consequent commitment amongst learners to arrive at suitable career choices? Subsequently, is it because of uninformed career choice decisions that employers lose so much in skills-investing in people who will change career paths due to dissatisfaction? This is also evident in the failure rate and students dropping out. This research being a case study uncovered more questions that necessitate further research in other areas that are career orientation related.

The above scenario led to more questions that ultimately culminated into the objectives of this study. It is obvious in this instance that learners who are termed to be at-risk in this investigation, experience a socio-economic background disabling them from affording professional career psychology guidance. Therefore, it was easy to establish whether the school career programs were suitable enough to prepare learners for more informed career choices and decisions, and of which were not suitable.

To take this further, it is correct to say that the investigation elucidated on what has been discussed on page 18 (first paragraph under the heading "impairing realities of career decision making process) of this document that, "many career development theories are narrowly defined and deal almost exclusively with occupational choice. Super, 1990, p112), views a career as a series of work and non-work roles that people play across their life span including student, worker, homemaker, citizen and 'leisurite'. Therefore, to understand adolescent career development, it is important to know how motivated youths are so as to pursue various life career roles and why they want to pursue them" (Munson, 1992, p 361).

In all fairness one can conclude that the structure of the existing program does not help learners in alleviating the myth's they have towards careers of their choice. Firstly, the CBI found in no uncertain terms that there are myths that play a major role in forming career decisions by learners. Then secondly, presently career guidance teachers /counselors are not an option to assist students to make appropriate and relevant decisions

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towards their careers. This is reiterated by the fact that the subject "career decision making" has more a scholarly value than its practical execution.

It is from this investigation that the realization of lack for information is a detrimental aspect that needs to be addressed to prevent our youth to go astray. Therefore, in short, learners are not informed and people they should turn to (teachers/counselors) are also not well equipped and informed about aspects of career decision making techniques and procedural steps. The answers confirmed the fact that, *at-risk high school learners rely mostly on mythical information for career choices and decisions because of a lack of suitable and relevant career guidance.* This resulted in asking more questions rather than having answers to the initial general hypothesis.

Again one has to understand that there are a number of aspects that work coherently to emulate obstacles towards following a proper career development program. Myths, qualifications of teachers/counselors and the career guidance program are just a few of those aspects that have a direct implication on the decision making process. These aspects are easier to established and can be redressed as opposed to psychological, social and market aspects that have a bearing on one's decision and not vice versa. Looking at Super's and Holland's theories it is evident that a career is a lifetime exercise, bigger than an individual in respect. Moreover, career decision making should be pursued rather than leaving one's future to fate. Destiny can be shaped to at least what an individual aspires it to be.

Finally, perhaps one of the main focuses underlying much of this academic enquiry was that the world of work requires dedicated people who take the trouble early in life already to find out what kind of careers they will pursue. So often people have rather fanciful perceptions of what the term job entails, focusing on status and materialistic wish-fulfillment rather than what the job will demand of them and whether they are adequately equipped for it.

There is a need for career-oriented youngsters who will look acutely and earnestly of themselves and what the job markets require and make informed decisions about their future. This will help them to realize their goals with an understanding of the amount of sheer hard work that also has to go into the equation. Rettig (1974, p 69) states that, "choosing your occupation should not mean taking the first job that comes along. Choosing an occupation should mean finding the best possible match of a person with a particular kind of work".

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