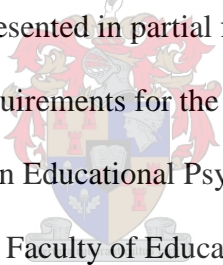


**THE CAREER CONSTRUCTIONS OF AND INFLUENCES  
ON CAREER CHOICES OF ADOLESCENTS  
IN A LOW-INCOME SCHOOL**

**by**

**Liesl Blomerus**

Thesis presented in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Education in Educational Psychology (MEdPsych)  
in the Faculty of Education at  
Stellenbosch University

The image is a faint, semi-transparent watermark of the Stellenbosch University crest, centered behind the text. The crest features a shield with various symbols, topped by a crown and flanked by two figures.

**Supervisor: Prof Ronelle Carolissen**

**Co Supervisor: Ms Karlien Conradie**

**December 2016**

## DECLARATION

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## ABSTRACT

In a multi-cultural society such as South Africa, the implementation of career psychology has been challenging as most of our approaches to career counselling have been derived from a westernised perspective. These approaches are based on the notion that people have a choice with regard to the career pathway they want to pursue. However, this is not true for the majority of South Africans, and therefore these approaches are not applicable to them. It is evident that the development of indigenous approaches to career psychology is necessary to serve the needs of the majority. The primary objective of this research was to gain an in-depth understanding of the Construct of career and the influences on career choices of adolescents attending a low-income school. The aim was also to contribute to the literature that is needed to develop more indigenous approaches. The study used an interpretive paradigm and the research design was a collective case study. The research was conducted at a high school in a small, historically coloured, Afrikaans-speaking community and the sample consisted of eleven grade nine learners. Data collection involved a systems-based activity, a photovoice activity, a focus group and individual interviews. The data were analysed using the constant comparative method.

The research findings indicated that the participants' understanding of the construct of career was linear, future-oriented and demonstrative of limited insight. Furthermore, the participants showed a lack of career maturity that can be attributed to the fact that South Africa still tends to follow westernised approaches. Influences in the social system, such as parents, siblings, teachers and the media, were identified as both positive and negative influences. Finally, issues of social justice and inequality were identified due to the influence that the participants' low socio-economic status had on their career choices.

**Keywords:** Construct of career, career choices, Systems Theory Framework

## OPSOMMING

In 'n multikulturele samelewing soos Suid-Afrika, is die implementering van loopbaansielkunde problematies, aangesien dit grootliks gegrond is op westerse benaderings tot beroepsvoorligting. Hierdie benaderings is gegrond op die aanname dat mense 'n keuse het ten opsigte van die loopbaanpad wat hulle wil nastreef. Dit weerspieël egter nie die realiteit vir die meerderheid van Suid-Afrikaners nie. Hierdie benaderings is dus nie van toepassing nie. Dit is duidelik dat die ontwikkeling van inheemse benaderings tot loopbaansielkunde noodsaaklik is om aan die behoeftes van die meerderheid te voorsien.

Die hoofdoel van hierdie navorsing was om 'n in-diepte begrip van die konstruk 'loopbaan' te verkry, asook die invloede op loopbaankeuses van adolessente wat 'n lae-inkomste skool bywoon. 'n Verdere doel was om by te dra tot die literatuur wat benodig word om inheemse benaderings te ontwikkel. Die studie het 'n interpretatiewe paradigma gebruik en die navorsingsontwerp was 'n kollektiewe gevallestudie. Die navorsing is gedoen by 'n hoër skool in 'n klein, histories bruin, Afrikaanssprekende gemeenskap en die steekproef het bestaan uit elf graad nege leerders. Data-insameling het 'n sisteemgebaseerde aktiwiteit, 'n fotoneem aktiwiteit, 'n fokusgroep en individuele onderhoude behels. Die data is ontleed met behulp van die konstante vergelykende metode.

Die navorsingsresultate het aangedui dat die deelnemers se begrip van die konstruk van loopbaan lineêr en toekomsgerig is maar met beperkte insig. Verder het die deelnemers 'n gebrek aan beroepsvolwassenheid getoon wat toegeskryf kan word aan die feit dat Suid-Afrika steeds neig om westerse benaderings te volg. Invloede binne die sosiale sisteem, soos ouers, broers en susters, onderwysers en die media, is aangedui as beide positief en negatief. Ten slotte is kwessies van sosiale geregtigheid en ongelukheid ook uitgewys weens die invloed wat die deelnemers se lae sosio-ekonomiese status op hul beroepskeuses het.

**Slutelwoorde:** Konstruk van loopbaan, beroepskeuses, Sisteemteorieraamwerk

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to thank my husband, Du Toit, for his unfailing support, patience and encouragement. It would not have been possible for me to complete this journey without him by my side.

Secondly, I would like to thank my dad, Bertie, for providing me with the opportunity to embark on this journey and always being ready to share his wisdom and inspiring me to strive for excellence.

Thirdly, I would like to thank my mom, Jeanette, for always being there for me when the going got tough, ready to listen and to give advice.

Fourthly, I would like to thank the participants for their willingness to share their views and experiences with me. It was a privilege to work with them and I am grateful that I could tell their stories.

Lastly, I would like to thank my supervisors, Prof Ronelle Carolissen, DPhil (SU), and Ms Karlien Conradie, MEd Psych *Cum Laude* (SU), for their guidance, encouragement, patience and wisdom.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| DHET    | Department of Higher Education and Training |
| DoBE    | Department of Basic Education               |
| DoE     | Department of Education                     |
| MSCI    | My Systems of Career Influences             |
| NGO     | non-governmental organisation               |
| REC     | Research Ethics Committee                   |
| SAQA    | South African Qualifications Authority      |
| SES     | Socioeconomic status                        |
| StatsSA | Statistics South Africa                     |
| STF     | Systems Theory Framework                    |
| UKZN    | University of KwaZulu-Natal                 |
| USA     | United States of America                    |
| WCED    | Western Cape Education Department           |

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. INTRODUCTION

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is characterised by “great promise and uncertainty” as the workplace, information and technology are rapidly changing (Perry, 2009, p.482). Globalisation pressures and socioeconomic trends have forced all countries to change with regard to the way in which they approach the labour market (Burke & Cooper, as cited in Fouad & Bynner, 2008). According to DeBell (2006), with the rise of globalisation, efficiency and profit became more important than employment. It is evident that the expectations on employees are different now than in the past. The way in which career counselling was approached, therefore had to be adjusted. Career counselling also had to consider that there is a vast division between wealth and opportunities amongst the different spheres in society, even in developed countries (Perry, 2009). Due to the changing nature of the global economy and the inequities that exist between people globally, career counselling is currently undergoing a radical change that emphasises the importance of external influences (Fassinger, 2008; Fouad & Bynner, 2008). These external influences include, for example, socioeconomic status (SES), chance events, globalisation and political decisions which all have an impact on the career opportunities available to the individual.

It is important to be knowledgeable about international developments in this field as these developments also have an impact locally. In a multi-cultural society such as South Africa, it is essential to consider the influences of culture and context in the field of career psychology, because of the country’s prevailing different cultural practices and values, political influences and social realities. More importantly, in order to assist the youth effectively, an understanding of the development of career psychology in South Africa is required, as well as



the youth's understanding of the construct 'career' and the influences that may guide them to make career decisions. This particularly applies to adolescents attending low-income schools as they face unique challenges that are often left unattended. These challenges include, but are not limited to, monetary constraints in both formal education and non-governmental organisation (NGO) structures that influence staffing and resource provision (Akhurst & Mkhize, 2006); limited exposure to the world of work; little access to career education services; little or no knowledge about tertiary institutions; and a narrow range of social contacts (Pryor, as cited in Akhurst & Mkhize, 2006).

## **1.2. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

Career psychology has always been a contested terrain in South Africa (Nicholas, Naidoo, & Pretorius, 2006). This can be attributed to several reasons. Firstly, career psychology, and thus career education, in South Africa has largely been derived from an American approach to this field (Stead & Watson, 1998; Nicholas & Pretorius, 2006). According to the authors (1998), it has mostly been based on the theories of Holland (1959; 1985) and Super (1990). These Western-based theories were initially transferred to all ethnic groups in South Africa, as it was assumed that it would be relevant (Stead & Watson, 1998). According to Stead (1996), the focus was mainly on the individual and little attention was given to historical, cultural, socio-political and economic factors and the impact that these factors could have on the career development of individuals.

Government bias during the apartheid years resulted in the majority of the population having restricted access to career choices. The government at the time used political, economic and social conditions to steer career psychology in such a direction that vast discrimination occurred (Nicholas et al., 2006). It is thus evident that the construct of career education was only known by a privileged minority and according to Akhurst and Mkhize (2006), not

accessible to the majority of people. The end of apartheid represented the beginning of a new, more promising, future for South African citizens, especially the youth. However, this promise has not materialised, as for many young predominantly black learners, the experience of career education is as limited as it was under apartheid. For example, unemployment is still a big concern and the ethnic groups who are most affected by it are often those who were previously discriminated against. According to Statistics South Africa (StatsSA, 2014), the formal employment figure in the non-agricultural sector decreased by 129 000 jobs from 8.67 million in June 2014 to 8.54 million in September 2014.

South Africa's democracy is already in its twentieth year of existence and yet many of the youth that form part of the previously disadvantaged ethnic groups still struggle with making career choices. They often end up choosing a career that would have been viewed as 'acceptable' during the apartheid years. This is especially true for learners attending low-income schools. Akhurst and Mkhize (2006) suggest that career education has the ability to have a positive impact on the career choices of people, but that it still reflects the inequalities of the apartheid education structures. This can be seen in the funding available to the different schools. The difference in staffing and resources of 'high income' schools compared to those of 'low-income' schools is evident and thus also the opportunities with regard to experience and exposure to, for instance, the world of work.

Additionally, the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training: Building an expanded, effective and integrated post-school system (DHET, 2013) indicates that 32.9% (3.4 million) of South Africans between the ages of 18 and 24 are unemployed and not in training. According to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET, 2012b), this signifies a neglect of human potential and has the ability to lead to severe social instability.

This challenge is addressed in the White Paper (DHET, 2013) which states that by the year 2030, the DHET aims to have 1.6 million enrolments at public universities, 2.5 million in technical and vocational education and training colleges, and 1 million in community colleges. Furthermore, it is estimated that there will be half a million enrolments in private tertiary education institutions (DHET, 2013). The White Paper (DHET, 2013) also stipulates that education is the key that individuals need to break free from poverty to prosperity, and a means of supporting equality of opportunity. Access to quality education for all segments of the population is viewed as a way in which greater social justice will be achieved (DHET, 2013). Similarly, quality education is linked to more rapid economic, social and cultural development in South Africa. Although economic growth cannot be guaranteed by means of education, it will be impossible without it (DHET, 2013).

The DHET will not be able to achieve the abovementioned goals if they work in isolation. It is clear that the issues of concern need to be addressed at school level already. The DHET and Department of Basic Education (DoBE) thus need to closely work together. Learners should be educated with regard to the opportunities that are available to them on completion of school, while they also need the opportunity to determine what they would like to achieve, as well as how they should go about achieving those goals. When considering the latter, it is apparent that career education should form an essential part of every learner's education. Consequently, in order to guide effective career education, insight into the meaning of the Construct of career and its impact on career choices is needed.

In terms of the curriculum developed by DoBE, career education forms part of the subject Life Orientation. According to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement Grades 7-9: Life Orientation (DoBE, 2013), most time is allocated for career education during the grade nine year. This is because at the end of grade nine, learners need to make subject choices

which will have an impact on their further education and training opportunities and career choices on completion of their matric year. The current research was thus aimed at this population group, as career education forms a substantial part of their Life Orientation curriculum. Therefore, the opportunity that the study gave them to gain insight into their own understanding of the Construct of career as well as the different influences on their career choices assisted them in the process of making subject choices and setting career goals.

Furthermore, the career choices of youth attending low-income schools have also been constrained due to a lack of self-knowledge, occupational knowledge, the trends in the labour market and their limited exposure to career education programmes (Watson, Foxcroft, Horn & Stead, 1997). Low-income contexts also often have a negative impact on the self-efficacy beliefs of the youth (Dass-Brailsford, 2005). According to Naicker (1994), the main reason for the latter can be attributed to inequitable distribution of services in the different education departments during apartheid. Naicker (1994) also states that even after career counselling services were made available, many ethnic groups were still sceptical of such services as they viewed it as another way in which the government was trying to control their career choices. Furthermore, many schools did not consider career education as important and thus used the time allocated for it to rather focus on subjects that were examined (Stead & Watson, 1998).

In addition, the traditional approach of ‘matching’ a person to his or her environment, termed the trait-factor approach, has been criticised in South Africa (Naicker, 1994). Kim and Berry (as cited in Stead & Watson, 1998) have proposed the use of indigenous psychology as it provides individuals with a better understanding of themselves and the world in relation to their context. Indigenous psychology refers to methods and practices that are locally developed and thus culturally appropriate. During the last few years qualitative career assessment methods, especially narrative approaches to career counselling, have yielded

positive results internationally (Maree, 2010a), providing a space in which indigenous knowledge can be incorporated. Maree (2010a) asserts that although the latter is true, the reality on the African continent looks somewhat different as there is still an over-reliance on psychometric testing. The latter is problematic as the quantitative methods of assessment are often culturally inappropriate, and fail to consider the different contextual influences on career development.

It thus goes without saying that career psychology, career education and career choices are complex phenomena in South Africa's multi-cultural context, especially in light of the country's history of discrimination and inequality. Research should therefore focus on practical solutions that are culturally and contextually sensitive (Stead & Watson, 1998). Before solutions can be proposed, insight into the understanding of the Construct of career, and the influences on the career choices of learners in low-income schools are needed.

### **1.3. BACKGROUND OF THE COMMUNITY**

The identified school where the research was conducted, is situated in a small, historically coloured, Afrikaans-speaking residential area (Carolissen, Van Wyk & Pick-Cornelius, 2012). It consists of many large middle-class homes, as well as informal housing such as shacks which are located on the outskirts of the community. Community resources such as the local clinic and schools are used by many of the farm workers who work and live on the farms in the surrounding areas (Carolissen et al., 2012). This community, over recent years, also became the home of an upmarket shopping centre which is situated at its entrance. This is because of the development of a golf course and estate opposite the road that belongs to and is occupied by mainly white residents. Additionally, white buyers have also become interested in obtaining properties in the area where the current research was conducted, which was previously classified as a coloured community (Carolissen et al., 2012). According to

Carolissen et al. (2012), these developments have led to conflict in the community as many of its residents are concerned that cultural practices that previously led to the establishment of a sense of community, will degenerate.

The school itself is classified as a ‘low-income’ school according to the National Norms and Standards of School Funding (Department of Education, 1998). All government schools in each province are “sorted on the conditions at the school and the poverty of the community served by the school, so as to produce five groups of schools” (DoE, 1998, p.28). These groups are referred to as “school quintiles, from poorest to least poor” (DoE, 1998, p.28). Resource allocation is based on this list (DoE, 1998). The school is listed as a ‘quintile two’ school, and since 2007, all schools in quintiles one and two were declared as ‘no-fees schools’ (Dieltiens & Meny-Gibert, 2012). This school fee exemption was extended to all schools in quintile three from 2010. Since 2012, all schools were classified as either ‘fee-paying’ or ‘non-fee paying’ (Dieltiens & Meny-Gibert, 2012).

One of the reasons that contribute to the school’s classification of a ‘no-fees school’ is due to the fact that it serves a large number of learners that do not reside in the physical community where the school is situated. A substantial percentage of the learner population consists of learners whose parents are farm workers and thus reside in the local farming communities. According to My Wage (2015), the minimum monthly income of a farm worker is R2 420.41 a month. When considering this amount, it is evident why the school attended by children from farm workers would be classified as a ‘low-income’ school.

#### **1.4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The theoretical framework can be seen as the lens through which we view the world (Merriam, 2009). Merriam (2009, p.68) posits that this view has an effect on all the different aspects of a study and can be seen as a set of “interlocking frames” in relation to a particular

problem statement. It thus serves as an indication as to what is known about a topic, what aspect of the topic the research will be focused on, identifying those aspects that are yet unknown about the topic, the reason that it would be of value to know, and the purpose of the proposed research (Merriam, 2009). The latter information is then used to construct the problem statement that is embedded in the theoretical framework. This theoretical framework, in turn, is used to determine the specific purpose of a study (Merriam, 2009). It is thus evident that the theoretical framework is a crucial consideration, as it lays the foundation of a study.

The nature of the current study, however, prohibited the use of a single theoretical framework as it limited the meaningful interpretation of data. I therefore decided to focus on three stands of conceptualisation, namely career theory, a systems theory framework (STF) and the construction of community. A brief discussion of each will follow.

### **Career theory**

Career theories are used as parameters in which it is possible to understand and hypothesise about career behaviour and choice (Watson & Stead, 2006). Due to the changing nature of society, the theories guiding the practice of career counselling are continually being adapted and/or revised. The paradigm shift from modernism to postmodernism has underpinned and guided the theory and practice of career counselling. This is evident when reviewing the different theories that dominated the field during different times. In order to understand the current climate in the field of career psychology, namely the postmodern approach, it is important to gain an understanding of its “historical precedents” (Watson & Kuit, 2007).

### **Modernism**

Modernism refers to a period that was characterised by the use of scientific methods of inquiry which was concerned with revealing “a value-neutral and objective truth of nature

and the purpose of all things” (Watson & Kuit, 2007, p.74). This led to an objective understanding of career behaviour.

The rise of modernism coincided with the start of the industrial era. Workers were therefore only viewed as small parts of a big machine and could hardly ever view the final products (Maree, 2013). It was only during this era that “vocational guidance per se” emerged (Maree, 2013, p.19). The author states that the aim was to assist individuals in a process of matching themselves to occupations where they will find others who are similar to themselves. This traditional approach to career counselling, also known as the ‘trait-factor’ theory, was conceptualised by Frank Parsons in 1909 (McIlveen & Patton, 2006; Kazuyuki & Kuo-lin, 2006; Watson & Stead, 2006). It consists of matching the characteristics of individuals (traits) with the requirements of the different work environments (factors) (Watson & Stead, 2006).

The influence of the trait-factor approach in South Africa is difficult to establish (Watson & Stead, 2006). However, Watson and Stead (2006, p.16) note that the influence is “considerable”. This can be seen in the South African psychological profession’s development and reliance on psychometric testing (Watson & Stead, 2006). According to Foxcroft (1997), concern exists about the appropriateness of the tests pertaining to the different population groups in South Africa. Moreover, career measures make assumptions about which factors are deemed appropriate and relevant when making career choices (Watson, Duarte & Glavin, 2005).

During the 1950s, the trait-factor conceptualisation was challenged owing to a broader view about what career choice involves (Watson & Stead, 2006). The biggest shift away from the trait-factor theory was when theorists started viewing career as a developmental process (McMahon & Patton, 2002; Watson & Stead, 2006). The intricacy of the world of work



additionally emphasised the variety of issues that career counsellors were faced with leading to further concerns about the trait-factor approach (McMahon & Patton, 2002).

The 1950s were characterised as the timeframe in which many new theories with regard to career behaviour and career choice originated (Watson & Stead, 2006). One of the main concerns of all of these theories was the fact that career behaviour was viewed as a linear process, and that not any form of change or chance was accounted for. However, with the shift towards postmodernism during the 1980s, major changes happened in the field of career psychology.

### **Postmodernism**

Postmodernism refers to the period that followed modernism due to changes in the world of work, the development in technology, as well as the emergence of career theory and research that challenged modernistic approaches (Watson & Stead, 2002). Theorists and researchers started questioning the appropriateness of a single truth that is applicable to all individuals. Postmodernism thus “redirect our attention from discovering truth in objective reality to understanding truth as a socially constructed version of reality” (Savickas, 1993, p.208).

One of the important approaches that developed as a result of postmodernism is constructivism. Constructivism is centred on the belief that there is no absolute truth. It is therefore “perspectival” (Watson & Stead, 2006, p.20) and inherent to the individual’s cognitive processes (Young & Collin, as cited in Patton, 2007) as they interact with their environment and others around them. Collin and Watts (1996, p.394) summarise the aim of a constructivist approach to career counselling well in stating that this approach focuses on three tasks: “Helping them [clients] to ‘authorise’ their careers by narrating a coherent, continuous and credible story; helping them to invest their career narrative with the meaning

by identifying themes and tensions in the story line; and learning skills to perform the next episode of the story”.

Constructivism succeeds in challenging the scientific approach to career theories and their failure to consider the impact of contextual factors (Watson & Stead, 2006). It emphasises the context in which individuals make career decisions, as well as their interactions with the context (Watson & Stead, 2006). Watson and Stead (2002, p.28) argue that although describing contextual factors that have an impact on the career development of South Africans may be “a move in the right direction”, it is still not enough. The focus needs to be on a description that goes “beyond the contextual factors of the status quo to an active challenge of the factors that may be perpetuating a kind of career oppression of most South Africans’ career development” (Watson & Stead, 2002, p.28). A constructivist-based career theory that provides career counsellors with the opportunity to start exploring such factors or influences is the STF. It is an integrative strategy that addresses the critique of traditional career theories of being too narrow and focusing on separate concepts that are applicable to individual career behaviour (Patton & McMahon, 2006).

### **Systems Theory Framework**

The Systems Theory Framework (STF) (McMahon & Patton, 1995, Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006, 2014) offers an integrated framework that adds coherence to the career arena through the conceptualisation of a wide range of career theories and concepts (McMahon, Watson, Foxcroft & Dullabh, 2008). Patton, McMahon and Watson (2006) argue that it is a meta-theoretical framework which incorporates all the concepts of career development, but centres around the individual and the constructing of his/her own meaning of career. It has the capacity to bridge the gap between career theory and career practice (McMahon, 2005; Patton & McMahon, 2006; McMahon et al., 2008).

McMahon and Patton (as cited in McMahon, 2005) describe the STF as a map that career counsellors use to encourage clients to fill in the details and realities of the map of their career narratives. There are a number of conceptual understandings and practical considerations that the counsellor should be aware of when using the STF as map (McMahon, 2005). These are a conceptual understanding of the following concepts: the ‘individual’<sup>1</sup>, ‘systemic thinking’<sup>2</sup>, ‘story’<sup>3</sup> and ‘recursiveness’<sup>4</sup>. According to McMahon (2005), a clear understanding of these concepts will provide the counsellor with a sound theoretical base. The practical considerations, on the other hand, are about ‘connectedness’<sup>5</sup>, the ‘nature of the counselling relationship’<sup>6</sup> and the ‘use of narrative and story’<sup>7</sup>. If these practical considerations are adhered to it will assist in facilitating consistency between theory and practice (McMahon, 2005).

In terms of the South African context, the STF is able to accommodate influences (McMahon et al., 2008) such as politics, economics and prevailing environmental-societal conditions that have had an effect on the nature, form and direction that career psychology in South Africa has taken (Nicholas et al., 2006). For example, according to Nicholas et al. (2006), South Africa’s history of apartheid resulted in unequal realities as there were different educational

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<sup>1</sup> Viewed as central to career development and counselling. Able to self-organise and design his/her own career (Patton & McMahon, as cited in McMahon, 2005).

<sup>2</sup> Focuses on the idea of whole and parts (McMahon, 2005). Counsellors are encouraged “to take a holistic view and locate all the parts within the whole, to examine connectedness and recursiveness between the parts, and to encourage clients to co-construct meaning based on the whole and its parts” (McMahon, 2005, p.34).

<sup>3</sup> An individual’s ability to make meaning of their lives and “actively construct the nature of their lives” (Patton & McMahon, as cited in McMahon, 2005, p.34).

<sup>4</sup> Interaction processes within the individual and the context, between the individual and the context, as well as between the counsellor and the client (McMahon, 2005; Zimmerman & Kontosh, 2007).

<sup>5</sup> It occurs on many levels and refers to the connectedness between the counsellor and client in order to develop a relationship, the counsellor’s awareness of his/her own systems of influences and the client’s ability to connect the elements of their system of influences (McMahon, 2005).

<sup>6</sup> A relationship which is collaborative and in which the client is viewed as an expert in his/her own life (McMahon, 2005).

<sup>7</sup> The dialogue between the counsellor and client that facilitates the narration of a story in order to “connect with new stories, new meaning, alternative stories or new endings to stories” (McMahon, 2005).

and vocational opportunities for different ethnic groups. Subsequently, the insufficient secondary education, in combination with the strict apartheid laws and high unemployment rates resulted in many South African adolescents making career decisions based on trial and error (Akhurst & Mkhize, 2006).

Furthermore, McMahon et al. (2008, p.533) state that the STF has “the capacity to provide theoretical and methodological consistency and a multi-theoretical and holistic examination of the career development of adolescents”. The aforementioned is important as the participants in McMahon’s study were adolescents. Additionally, the STF has been used locally, in South Africa, on both a practical and theoretical level (e.g. Patton et al., 2006). The STF has also been used for career assessment in South Africa (McMahon et al., 2008). For example, the My Systems of Career Influences (MSCI) (McMahon, Patton & Watson, 2005a, 2005b) that has been developed using the STF, has been tested and implemented both in Australia and South Africa (McMahon, Watson & Patton, 2005c).

As part of the theoretical framework, the STF aims to address the need for indigenous approaches towards career psychology in South Africa and towards adolescents’ needs (Stead & Watson, 2006). Additionally, this framework has the potential to address the need for research among non-dominant groups in a field where limited research has thus far been conducted in South Africa, namely: The career constructions of and influences on career choices of adolescents attending a low-income school.

### **Construct of community**

There has been an increasing interest in the construct of ‘community’, with a specific focus on communities that are “economically disadvantaged” and “culturally diverse” (Harris, 2013, p.91). This study was conducted in a community that is both viewed as “economically disadvantaged” and “culturally diverse”. It was therefore essential to consider and explore

the construct of community during the interpretation of the data in order to ensure that it is meaningful. As the study focused on adolescents, it was especially relevant to gain insights into their views and experiences of ‘community’.

The construct is frequently romanticised in literature. A picture of shared attachment to and pride in a place is often created (Harris, 2013). The latter, however, is very seldom true. The construct of community is rather complex and providing a homogenous definition applicable to all communities is almost impossible. Harris (2013, p.92), furthermore, observes that “young people are often constructed as either insufficiently engaged in their communities, lacking civic knowledge and participation, or as inappropriately connected”. Young people are thus seen as problematic and many of their activities are viewed as inappropriate (Harris, 2013).

Harris (2013) argues that these perceptions are not true, and that the way in which young people experience the activities that they engage in in order to express their sense of community varies greatly and is not limited to ‘traditional ways’ such as sharing the same values and having a common goal. In terms of the career constructions and influences on career choices, it is important to be aware of the youth’s views and expressions of community as this in turn will have an impact on their understanding and formation of the construct career as well as the influences that they are exposed to with regard to their career choices.

## **1.5. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

As mentioned above, the current trend in Africa is still to rely on assessment methods that have mostly been developed internationally (Maree, 2010a). According to Maree (2010a, p.353), these methods of assessment “are, at best, inappropriate and at worst, potentially dangerous”. The same reality exists in South Africa and, more specifically, the Western Cape. Psychometric tests have only been standardised for dominant cultural groups, but are often

used with traditionally disadvantaged learners in an unscientific way (Maree & Beck, 2004). These psychometric tests are positivistic in nature and make no provision for contextual influences.

Additionally, as is evident from the literature, there are multiple influences on the career choices of learners attending low-income schools in South Africa. Most of the research also focused on the influences on career choices of black South African youth, the most recent being from Albien (2013). However, a large population group in the Western Cape consists of the coloured community attending low-income schools. Limited research is available pertaining to the career constructions and influences on career choices of adolescents forming part of this community.

Against this background, it is evident that the current career counselling practices in South Africa raise concerns, particularly in terms of the level of appropriateness. Furthermore, there is still a gap in the research with regard to the influences on career choices of adolescents, especially the coloured youth attending low-income schools. Career counselling practices in South Africa will only be able to be relevant when insight is gained into how the Construct of career is viewed by the youth, as well as the influences that affect their career decisions.

## **1.6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The research questions that guided this study were as follows:

- What are the constructions of career and the influences on career choices of coloured adolescents attending a low-income school?
  - What are the perceptions of careers among coloured adolescents attending a low-income school?

- What are the positive influences on career choices of coloured adolescents attending a low-income school?
- What are the negative influences on career choices of coloured adolescents attending a low-income school?
- What are the relative values attached to careers by coloured attending a low-income school?

### **Literature review**

A comprehensive literature review is presented in Chapter 2 with the purpose of contextualising the research by demonstrating how it fits into the specific field of study (Rabie, 2013).

## **1.7. AIMS OF THE RESEARCH**

The primary aim of the research was to explore the constructions of career and the influences on career choices of coloured grade nine learners attending a low-income school. The motivation of the study being that grade nine learners have to make subject choices during that year that could have an impact on the career opportunities available to them after their high school completion. As far as I could ascertain, limited previous career-related research involving this population group has been conducted. The primary objective of the study was therefore:

- To explore the career constructions and the influences on career choices among grade nine coloured learners attending a low-income school.

## **1.8. RESEARCH PROCESS**

### **Paradigm**

The phenomenon under investigation and the purpose of the research will ultimately determine the methods, techniques and tools that will be used (Henning, Van Rensburg &

Smit, 2004). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p.3), “qualitative researchers study things in their naturalistic settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them”. Considering the latter and the purpose of this study, a qualitative epistemology was adopted.

It is furthermore essential for researchers to be aware of their philosophical orientation towards the world, and more specifically, research. This study was therefore situated in an interpretivist paradigm. According to Merriam (1998), reality in an interpretivist paradigm can be defined as being socially constructed by individuals whilst interacting with their social worlds. It is therefore not possible to determine one single reality, and impossible to completely comprehend the realities of individuals without considering their context and proximal relationships.

### **Research design**

The research design employed to guide this investigation was in the form of a case study. According to Babbie (2013), the purpose of a case study can be multi-functional as it can be descriptive in nature, but can also provide in-depth insight into a certain phenomenon. This was the case with the present research. The objective was to engage with grade nine learners in such a way that both they and I, as the researcher, gained an understanding of their career constructions and the influences on their career choices. The objective was addressed by assisting learners to engage in reflective practices and to introduce them to the concept of 'systematic thinking'. Furthermore, to gain insight into their career constructions and the influences on career development in order to improve the way in which career counselling is practiced in the specific context.

The participants were selected by using purposive sampling. This method of sampling is based on the researcher's knowledge about the characteristics of the population being



investigated, its elements and the purpose of the study (Bless, Higson-Smith & Kagee, 2006; Babbie, 2013). A small subset of participants was selected from the larger population (Babbie, 2013) by using specific criteria. The criteria which were used for selection were as follows:

Coloured learners in grade nine attending a low-income school

Learners of both genders to be included in the sample (if possible).

### **Methodology**

A qualitative methodology was used in this study. Merriam (2009) states that in qualitative research, the researcher has an interest in the way in which people interpret their experiences, construct their worlds, and the meaning that they assign to their experiences. In this study, the focus was thus on the learners' perceptions with regard to the influences on their career choices.

There are four key characteristics that are central to the nature of qualitative research (Merriam, 2009) which featured throughout the study, as part of the process to understand the learners' perceptions of the construct of career and the influences on career choices. The first characteristic is 'focus on meaning and understanding' which entails understanding a certain phenomenon from the research participant's perspective, thus gaining an insider's viewpoint. Second is the 'researcher as primary instrument' which implies that the researcher is the key instrument for the collection and analysis of data (Merriam, 2009). The third characteristic is qualitative research as an 'inductive process'. This process infers that the researcher collects data in order to develop concepts and hypotheses instead of testing hypothesis which is the case in positivist research (Merriam, 2009). 'Rich description' is the fourth characteristic and entails the end product consisting of a detailed description using words and pictures instead

of statistics to convey what the researcher has learned about a certain phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). A more detailed description of the methodology follows in Chapter 3.

### **Data collection**

The data in this study were collected by making use of a systems-based activity, a photovoice activity, a focus group, and individual interviews.

The eleven participants were identified by using purposive sampling with the assistance of a liaison teacher. Initially, the systems-based activity was conducted with the participants during two sessions, followed by the use of a photovoice activity. Photovoice is a participatory action research method involving the use of cameras by participants for a certain amount of time during which they are encouraged to photograph anything that they think might add significance to the study (Harley, 2012). The participants were first briefed on how this method worked and what it entailed. They then received training in the ethics involved in the method and afterwards were asked to take pictures of anything that depicted the concept of ‘career’ to them.

Following the photovoice, two focus group interviews were conducted with the participants during which they could provide feedback about their experiences with regard to the systems-based activity and the meanings attached to the photographs they had taken. Focus groups can be characterised as group interviews during which the participants discuss a specific topic that they are knowledgeable about (Stringer, 2007; Merriam, 2009). It is always unstructured or semi-structured (Bless et al., 2006), and give participants the opportunity to express their experiences and perspectives in their own way without restrictions from the interpretive framework that is derived from the researcher’s perspective, technical language or theoretical concepts (Stringer, 2007). It is important though that the researcher is well-prepared and that

the questions are well-thought through (Stringer, 2007), to ensure that the participants will be able and willing to share their perspectives and opinions.

After completing the focus group interviews, a number of the participants were asked to take part in individual interviews to clarify or gain more insight into concepts and/or issues that were mentioned in the focus group interviews (Merriam, 2009). It was furthermore used to do member-checking. The latter entails taking “your preliminary analysis back to some of the participants and ask[ing] whether your interpretation ‘rings true’” (Merriam, 2009, p.217). Interviews are similar to conversations, but at the same time require specialised skills.

Additionally, I conducted a career counselling session with all the grade nine learners during a life-orientation period, using the STF of career development as guide. This gave them an opportunity to engage in career counselling, and to gain insight into the different influences on their career choices.

After these processes were completed and I, the researcher, was satisfied that thick and accurate descriptions were obtained, the data were analysed.

### **Data analysis**

According to Henning et al. (2004, p.176), data analysis is “a complex process that involves moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between description and interpretation”. I, as the researcher, thus needed to make sense of the data by means of systematic analysis. The latter was accomplished by making use of thematic content analysis of the systems-based activity, transcripts of the focus group interviews and the individual interviews, and an explanation of the photos in order to gain an understanding of the construct of career and to identify enablers and barriers pertaining to career choices.

The objective was to obtain thick descriptions of the participants' career constructions and its influences on their career choices. The participants' thoughts, feelings, views and experiences consequently encapsulated the data that were gathered. In this specific study, the views of external influences such as teachers and parents were not considered, as the emphasis was primarily on the subjective experiences of the participants.

## **1.9. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

“All research levies a cost on society and on participants – even if they only contribute their time” (Allan, 2008, p.288). According to this author, research is only ethical if it is beneficial to society and the research participants. The first issue that therefore arises is to ensure that the proposed study is beneficial to society and more specifically, the participants themselves.

As the study involved human participants, the issue of human rights received priority. Allan (2008) identifies eight shared ethical principles in psychology that guided the study. These are respect for the dignity, moral and legal rights of people, justice, autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence, veracity, fidelity and responsibility. The most important of these ethical principles was obtaining approval from all the different role players involved in the research, and gaining informed consent from the participants and their parents, to ensure confidentiality (Rabie, 2013).

## **1.10. CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS**

### **Career**

The meaning and definition of career lacks conceptual clarity as it is understood differently and therefore results in a lack of common thinking in this area (Patton & McMahon, 2014). Traditional definitions have been criticised for being too narrow by only including professional work life which include advancement, and not including pre-vocational, post-vocational and other life roles (Patton & McMahon, 2014). Furthermore, the term ‘career’

has often been associated with the notion of choice and privilege, but according to Blustein (as cited in Patton & McMahon, 2014, p.5), many people work to merely survive and this may only result in the fulfilment of needs, “as opposed to personal and public identity and fulfilling a ‘calling’”. Also, according to Collin and Watts (as cited in Patton & McMahon, 2014), the construct of career is not something that is objective, but rather a concept that is subjectively constructed by individuals. It is therefore constructed “on the basis of their perceptions of, attitudes toward, and actions in relation to, career” (Patton & McMahon, 2014, p.5). The meaning of the term ‘career’ thus differs from individual to individual.

From the above discussion, it can be deduced that defining the term ‘career’ is a complex matter. For the purpose of this research, a workable definition was required, and career was thus defined as “the meaning of work (inside and outside the employment context) in relation to the individual’s life roles and relationships across the lifespan” (Stead & Watson, 2006, p.183).

### **Career development**

Traditionally, career development has been described as “a lifelong process of getting ready to choose, choosing, and typically continuing to make choices from among the many occupations available in our society” (Brown & Brooks, as cited in Patton & McMahon, 2014, p.7). This definition encapsulates the fact that career development happens across individuals’ lifespans, but at the same time portrays the message that the events are linear. The latter is problematic as Brown and Lent (as cited in Patton & McMahon, 2014) note that development may involve both forward and backwards movement. Viewing career development as a linear process is a very narrow viewpoint and fails to consider the impact of different influences, and the interplay between them, on career development.

According to Savickas (2000), there has been a cultural and social shift which had an influence on work life. The focus has shifted from how individuals fit into their occupations to how individuals fit work into their lives. The latter has an impact on the notion of career development as there has been a shift from talking about career development to talking about “development through work and other life roles” (Patton & McMahon, 2014, p.8).

Additionally, the changing workplace, globalisation and socioeconomic trends have also had an influence on career development as individuals are increasingly encouraged to expand their knowledge and skills in order to become more employable, instead of focussing on job security (Patton & McMahon, 2014). The aforementioned authors therefore suggest that career development is now seen as being multi-directional and multi-levelled.

### **Career Maturity**

The construct of career maturity forms an integral part of career psychology’s theory and practice (Hardin, Leong & Osipow, 2001). According to King (as cited in Naidoo, Bowman & Gerstein) career maturity can be defined as the readiness of an individual to make knowledgeable, age-appropriate career decisions, and to plan one’s career wisely according to the opportunities and constraints posed by society. Levinson, Ohler, Caswell and Kiewra (1998) describe it as the degree to which an individual has developed the necessary skills and knowledge to make career choices that are smart and realistic.

## **1.11. PRESENTATION OF THE STUDY**

The following is an outline of the research study and of the individual chapters:

### Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter provides an outline of the study and serves as a point of departure.

### Chapter 2: Theoretical framework and literature review

The focus in this chapter is on providing a relevant literature review with regard to career choices, as well as discussing the theoretical framework in detail.

### Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

In this chapter, the emphasis falls on the research methodology. An in-depth discussion of the research paradigm and research design is offered. Qualitative research, the research process, data collection methods, data analysis and data verification are discussed. The role of the researcher, as well as the ethical considerations are also explained.

### Chapter 4: Research findings and analysis

This chapter focuses on outlining and discussing the findings. The emerging themes and categories are discussed. These themes and categories are then used to address the research questions that were introduced in the first chapter.

### Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendations

In this concluding chapter, a summary of the research findings are provided. The chapter also includes a discussion of the limitations and offers recommendations for future career research in low-income schools.

## **1.12. CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the research study was introduced and the rationale, problem statement, research questions and objectives of the study were discussed. A brief discussion about the research design, the methodology, the data collection methods and data analysis, as well as the ethical considerations, was also included. Lastly, a conceptual analysis formed part of this chapter in order to orientate the reader.

In the next chapter, the literature covering the influences on career choices within career theory, the STF and the construct of community will be reviewed. A discussion about the development in career theories will also be included.



## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1. INTRODUCTION

Career counselling practices are at a crossroads due to drastic changes in people's lifestyles and career planning as a result of the technological advancement and information explosion of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Maree & Beck, 2004, p.80). At a global level, predicting the future has become increasingly difficult as well as identifying the factors that will co-determine career and life success (Maree, 2010b). The days when it was possible to determine and predict the traditional movement from school to work and then to retirement no longer exist (Peavy, as cited in Campbell & Ungar, 2004). It is now expected that individuals accept responsibility for their lives: "the 'stable' post-industrial world of work no longer exists, and security and stability in the workplace are no longer guaranteed" (Maree, as cited in Maree, 2010b). This is a result of the epistemological paradigm shift from modernism to postmodernism, which has brought about an increasing complexity. The changing nature of society thus resulted in the continual need for adaptation and the revision of theories that previously guided the practice of career counselling.

Furthermore, there has been a growing awareness of the influence of 'social capital'<sup>8</sup>, 'cultural capital'<sup>9</sup> and 'aspirational capital'<sup>10</sup> on individuals' abilities to make career decisions (Basit, 2012). In the past this has often been taken for granted, especially

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<sup>8</sup> The set of resources that forms part of an individual's family relations and community organisation and is of benefit for an individual's social and cognitive development (Coleman, as cited in Basit, 2012).

<sup>9</sup> Tramonte and Williams (2010) distinguish between two forms of cultural capital, namely static and dynamic cultural capital. Static cultural capital refers to a family's socioeconomic advantage, whilst dynamic cultural capital refers to the resources and experiences individuals can use to interact strategically in order to attain success.

<sup>10</sup> "An amalgam of positive thoughts, feelings, values, beliefs and actions that parents hold or undertake on behalf of their children" (Basit, 2012, p.140).

pertaining to career choice and the navigation of the world of work. Tramonte and Williams (2010) furthermore suggest that some schools promote certain linguistic structures, authority patterns and curricula. This means that learners from families with a higher socioeconomic status (SES) are accustomed to these ‘social arrangements’ and therefore are likely to adapt easier which, in turn, result in higher academic achievements compared to those learners from lower SES families (Tramonte & Williams, 2010, p.201). Consequently, learners with low SES backgrounds often lack the opportunity to pursue a career of choice. According to Prilleltensky and Stead (2012), little attention has been paid to the way in which marginalised people obtain access to work. The authors argue that most career theories are based on the assumption that at least some form of career choice is present. Not much emphasis has been placed on the way in which career psychology has contributed to oppression, “how this maintains the status quo and marginalises the people and the extent to which this may severely limit or remove individuals’ career choice options” (Prilleltensky & Stead, 2012). In short, the question rises whether adolescents in low SES contexts actually have a career choice at all, or if they have to accept just any job that may secure a livelihood, such as occasional and shift work.

The social and economic problems of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the field of career psychology are clear. It translates into an obvious domain namely human suffering and the working life (Blustein, McWirther & Perry, 2005). According to these authors, the reality of social inequities and injustices is most evident in the world of work. For the majority of the working force around the globe, work is seldom experienced as an opportunity in which individuals can express their intrinsic values, interests and talents (Blustein, Donkin, Newman & Wilson, as cited in Blustein, Kenna, Gill & Devoy, 2008). This is also true for most South Africans. Many people are willing to do any form of work to survive. This often

results in long working hours with a minimum amount of compensation and even less job satisfaction.

Blustein et al. (2008) note that in the field of career psychology, there is a gap with regard to an in-depth investigation into the lives of the people to whom work is merely a means of survival rather than an opportunity to express their personality and talent. Furthermore, little attention is paid to the impact that these circumstances may have on the overall wellbeing of such individuals. Blustein et al. (2008, p.295) infer that work is often viewed in terms of its functionality, but we often forget that “work is a central part of real life, a primary factor in the overall wellbeing of individuals, and a key to understanding human behaviour”. In order to develop effective career counselling theories and strategies, it is thus crucial to realise the important role that work plays in individuals’ lives and to take into account the effect that it has on them. As the researcher of this study, I agree with Blustein et al. (2008) in that if we really want to understand the full range of individuals’ lives, we need to investigate the complete experiences of all people, not only those who have choices and decisions available to them when it comes to selecting jobs and careers. This approach will ensure that we are acting in a socially just manner by being able to serve the specific needs of our clients (Patton & McMahon, 2014). If career psychologists fail to do this, we will be contributing to the maintenance of the status quo and preventing the voices of the majority to be heard.

In the past, the upholding of the status quo has happened too often as traditional approaches to career counselling were viewed as being suitable to all. However, Savickas (2007) proposes that transformation is needed in order to meet the requirements of postmodern living. He believes that narrative models and self-construction methods are needed for individuals to tell stories that are true to the self.

The purpose of this chapter is to firstly discuss the changing paradigms, a constructivist approach to career counselling, namely the STF, and by doing so, demonstrate the shortcomings of traditional psychology within a framework of critical community psychology. The specific focus will be on learners attending a low-income school that is often associated with having a low socio-economic status.

## **2.2. CHANGING WORLD VIEWS**

In this section, a brief overview will be provided of broad traditions that had an impact on career psychology and how careers were constructed. This will be followed by a discussion of the transition from modernism to postmodernism and the consequent development of constructivism.

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, modernism refers to an era that employed scientific methods of inquiry that was concerned with identifying objective truths and applying it to human behaviour. According to Gergen (as cited in McMahon & Watson, 2006), modernism is centred on four overarching assumptions. Firstly, it is possible to know the world. Secondly, there are universal principles that can be discovered and then applied to other people or institutions. Thirdly, an empirical methodology and a methodology that is value and ideology free are followed. Fourthly, and lastly, it is believed that research is progressive in its attempt to understand specific subjects. These assumptions had a profound impact on the way that the “self” was viewed (Watson & Kuit, 2007). According to these authors (2007), the individual was seen as having the capacity to be self-determining and autonomous. Science therefore aimed to ensure the removal of any contextual factors that will prevent the self to be expressed truly (Watson & Kuit, 2007).

The criticism of modernist views of career counselling and career behaviour, the changing nature of the world of work (Savickas, as cited in Watson & Kuit, 2007), the theoretical

changes in the broader discipline of psychology, as well as the global and technological changes in the world of work have led to the development of postmodernism (Watson & Kuit, 2007). Although this notion is true, McMahon and Watson (2006, p.27) caution that it is “over simplistic to oppose or contrast modernism with postmodernism”, as postmodernism refers to a period that followed modernism (McMahon & Watson, 2006). In short, there was a change in the way that people started to think about and understand the way in which knowledge is constructed.

This change in conception brought about criticism on models that were continually trying to explain an increasingly array of diverse individuals using one model, especially pertaining to multiculturalism (Watson & Kuit, 2007). The criticism led to the development of postmodern thinking. In this framework there is no one single truth in career psychology, but truth needs to be established in the contexts of different individuals (Watson & Kuit, 2007). According to Savickas (as cited in Watson & Kuit, 2007, p.76), this shift in perspective requires a movement away from the “grand narrative” grounded in a scientific approach, to a variety of local narratives that consider contextual factors. The latter allows for different perspectives in a situation. In postmodernism, there is thus a movement towards a more interpretive, relational, contextual and tentative understanding of career behaviour (Watson & Kuit, 2007). McMahon and Watson (2006) infer that there is thus a shift in focus from group studies, that characteristically report their findings statistically, towards the study of and focus on individuals.

### **2.3. CONSTRUCTIVISM**

Constructivism is a world view that developed in order to suit the demands and interests that emerged due to the postmodern turn in psychology (Botella, as cited in McMahon & Watson, 2006). According to constructivism, “the ‘reality’ of the world events is seen as constructed

from the inside out by the individual (that is, through the individual's own thinking and processing)" (Patton & McMahon, 2014). Therefore, truth is seen as something inherent to each individual, and that no two individuals' truths are the same.

According to Watson and McMahon (2009), constructivism favours qualitative and narrative approaches to career counselling. Characteristic to such approaches are recognising that individuals are active agents in the construction of their careers (McMahon & Watson, 2006). Clients therefore play a more active role and the counsellor facilitates the process of storytelling (McMahon & Watson, 2006). The process between client and counsellor is consequently a collaborative process (McMahon & Watson, 2006). In essence there is a shift in power from the psychologist as the expert to an equal partnership between client and counsellor. The relationship and the co-construction of meaning is emphasised during this process (McMahon, Patton & Watson, 2004). Particular attention is given to finding connections between several elements in clients' individual system of influences and their experiences during constructivist assessment and counselling, including the past, present and future (Maree, Ebersöhn & Molepo, 2006).

Savickas (as cited in McMahon et al., 2004) stated that career counsellors should deviate from trying to find the right fit based on scores, and rather focus on stories. The focus of narrative approaches is on specific local narratives rather than generalised understandings (Watson & McMahon, 2009). The meanings that clients attach to their career development are therefore valued (Watson & McMahon, 2009).

As mentioned in Section 1.1.2 of the introductory chapter, constructivism challenges the more scientific approaches of career theories and their failure to adequately take the influence of environmental factors into account (Watson & Stead, 2006). Watson and McMahon (2009) argue that for over a decade the discussion surrounding the adoption and adaptation of

predominantly westernised models of career counselling in South Africa has mostly been theoretical rather than applied. Watson and McMahon (2009), however, observe some change during recent years with the implementation of constructivist approaches in South Africa. “Constructivist approaches recognise the holistic and contextualised nature of career development” (Watson & McMahon, 2009). These approaches make it possible to understand specific contexts and systems. According to Perry (2009), it is not possible to accurately comprehend career counselling or apply it effectively without these understandings.

#### **2.4. THE SYSTEMS THEORY FRAMEWORK OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND CAREER RESEARCH**

The STF of career development (McMahon & Patton, 1995; Patton & McMahon, 1999; Patton & McMahon, 2014) is an example of a constructivist approach that provides a theoretical response to the challenges of the complex world of work (McMahon & Watson, 2006). It is an “integrative meta-framework based on systems theory” with the purpose of providing a basis for the different theories to be positioned and applied both in theory and practice (Patton & McMahon, 2014, p.240). The individual is the central focus, who has to construct his/her own understanding of career, with constructs of existing career theories remaining relevant as it applies to each individual (Patton & McMahon, 2014).

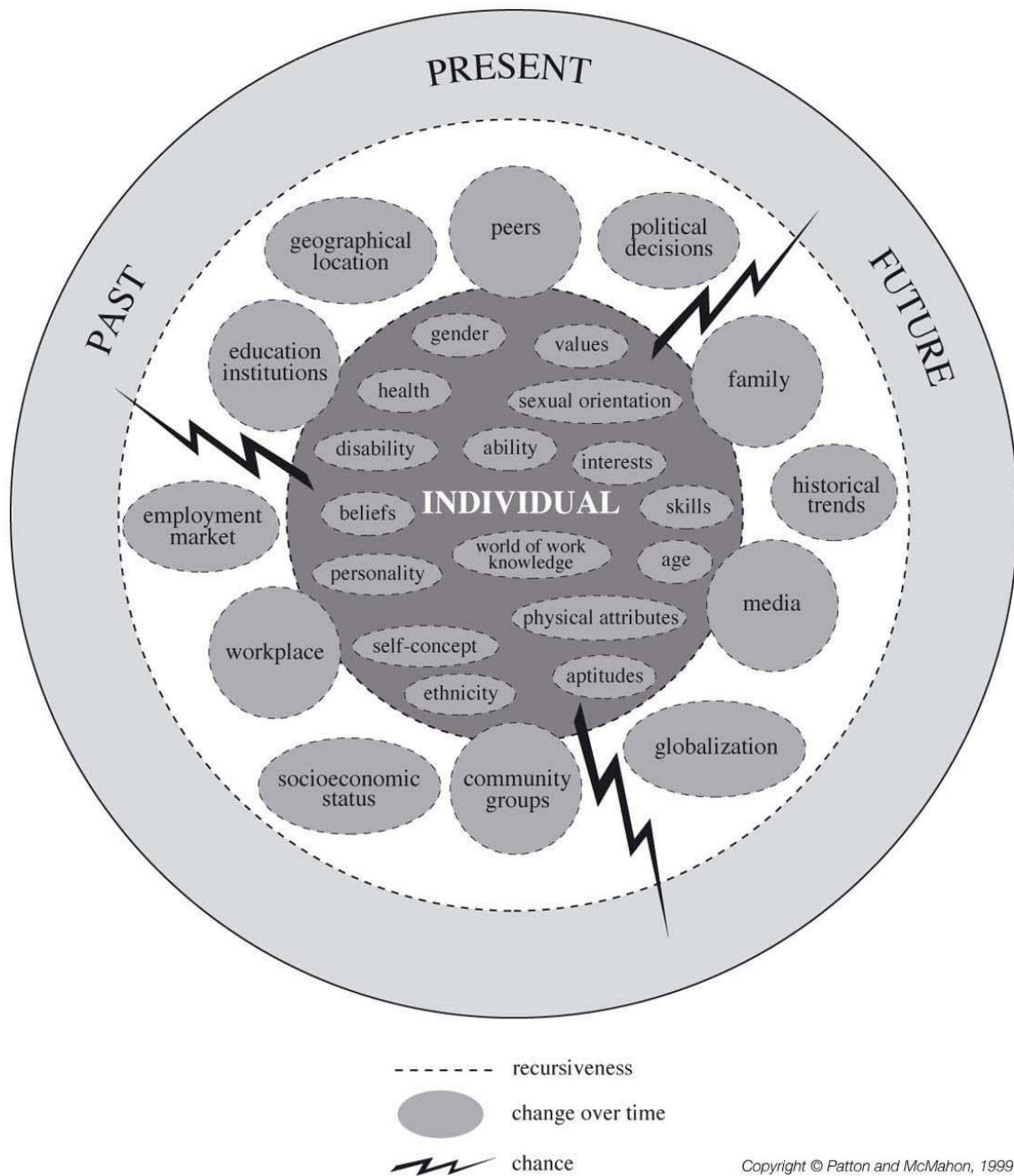
The aim of STF is to emphasise two general influences of career theory, namely content and process (Patton & McMahon, 2014). The STF provides a map that facilitates the process of career counselling and the co-construction of career stories (McMahon et al., 2004). The term ‘influence’ was deliberately chosen by the developers to describe intrapersonal and contextual factors relevant to the career development process as it is less static than ‘factors’, while it is also a dynamic term capable of reflecting both the content and process components

of career theory (McMahon et al., 2004; Patton & McMahon, 2014). According to Patton and McMahon (2014), the influence relates to the system in a number of different ways as it is seen as input. An individual can thus experience an influence as either a barrier or enabler in the process of career development (Patton & McMahon, 2014).

Content influences consist of intrapersonal variables, for example personality, gender, abilities and age, as well as contextual variables which consist of the context in which they live, including their social relations, organisations with whom they interact, and the environment in which they live (McMahon et al., 2004; McMahon & Watson, 2008). Within the framework these influences are represented as three interconnected systems, namely the individual system, the social system and the environmental-societal system (McMahon et al., 2004; Patton & McMahon, 2014). According to McMahon and Watson (2008), the STF makes provision for the interaction and changing nature of these influences and is thus conceptualised as a dynamic, open system.

The process influences comprise three different elements. The first one is referred to as recursive interaction within the individual, as well as between the individual and his or her context (McMahon et al., 2004; Patton & McMahon, 2014). The second process influence is known as change over time and “emphasises how recursive interaction contributes to the micro-process of career decision making and the macro-process of change over time” (McMahon et al., 2004, p.14). The third process influence is concerned with the impact of chance on career development (McMahon et al., 2014; McMahon & Watson, 2008; Patton & McMahon, 2014).





**Figure 2.1: The Systems Theory Framework of career development**

Source: Cited in Albien, 2013.

A detailed discussion of the different elements will be presented in order to demonstrate the different parts of a systems theory perspective on career development, the way in which these elements are interrelated, as well the way in which they contribute to the wholeness (Patton & McMahon, 2014).

### The individual system

The individual system (see Figure 2.1) comprises both intrapersonal influences that have been presented in existing career theories, such as personality, values, and interests, as well as those influences that have traditionally been under-represented in existing career theories, for example gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation (Patton & McMahon, 2014). All individuals have these intrapersonal influences, but they are different for each individual (Patton & McMahon, 2014). As is evident from Figure 2.1, the individual system forms the centre of the STF (McMahon & Watson, 2008; Patton & McMahon, 2014). McMahon and Watson (2008) point out that the intrapersonal influences are a representation of the subsystems of the individual system - inferring that as subsystems, they form part of a larger contextual system and do not function in isolation (McMahon & Watson, 2008; Patton & McMahon, 2014).

### The contextual system

The contextual system is separated into two smaller systems namely the social system and the environmental-societal system. Individuals are relational and they construct a sense of self through interaction with those around them (Patton & McMahon, 2014). Different life roles only exist due to the relationship that exists with the larger system (Patton & McMahon, 2014).

The social system represents the principal social influences with which individuals interact, such as family, educational institutions, peers and the media (McMahon & Watson, 2008; Patton & McMahon, 2014). Each of these social structures is also a source of beliefs, values and attitudes that may get taught to the individual in a diversity of ways (Patton & McMahon, 2014). The influence that these different groups can have on an individual can be long-lasting, but also change at different times throughout an individual's life as he/she move between social influences (Patton & McMahon, 2014).

As can be seen in Figure 2.1, the individual and the social systems function within the broader system, namely that of the society and the environment (McMahon & Watson, 2008; Patton & McMahon, 2014). This is known as the environmental-societal system. Although subsystems of the environmental-societal system, such as political decisions or globalisation, seem to have a less direct impact on the career development of the individual, it is none the less profound. In other words, it can be viewed as a ripple effect, where the slightest movement in the outer circle is felt by the smallest circle in the centre. Therefore, in the case of the STF, it will be the individual.

### Recursiveness

Recursiveness can be defined as the multi-directional and nonlinear interaction between the different influences. The result is that change in one part of the system will cause change in another part of the system (McMahon & Watson, 2008). Patton and McMahon (2014) are of the opinion that recursiveness includes many of the important aspects of influences, for example their being acausal, mutual, as well as including the ongoing relevance of the past, present and future. Each of the different systems and subsystems are open to influence and thus accessible to influence (Patton & McMahon, 2014). It is for this reason that each of the different systems and subsystems are bordered with a broken line in Figure 2.1 (Patton & McMahon, 2014). According to the latter authors, it is significant because as the nature of an influence changes so does the degree of influence.

### Change over time

It is well-known that individuals' career development happens throughout their whole life (Patton & McMahon, 2014). Ongoing decision-making is part of individuals' career development. The dimension of time, thus, refers to this process of ongoing decision-making and accounts for change over time (Patton & McMahon, 2014). As shown in in Figure 2.1,

time is presented as a circular drawing to emphasise the nonlinear nature of individuals' career development, as well as the fundamental role of the past, present and future influences (Patton et al., 2006; Patton & McMahon, 2014). Patton and McMahon (2014) believe that the road of career development is one of continuous development, and may include forward and backward movements, as well as movements that are multi-directional and multi-levelled. The reason for this is that the intricacy of influences, as presented in the STF individuals' career development, will not always be planned, predictable or logical (Patton et al., 2006).

### Chance

Events that are unforeseen or unpredictable, for example illness, accidents or chance event led to an employment opportunity, may significantly influence career development and is therefore acknowledged in the STF (McMahon & Watson, 2008; Patton & McMahon, 2014). In Figure 2.1, it is depicted as random flashes and according to Miller (1983, p.17), can be defined as “an unplanned event that measurably alters one's behaviour”.

According to the STF, emphasis is placed on the fact that chance occurs only when recognised by the individual observer (Patton & McMahon, 2014). This means that what is viewed as chance is subjective, because even if an event or occurrence appeared obvious from an outsider's perspective, the individual might not have been aware of it and thus experienced it as chance.

### Advantages of the Systems Theory Framework

Patton and McMahon (2014) list the following advantages of the STF. Firstly, it recognises the contribution of all career theories. Secondly, it places extant theories in the context of other theories and by doing so, demonstrates the way in which it is interconnected. Thirdly, the contribution of other disciplines to the development of career theory and practice is

recognised by the STF. Fourthly, the STF provides congruence between theory and practice, as well as new approaches to use in career practice. Fifthly, it emphasises the individual and not the theory resulting in the fact that it can be applicable at a macro level of theory analysis and also at a micro level of individual analysis. Sixthly, it encourages practitioners to make use of theory that is most relevant to their clients' needs instead of repeatedly working from the same theoretical orientation. Seventhly, and lastly, it includes theories derived from the logical positivist world view, as well as those derived from the constructivist world view and thus "offers a perspective that underlies the philosophy reflected in the move from the positivist approaches to constructivist approaches" (Patton & McMahon, 2014, p.263).

In these philosophical and ontological contexts, distinct fault lines were formed between what is regarded as a traditional mainstream career psychology and a more critical, questioning career psychology in the subdiscipline of career psychology. A brief description of these tendencies within career psychology follows next.

## **2.5. A CRITICAL DISCUSSION OF MAINSTREAM CAREER PSYCHOLOGY**

According to Savickas (as cited in Blustein et al., 2005), during the emergence of career psychology the focus was on the poor populations and the working class. This changed after World War II as the emphasis shifted to the working lives of those who were fairly well-educated and had some degree of choice in terms of their educational and career options (Brown, as cited in Blustein et al., 2008; Blustein et al., 2005). More specifically, career psychology was aimed at the white middle-class (Richardson, 1993). Richardson (1993, p.426) states that "there is almost no acknowledgment that poor and lower class populations, regardless of race or ethnicity, are almost totally absent from this literature". According to Watson and Stead (2002, p.26), the focus of traditional approaches is on how the self adjusts to the "social order rather than the other way around". The role of context is minimised and

intra-individual factors are emphasised (Watson & Stead, 2002). The latter authors argue that traditional approaches are reactive in nature rather than proactive. Counsellors using these approaches assisted clients to cope or adjust to adverse circumstances (Watson & Stead, 2002). In effect, these approaches thus never led to the questioning of the status quo but instead contributed to the upholding of it.

It is therefore evident that traditional career theories are exclusive in nature and that approaches are required that will consider the needs of the majority, especially those who have been marginalised in the past. This shift in focus, as mentioned above, was more severe in South Africa because of the disparity between the different ethnic groups, with whites being privileged above other ethnic groups. The majority of the population had little or no choice in terms of educational and career choice. Although the discrimination is not legalised any longer and is not as overt as before, the long-term effects are still seen and felt by many who were previously discriminated against.

South Africa is only one example of a country where traditional career psychology theories is not experienced by the majority. These theories are centred on the presumption that people have the opportunity to clarify their interests, research their options and modify their decisions (Blustein, 2001). Examples of such theories are the work of Parsons (1909), Holland (1959, 1985, 1997), Dawis and Lofquist's (1984) and Super (1953, 1957, 1990).

The focus of Holland's (1997) career theory is more on personal career counselling than on the contextual barriers that have had an influence on career choice (Watson & Stead, 2002). This approach often results in victim-blaming without considering the impact of structural factors such as discrimination, poverty and oppression (Watson & Stead, 2002).

Van Niekerk and Van Daalen (as cited in Stead & Watson, 1998) have specifically questioned whether Super's theory is relevant to the majority of South Africa, as his stages of

development do not reflect the career paths of most people. This is because of the fact that the majority do not have the opportunity to investigate and commit themselves to long-term careers. Stead and Watson (as cited in Stead & Watson, 1998) are of the opinion that developmental stages, self-concept, career maturity, and decision-making facets of Super's theory need to be revised and adjusted in order for it to be relevant to the majority of South Africans. These authors furthermore argue that contextual factors that are unstable and unpredictable continuously have an impact on the South African youth and it is therefore challenging to successfully apply Super's developmental stages. Super's (1990) prescriptive decision-making is also challenged by these authors as they believe that in today's society, information is seldom stable, manageable or always available.

## **2.6. CAREER PSYCHOLOGY WITH A COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY APPROACH**

As mentioned earlier, traditional psychology focuses on the individual based on the assumption that all individuals have the privilege of choice. The concept of oppression and discrimination is not accounted for. With community psychology, on the other hand, the discrepancy between describing a problem such as oppression and taking action to change the way in which people live daily, is a key focus. This is especially relevant in the field of career psychology. Blustein et al. (2005) assert that although the individual is important, lasting change will not be possible without addressing the larger issues of social change. In South Africa there are many non-governmental organisations that provide psychological services, more specific career guidance, to individuals, but large-scale change has not taken place. This can be attributed to the fact that there is no single body that has the exclusive obligation of "coordinating career information, advice and development services for the career development sector in general" (DHET, 2012a). The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) has taken a step in the right direction by developing the Framework for

Cooperation in the provision of Career Development Services in South Africa in 2012, but whether this framework will have the intended impact still remains to be seen.

In the field of community psychology, the aim is to conduct research that will be appropriate to the real-life experiences of research participants, especially those who are typically marginalised (Blustein et al., 2005). This may lead to the development of theories that not only explain behaviour superficially, but also may provide us with the opportunity to address oppressive environmental conditions, to take full advantage of job opportunities, and experience job satisfaction and economic well-being (Blustein et al., 2005). These authors (2005, p.158) suggest that the only way in which this can be achieved is by “creatively thinking about theory development that will be socially and economically inclusive”.

## **2.7. ADOLESCENCE AND THE IMPACT ON CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

For the purpose of this research the term adolescence is defined as the developmental phase between the ages of 13-18 years of age. According to Erikson’s psychosocial theory of development the main task during this stage is identity formation (Slee, Campbell & Spears, 2012). It is thus a period characterised by exploration in different areas, including career exploration.

According to Savickas (as cited in Skorikov, 2007) a career offers a procedure through which social integration and adaption can take place throughout the transition into adulthood. The developmental theorists are of opinion that the successful completion of a developmental task results in improved personal and social adjustment and success with later tasks (Erikson; Havighurst, as cited in Skorikov, 2007). In agreement with the latter, career development theory has suggested that improved mental health and a sense of well-being can be gained from successful career development (Herr; Vondracek; Lerner & Schuberg, as cited in Skorikov, 2007).



## **2.8. THE IMPACT OF A LOW SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS**

Immerwahl (as cited in Blustein et al., 2005) conducted a study among a group of Hispanic high school learners in the United States with regard to the successful transition from school to tertiary education. He established that even though the parents had high aspirations for their children to pursue tertiary education, they often still found it difficult because of the absence of support and information from other well-informed adults, inadequate preparation, as well as poor planning skills. Locally, Meyer and Braxton (2002) ascertained that the youth classified as having a low SES have demonstrated less success in terms of career development when compared to their counterparts in more affluent communities. Bonner and Segal (as cited in Seabi, Alexander, & Maite, 2010) suggest that a reason for the latter phenomenon could be because there are few opportunities for learners from low SES backgrounds to associate positive meanings with the value of work. This could be ascribed to little or no exposure to positive role models in their communities. Another trend that was noticed among learners from disadvantaged backgrounds is their high levels of unrealistic, non-market-related occupational aspirations, which in many cases can be attributed to sometimes misleading mass media broadcasting of occupational information (Watson, 2010).

## **2.9. SOCIAL JUSTICE AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA**

In career literature, 'social justice' is defined as those actions that contribute towards providing equal access to all people in a particular society or nation (O'Brien, 2001). According to McGarth and Akagee (2007), the level of inequality in terms of poverty in South Africa is the worst globally. Watson (2010) notes that the minority of the country lives in a developed, first-world context, whilst the majority of the country live in a developing, third-world context. This raises issues of social justice, which according to Singh (2009), are encountered by most developing countries. Children, thus, living in the same town, but in

different neighbourhoods have different opportunities in terms of access to resources. This often results in them not having the same opportunities with regard to reaching their full potential and contributing to the economic growth of the country (Singh, 2009). The different levels of access to resources include access to career counselling services.

Most of South Africa's social justice issues related to career development can be attributed to different macro-systemic factors (Watson, 2010). Watson (2010) provides an example of such a macro-systemic factor, namely the level of poverty that is prevalent in the country. Furthermore, Watson (2010) infers that the state of South Africa's present education system is another macro-systemic factor that affects career development. According to DeLannoy and Lake (as cited in Watson, 2010), strong evidence exists that learners with limited access to economic resources and who have parents with low levels of education, have a high prevalence to not enrol at school, or to drop-out early. Matsebatlela (as cited in Stead, 1996) points out that the career advice of many of these learners' parents is limited, and therefore they fail to encourage their children to attain a steady income and a social and professional status. Many of these parents, on the other hand, experienced difficulty in moving beyond their status as unskilled or semi-skilled labourers, as a result of the restrictions that the apartheid laws placed on their educational and career development (Stead, 1996). Consequently, both these parents and their children's career knowledge and financial resources are compromised. Jansen (as cited in Watson, 2010, p.25) also expresses concerns with regard to the standard of education, identifying "push-out factors' such as unpredictable time tables, erratic teaching, and low instructional time and 'pull-out factors' such as gangs, drugs and theft" as possible reasons.

Additionally, the way in which the field of psychology functioned in general, has had a negative impact on issues pertaining to social justice in South Africa (Watson, 2010). This,

too, is a macro-systemic factor that needs to be considered. Louw and Van Hoorn (1997) suggest that, in order for the field of psychology to be effective and legitimate, it has to coincide with the societal identity of the time. This is exactly the opposite approach that psychologists used during the apartheid years, namely to adopt a ‘decontextualised’ approach, and thereby upholding the status quo (Louw & Van Hoorn, 1997). This approach was also evident in the way in which career research and practice was conducted. Most of the research and approaches adopted were derived from westernised values and thus favoured the individual (Mkhize & Frizelle, 2000). No attention was given to the societal and institutional influences that had an impact on individuals’ career development (Mkhize & Frizelle, 2000). Career counselling therefore only served the needs of a minority of individuals (Watts, as cited in Watson, 2010), and failed to provide contextually relevant services to those who needed it the most. Even after the apartheid system ended and it was acknowledged that new indigenous approaches were needed, not much has changed. According to Watson (2010), the predominant approaches in career psychology in South Africa are still based on westernised, quantitative practices.

Watson (2010) argues that social justice issues in South African career psychology has mostly been redressed rather than addressed. One of the biggest contributing factors to this approach is that most commentary with regard to career psychology has come from policy statements and academic disciplines (Watson, 2010). Post-apartheid South Africa is known for its development of new policies to attempt to redress the historical divisions and inequalities (Watson, 2010). Although on paper these policies appear to bring about change and move South Africa forward into a brighter future, it often fails to lead to action. The reason being: that there is often a lack in resources and training. This frequently results in the implementation of policies in schools where resources are freely available, but not in schools where resources are scarce. Schools where resources are scarce are attended by the majority of

learners in the country. The reality thus is that more than twenty years after apartheid, “South African career guidance suggests that it [still] perpetuates historical divisions” (Watson, 2010, p.26).

A number of authors, for example Maree and Malepo (2006), Mkhize and Frizelle (2000), Stead and Watson (2006) and Watson (2006) have questioned the relevance of existing career theories and practices, as well as the way in which research has been conducted (Watson, 2010). These authors argue that there has been a call to change from a quantitative approach to a more qualitative approach in order to promote the inclusivity of career counselling. According to Watson and Stead (2002), no career theories that will serve the needs of the multicultural South Africa society have yet been developed. It is thus evident that South Africa is in dire need of approaches to psychology and more specifically, career psychology that are contextually relevant and will serve the needs of the majority of its citizens. Therefore, indigenous approaches are needed and some literature exists in this area, which will be discussed next.

## **2.10. INDIGENOUS APPROACHES TO CAREER PSYCHOLOGY**

Based on Western principles and approaches, career counselling in South Africa, is often not relevant to many clients as there is no room for incorporating and acknowledging their world views and values. This results in an experience that is often disconnected from people’s needs and expectations. Tebuhleni Nxumalo (as cited in Ebersöhn, 2012, p.800) posits that “the tools of our trade need to change so that they can be used for social justice too”. Our western way of thinking and practising often falls short as it does not consider everyday local knowledge and lacks a sense of cultural richness (Ebersöhn, 2012). In essence, by applying westernised approaches to psychology in South African contexts where these approaches are not applicable, we are inherently ignoring our clients’ needs. Instead of providing them with

tools to empower themselves, we are in fact adding to their feelings of disempowerment. According to Maree et al. (2006), career counselling in South Africa is still mostly characterised by privileged counsellors who facilitate the process to clients whose experiences have been marginalised. This can potentially result in silencing the clients during the process (Maree et al., 2006), and thus leaving their voices unheard.

There are many definitions of indigenous psychology, but they all express the same goal of “developing a scientific knowledge system that effectively reflects, describes, explains, or understands the psychological activities in their native contexts in terms of culturally derived categories and theories” (Leong & Pearce, 2014, p.68-69). Internationally, there has been a focus on the concept of ‘indigenous psychology’, but locally, although being written about frequently, it is still mostly a vision and no specific plan of action for its development has been established (Watson & Fouche, 2007). Ebersöhn (2012, p.802) poses several different questions as to why local psychologists have failed to take action in this regard. She came to the conclusion that we, as “scholars in a comfort zone of arguably ineffectual imported knowledge”, have not given recognition to locally generated knowledge. This approach resulted in us not systematically documenting and producing indigenous psychology. In looking at the current stance of psychology more than twenty years after apartheid, I tend to agree with Ebersöhn, as our approach to psychology has not changed drastically. Many of the South African youth are still assessed with the use of measures based on a westernised understanding of career development that were standardised for the population in which it originated (Maree & Molepo, 2007; Ebersöhn, 2012). These assessments mainly consist of psychometric tests, and Maree (2007) identified numerous shortcomings. These shortcomings include: 1) an over-reliance on psychometric testing by counsellors; 2) few of the psychometric tests were developed for the multicultural South African population and are not necessarily valid and reliable to the majority of the population; 3) the tests’ results are

often inflated and the career counsellor is seen as the expert whose opinion weighs the most, and this frequently results in the exclusion of clients from the decision-making process; 4) the client fails to take responsibility for decisions regarding his/her future careers and there is little evidence that the client engages in a process of self-exploration and development; 5) the client seldom gets the opportunity to explore and develop due to a lack of the dynamic interpretation of the test results; and 6) the majority of the clients are not English proficient while this is the main language of testing. It is thus evident that the results are frequently not a true reflection of the needs of clients. These results are then used to develop career interventions that are not “reconcilable with many South African clients’ ecologies of practice” (Ebersöhn, 2012, p.801). These career interventions thus serve no purpose to the youth as it is far removed from the realities which they face on a daily basis.

Ebersöhn (2012) offers several suggestions to work towards an indigenous psychology approach. Firstly, the concept of ‘career resilience’ needs to be considered. Westernised definitions of resilience fail to take the chronic environmental risks and the experience by the majority of South Africans into account (Ebersöhn, 2012). Ebersöhn (2012, p.803) is of the opinion that only when we gain an understanding of how people habitually adjust to “chronic poverty, lack of employment, limited skill sets, and barriers related to education”, we may gain insight into local knowledge with regard to career resilience.

Secondly, she questions the production of indigenous knowledge by asking: “Whose knowledge” is going to form the foundation of this indigenous knowledge? (Ebersöhn, 2012, p.806). To answer this question, Ebersöhn (2012) proposes that knowledge about career counselling will only be generated through the ‘lived’ experiences of the youth, clients, relevant stakeholders and elders of a community. They will own the knowledge and, in turn, it will be used by researchers, lecturers and trained professionals. This will result in a

partnership between career counsellors with an indigenous approach and their beneficiaries, such as future clients and future psychology trainees, in order to comprehend and record experiences of career development as experienced in everyday life. In this way, the use of positivist, mechanistic Western ideas and measuring instruments can be counteracted.

Indigenous approaches have the main aim of constructing an indigenous psychology that is specific to individual societies or specific cultures (Leong & Pearce, 2014). This, in turn, can be used to develop indigenous psychologies for increasingly larger populations which can be defined by different considerations such as ethnicity, and linguistic, religious and geographical locations (Long & Pearce, 2014). The combination of the lower-level indigenous psychologies will then ultimately lead to a universally-oriented or global psychology that is applicable to all individuals (Yang, as cited in Leong & Pearce, 2014). According to Kim and Berry (as cited in Leong & Pearce, 2014), the indigenous approach is not against the use of scientific methods nor does it exclude the use of certain methods. It also does not view any theoretical framework as more superior than another. In a multicultural country such as South Africa, the development of indigenous approaches in psychology is thus vital, as it is impossible to serve the needs of the majority using only one theoretical framework.

There has been much debate about the value of career psychology for people in marginalised contexts. However, there are a number of career studies that have been conducted with participants from low SES backgrounds and other contexts of marginalisation. These will be reviewed next.

## **2.11. A REVIEW OF STUDIES ON CAREER PLANNING IN LOW SOSIOECONOMIC CONTEXTS**

Both internationally and locally, career researchers have conducted studies of career planning and development in contexts where participants were classified as having a low SES. These studies add value to our understanding of the relevance of career psychology, as well as emphasise the importance of developing indigenous knowledge and methods of working. In doing a review of the different studies, the following themes emerged:

### The impact of career maturity

Watson and Van Aarde (1986) conducted a study among coloured adolescent high school learners. The population was specifically chosen as they were viewed as a marginalised group. The aim of the study was to determine the career maturity of South African coloured learners, as well as to explore the impact of grade, age, socioeconomic status, mental ability and gender on attitudinal career maturity (Watson & Van Aarde, 1986). The sample consisted of 300 participants, 60 learners from each grade (the latter representing 20 from each socioeconomic level). The authors used the Career Maturity Inventory Attitude Scale, a standardised group intelligence test to assess mental ability, and a biographical questionnaire to group the participants according to the different influences under investigation. The results showed that the participants from the lower socioeconomic group were, in terms of their attitudes, less career mature than learners from the higher socioeconomic group (Watson & Van Aarde, 1986).

Similarly, Martha Bernard-Phera found in 2000, that grade 12 learners from a disadvantaged context had a lower level of career maturity and career decision-making self-efficacy compared to learners from a normative high school sample in an affluent area. Her sample consisted of 202 black grade 12 learners who had to complete three different measuring



instruments namely a biographical questionnaire, a career development questionnaire and the Career Decision-making Self-efficacy Scale. After the scores were obtained, a comparison with the normative high school sample revealed significant differences.

No current studies could further be found that specifically focused on the career maturity of learners from low socioeconomic contexts, but the above studies highlight the importance of further research into this phenomenon, as well as developing intervention programmes that could develop learners' career maturity.

#### The role of social support

Ali, McWirther and Chronister (2005) examined the self-efficacy and vocational outcome expectations for adolescents of a lower SES in the United States of America (USA). The participants consisted of 114 ninth grades that had to complete a participant information questionnaire, which included their aspirations after high school, and the Four Factor Index of Social Status and the Vocational/Educational Self-efficacy Scale. The findings of this study indicated that support from influential siblings play a key role in the career development of adolescents from a lower SES, which may even have a stronger impact on their self-efficacy beliefs than the support of their parents (Ali et al., 2005). It was furthermore found that peer support contributed significantly to the participants' self-efficacy beliefs. The researchers also found that the participants who had greater support from their parents and peers also had a lower perception of barriers (Ali et al., 2005). These findings were consistent with those of Lent, Brown and Hackett (2000) who argue that career barriers may be over-emphasised in the literature and that attention should be focused on increasing social support rather than attempting to decrease the perception of barriers.

In a more recent study, Mhlongo and O'Neil (2013) investigated the role of family influences on the career decisions of black first-year students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal

(UKZN). The sample comprised 15 black first-year students, as it was assumed that due to the historical inequities they would have experienced a measure of disadvantage prior to enrolling at UKZN (Mhlongo & O’Neil, 2013). Data were generated by means of individual semi-structured interviews. A strong correlation was found between student career decisions, family socio-economic status and family support.

### The impact of context

Galvaan (2015, p.39) did a “critical ethnographic study investigating the factors shaping the occupational choices of marginalised young adolescents in a community in South Africa”. The participants consisted of seven young adolescents, their peer groups and an important adult in each of their lives. Photovoice methods, photo-elicitation interviews, observation and a semi-structured interview were employed to generate the data. This study confirmed that the constraints of context had an effect on the career choices that young adolescents thought were available to them. It was also evident that they had an instilled practical consciousness that reproduced limited patterns of career choices. Galvaan (2015, p.49) argues that “this reproduction contributed to re-creating social inequalities, perpetuating occupational injustices”.

## **2.12. CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this chapter was to provide a framework, based on existing literature, to formulate the research. Firstly, the shift in paradigms was outlined, which included an in-depth discussion of constructivism and more specifically, the STF of Career Development and Career Research. Secondly, a critical discussion with regard to mainstream career psychology followed, and thirdly, career psychology within a community psychology approach was examined. Indigenous approaches to career psychology were also explained, before the chapter concluded with a review of the different studies that were conducted on

career planning in low SES contexts. Chapter 3 will focus on the research design and methodology that guided this study.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY, DESIGN AND PROCESS

#### 3.1. INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of this study was to gain insight into the way in which learners attending a low-income school understood the Construct of career, and the influences on their career choices. This study provided an opportunity for grade nine learners to explore the influences on their career choices as well as voicing their views on the Construct of career. The study also provided a greater insight into how the Construct of career and career choice is experienced and understood in a diverse South African setting.

The following sub-questions, that were stated and listed in Chapter 1, guided the study:

- What are the constructions of career and the influences on career choices of coloured adolescents attending a low-income school?
  - What are the perceptions of careers of coloured adolescents who attend a low-income school?
  - What are the positive influences on career choices of coloured adolescents attending a low-income school?
  - What are the negative influences on career choices of coloured adolescents attending a low-income school?
  - What are the relative values attached to careers by coloured adolescents attending a low-income school?

This chapter consists of an explanation of the procedures that were followed to answer the research questions. This entailed using a specific research paradigm, research design and research methodology. Firstly, the features of qualitative research will be discussed.

Secondly, an explanation of the procedures used to identify the research setting and select the participants will follow. Thirdly, a description of the various data collection methods, the data analysis techniques and the data verification techniques will be given. Finally, a review of the different ethical considerations that were considered and adhered to during the study will be presented.

### **3.2. RESEARCH PARADIGM AND EXPOSITION**

The way in which individuals view the world and make sense of the things happening around them is shaped by their inherent belief system and the paradigms through which they perceive the world. Therefore, this research project was directly affected by the paradigm used to interpret the findings. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) define paradigms as comprehensive systems in which practice and thinking are interconnected and are used by researchers to determine the nature of inquiry along the three dimensions of ontology, epistemology and methodology.

Ontology refers to what is believed with regard to the nature of reality and what is possible to know about it (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006). Epistemology is concerned with the relationship between the researcher and what can be known, and methodology denotes the way in which the researcher attempts to investigate what they believe is possible to know (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006).

As mentioned in Section 1.8.1 of Chapter 1, an interpretive paradigm was used to direct this research study. According to the interpretive paradigm, ontology is ubiquitous and is socially constructed by people (Thomas, 2009). Therefore, the aim of interpretivism is to gain an understanding of how people think and form ideas about the world, as well as how their worlds are constructed (Thomas, 2009). It is therefore not possible to determine one single reality and impossible to completely comprehend the realities of individuals without

considering their context and proximal relationships. I align myself with this view as I consider it reductionistic to work from a perspective where reality is perceived as objective and applicable to all individuals and contexts. In terms of career counselling, this has frequently occurred, especially in South Africa, where quantitative westernised theories have been imposed on all citizens, regardless of their contexts.

Researchers assuming the above theories, measure all individuals, independent of their contexts, according to the same criteria. By doing this, researchers are ultimately only subjecting individuals involved in a study to their subjective view on reality and imposing it on them as the only truth. The epistemological view of an interpretive paradigm provides the researcher with the opportunity to take an emphatic position and to be an observer of what the participants experience as reality (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006) to gain an in-depth understanding.

Furthermore, when you remove individuals from their context for the purpose of studying them, it is not possible to obtain a true reflection of the phenomenon being investigated, leaving the researcher with skewed perceptions instead. This view aligns itself with the methodological view of the interpretive paradigm which is based on interaction, interpretation and is qualitative in nature (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006). I agree with Merriam (1998, p.6) when she asserts that “meaning is embedded in people’s experiences and that this meaning is mediated through the investigators’ own perceptions”.

### **3.3. RESEARCH DESIGN**

A research design is “a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of the research” (Durrheim, 2006, p.34). It is consequently “a plan to ensure that sound conclusions are reached” (Durrheim,

2006, p.36). In short, it assists the researcher to develop sound methodologies to ensure that the research question is answered.

Qualitative research designs are “more open, fluid, and changeable, and are not defined purely in technical terms” (Durrheim, 2006, p.35). According to the latter author, research is therefore an iterative process, meaning that it requires an approach that is flexible and non-sequential. It is thus possible for the research design to change once the research is being conducted (Durrheim, 2006). This implies that pragmatic considerations also influence the final research design and not only technical considerations (Durrheim, 2006).

The research design that was employed in order to guide this investigation was a qualitative case study. According to Yin (2014, p.16), a case study can be defined as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident”. The aim of a case study is to identify patterns, relationships and dynamics that justify the inquiry process (Henning et al., 2004). According to Stake (2005), the research process about the case is as important as the research outcome.

Merriam (2009) notes that when designing a case study, a distinction is made between types and functions. Stake (2005) differentiates between three types of case studies, namely intrinsic case studies, instrumental case studies and multiple case studies. Intrinsic case studies are used when the researcher is interested in the specific case itself and is not interested in making generalisations (Merriam, 2009; Silverman, 2013). Instrumental case studies, however, are used when the researcher is interested in gaining insight into a specific phenomenon (Stake, 2005). The case itself plays a secondary role, with the purpose of assisting researchers to gain an understanding of a phenomenon (Stake, 2005). When

researchers are not interested in a specific case and studies a number of cases jointly, it is referred to as collective case studies (Stake, 2005).

During the research process, I made use of a collective case study as my unit of analysis involved eleven single, instrumental case studies being studied together with the aim of gaining an understanding of the way that these different cases (i.e. eleven grade nine learners attending a low-income school) viewed the construct of career as well as the influences that had an impact on their career choices. The reason that these learners were chosen is because it is believed that an in-depth understanding of their experiences and understanding would in turn lead to a better insight into and theorising of a larger collection of similar cases (Stake, 2005).

To conclude: A research design is “a plan for action” (Durrheim, 2006, p.57) which guides the research process throughout. It assists us with answering questions pertaining to the phenomenon under investigation in order to enlighten our understanding.

### **3.4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

According to (Henning et al., 2004, p.36), methodology refers to “the coherent group of methods that complement one another and that have the ‘goodness of fit’ to deliver data and findings that will reflect the research question and suit the research purpose”. In order to answer the primary research question as well as the sub-questions, I decided to employ a qualitative methodology, because qualitative research is concerned with the way in which individuals experience their worlds and the meanings that they attach to these experiences (Merriam, 2009). The aim of the present research was thus to gain insight into how the participants constructed meaning with regard to Construct of career and the influences on career choices.



## **Qualitative research**

Qualitative research is concerned with how and why things happen, and not merely what happens (Henning et al., 2004). The purpose of qualitative research is to gain an understanding and explain the phenomenon being studied in an argumentative way, using generated data and literature as evidence (Henning et al., 2004). Flick (as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) states that qualitative research has a multi-method focus, in order to secure a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Qualitative research contains a number of characteristics. The first characteristic as identified by Merriam (2009, p.14), is the “focus on meaning and understanding”. This guided me, as the researcher, to be sensitive towards understanding the career constructions and influences on career choices from the participants’ perspectives and not my own. I thus made use of an insider’s perspective (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

The second characteristic is the “researcher as primary instrument” (Merriam, 2009, p.15). According to Terre Blanche et al. (2006), this is especially the case during the data collection and analysis processes. What happens to the data will be determined by the understanding, knowledge and expertise of the researcher (Henning et al., 2004). There are many advantages to this, such as the fact that the researcher has the ability to immediately respond and adapt; to expand his or her understanding by using both verbal and non-verbal communication; to instantly process data; to clarify and summarise materials; to ask participants about the accuracy of interpretations, and to explore ambiguous responses (Merriam, 2009). Subjectivity also needs to be considered as it is impossible for the researcher to remain value-neutral. However, Terre Blanche et al. (2006, p.277) believe that subjectivity should not be viewed as the “enemy of truth”, but rather as a means through which empathetic understanding can be gained.

Qualitative research as an “inductive process” is the third characteristic (Merriam, 2009, p.15). This process refers to the fact that during this type of research researchers often construct ideas, theories and hypotheses using observations and intuitive understandings that was generated whilst busy with the field work (Merriam, 2009).

Fourthly, qualitative research is characterised by having a “rich description” (Merriam, 2009, p.16). A rich description refers to the fact that the researcher uses the data that were generated to see the bigger picture (Henning et al., 2004) by using pictures and words (Merriam, 2009). Throughout the current study, I was therefore conscious of the fact that I had to provide the participants with the opportunity to share their ideas, views and experiences in order for me to use it to develop a final product that would provide a rich description of the Construct of career and the influences on career choices.

Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p.6) identified a fifth characteristic namely “qualitative research as a site of multiple interpretive practices”. This means that qualitative research does not favour one method over another (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). There are no distinct methods or practices that exclusively belong to qualitative research, thus making it possible to use in different disciplines (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). It therefore also allows the researcher the freedom to investigate a phenomenon without being constricted by rigorous and prescriptive guidelines.

The use of a qualitative methodology, consequently, allowed me, the researcher, as the primary instrument to engage in an inductive process concerning the participants’ understandings and experiences with regard to their career constructions and the influences on their career choices. This was realised by using multiple methods to produce rich descriptions with the main aim of gaining a better understanding.

### **3.5. THE RESEARCH SETTING**

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the school is situated in a small, historically coloured, Afrikaans-speaking community (Carolissen et al., 2012). According to the National Norms and Standards of School Funding, the school is classified as a low-income school (Department of Education, 1998). It is also listed as a quintile two school which exempts all the learners attending from having to pay school fees.

At the time of the study, the school had approximately 819 learners. There were 185 grade nine learners who were divided into four classes, with approximately 40-45 learners per class. Ninety percent of these learners' home language was Afrikaans and the remaining 10 per cent indicated their home language as isiXhosa. The staff consisted of 22 educators appointed by the WCED, and one educator appointed by the school's governing body.

### **3.6. SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS**

The research question and research design determined the type of sampling that was used during this investigation (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). As the chosen design was a case study, thus focusing on a specific bounded system, it was decided to use purposive sampling.

Purposive sampling is appropriate when knowledge about a population, its elements and the purpose of the study is known (Babbie, 2011). It is thus suitable to use when the researcher wants to explain a certain phenomenon with regard to a specific case (Silverman, 2013).

The sample size was determined by the purpose of the study, the resources as well as the time that was available (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002). According to Patton (2002), the strength of purposive sampling is in selecting cases that are information-rich in order to study them in-depth. In other words, the focus during this study was not on quantity, but rather on the

quality of information, so that I, as the researcher, could learn significantly from each participant. I therefore decided to select only eleven participants for the study.

In order to choose the site and participants, I had to stipulate the necessary selection criteria by engaging in a process of purposive sampling (Merriam, 2009). This assisted me in identifying a small group from the population as a whole (Babbie, 2011). As the aim of the study was to gain insight into the understanding of the construct of career among coloured adolescents attending a low-income school, as well as the influences on their career choices, I decided on the following selection criteria:

- Coloured learners in grade nine attending a low-income school; and
- Learners of both gender were to be included in the sample (if possible).

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, grade nine learners were specifically chosen, as the subject *Life Orientation's* main focus is on career education. This is due to the fact that learners have to make subject choices at the end of their grade nine year, which influences the options available to them upon completion matric.

The school involved in the study was also selected according to a specific criterion. The school was the only school exempted from school fees in the town in which the research was conducted and thus met the criterion of being a low-income school.

After gaining ethical clearances from both the Research Ethics Committee (REC) of the University of Stellenbosch (see Appendix A), and the Research Department of the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) (see Appendix B), I approached the principal of the school to obtain his written informed consent (see Appendix C) for the school to be

voluntarily involved. Once his permission was obtained, I was put in contact with a liaison teacher who assisted me in identifying the participants.

I informed the liaison teacher about the purpose of the research, as well as the selection criteria and the procedures involved. He then employed the help of the grade nine life orientation teacher with the selection of the participants. In order to ensure the anonymity of the participants, the teachers were asked to manage their assistance with the study with discretion and confidentiality (Rabie, 2013). The two teachers subsequently identified eleven grade nine learners who met the selection criteria. The sample was therefore a convenience sample.

The liaison teacher approached the learners, informing them about the study and asked them whether they would be willing to participate voluntarily. I then met with the learners and explained the purpose, aims and procedures of the research study to them. I gave each learner a consent form (see Appendix D) that needed to be completed by their parents or guardians, an assent form (see Appendix E) and a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix F) that needed to be completed by the learners themselves. (The permission letter to the principal and the consent and assent forms explaining the research process differed from the actual process that was followed due to logistical changes within the research setting.) After the meeting with the learners, I phoned each of their parents in order to explain the purposes of the research project as well as the procedures involved, and also asked them to complete the written consent form. Obtaining consent in this way was a viable alternative due to a lack of transport for the learners' parents to attend a meeting at the school.

### **3.7. DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

Data can be defined as information that is gathered from the environment (Merriam, 2009, p.85). According to Dey (as cited in Merriam, 2009), the two processes that are always

involved in data collection are the selection of the data, and the techniques used for the data collection. This in turn, will determine what comprised as data during the research. My theoretical framework, research problem and purpose of the investigation, as well as the sample selected, influenced what was considered as data (Merriam, 2009).

### **Documents**

In case study research, documents should form an essential part of the data collection plan (Yin, 2014). Merriam (2009) distinguishes between different types of documents, namely public records, popular culture records, visual documents and personal documents. Public records can be defined as those documents that are concerned with keeping ongoing records of a society's actions (Merriam, 2009). Materials that have the purpose of entertaining, informing and persuading the public is known as popular culture records, whereas photography, film and video are known as visual material. Personal documents refer to "any first-person narrative that describes an individual's actions, experiences and beliefs" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p.13).

Personal documents were used as a method of data collection. According to Merriam (2009), the use of such documents results in subjective data, which in the case of this study, was particularly useful and insightful.

### *Systems-based activity*

As described in Chapter two, one of the theoretical frameworks that was drawn on during this study, was the STF of career development. According to Patton and it is possible for individuals to make visual presentations of the constellation of influences that connects with their career situation (McMahon et al., 2005c). This led to the development of a qualitative assessment tool, namely the MSCI (McMahon et al., 2005c). According to the latter authors, the MSCI was developed because of the need for assessment tools that are culture-fair, the

need to take contextual information into account, the need for the more frequent use of qualitative assessment, as well as the complimentary use of qualitative and quantitative assessments.

The MSCI, through the narration of their career stories, assists individuals to fill in the details and reality of their career development (McMahon & Watson, 2008). Individuals also have the opportunity to visually present, elaborate and reflect on the constellation of influences on their career development, making use of a step-by-step process (McMahon & Watson, 2008). The MSCI thus provides individuals with the opportunity to develop their own personalised STF, which emphasises the distinctiveness and totality of individuals, and assists counsellors to gain an understanding into their clients as well as the interconnectedness of the different systematic influences. In this research study, the MSCI was used as a template to develop a context-appropriate activity that allowed the participants to critically consider the different influences on career development in their various systems, and to present it in a visual way (see Appendix G).

This process was collaborative in nature and the participants played an active role during the process of constructing meaning (McMahon et al., 2005c; McMahon & Watson, 2008). My role as researcher was labour-intensive as I had to take on a supportive role throughout, and ensure that I debriefed the participants effectively so that learning was prompted at the end of the process (Goldman, as cited in McMahon et al., 2008). In short, both the participants and myself had equal responsibility in this process of constructing meaning with regard to the influences on their career choices.

### *Photovoice*

The photovoice method for research is based on the assumption that people themselves are the ones whom can best identify and represent their own realities (Wang & Burris, as cited in

Harley, 2012). Photovoice aims to promote knowledge and dialogue about vital issues (Joubert, 2012). Both Hergenrather, Rhodes, Cowan, Bardhoshi, and Pula (2009) and Catalini and Minkler (2010) conducted a systematic review of the literature on this method and found that it is possible to use this method in different countries, to address a diverse range of issues with participants of all ages. This approach provides participants, whose voices often go unheard due to political and social disempowerment, the opportunity to represent their understandings of their social world through photographs that they take and select (Suffla, Kaminer & Bawa, 2012). According to Minkler and Wallerstein (as cited in Suffla et al., 2012, p.518), photovoice contains several principles of community-based participatory action research, namely “community empowerment and capacity building, partnership co-learning between academic and community partners, and balancing research, action and influence on policy-making”.

As pointed out in Section 8.3.2 of Chapter 1, this method involved providing the participants with cameras for a period of a week during which they were asked to take photos of anything that depicted the Construct of career and/or the influences on their career choices (Harley, 2012). Afterwards, these photos were developed and during a focus group interview, participants had an opportunity to talk about the photographs that they had taken (Harley, 2012; Joubert, 2012). By talking about the photographs, it assisted the participants to record and reflect on what they viewed as the most important information. Thereafter, they entered into a dialogue between themselves and me, as the researcher (Harley, 2012). During this research study, the latter was done, but the original plan had to be adjusted, as the participants were initially provided with disposable cameras, but were unable to take recognisable photos with these. The timeline thus had to be adapted and another opportunity was made available in which the participants were provided with digital cameras in the form of cell phones and cameras. These attempts were successful. After the cameras were collected, the photos were



developed, and a focus group interview was conducted in which the participants had the opportunity to discuss their photos and the reasons for taking them. As the study progressed, some of the learners withdrew for different reasons, and eventually only six of the original learners participated in the photovoice activity.

Photovoice favours a merged approach and challenges the current dominance of a single scientific discourse (Suffla et al., 2012). The merged approach includes indigenous theories, practices and also “a set of principles and assumptions that privilege community voice” (Suffla et al., 2012, p.518). In essence, the photovoice approach gave participants the opportunity to contribute to their own knowledge and experiences regarding their career development. This may contribute to gaining indigenous knowledge that can be used to develop indigenous theories and approaches in the future.

### **Interviews**

“A qualitative interview is an interaction between an interviewer and a respondent in which the interviewer has a general plan of inquiry, including the topics to be covered, but not a set of questions that must be asked with particular words and in a particular order” (Babbie, 2010, p.318). Given this description of a qualitative interview, as the researcher, I needed to know what I wanted to know before I started with the interviewing process.

At the same time, being a qualitative researcher, I also needed a clear purpose and direction in mind. Babbie (2010) contends that the ability to be flexible is a distinct strength of field research. I was therefore not able to merely ask a pre-established set of questions and write down the answers (Babbie, 2010). Instead, I had to ask a question, listen carefully, interpret its meaning and thereafter asked a follow-up question, which led the participants to dig deeper into their previous answers, or directed them to a more relevant area of the inquiry process (Babbie, 2010).

During an interview, it is essential to not only pay attention to what the participants communicate about their experiences, feelings and thoughts, but also to engage with the data in an insightful manner (Henning et al., 2004). I needed to pay attention to the way in which the participants communicated their thoughts, as well as the way in which their cultural knowledge and societal role were presented during the interview (Henning et al., 2004).

There are many different types of interviews that are mainly influenced by the theoretical positioning of the researcher (Merriam, 2009). As my research design was a collective case study involving eleven participants, I decided to make use of a focus group interview and individual interviews with selected participants.

#### *Focus group interview*

A focus group is a general term used for interviewing a group of people (Kelly, 2006a). The participants are selected on the basis of certain characteristics they share that are relevant to the research question (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). A focus group interview should take place in a supportive environment, with focused questions in order to encourage discussion and the expression of different points of views and opinions with a group of participants preferably not bigger than ten (Merriam, 2009; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). In terms of the current study, all the participants were coloured adolescents, attending a low-income school, and had to engage with the construct of career and the influences on their career choices, as they were about to make subject choices that would have an impact on their future career opportunities.

According to Kelly (2006a), a focus group interview allows the researcher to gain insight into intersubjective experiences. It furthermore allows the researcher to understand the differences between the participants that were initially thought of as a homogenous group (Kelly, 2006a).

A constructivist perspective underlies a focus group interview, as the data are collected in social settings where there is interaction between the participants (Merriam, 2009). According to Marshall and Rossman (2011), social interaction contributes to the development of attitudes and beliefs. Before forming their own opinions and understandings, people are more likely to first listen to those people around them (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, Babbie & Mouton, 2001). The participants' views were therefore likely to be influenced by what they heard the other participants say. In line with Marshall and Rossman's (2011) findings, this social interaction was indeed a strength that provided me, the researcher, with the opportunity to study the participants in a natural setting, as opposed to artificial experimental circumstances. It is also more relaxed than a one-to-one interview, because of the division of attention and focus between the participants. A further strength of a focus group interview is that it has high face validity (Babbie, 2011; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). According to Marshall and Rossman (2011), this can be attributed to the fact that this method is easily understandable and makes member-checking immediately possible thus increasing the validity of the study.

Although a focus group interview has many benefits, it is important to be aware of its challenges. Marshall and Rossman (2011) argue that the biggest challenge is the difference in power between the researcher and the research participants. Throughout the focus group I had to be intentionally aware of the power dynamics and to facilitate well (Marshall & Rossman, 2011), to avoid interference with the data collection process. A further challenge during a focus group interview is that the researcher often has less control than during an individual interview (Krueger, as cited in Babbie, 2011; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). These authors also argue that data generated from focus groups are usually difficult to analyse, as the context is vital in understanding the participants' comments and the facilitators need to be well-trained. Being aware of these challenges helped me to conduct the focus group

interview with greater caution to make sure that I generated rich data. Additionally, my experience as a trainee psychologist, as well as a researcher, enabled me to pay particular attention to the group dynamics.

The focus group was initially scheduled to happen after both the systems-based and photovoice activities were completed and the photos developed. However, due to the fact that the participants had a second opportunity to take photos, the focus group was divided into two groups and only those learners that were involved with the photos formed part of the second focus group. Specific questions for both these focus groups were developed to facilitate discussion, and to elicit more rich and meaningful data, especially related to the photographs (see Appendix H). During the course of the both focus groups, I encouraged the participants to spontaneously discuss and share their understandings and views about careers and the influences on their career choices. I emphasised the value of anonymity, confidentiality and mutual respect (Rabie, 2013). Participants that were less verbal were encouraged to equally take part in the discussion and opportunities were provided to clarify misinterpretations (Rabie, 2013).

#### *Individual interviews*

According to Kelly (2006a), individual interviews allow the researcher to engage with the participant in a more natural way. It creates a space in which it is possible to get to know the participant on a more personal level and to gain an understanding of the way in which he or she thinks and feels (Kelly, 2006a). The interview ranges from deep feelings and lived experiences to stories of an individual or mere opinions and facts (Henning et al., 2011). Research participants, especially adolescents, are more willing to share intimate thoughts and feelings in a one-to-one situation than when participating in a group conversation. In essence, an individual interview is a conversation, but with a specific goal in mind.

It is a combined creation between the researcher and the participant (Newman, 2011). The researcher and the participant thus co-construct meaning. “Members are active participants whose insights, feelings, and cooperation are essential parts of a discussion process that reveals subjective meanings” (Neuman, 2011, p.449).

The main critique against the individual interview is the fact that it is impossible to conduct an interview that is completely neutral (Henning et al., 2011). The latter authors argue that when two people interact, a subtext within a context is already created. This means that by just being in the same room, a certain relationship is formed between two people that will have an influence on their response patterns. In the context of the current research, there was a certain degree of power imbalance, as I was seen as being senior and more knowledgeable as the learners.

After the completion of the systems-based activity, the focus group interview and the photovoice activity, I decided that a number of participants’ career stories needed further investigation. I therefore asked four of the participants to take part in an individual interview in order to gain in-depth insight into the way in which they viewed the Construct of career, as well as the influences on their career choices.

### **3.8. GRADE NINE INTERVENTION**

It was decided to do a brief career counselling intervention with all the grade nine learners, to ensure that not only the research participants benefitted from the career counselling practices during the research. This intervention was conducted with each of the four grade nine classes during one of their life orientation periods.

During this session, the learners were asked about a dream for their life, as well as possible careers that they were considering. It was followed by a discussion that there are different

influences on a person's career choices. Using the STF of career development, we identified the different influences, firstly intrinsically and thereafter extrinsically. I wrote these influences on the board and each learner had the opportunity to identify the unique influences on their life (see Appendix I). Afterwards, we discussed the importance of being aware of the impact of these influences when making career decisions.

### **3.9. DATA ANALYSIS**

The aim of data analysis is to identify patterns that direct us to theoretical understandings of social life (Babbie, 2011). In qualitative research, data collection and analysis is a simultaneous process (Merriam, 2009; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Silverman, 2013), while it is also a continuing, developing and non-linear process (Henning et al., 2004) in which data are converted to findings (Patton, 2002). Data analysis can take place during both the data collection and analysis phases of research. The data analysis process that was followed in the study is described next.

During the interviews, I observed the participants' body language, interactions, and facial expressions in addition to the content of what they were saying. I also started to note down these responses and some of the themes that were beginning to emerge. This process continued during my rereading of the transcripts after I had received them from the transcriber. Additionally I made a table containing the participants' responses with regards to the systems-based activity (see Appendix K). Thereafter, I coded the transcripts from the focus group interviews, individual interviews and the responses from the systems-based activity by highlighting the various sections in different colours that seemed to belong together. Terre Blanche et al. (2006) suggest that this is an effective way to start the process of making sense of the data.

Next I identified categories and themes within cases and across cases (see appendices L and M). I engaged in what Merriam (2009) refers to as inductive and comparative data analysis using the constant comparative method. This allowed me to compare different incidents in the same data set or in another set (Merriam, 2009). My knowledge about the theoretical framework of the study assisted me in the identification process (Henning et al., 2004). After I was satisfied that each theme represented “a chunk of reality”, I used it to formulate my research findings (Henning et al., 2004, p.107).

### **3.10. DATA VERIFICATION**

It is important that all research conducted produces valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner (Merriam, 2009). According to the latter author, many strategies can be employed to improve the reliability and validity of qualitative studies. In this study I ensured reliability and validity by using a model developed by Lincoln and Guba (as cited in Merriam, 2009). This model consists of four sections namely trustworthiness and credibility, reliability and dependability, conformability, and fourthly, generalisability and transferability.

#### **Trustworthiness and credibility**

Trustworthiness and credibility can be compared to internal validity (Merriam, 2009). Trustworthiness and credibility are concerned with whether the findings accurately record what really is there. According to Lincoln and Guba (as cited in Merriam, 2009), credibility considers whether the findings are credible in view of the data that were collected. There are different procedures that can be used to ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of a study (Merriam, 2009; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). During this study, I made use of triangulation, member-checking and peer examination for credibility.

### *Triangulation*

Mouton and Marais (1990) define triangulation as the use of different methods of data collection to ensure that the observations are reliable. There are many forms of triangulation, but the one that was chosen for this study was methodological triangulation (Patton, 2002). This form of triangulation refers to making use of various methods to investigate a certain phenomenon (Kelly, 2006b). It allows the researcher to cross-check the credibility of the data by using various sources.

During this study, I employed this procedure by means of multiple methods of data collection, such as written texts, visual images and a focus group interview. This made it possible to cross-check the data for emerging themes or alternative explanations and confirming credibility (Patton, 2002).

### *Member-checking*

Member-checking refers to obtaining feedback from the participants about the data and the way in which it was interpreted (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). According to Maxwell (2005), this is an essential procedure to avoid misinterpreting what participants mean in terms of what they say and do, and it also provides the researcher with the opportunity to reflect on his/her own biases and misunderstandings of what has been observed.

I thus implemented this strategy by constructing new questions based on my findings and asked a few of the participants these questions to ascertain whether or not my interpretations rang true (Merriam, 2009).

### *Peer examination*

This strategy to obtain credibility and trustworthiness involves asking a knowledgeable peer to read through some of the raw data to determine whether one's findings are credible (Merriam, 2009). For the purpose of this research, a fellow master's student and my research



supervisors were approached to scan the raw data to ascertain whether the findings were trustworthy.

### **Reliability and dependability**

Reliability is a term used in traditional research to refer to the extent to which findings can be replicated (Merriam, 2009). Reliability is problematic in the social sciences because human behaviour is not static (Merriam, 2009). It is therefore not possible to replicate results and the focus is thus on determining if the results are consistent with the collected data (Merriam, 2009). Guba and Lincoln (1985) were the first researchers to conceptualise the term ‘dependability’. Dependability refers to the degree to which the readers are convinced that the findings were made as proposed by the researcher (Van der Riet & Durrheim, 2006).

### *Audit trail*

An audit trail allows independent individuals to substantiate the findings of the study by following the trail of the researcher (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Merriam, 2009). Richards (2005) argues that in order for qualitative research to claim validity, it is essential for the researcher to realistically demonstrate how the conclusions were reached and also to confidently prove that it was the best description possible.

I thus needed to provide a detailed description of the processes followed to ensure that the reader would get a clear picture of how the research took place (Kelly, 2006b). This was done by providing descriptions of how the data were collected and analysed. The research methodology, design and process chapter, and the chapter containing the research findings serve as audit trail for the present study along with the necessary appendixes where relevant.

### **Conformability of the research findings**

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001, p.278), conformability is concerned with “the degree to which the findings are the product of the focus of inquiry and not of the biases of

the researcher”. As the researcher, I thus had the responsibility to ensure that the findings were not a product of my own biases, but that it reflected a true representation of the participants’ views on the Construct of career and the influences on their career choices. Conformability is thus essentially demonstrated by keeping an audit trail.

### **Generalisability and transferability**

Generalisability and transferability is concerned with the extent to which the research findings can be applied to other contexts than the one in which it was conducted (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Kelly, 2006b; Merriam, 2009). According to Merriam (2009), several strategies can be used to improve the possibility of transferring the findings of qualitative research to another context.

The most well-known strategy is a thick, rich description (Merriam, 2009). This strategy entails the gathering of descriptions of data that are detailed and precise (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). I thus made sure that I provided adequate descriptions of the research settings, participants and methods used (Merriam, 2009). Ample examples of evidence collected in the form of quotes, documents and parts of the transcribed interviews were also included.

A further strategy that was implemented to ensure transferability was maximum variation, which is relevant when selecting the sample, and provides the possibility for a greater degree of application (Merriam, 2009). Learners from both genders were chosen to participate in the sample, as well as learners from each of the different grade nine classes. This was done to enhance the generalisability and transferability of the findings.

### **3.11. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

According to Allan (2008), research is only ethically justifiable if it has scientific merit, appropriate methodology and the study is realistic. It is also ethical if the potential benefits

of the study to the participants and/or to society outweigh the risks involved in the study (Allan, 2008).

During this research I drew on ethical considerations identified by both Wassenaar (2006) and Allan (2008) to prove that the study was ethically justifiable. These considerations are: autonomy and respect for the dignity of persons, informed written consent, confidentiality and right to privacy, voluntary nature of the study, non-maleficence, beneficence, justice, fair selection of participants, favourable risk/benefit ratio, scientific validity, independent ethical reviews and on-going respect for participants and study communities. The way in which these considerations were applied throughout the study will be discussed next.

### **Autonomy and respect for the dignity of persons**

It was vital that I respected the dignity of the research participants during the course of the study (Allan, 2008). This involved gaining voluntary informed consent from the participants and their parents, as well as ensuring that the confidentiality of both the participants and the school involved was protected (Wassenaar, 2006).

### **Informed written consent**

Before any form of data could be collected, it was necessary to obtain written consent from the parties involved. It involved gaining permission from the WCED (see Appendix B), the principal of the school (see Appendix C), as well as the participants and their parents (see Appendices D & E). According to Wassenaar (2006, p.72), there are four standard components of consent. These are: “a) provision of appropriate information, b) participants’ competence, c) voluntariness in participating and freedom to decline or withdraw after the study has started, and d) formalisation of consent, usually in writing”. Allan (2008) asserts that obtaining written consent contributes to the transparency of the study. I thus informed the relevant parties, in writing, about the nature of the research, the potential benefits and

risks involved, as well as what would happen after the findings were made (Wassenaar, 2006).

### **Confidentiality and right to privacy**

Allan (2008, p.292) writes that “researchers must respect participants’ right to privacy – both their right to be left alone and their right that data collected about them should remain confidential”. At the start of the data collection process, I informed the participants that their participation would be anonymous and that the only people who would know their identity would be the liaison teacher, the research supervisors and myself. During the reporting of the results I thus had to take special care that individual participants were not identifiable (Burgess, as cited in Allan, 2008).

### **Voluntary nature of the study**

According to Diamond, Reidpath and Jung (as cited in Allan, 2008), consent to participate in a research study must be free and voluntary and ethics committees are especially attentive when a vulnerable group such as minors are involved. I thus had to explain to the participants, both verbally and in writing, that their participation was completely voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw at any time should they wish to do so.

### **Non-maleficence**

The principle of non-maleficence involves that the researcher ensures that the study does not cause harm to the participants either directly or indirectly (Wassenaar, 2006). According to Macklin (as cited in Wassenaar, 2006), harm can include participants being wronged. Wassenaar (2006) explains that if data are collected and not reported on, the participants are wronged. I thus had an ethical responsibility to make sure that the data collected from the participants were correctly analysed and reported on.

**Beneficence**

Beneficence is concerned with whether the researcher is maximising the benefits that the participants can gain from participating in the research (Wassenaar, 2006). It was important to consider the relative risks involved in this study compared to the benefits that could be gained by the participants themselves and/or the society through the knowledge that was gained (Wassenaar, 2006). Both the ethics committee and myself considered the risks compared to the benefits, and classified the study as a low-risk study. The reason being that the participants received free career counselling and that the data gained could possibly assist in developing locally contextualised career counselling programmes. The risks were also relatively low. The participants might have felt confused and anxious afterwards about their future career possibilities, but this concern was addressed by providing them with the phone number of a qualified counsellor who would be able to assist them should it be necessary.

**Justice**

According to Wassenaar (2006), the principle of justice is concerned with ensuring that the researcher treats the participants with fairness and equity throughout the course of the research project. It involves the fair selection of participants, as well as ensuring that those who benefit from the research project also carry its burdens such as providing support for participants who might become anxious during or after the research study (Wassenaar, 2006).

To ensure the fairness of the study, all the learners that met the criteria had the opportunity to be selected. The learners that were not included in the study still had an opportunity for career counselling during a life orientation period. This involved a discussion of the influences on career choices, as well as an activity in which the learners could identify their own influences (see Appendix I). I furthermore carried most of the burden of the research by making it as easy as possible for the participants to do what was required of them. This was achieved by adapting my schedule to suit theirs, and to make arrangements that would cause

the least inconvenience to them. As mentioned in the discussion on beneficence, I also provided them with the contact details of a qualified counsellor if they felt they needed further assistance with any matters pertaining to the research study.

### **Fair selection of participants**

The participants who are selected to participate in a research study should be those to whom the research question applies (Wassenaar, 2006). As I was interested in gaining insight into the understanding of the construct of career and the influences of career choices of specifically coloured adolescents attending a low-income school, I ensured that the participants chosen formed part of the identified population group.

### **Favourable risk/benefit ratio**

Favourable risk/benefit ratio is concerned with the identification of all possible risks or harm that the study might pose, and trying to reduce it as best possible to achieve a favourable risk/benefit ratio (Wassenaar, 2006). According to the latter author, the best way to do this is by minimising the risks and maximising the benefits for the research participants. Benefits to society are a secondary consideration compared to the benefits to the participants, but it still forms an important part of the risk/benefit ratio.

The individual benefits during the study were more favourable than the potential identified risks, as the participants received free career counselling and had access to a qualified counsellor if they experienced any form of anxiety or distress. The knowledge gained from this study is also beneficial to society as it can contribute to the development of indigenous approaches to career counselling. The study therefore had a favourable risk/benefit ratio.

### **Scientific validity**

“The design, methodology, and data analysis applied in the study should be rigorous, justifiable, and feasible, and lead to valid answers to the research question” (Wassenaar, 2006, p.70). If this is not the case, the research conducted is unethical as it wastes resources,

the results are not valid, the participants are exposed and they are inconvenienced for no purpose (Wassenaar, 2006). This chapter stipulated the way in which was set about to obtain and analyse data in such a manner that the results yielded were ethical and therefore served a purpose.

### **Independent ethical review**

In order to protect the research participants, no research study is allowed to commence until an independent ethical committee has reviewed all protocols (Wassenaar, 2006). I therefore first submitted my research proposal, including my interview guide, to the research ethics committee and waited for their approval (see Appendix A) before commencing with my data collection.

### **On-going respect for participants and study communities**

This principle is concerned with treating the participants with respect during the course of the study and ensuring that their personal information remains confidential (Easter, Davis, & Henderson, as cited in Wassenaar, 2006). Furthermore, the researcher has the responsibility to make the findings available to the “host community” in which the research was conducted (Wassenaar, 2006, p.73). Throughout and even after the study I treated the participants and the host school with the utmost respect and made it clear that the research findings would be made available to them once the study was completed.

## **3.12. CONCLUSION**

In this chapter the research design, methodology and ethical considerations were presented in a transparent way to demonstrate the trustworthiness and ethicality of the study. In the next chapter the research findings will be presented and discussed in detail.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1. INTRODUCTORY DISCUSSION**

This chapter will describe the research data that were collected from the eleven participants, each being represented as a single unit of analysis. The overarching research question, as well as the sub-questions presented in Chapter 1 will be addressed by means of the analysis of the data obtained. This study was guided by the following primary research question:

What are the career constructions and the influences on career choices of coloured adolescents attending a low-income school?

The following sub-questions were also explored:

- What are the perceptions of careers among coloured adolescents attending a low-income school?
- What are the positive influences on career choices of coloured adolescents attending a low-income school?
- What are the negative influences on career choices of coloured adolescents attending a low-income school?
- What are the relative values attached to careers by coloured adolescents attending a low-income school?

According to Blustein et al. (2008), a gap exists in the field of career psychology with regard to a comprehensive investigation into the lives of those people to whom work mostly serves as a way to survive, rather than providing a vessel through which to present their personalities and talents. South Africa's apartheid history resulted in the majority of the country's



population to find employment driven by the need to survive rather than driven by their passion and interests. Traditional career education contributed to this situation as it was mainly aimed at and implemented in traditionally white schools. This caused and still causes many constraints to the majority of learners in South Africa (Akhurst & Mkhize, 2006). The challenge thus exists to find career education models that will serve the needs of the majority.

Therefore, my motivation to do this study was twofold. Firstly, I wanted to determine how the construct of career is understood in a low socioeconomic context. Secondly, I wanted to gain insight into the influences on career choices of adolescents in the same context. This could then lead to the design of context-specific and relevant career education models that will assist the youth on their career path.

#### **4.2. DESCRIPTION OF WITHIN-CASE DATA**

The first step of the data analysis process was to conduct an in-depth within-case analysis of two of the cases, because they were emblematic of the eleven cases. The cases of specifically participant five and eleven were analysed. These two cases will be presented separately, using the STF of career development as it was one of the theoretical frameworks that were used during this study. A second phase of data analysis was conducted during which a process of cross-case analysis was conducted to compare the cases. All eleven cases were used during this analysis. The data that were generated during this phase of analysis are presented in the form of a narrative discussion, centring on the main themes in an attempt to answer the research questions. The biographical information of the participants is presented in Table 4.1. The participants were given the opportunity to choose their own pseudonyms and will be used throughout this chapter.

**Table 4.1: Biographical information of the participants**

| <b>Participant</b>          | <b>1</b>                           | <b>2</b>                 | <b>3</b>       | <b>4</b>  | <b>5</b>   | <b>6</b>                         | <b>7</b>                          | <b>8</b>        | <b>9</b>                     | <b>10</b>                   | <b>11</b>                                   |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|---|--|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Pseudonyms                  | Jess                               | Will                     | Kim            | Kyle  | Brad   | Chanelle                         | Bianca                            | Michelle        | Stewardt                     | Naya                        | Marsha                                      |
| Age                         | 16                                 | 15                       | 15             | 16  | 15   | 16                               | 16                                | 16              | 15                           | 15                          | 15  |
| Gender                      | Female                             | Male                     | Female         | Male  | Male   | Female                           | Female                            | Female          | Male                         | Female                      | Male  |
| Possible careers considered | Actress<br>Dancer<br>News reporter | Engineer<br>Cartographer | Singer<br>Chef | Badminton player<br>Soccer player<br>Good job one day | Engineer<br>Doctor<br>Policeman<br>Soccer player | Teacher<br>Police woman<br>Nurse | Police woman<br>Teacher<br>Lawyer | ?               | Teacher<br>Policeman<br>Chef | Athlete<br>Dancer<br>Singer | Lawyer<br>Actress<br>Primary school teacher |
| Mother's education          | ?                                  | Grade 12                 | Grade 11       | To teach me   | ?  | ?                                | Grade 8                           | Grade 9         | Grade 8                      | Grade 8                     | Grade 12                                    |
| Father's education          | ?                                  | Studied further          | Grade 10       | To teach me   | ?  | ?                                | Grade 11                          | Grade 10        | Grade 11                     | Grade 9                     | Grade 9                                     |
| Mother's job                | House cleaner                      | Teacher                  | Spray painter  | Stay at home mother                                   | ?  | Stay at home mother              | Domestic worker                   | Domestic worker | Stay at home mother          | Works on a farm             | Domestic worker                             |
| Father's job                | Gardener                           | Engineer                 | Farm worker    | Supervisor  | ?  | Labourer                         | Farm worker                       | Labourer        | Labourer                     | Works on a farm             | Deliverer                                   |

Note: The question mark in the table indicates that the learner did not complete the question

## Case presentations

As mentioned in the chapter on research design and methodology, there were four different methods of data collection used in this study, namely a systems-based activity, a photovoice activity, a focus group, and individual interviews. Not all the participants joined in all the activities. Appendix J contains a list of which participants participated in the different data collection methods.

### *Participant 5: Brad*

Brad is a fifteen-year old learner who lives in the community and attends the local high school. According to Brad, he was considering becoming an engineer or a doctor.

Brad participated in all the activities, namely the systems-based activity, the focus group, the individual interview and the photovoice. Firstly, his view of the Construct of career will be discussed. After that, an analysis of his responses to these different activities will be presented to identify his perceptions of the different influences at each level of the system. Lastly, his responses to the reflective questions will also be discussed.

#### 4.2.1.1.1 Construct of career

During the focus group it became evident that the construct of career evoked feelings of nervousness and insecurity for Brad. These feelings were indicated by his response to the question with regard to his understanding of the construct of career. He stated:

*Anxious, you don't actually know what to make. There are a lot of things that comes to mind that you have to choose from.*

Brad's understanding of the construct of career furthermore included a future-oriented view - a decision that only was to be made in a few years' time. He mentioned that when he thought about the construct career the words that came to mind were:

*Your future.*

*What you want to achieve one day.*

These responses indicated that his understanding of the notion of career was very linear. Brad thus viewed the construct of career as a once-off decision that would determine the rest of his life course.

#### 4.2.1.1.2 Individual system influences

An analysis of Brad's responses pointed to several influences on the individual system.

- **Interests**

Brad's interests were highlighted as an important influence to him. His responses showed that he had a diverse range of interests and that all these different interests were influencing him to consider different possible careers. This was observed in his responses to all the different activities. In the systems-based activity Brad stated:

*I want to be a doctor, but if I don't make it I want to be a policeman or an engineer, because I like helping people and the environment.*

In our discussion during the individual interview about part-time work he had done before, Brad mentioned the following:

*I would want to be a boss, I would want my own business; people must work for me. I would let people make the wood for me, but I would not want to sell the wood.*

This statement is indicative of two things. Firstly, that Brad was possibly interested in being an entrepreneur and secondly, that he might see an owner of a company as someone who has

status and stability. The latter value was one that also came across at a different time during the discussions.

Another interest of Brad was soccer. He mentioned this in the systems-based activity and also during the individual interview:

*Researcher: So you have played at a lot of places? Tell me did it teach you anything about the type of career choices that you want to make one day?*

*Brad: I will also take that as a job, do you see M'am? To play soccer every day is very nice for me M'am and I enjoy it a lot. It is also not a lot of stress and difficulty and stuff, see M'am? People that shout at you that are at work, you are not doing that correct, see M'am?*

It thus appears as if Brad's interests had both a positive and a negative influence on his career choices, because he did not have the insight to distinguish between when an interest was merely a hobby and when it could become a career. He also had a false notion of what it involved to be a professional soccer player. Again, his value system was highlighted in these statements as it was important for Brad to feel respected and valued in the career path that he would pursue.

During the focus group interview Brad mentioned that he had worked in a wine cellar before and that he found it interesting, because he liked the machines, but at the same time he would not like to work in a cellar as part of his career. His reason was as follows:

*It is too heavy. There are a lot of heavy things that you must pick up. Those bins that you put the wine in, you will have to pick up those.*

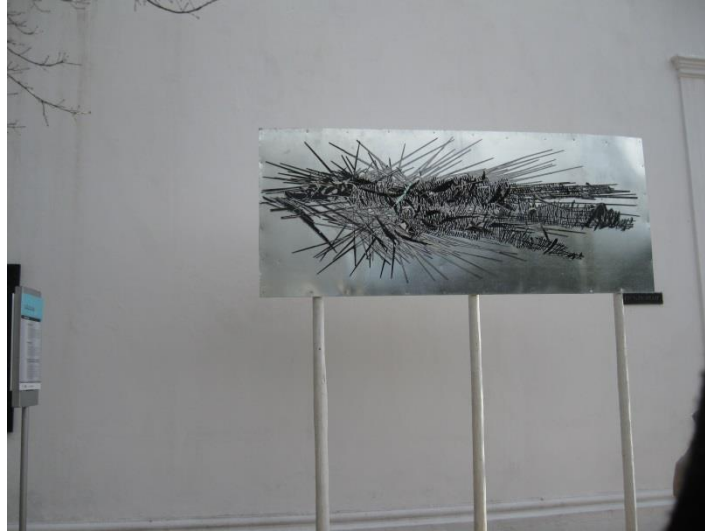
Brad then continued to say that he wanted to become an engineer. It became clear during the discussion that he was interested in machines and practical work, but that he disliked manual labour.

Brad's participation in the photovoice activity indicated that he had a keen interest in art and working with his hands. Both his photos were of art works and his reasons for choosing the particular photos were as follows:



**Photo 4.1: Brad's photo of doing practical work**

*The reason that I have a photo of this is, because I like to work with my hands, the art, I like to work with my hands and I like to draw. That is why I took the photo.*



**Photo 4.2: Brad's photo of confusion**

Brad stated that the reason for taking this photo (Photo 4.2) was that it seemed confusing and that he did not like to feel confused. He did not elaborate further, but it could be a representation of what he felt like when he thought about the future.

Relationship with people was also an interest of Brad. During the individual interview Brad had the following views:

*To talk with other people is very interesting, because I learn more about them and they learn more about me, do you see M'am? Then it happens that I am maybe at a place that is far from my home and family, see M'am, then I maybe meet them. And yes the two of us did meet at that place, you see M'am, then the two of us can talk again. Can have a nice day together, do you see M'am?*

- **Values**

Another influence on Brad's career choices were his values. As mentioned earlier, many of his values surfaced during our conversations about his interests. It was evident that Brad's

biggest values were to gain financial stability, but at the same time to help other people. In the systems-based activity Brad wrote:

*I want to make a lot of money.*

When asked about this statement in the individual interview, Brad responded as follows:

*Yes, but it is not about the money for me. I don't worry about the money, do you see M'am? But because I thought that if I have a lot of money, you see M'am, people that are outside on the street and that don't have food and stuff like that, I want to sponsor them and give them things M'am. People that live on the street I want to give them houses, do you see M'am? So, if I make my own business where they can work, do you see M'am? I actually want to give them good circumstances, a good job, do you see M'am?*

- **Skills**

Brad's skills and interests correlated and it was apparent that his skills had an influence on his career choices. His responses to the different activities indicated that he viewed himself as being skilled at communicating with other people and that it would influence his career choices. During the individual interview he specifically stated that it would influence his career choices in the following way:

*Yes M'am, like I said I enjoy working with people, because I am friendly with other people and people are friendly with me and I really enjoy working with them.*



Another skill that emerged was that Brad was a leader. It is not necessarily a skill that he was explicitly aware of. The fact that he was not necessarily aware of it could potentially be a negative influence as it might limit Brad in the type of career choices that he would make. A hint of the fact that he possessed leadership skills was mentioned in the systems-based activity in his response to the different roles in his life. He wrote:

*I am a sport person and I am also a soccer captain and I am a member of our church.*

- **Reflective practice**

Brad also appeared to have a degree of insight into himself and the ability to engage in reflective practice. At the end of the individual interview when discussing what the process meant to him, Brad said:

*Yes M'am, it was very interesting for me to learn more about what other children like and what I like. The life style that they live and I live. You see M'am, I always thought my life style is lower than the other's life style and that I have more problems than other people, but I think to myself that is not the case. There are people and children that have bigger problems than I have, do you see M'am, then it makes my problems bigger than theirs. I learned a lot from others and I learned a lot about me. So the process was very interesting to learn from others and what I learned.*

- **Knowledge of the world of work**

Brad's knowledge of the world of work was also identified as having an influence on his career choices, both positively and negatively. Due to different part-time work experiences,

Brad had exposure to diverse career pathways. These helped him to gain an understanding of what he liked and disliked.

Although not completely informed, it seemed as if he also had some exposure to the importance of equipping oneself with a qualification and to have a curriculum vitae. During the individual interview he said:

*Yes, that sentence says actually what I want to become, M'am. If I have the qualifications for it and I have my own papers, so then I can go to any place, then I can show them my papers and my qualifications that I have and what I have done, do you see M'am?*

This influence was also negative, because although Brad had exposure, he did not have the correct information with regard to the requirements needed to pursue the careers that he showed interest in. This was noted during the individual interview about how he was going to go about making his subject choices. In his words:

*My grandmother wants me to become a doctor so I must take life orientation, Natural Sciences and Maths Literacy and subjects like that.*

#### 4.2.1.1.3 Social system influences

Brad's responses pertaining to the different influences in his social system presented as both positive and negative, although the negative seemed to carry a stronger weight for Brad.

- **External pressure**

During the systems-based activity, the focus group interview and individual interview, a theme of 'experiencing a lot of pressure and confusion' emerged, because of different people having different expectations for Brad. In the systems-based activity he wrote the following:

*I will be good at being a doctor.*

*You should not clean a garden, you don't get a lot of money.*

*You like talking to people, you must become a leader at church.*

*You are not scared, why don't you become a policeman.*

*You are clever, why don't you become an engineer.*

*My friend told me that I must become a sport man.*

He only mentioned several voices advising him to pursue different career pathways. There was no mention of any role models that he admired, because of their abilities, attributes, achievements or values.

During the focus group this theme was observed when Brad said:

*Because your friends tell you to do this and your parents tell you to do this and the people around you also wants to make decisions for you. You can't make your own decisions.*

*Because you don't always want to follow your parents' decisions. Then there comes more people in your neighbourhood and tell you that you are not good in this, but you are good in this and so that makes you feel confused.*

In the individual interview Brad again stated:

*Brad: What I want to do? My mom wants me to become an engineer.*

*Researcher: Yes?*

*Brad: I don't know. I also want to become an engineer and I want to work with computers, but my grandmother wants me to become a doctor, because she says I have soft hands and know how to work with people.*

*Researcher: What do you think?*

*Brad: I am a little bit confused*

Both Brad's grandmother and mother had different ideas about career choices that he should make, causing confusion for Brad. It appeared as if Brad found it challenging to think independently with regard to the career choices that he needed and wanted to make.

- **Support network**

Although many voices tried to steer Brad in a direction, especially those of his mother and grandmother, they were also the people who had a positive influence on his career choices. Brad mentioned that when he had to make a decision with regard to subject choices he could speak to his mother about it. During the individual interview, Brad furthermore mentioned that he felt that he could speak to his grandmother about his career choices:

*Yes, because she has been around for a long time, she knows what she has gone through and all that stuff, do you see M'am? So I take her as my role model. She does not have talent, but she has a good mind, do you see M'am? She knows already that if you want to do that, that is maybe going to happen to you or if you want to do that, that will be good for you, do you see M'am?*

- **Role model**

A further positive influence on Brad's career choice was that he considered becoming a policeman, because his father was one. His father was thus a positive role model for Brad. During our discussion he said:

*The reason why I said that I want to become a policeman is because my dad is a policeman and he always told me, any trouble that happens and they ask you*

*to go, does it, because a person does not know what you get out of it, do you see M'am? A person does not know who is making the trouble or what trouble it is, but a person must also be careful, because a person can't walk at any place.*

#### 4.2.1.1.4 Environmental-societal system influences

Brad identified several influences emanating from the environmental and societal system.

- **Money**

His response to the systems-based activity initially seemed as if money was a negative influence for him, but it became clear during the individual interview that it was both a positive and a negative influence. He stated:

*Brad: Yes M'am, the college that I wanted to study at they say I can go study at. They can get me a bursary, but it is expensive for them, because they are paying our house and our two cars, do you see M'am?*

*Researcher: Yes*

*Brad: So, it is a lot of money that they have to spend and then they still have to spend money on me. It is not a problem to give money for the college, but for me, see M'am, to give me money every day. So, if I grow older, they must give me a car, so obviously they must throw petrol in the car, now to give me money to buy things to eat, do you see M'am, every month give me money, see M'am? So they said it will be easier for me if I was close to them, maybe Boland College to go study there. Because I actually want to go study in Cape Town and that is really far.*

- **Work outside of his community**

During the individual interview Brad furthermore said that one of the reasons why he wanted to study further away from home was that he felt that the people in his community were placing too much pressure on him, telling him what to do with his life.

In the systems-based activity Brad wrote the following:

*There are lots of job opportunities and opportunity and it is easy.*

- **Transport**

Brad identified transport as a negative influence on his career choices. This was noticed in his responses to the systems-based activity. He wrote:

*It is far to get there.*

*It is in Cape Town, but I want to do it, but it is too far.*

#### 4.2.1.1.5 Change over time

It was evident from Brad's responses to the systems-based activity and the individual interview that his past, present and future were all influencing his career choices.

- **Past**

He stated that in the past he considered becoming a policeman, because it was what his dad was doing. It aligns with what he stated earlier in the individual interview about becoming a policeman.

- **Present**

For the present he wrote:

*I just want to live just here where I grew up.*

It thus appeared as if Brad was happy with his circumstances at the time and that he was satisfied with the support he was receiving from significant others in his life, and it thus had a positive impact on his career choices.

- **Future**

In terms of the future Brad stated:

*I want to make a lot of money and I want to help people and my family.*

*I want my mom and dad to go live overseas. I will give them a lot of money.*

After further exploration in the individual interview it became clear that Brad had a strong desire to financially assist the people he cared for in the future and that this had a positive influence on his career choices.

#### 4.2.1.1.6 Reflective questions

Brad's responses indicated that he had a degree of insight into his own circumstances and opportunities that were available. However, it became evident that he still required a deeper insight into the different careers he wished to pursue.

As mentioned in the section about his social system influences, Brad indicated that he did not want to become a doctor one day, but felt pressured, because that was what his grandmother had expected of him. However, on the question "What was confirmed for you?" he wrote:

*I knew I wanted to be a doctor, but it just made me think back again.*

It thus became clear that he had the ability to discuss his preferences in terms of career choices, but that he still needed insight about what it meant to engage in career choices.

Also, when answering the question about what he would like to change, he did not comment on his own career development process, but rather on a phenomenon in the environment. His response was as follows:

*I would like to change the people. They should not be rude to each other.*

*They must help each other.*

In conclusion, Brad was mostly aware of the influences in his individual and social systems, although he was able to identify a few influences in his environmental-societal system. It also became clear that Brad believed that there were a lot of “voices” trying to influence him to pursue certain career pathways, causing him to experience a great deal of pressure. He was also aware of his strong desire to help other people, although he still needed some exposure in terms of what the different career pathways involved and what was required of him to pursue these pathways.

#### *Participant 11: Marsha*

Marsha is a fifteen-year old learner who lives in the community and attends the local high school. Marsha’s father completed grade nine and her mother completed matric. Her father is a delivery man and her mother a domestic worker. Marsha indicated that she was considering becoming a lawyer, actress or primary school teacher.

Marsha participated in the systems-based activity, the focus group, the individual interview, as well as the photovoice activity. Her responses pertaining to the different activities will be analysed and discussed according to her understanding of the construct of career and the influences in the different systems in terms of career choices.



#### 4.2.1.2.1 Construct of career

Marsha did not explicitly respond to the question with regard to her understanding of the construct of career, but her responses towards career pathways indicated that it was important to make the correct choices. By implication it thus appeared as if there were wrong choices and that it was seen as a once-off big decision that she had to make. Similar to Brad, Marsha viewed the construct of career as a linear process.

#### 4.2.1.2.2 Individual system influences

Marsha's responses indicated that there were several influences in the individual system that had an impact on her career choices. The categories that were identified in the individual system were interests, personality traits, skills, values and knowledge of the world of work. The themes identified in each category will be discussed next.

- **Interests**

It was evident that Marsha was interested in spending time with people. She frequently indicated enjoying and being involved in activities with other people. She specifically mentioned that she liked meeting new people that she did not know. Marsha was furthermore particularly interested in the law. During the different activities she stated that she wanted to become a lawyer. In the beginning of the individual interview she remarked:

*I have not thought about it yet, but I have thought about which subjects I must choose if one day I want to be a lawyer and help people.*

The photovoice activity also revealed that Marsha was interested in technology, specifically working on a computer. It was interpreted that she enjoyed work in this line, and it also appeared as if she viewed people who work on computers as being successful. The photo she

took was of one of her teachers working on her computer. She said the following about the photo:



**Photo 4.3: Marsha's photo of doing computer work**

*Lots of business women works on computers. That is why I took the photo.*

There was thus a link between Marsha's interests and the career choices that she wanted to make.

- **Personality traits**

Marsha's personality traits that were identified were the fact that she had a good self-concept and that she saw herself as joyful. These qualities would have a positive impact on her career choices as she believed in her own abilities, as well as having the ability to remain positive even when facing challenging situations and circumstances. Her response in the systems-based activity was as follows:

*I am unique, because there is no one like me.*

*I am very joyful. I like to laugh.*

Another trait that came to light was Marsha's ambition. She said on a few occasions that she wanted to achieve her goals and that she had a high target for herself. It was observed when she stated:

*I don't want to be so low, I want to go high.*

Marsha was thus motivated to achieve certain things in her life and this would have a positive impact on her career choices as she was willing to go the proverbial extra mile.

- **Skills**

Marsha identified a number of skills that she felt had an influence on her career choices. She mentioned that she saw herself as a leader, because she was a class captain, as well as a role model for her younger brother and sisters. During the individual interview she stated:

*Yes, they actually look up at me, because I am their older sister and I am actually following in my mom's footsteps...I don't want them to drop out of school in grade 9 or grade 10. They must look up at me and want to finish school and want to go study further. I want to achieve my dreams. That is why I am saying that they should look up at me.*

Marsha was thus motivated to achieve her goals not only for her own gain, but because she would like to inspire her sisters and brother as well. A skill that was mentioned frequently was that she viewed herself as being able to communicate well with others. She said the following:

*I like to communicate with people and to be a waiter you communicate with clients and they ask you questions and you answer it and it is nice to work with people and to meet people that you don't really know.*

It became clear that Marsha was aware of the fact that she would enjoy working in an environment in which she had to interact with other people on a regular basis. This self-awareness can be seen as a positive influence on her career choices, because she was able to link her skills with possible career pathways. A skill that linked to her ability to communicate well was that she had the ability to work with other people's problems.

Marsha furthermore mentioned that she became shy when she had to cook. This was also interpreted as a positive influence on her career choices, because she had the ability to distinguish between the skills that she was good at and those that she felt she lacked and thus could not pursue a career in.

- **Values**

It became clear throughout Marsha's participation in the different activities that there was a correlation between her values and her skills and interests. She mentioned that it was important for her to always help other people to the best of her abilities. Positivity was another value identified. She specifically mentioned that it was important to always remain positive and not to become negative in terms of one's dreams for the future. It was also clear that religion was a positive influence on her career choices, as she wrote in the systems-based activity:

*If there are problems I pray and talk to God.*

- **Knowledge of the world of work**

Marsha's exposure to the world of work was also identified as having an influence on her career choices. From the discussions and her responses in the systems-based activity it became evident that she had thought about what she would like to do one day. The possible career choices that she was considering were both realistic and unrealistic. In the systems-

based activity she wrote a long list of possible career pathways. These were: actress, lawyer, teacher, winemaker, psychologist and doctor. She mentioned during the individual interview that she thought that she was good at acting and that her mother also felt that she should become an actress, but it appeared to be more of a fantasy than a reality. However, pursuing careers in the wine industry and medical field would not be possible for Marsha as the school did not offer the required subjects.

Her knowledge was limited in terms of the subject choices that were required for the different career pathways in which she was interested in, but something that she was not aware of. During the individual interview when we discussed the fact that she needed to make subject choices, and how it could influence her career choices, specifically to become a lawyer, she stated:

*Yes I know mathematics must I take and life orientation, how to communicate with people and I think it is very important subject choices that I must make.*

Although choosing a subject like mathematics would provide her with more options than mathematical literacy, she was not aware of the fact that when applying for law, languages would be the most important subjects. It was thus evident that her knowledge about which subject choices were required for the different career pathways was constraining her and could thus be identified as a negative influence on her career choices.

#### 4.2.1.2.3 Social system influences

Many different influences were identified in the social system that had an impact on Marsha's career choices.

- **Extended family**

Marsha mentioned during the individual interview that her uncle had an influence on her career choices. He gave her exposure to the winemaking industry and as a result, she considered pursuing a career in that direction. He also inspired her, telling her that she would be a good winemaker.

- **Teachers**

Marsha's teachers at school were further identified as positive influences on her career choices. During the individual interview, she stated the following:

*Mr P told me the other day that I will make a good teacher, because I always talk with a smile, I am never unhappy, I am always happy.*

Additionally, during the photovoice activity she took a photo of another teacher who she viewed as a role model. She cited the following reason for taking the photo:



**Photo 4.4: Marsha's photo of a teacher at work**

*It is a teacher that sits in class and is marking essays and why I choose her was she inspires me a lot. She did not grow up rich, but she worked hard and studied hard to be where she is today. That is why I took this photo.*

Both her teachers thus had a positive influence on Marsha as the one verbally encouraged her to pursue a pathway that he thought she would do well in, while the other teacher inspired her by sharing her own life experiences, giving Marsha a sense of hope.

- **Parents**

Marsha indicated that her parents had both a positive and negative influence on her career choices. During the individual interview she mentioned that before making a decision, she would ask her parents for advice on what they thought would be best for her. She furthermore pointed out that her mother told her that she was good at acting and should become an actress. She also mentioned that her mother was a role model for her, citing the following reason:

*She finished school, she went and studied, she was a teacher and then she got problems with her head and now they [brother and sisters] look up at me and I look up to her, and for my mom I said what she grew up with it is actually very inspiring, because through circumstances she made it and I can also make it through circumstances.*

In addition, when discussing her definition of success, Marsha referred to her father who said the following to her:

*...my dad always says that I won't become anything in life, because I don't want to study and I will always look after my sister and brother and then I said one day they will look at me in the highest court on T.V. and then they will say to me that is my daughter. I always told her that she is nothing and then one*

*day I will help them with their problems and business. I will always be there for them and even if I know I achieved my dreams, I proved them wrong.*

It was evident that Marsha's father did not believe in her abilities and determination to achieve her dreams. Although it was a negative influence, it motivated Marsha to prove him wrong and to pursue her dreams.

- **Community members**

Another positive social influence on Marsha's career choices was a lady at church with whom she could discuss her career choices. During the individual interview, Marsha mentioned that the lady had to decide between two different career pathways when she was younger, and that she told Marsha to do the same when she reached grade 10.

- **Friends**

Her friends were also identified as having a positive influence on her career choices as they encouraged her to pursue certain careers pathways due to the skills that she had. In the systems-based activity Marsha wrote:

*My friend said that I am good at working with children.*

In the individual interview she mentioned what her friends had said:

*A good lawyer, because I am good at sorting out business.*

- **Media**

The media furthermore influenced Marsha's career choices as it provided her with exposure to different career pathways. The media can be seen as both a positive and a negative influence, because it could expose her to certain career pathways, in her case the law. The negative side



was that the exposure would not necessarily be a true reflection of the law profession. This was detected in Marsha's response in the systems-based activity in which she wrote:

*I saw on television how to be a lawyer, strict and you must be able to lie.*

#### 4.2.1.2.3. Environmental-societal system influences

Marsha identified several influences on her career choices in this system. All the influences that she identified in this respect had a negative impact on her career choices.

- **Transport and finances**

Marsha wrote in the systems-based activity that transport was problematic, as there was not always transport available to the places that she needed to go to. Additionally, in both the systems-based activity and the individual interview Marsha mentioned that she did not have the financial means for further studies. She specifically said:

*Yes, my mom is a domestic worker; she helps and cleans houses, my dad works with wine. He delivers wine at bars and so goes delivers wine at the bars and the finances are not good, because we are three children that are in school and my mom does not pay a lot of money and my dad also does not. He buys the food and then he gives my mom the money and there is not enough for me to go and study one day.*

- **Home circumstances**

She continued to talk about the fact that her circumstances at home were very difficult:

*The circumstances in our house are very big. I always go and visit my family, my grandmother comes to fetch me and then I go visit, because I don't like to stay in the circumstances.*

*I don't think they can support me. The circumstances at home and the finances, they won't be able to support what I want to do one day.*

- **Environment**

Marsha also regarded her environment as unfavourable, because there were many people using drugs and selling alcohol. She expressed a desire to have the financial capacity to provide her parents with the means to move to a safer area in which they would not have to be worried about people breaking in and stealing their belongings.

- **Job opportunities**

In both the systems-based activity and the individual interview Marsha mentioned that she was concerned about job opportunities available in Stellenbosch. She indicated that she would ideally prefer to work and study in Johannesburg as she believed there would be more opportunities available for her there.

#### 4.2.1.2.4 Change over time

Marsha's responses indicated that there were different influences in the different timeframes in her life in terms of her career choices. These influences were mostly positive although there was a more negative undertone detected in terms of her present situation.

- **Past**

Marsha mentioned that in the past she viewed her Afrikaans teacher as an example to her and that she was able to learn from her.

- **Present**

In terms of her present situation, she mentioned that she did not want to live where she had been living. On the surface, a negative influence was implicated, but it also demonstrated a

longing to rise above her circumstances. This was further emphasised in her response to her future.

- **Future**

She indicated that she would like to help other people with their problems. She also specifically mentioned during the individual interview that she would like to help her parents so that they would be able to live in a better environment.

In general, there was a theme of wanting to improve her circumstances and those of the people around her as she progressed through life. She was also positive about the past as she had the opportunity to learn from people in her immediate environment.

#### 4.2.1.2.5 Reflective questions

It was evident from Marsha's responses that she had a higher level of insight than most of the other participants. When asked in the individual interview what she had learned, she answered as follows:

*Yes, to remain positive and you will reach your dream one day even though there are circumstances at home, even if there are financial problems, even if your family has problems, but you must run the race in full and remain positive. Not think negative things.*

She furthermore demonstrated the ability to be able to reflect on her true feelings with regard to thinking about her career choices. This was seen in her response to the question "How do you feel when you look at your system of career influences?" She responded as follows:

*I am still unsure, still feel scared.*

In conclusion, Marsha came across as a very determined and insightful young individual who had the ability to make a connection between her interests, skills and values and possible career pathways. She was mostly realistic about potential career pathways and although she still required more exposure to the world of work, it was evident that she had given it some thought as to why she wanted to pursue certain career paths. She was able to identify numerous influences in the different systems and interpreted it in a realistic manner.

#### **4.3. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND EXPOSITION OF CROSS-CASE DATA**

The purpose of this section is to present the results of the cross-case analysis. These results were obtained by comparing the data collected from the different cases. The research findings will be presented along with the relevant literature to ensure that the research questions are answered.

The findings will be presented using the STF structure. The findings are based on the data that were generated from the four sources of data during the data collection process, namely the systems-based activity, the focus group interview, the photovoice activity and the individual interview. The data revealed relevant themes with regard to the participants' career constructions, the influences in the individual, social and environmental-societal systems, the construct of time and the participants' ability to engage in reflective practice.

**Table 4.2: Categories and themes**

| <b>Categories</b>             | <b>Themes</b>  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>1. Construct of career</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linear view</li> <li>• Right choices</li> <li>• Limited planning</li> <li>• Unrealistic career aspirations</li> </ul> |
| <b>2. Individual system</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited career maturity</li> <li>• Self-efficacy beliefs</li> <li>• Limited exposure to the world of work</li> </ul>  |

| Categories                              | Themes   |
|---|--|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited self-reflection skills</li> <li>• Limited self-awareness</li> </ul>   |
| <b>3. Social system</b>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents</li> <li>• Siblings</li> <li>• Extended family</li> <li>• Teachers</li> <li>• Friends</li> <li>• Inadequate role models</li> <li>• Media</li> <li>• Inadequate resources</li> <li>• Inadequate social and cultural capital</li> </ul> |
| <b>4. Environmental-societal system</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low socioeconomic status</li> <li>• Work opportunities</li> <li>• Inadequate cultural capital</li> <li>• Unfavourable environment</li> <li>• Lack of power and control</li> </ul>   |
| <b>5. Change over time</b>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rise above circumstances</li> <li>• Financial stability</li> <li>• Family</li> </ul>  |

### Construct of career

During the data analysis process it became evident that all the participants had a similar understanding of the construct of career.

- **Linear view**

The participants portrayed a linear understanding of the construct of career. A linear view refers to a decision that a person makes in terms of the career he or she wants to pursue and then to stay in that career until retirement. This was seen in statements such as:

*Participant 6: Big decision, because your future depends on it.*

*Participant 5: Nervous, you don't really know what to do really. There are lots of things that come into your thoughts about what you should do.*

These responses are indicative of the fact that their understanding was causing a certain degree of pressure, anxiousness and feelings of being unsettled.

- **Right choices**

The theme of making the right choices presented itself during the different activities. It appeared as if this concept of having to make the right choices were embedded in the participants during their forming years by significant others in their life such as family members, teachers and probably also spiritual leaders at their places of worship. This was observed in responses such as *right choices* when discussing what came to mind when they thought about the construct of career. It appeared as if the participants did not necessarily know what 'right decisions' implied. They were only aware of the fact that they should make these so-called 'right choices' and live a 'good' life.

- **Limited planning**

Furthermore, the participants' responses to the question about future career choices revealed limited planning, focussing on the present without much thought about future decisions. Ten of the eleven participants indicated that they needed to decide which subject choices they would choose, and only two of the participants stated that they needed to complete their school career. Participant one was the only participant who remarked: "Decide which career to complete to keep me happy one day". According to Akhurst and Mkhize (2006), one of the limitations of career education is that learners have to make subject choices at the end of grade nine. They are, however, still at the beginning phase of exploring career options and might make choices that are not based on future career planning. This is especially true for

learners coming from low SES contexts as they have limited access to various career resources and experiences (Ngesi, as cited in Akhurst & Mkhize, 2006).

- **Unrealistic career aspirations**

The data generated from this study confirmed what Watson (2010) noted. He wrote that research in South Africa with regard to career ambitions of learners from a low SES background, found a stable pattern towards high volumes of unrealistic, non-market related career expectations. Among the career aspirations of the participants that were mentioned, were careers such as becoming an actress, a Hollywood star, a professional soccer player, a doctor or an engineer. Although the last two careers are indeed market-related, they are unrealistic careers for these participants as their school did not offer physics as a subject, which is needed to pursue careers in both medicine and engineering. In terms of the other careers, it seemed as if the participants were confused between interests and hobbies as opposed to skills. There also seemed to be a misconception of what the different careers involved and the skills that were required. These observations were all noticed in participant 10's responses to the systems-based activity with regard to future careers. She stated:

*I want to be a doctor to help people that are really sick.*

*I want one day to be an athletics person to get far to help my parents.*

*I want to be a singer for a church and I must come far with it.*

*I want to be a dancer as well.*

In summary, the construct of career was identified as being a negative influence on the participants' career choices as they viewed it as a decision that was still in the distant future, did not show an awareness of the fact that their decisions in the present already had an impact on their career pathway, and many of the participants had unrealistic career ambitions.

### **Individual system influences**

The data analysis led to the identification of a number of influences in the individual system.

- **Limited career maturity**

Career maturity had the biggest influence on the career choices of the participants. As mentioned in the introductory chapter career maturity refers to an individual's ability to make career decisions that are age-appropriate and informed, as well as to cope with career development tasks (Savickas, as cited in Patton & Creed, 2001). Super (as cited in Levinson et al., 1998) distinguish between five dimensions of career maturity, namely planning, exploration, information-gathering, decision-making and reality-orientation.

The responses of the participants indicated an absence of most of Super's five dimensions. Participant five was the only participant who indicated that he had done research on possible career pathways, but as mentioned earlier, he did not have the necessary insight to distinguish between when an interest was merely a hobby and when it was possible to pursue it as a career. His responses also indicated that he was not well-informed on what each career entailed, or the requirements to pursue these careers.

In addition, Savickas (as cited in Patton, Creed & Watson, 2003) explain that individuals who have a fair amount of career maturity are expected to achieve careers that are satisfying and successful, because they are more aware of the career decision-making process and consider different careers. These individuals also make a connection between present behaviour and future goals, have the ability to rely on their own power and resources when making career decisions, are dedicated to achieve their career aims and are able to recognise the difficulties of reality.

Comparing Savickas's statements to the responses of the participants served as further evidence that the participants did not have a high degree of career maturity. This was



observed in their responses to the career decisions that they had to make. They did not demonstrate an insightful connection between their future goals and possible career choices. It rather appeared to be a mere reflection of what significant others (especially teachers and family members) had infringed on them. The latter also substantiated the notion that most of the participants also did not have the required ability to rely on their own power and resources. This was seen in statements such as the following:

*Participant 5: You can't make your own decisions.*

The participants, however, were able to identify the difficulties that they faced in their everyday reality and the impact that this would have on their career choices. The following responses serve as examples:

*Participant 2: The environment is a bad influence*

*Participant 3: I am worried about the money. Do not have transport. Every day give out money for taxi.*

- **Self-efficacy beliefs**

Even though the participants did not have a high degree of career maturity, it appeared as if they had a high degree of self-efficacy beliefs. According to Betz and Hackett (as cited in Albien, 2013), research has found that career self-efficacy resulted in the pursuing of career activities and goals. Ryan and Deci (as cited in Chiesa, Massei and Guglielmi, 2016) theorised that career decision-making self-efficacy is similar to perceived competence. The participants' responses confirmed a belief in their own abilities. Participant one specifically stated in the systems-based activity that she knew she was successful "if she does well and does not give up". It is thus an indication that she believed that she could reach her goals. Participant three's response is a further example of the participants' self-efficacy beliefs. She

measured success as follows: “if you worked hard and had a good job”. These responses contradict the findings of Dass-Brailsford (2005) that the career development of adolescents from disadvantaged contexts is restricted, because of negative self-efficacy beliefs.

- **Career uncertainty**

Career uncertainty also emerged as a theme in this study. Although it is viewed as developmentally appropriate for adolescents to experience some degree of career uncertainty (Ladany, Melincoff, Constantine & Love, 1997), it has proved to be detrimental to individuals’ career self-efficacy beliefs, anticipations and career information-gathering (Janeiro, 2009). The aforementioned was particularly noticed in participant six’s statement:

*I feel unsure about what I want to become. Just feel unsure. You are not sure...uhm, you just feel unsure.*

This statement contains feelings of anxiousness, a sense of being overwhelmed and at loss without any evidence of career planning or exploration, and thus confirms Janeiro’s (2009) findings.

- **Limited exposure to the world of work**

Ladany et al. (1997) found that one of the influences on at-risk youth’s career investigation and commitment to career choices were their access to occupational information. In the current research study, a similar theme was identified as having a negative influence on the participants’ career choices, namely limited exposure to the world of work.

The participants’ responses showed that their exposure to the world of work was either influenced by their immediate surroundings or what they were exposed to through the media. All the participants indicated either having done or considered doing unskilled or semi-skilled part-time work. This was specifically observed in the following response:

*Participant 2: Work in the garden, clean a shop, help a spray painter, clean a backyard, wash cars and clean.*

The photovoice activity served as further evidence as can be seen from participant six's photos:



**Photo 4.5: Chanelle's photo depicting her view of work**



**Photo 4.6: Chanelle's photo depicting her exposure to the world of work**

Referring to photo 4.5, participant six said she took the photo because she enjoyed cleaning, while photo 4.6 demonstrates that she also enjoyed cleaning the garden. It was thus clear that

her frame of reference was limited to unskilled career pathways and that she probably did not have any or much exposure to careers that require specialised skills.

Furthermore it was evident that the participants were not aware of the requirements that are needed to pursue the different career pathways. Seven of the participants mentioned considering careers that would require of them to take physical sciences, but that the subject was not offered at their school. Participant three also stated the following about making subject choices:

*I thought it would be the easiest subjects, because the other subjects are heavy.*

This statement indicates that she only thought about her current situation and not how her current choices would influence her career choices. She thus demonstrated that her knowledge about the world of work and her degree of insight and/or ability to reflect was limited.

- **Limited self-reflection skills**

Maree (2012, p.376) posits that individuals are often not provided with the opportunity to “discover and construct themselves during assessment and career counselling”. The participants’ responses in the study served as confirmation. Although the participants were given an opportunity to engage in reflective practice and to construct their future options, it was evident that they had limited self-reflection skills. This was especially noted in the last section of the systems-based activity in which the participants had to reflect on what they had learned. A number of participants demonstrated a degree of self-reflection skills on certain questions, but then lacked depth on other questions. For example, participant one responded as follows to the question “What did you become aware of that you were not previously aware of?”:

*That I must behave more seriously and be aware of my own internal feelings.*

This response proved that she had the ability to engage, to a certain level, with self-reflection, but her response to the question “What would you like to change?” indicated otherwise:

*I would like to help people that are on drugs and steals from us.*

Although this statement was reflective of her interests and values, she did not understand the question in the context, and also did not show the ability to actively reflect on her systems of career influences. Participant eight’s response to the question: “What did you become aware of that you were not previously aware of?” furthermore served as evidence:

*About which choices you can make that is right and wrong.*

Even after engaging in the systems-based activity and being guided through the process of thinking about the different influences on her career choices, participant eight still did not give any indication that she was able to think for herself, but was merely echoing the opinions of the significant others in her life.

A possible reason for these responses is the fact that the participants did not demonstrate the ability to engage in self-reflection practice on a deeper level necessary for making informed career choices.

- **Limited self-awareness**

Additionally, only three of the participants indicated having a sense of self-awareness. This was seen in responses such as the following:

*Participant 5: I want to become an artist one day, because I like drawing and draw very well.*

*Participant 3: With animals work like a vet, because I really like animals.*

*Participant 11: I like communicating with people and to be a waiter you talk more to clients.*

Super (as cited in Albien, 2013) suggests that, for an individual to implement a career choice, it is essential that he/she has a picture of what he/she is capable of doing, as well as to have the ability to collect and process personal information that is relevant. The participants' inability to demonstrate self-awareness was therefore also identified as a negative influence on their career choices.

Interestingly, all the participants had the ability to identify different intra-individual factors, although most of them were not able to process and link these factors with a specific career pathway. This concurs what Watson and Stead (2002) pointed out, namely that traditional approaches to career counselling focus mostly on the identification of intra-individual factors and minimise the role of the context. It is thus apparent that the participants' exposure to career counselling in the past was most probably based on traditional approaches and did not provide the participants with the opportunity to reflect on how other systems could also influence their career choices.

### **Social system influences**

This system examined the participants' responses with regard to a number of influences including family, peers, media, community groups and educational institutions (McIlveen, McGregor-Bayne, Alock & Hjertum, 2003). According to the latter authors, the social system context will have a more direct influence on individuals' lives than those of the environmental-societal system, because it has a more direct impact.

Parents were identified as the primary positive influence on the participants' career choices, given that seven of the participants mentioned their parents as the people they would consider talking to about their career choices. The participants' responses, however, confirm Seabi et al.'s (2010) findings that in a disadvantaged context, parents' involvement in their children's career choices is often limited to only advising them to finish school and to achieve high-

status jobs, and not providing them with career information. This was observed in responses such as the following:

*Participant 5: You are clever you can be an engineer.*

*Participant 6: My parents said you must go and work in a restaurant, then earn lots of money.*

*Participant 1: My parents that always stands by me and encourages me to make matric.*

It was obvious that, although having good intentions, the parents did not have the necessary career information and insight to assist their children to make realistic career choices. However, some of the participants still mentioned that they viewed their parents as role models. Both participant two and participant eleven specifically named one of their parents as their role models.

Seabi et al. (2010) furthermore mentioned that although adolescents mostly experience their parents' support as positive, they sometimes experience it as negative as well. The reason for this being that their parents have often displaced their own career goals on their children that they themselves did not successfully reach. This theme also emerged in the current study, but expanded beyond the participants' parents. This was specifically noticed during the focus group interview:

*Participant 5: Because your friends say you must do this and your parents want you to do this and the people around you, they want to also make decisions for you. You cannot make your own decisions.*

*Researcher: So there are a lot of people that actually have an egg to lay?*

*Participant 5: Yes*

*Researcher: How does that make you feel? Naya?*

*Participant 10: Uncomfortable*

*Researcher: Why do you feel uncomfortable?*

*Participant 5: Because you don't always want to follow your parents' decisions. Then more people in your neighbourhood come and tell you, you are not good in this, but you are good in this and so it makes you completely uncertain.*

It is evident that the participants were experiencing external pressure from a variety of people and that this was causing them to feel uncertain about their career choices and doubting their own abilities.

- **Siblings**

Siblings were also identified as having a positive influence on the participants' career choices, although not being such a strong influence as that of parents and teachers. Only four of the participants either mentioned having received advice from their siblings or their siblings being the people they would consider asking for advice. It thus confirms what Schultheiss, Kress, Manzi and Glasscock (2001) found in their research with college students with regard to relational influences in career development.

However, in the theme of siblings, two sub-themes came to light, namely siblings acting as role models for participants, and secondly, siblings providing participants with direct career advice. Participant four said his brother told him not to make the same wrong decisions as he



had made, while participant three stated that she was considering the same career path as her sister. Participant six's response demonstrated the career advice given by siblings:

*My sister wants me to be a chef to earn nice money.*

- **Extended family**

The extended family was also identified as having an influence on the participants' career choices. Five of the participants mentioned a family member having a positive influence on their career development. Participant two specifically stated that he viewed his uncle as someone that he could talk to when having to make an important decision. Participant ten wrote during the systems-based activity that her uncle told her she will get far in her churches youth, while participant five mentioned that he perceived his great grandmother as a role model, because she was very wise.

- **Teachers**

Albien (2013) identified teachers as having a positive influence on adolescents' career choices as they assist learners in a process of reflection to become aware of their abilities and play a supportive role in making career choices. A similar theme was recognised during the present research study, with statements such as *My teacher has told me that I can read well* and *My previous grade 8 and 9 educator, because she always encouraged me*. However, another sub-theme was identified, namely teachers being role models for the participants. This was seen in the fact that five of the participants specified that they already had or would consider talking to their teachers should they have a difficult decision to make. Furthermore, participant eleven (as mentioned earlier in her case discussion) referred to her teacher as a role model, because she was able to rise above her circumstances and to make a success of her life.

- **Friends**

The influence of friends also came across strongly. This influence was both described as a positive and a negative influence. Six of the participants mentioned the influence of their friends on their career choices. Four of these responses were positive and included responses such as: *My friends, because they always think that I dream far (participant 1)*. The other two responses were negative. Participant seven's response was specifically noticed as she stated: *My friends said that my future is boring*. Participant four also mentioned that his friends influenced him both negatively and positively, because he did not make his own subject choices, but initially made choices based on those of his friends. On the positive side, they encouraged him by telling him that he played soccer well.

- **Inadequate role models**

According to Markstrom, Marshall and Tyron (as cited in Kerperlman & Mosher, 2004), adolescents residing in rural and peri-urban areas may find it difficult to build constructive support networks which helps to develop their resilience. In the present research, this influence was specifically noticed as there were no adequate role models. As mentioned earlier, the participants' role models were mostly limited to their family members, teachers and a few community members. Only participant six mentioned a professional person as having influenced her career choices positively. It is thus evident that the participants did not have the opportunity and/or exposure to network and build positive relationships with professional people in their field of career interest.

- **Media**

The media such as the newspapers, television and magazines were also noted as both a positive and a negative influence on the participants' career choices. The positive aspect was that the participants could have access to professional people, albeit not directly, and this

could inspire them to make certain career choices. This was specifically seen in participant ten's response in the photo voice activity. She took the following photo:



**Photo 4.7: Naya's photo of an athlete**

During our discussion about her reason for taking this specific photo, she stated that she took the photo, because she enjoyed athletics. Although not included in the photo, she also mentioned that Caster Semenya was her role model. The negative influence of the media was observed in the fact that television programmes often left the participants with a limited understanding of these careers. As a result, the career choices were often based on perceptions rather than on realities (Albien, 2013). This was prevalent in participant nine's response to a career in forensics: *I saw a documentary in which real people did it...it feels uncomfortable*. Participant eleven's response was a further example. She stated: *I saw on television how to be a lawyer, strict and you must be able to lie*. It is thus evident that the participants often based their decisions on the information gained from the television.

- **Inadequate resources**

Ladany et al. (1997) argue that at-risk learners who may be interested in investigating certain career choices may be limited due to inadequate resources at their school. The current study confirmed this shortcoming as many of the participants mentioned considering pursuing careers pathways such as medicine, engineering and winemaking, but that the lack of resources at their school was limiting them. One example is that science was not offered as a subject choice in grade 10.

- **Inadequate social and cultural capital**

The current research study furthermore underlined Basit's (2012, p.130) notion that, although educational 'provision' and career options are accessible to all adolescents, it is not possible for some (in the case of South Africa, the majority) to use it due to the inequality in adolescents "needs, abilities and aspirations and the lack of cultural and social capital". The specific theme that was identified is inadequate social and cultural capital (this concept will be discussed in more detail in Section 4.3.4). According to Basit (2012), part of social capital is parents who are involved in their children's education and who encourages them. As could be seen from the earlier discussion, most of the participants' parents were involved to a certain degree, and there was thus a degree of social capital. Their parents' advice, however, was very limited and no mention was made of the participants having adequate access to other social resources compared to their affluent counterparts.

To summarise, a number of social influences were identified. These were the influence of parents, the pressure of parents and the broader community, siblings, the extended family, teachers, friends, inadequate role models, a lack of resources at school and inadequate social capital. These influences were both positive and negative and some of the influences were mentioned as having a dual influence.

### **Environmental-societal system influences**

The environmental-societal system is concerned with the impact that the broader society and/or the environment can have on the individual. Although these systems do not seem to have a direct influence on the individual, the indirect impact can be significant. These influences include location, government decisions, historical trends, globalisation, socioeconomic status and the employment market (Patton & McMahon, 2014). According to Naicker (as cited in Albien, 2013), these influences are often a reflection of the power relations and opportunity structures in society. This section examines a number of these influences on the participants' career choices. Some of these influences were noted by the participants and others were derived from their responses in the light of the current social, economic and political climate in South Africa.

- **Low socioeconomic status**

On the surface level, specific themes with regard to having a low SES was identified. According to sFoxcroft and Roodt (2009), the SES defines which type of facilities individuals will most likely have access to, for example schools, libraries and different social services. In the current study, the themes that were identified having a direct impact on access to facilities were finances and transport.

Eight of the participants mentioned transport. Participant ten was the only participant that did not view transport as a negative influence on her career choices. The other participants all felt that it was disabling them to pursue their career goals. Participant seven mentioned: *The college is far to get there. There is no transport available.* Five of the participants also identified inadequate finances having a negative influence on their career choices. They all felt that they did not have the necessary funding available for further education. This was specifically observed in the following responses:

*Participant 5: It is too much money and my mom and dad can't do it.*

*Participant 11: Yes my mom is a domestic worker; she helps and cleans houses, my dad works with wine. He delivers wine at bars and so he delivers wine at bars and the finances are not good, because we are three children that attend school and my mom does not pay a lot and my dad also does not pay a lot. He buys food and then gives my mom the money and there is not enough money for me to go and study one day.*

- **Work opportunities**

The influence of work opportunities was also highlighted. This influence was deemed as a dual entity and indicated the perceptions of the different participants, and the impact that perceptions could have on an individual's ability to make career choices. Participant one and eleven mentioned a lack of work opportunities as a negative influence on their career choices. Evidence for this could be seen in participant one's response: *There is not work in my environment now.* Participant five, on the other hand, mentioned: *There are a lot of work and opportunities and it is easy.*

- **Cultural capital**

A distinction is made between two forms of cultural capital, namely static and dynamic cultural capital. In terms of static cultural capital, all the participants in this study were at a disadvantage, because of their low socioeconomic background. In terms of dynamic cultural capital, a gap in terms of resources and experiences existed. This could be seen in the negative influences that were identified in the environmental-societal system, for example a lack of finances and transport.

- **Unfavourable environment**

The participants' responses included comments about the environment as being a negative influence. This theme was divided into two sub-themes namely negative practices and individuals' attitudes. Participant eleven's response demonstrated the undesirable practices that were typical of her environment:

*The bottom part is not a very good environment, because here are a lot of criminals and people that sells drugs to young people and alcohol and I don't think it is a good environment. They are not a good example for our youth.* Participant four's response: *The thing that still bothers me is the people that don't want to get up and work*, as well as participant eight's response: *A lot of people just sit at home and they don't work, there are work but they are too lazy to get up and go work. So there are a lot of children that just sit and do nothing* are examples of the attitudes of many of the people in their environment.

This finding thus seems to confirm what Galvaan (as cited in Galvaan, 2015) stated that when a society, as in the case of South Africa, has a history and collective experiences of colonialism and ongoing racial and socio-economic class disparities, marginalised groups often continue to make career choices that allow situations of career injustice. It therefore implies that adolescents "learn how to live, be and do" in their community which is constructed by their experiences of living in that community and knowing what is realistic there (Gavaan, 2015, p.50). This results in adolescents making career choices that are limiting to them. They do not question if and how the cultural, social, economic and historic circumstances might inhibit their thoughts and decisions, and in doing so, they "contribute to maintaining the social inequalities" (Galvaan, 2015, p.50).

- **Lack of power and control**

Furthermore, a strong link was found between the theme of individuals' attitudes and inability to engage in reflective practices, and their lack of power and control. The theme of

lack and power and control was noticed throughout the data collection process. According to Prilleltensky, Nelson and Peirson (2001, p.149), power and control can be defined as “having opportunities to satisfy basic human needs, to experience participation and self-determination, and to develop competence and self-efficacy”. The latter authors believe that when children are provided with the opportunities to participate in different settings, especially if they can influence the setting by having a voice, competency and self-determination develop. In order for this to happen, a more equal power relationship is needed between adults and the youth (Prilleltensky et al., 2001). In the current research, the participants’ behaviour illustrated a lack of power and control. They found it difficult to voice their opinions, especially during the focus group, remained quiet for long periods of time, even though they were prompted with many open-ended questions. When a participant was willing to respond, the response was often met with laughter from the other participants. Without the ability to exercise their power and control it is very likely that adolescents from low SES backgrounds will not make career decisions that will contribute to changing the current socio-economic climate of the country.

In summary, many different influences directly affected the participants’ career constructions, as well as the career choices that they were considering. The influences that they were aware of were mostly superficial. Furthermore, it stretched beyond to include influences that contribute to maintaining social inequalities and the way in which society is structured with regards to providing adolescents with opportunities to develop power and control.

### **Change over time**

This system refers to the notion that career development is a life-long process and requires on-going decision-making over time (Patton & McMahon, 2014). Three main themes emerged from this system, namely a desire to rise above current circumstances, financial stability and family.



- **Rise above circumstances**

Five of the participants indicated the desire to rise above their circumstances. Participant eleven specifically stated: *I don't want to live where I live now*. Participant three also said: *Want to move away from the farm. I want to go and live in New York*. Participant four reiterated that he wanted to study in America. The participants thus had career aspirations that would allow them to have a completely different life than the one that they were experiencing at the time. It is possible that their ambitions of studying and/or living abroad were largely a metaphor of wanting to improve their circumstances.

- **Financial stability**

Financial stability was another theme that was identified in the change-over-time system. Participant four stated: *And I want to buy myself a beautiful home one day for me and my child*. Participant two wanted to live a comfortable life, whilst participant five mentioned: *I want to make a lot of money and I want to help people and my family*. It is thus evident that the participants had career aspirations that included earning a steady income, which would undoubtedly influence their career choices.

- **Family**

The influence of family was further elicited. This theme was divided into two sub-themes, namely having their own family and supporting their current family. The notion of having one's own family was specifically seen in participant three's response: *To have a family*. It can either be interpreted that at the time she did not feel as if she was part of a family and would like that to change, or that she would one day like to have her own family. Participant two stated: *Put family before work*. Having a family and specifically placing family first before work would have an influence on the participants' career choices as they would then have to choose careers that are family-friendly.

Participant four's response was demonstrative of the notion of providing for one's family. In her words:

*I don't live in a good environment. I would like to change it and I want to put my parents in a better environment where they can leave their house and there are not people who can break in and steal all their stuff.*

Participant five also stated: *I want my mom and dad to go live overseas, I will give them a lot of money.* The participants therefore felt responsible to provide for their parents one day, so that they can also have a comfortable life style.

In summary, the participants' responses indicated that they had thought about future career aspirations that they would like to achieve. The overarching theme that was elicited, however, was the fact that they wanted to live in different circumstances than in which they were currently living. This emerged in the three different themes, namely the desire to rise above their circumstances, financial stability and family.

#### **4.4. CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this chapter was to present the data collected from the eleven participants in two stages in order to answer the research question, as well as the sub-questions as outlined in Chapter 1. Firstly, a within-case analysis of two of the participants was presented as they were encompassing of all the participants. This analysis was done to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' career constructions, as well as the different influences on their career choices. These were identified based on the STF of career development which was one of the theoretical frameworks of this study. Secondly, an exposition cross-case analysis was presented. The purpose of this analysis was to identify recurring themes across the cases in order to derive, interpret and discuss the research findings.

Chapter 5 will consist of concluding remarks pertaining to adolescents' from a low SES background career constructions and the influences on their career choices. Both the limitations and strengths of the study, as well as recommendations for future research will be discussed.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUDING REMARKS, RECOMMENDATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND STRENGTHS**

#### **5.1. INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this research study was to gain insight into adolescents', attending a low-income school, career constructions, as well as the different influences on their career choices. Information, such as the aforementioned, is vital for the development and implementation of effective career education that will assist the youth to develop and achieve their career goals. The reason for specifically choosing to study the views of adolescents attending a low-income school was that limited research has been conducted on the career development of non-dominant groups. Additionally, the study aimed to provide the participants with the opportunity to engage in a meaningful career education process by means of identifying the different influences on their career choices, as well as the role that these different influences could have on their career development and choices.

A qualitative case study design was employed during this study as it is more flexible and allows practical considerations to influence the final research design (Durrheim, 2006). It was thus well-suited to explore the following questions about adolescents attending a low-income school: their perceptions of careers, the positive and negative influences on career choices, as well as the relative values that they attach to careers. The participants therefore had the opportunity to voice their understandings and opinions by means of a collective instrumental case study design.

Existing literature in South Africa emphasise the fact that limited career research has been conducted that is independent, or an adaptation, of Westernised theories, counselling methods

or assessment measures (Stead & Watson, 2006). Career research and practice locally have mostly failed to represent the life and work experiences of the majority of South Africans (Watson & Stead, 2002). Stead and Watson (2006) argue that in order to overcome this challenge, indigenous approaches to career psychology should be developed. This research therefore aimed to assist in addressing this challenge by gaining insight into the influences on career choices of adolescents who were previously excluded from career research, and to develop context-specific career counselling practices.

The study provided me with insight into the participants' perceptions and understanding with regard to their career constructions and the influences on their career choices. The primary research question, as well as the sub-questions were addressed during this study. It was established that the participants' understanding of the construct of career was linear, that their awareness in terms of the different influences were largely situated within the individual system, and that many of the influences in the environmental-societal system, which they were not aware of, contributed to maintaining social inequalities. It therefore proves that, although there is an increasing awareness of the necessity to investigate the "relevancy of its [career] approaches" in the South African context, the predominant approaches that are used are still westernised and more quantitative in nature (Watson, 2010, p.26).

## **5.2. CONCLUDING REMARKS**

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the research was conducted in a historically Afrikaans-speaking coloured residential area of the Western Cape. There were eleven participants in total, all adolescents from a low-income school, who participated in different data collection activities.

The participants' career constructions were largely representative of a modernistic approach to career development as their responses indicated linear and mainly decontextualised views (Watson & Kuit, 2007). The respondents' views were furthermore future-oriented, but at the

same time, showed limited insight with regard to the fact that they already had to make certain career choices, for example subject choices.

Miller (2006) studied the career maturity of learners from a disadvantaged context and concluded that the participants did not have the necessary abilities to make informed career choices. Similar conclusions were drawn from the current research study as the most important influence was the participants' lack of career maturity. According to Miller (2006, p.19), career maturity consists out of two dimensions namely content and process maturity. Content maturity involves "consistency and realism of career choices", whilst process maturity is concerned with "career choice attitudes of involvement and orientation, decisiveness, involvement, independence, and compromise, as well as career choice competencies of self-appraisal, access to occupational formation, goal selection, planning, and problem solving ability". Given the influences identified in Chapter four, such as unrealistic career expectations, inadequate knowledge and limited exposure to the world of work, career uncertainty and limited self-reflective skills, it was evident that many of these influences were absent in the participants day-to-day functioning and frame of reference.

The research study also emphasised that career research and practice in South Africa still tend to favour more traditional approaches, although there has been a slight shift towards more empowering theoretical approaches (Watson & Stead, 2002). This change was observed in the fact that the participants were mostly aware of intra-individual influences on their career choices, which is characteristic of traditional approaches, such as the person-environment fit. They were able to identify a number of influences in their social and environmental-societal systems, but found it difficult to engage in reflective practices with regard to how these different influences had an impact on them. There were a number of influences identified in the social system. These were parents, siblings, extended family, teachers, friends, role

models, the media and resources. Many of these influences were identified as being a dual entity by having both positive and negative influences on the participants' career choices. It was evident that the different social influences had reciprocal influences on each other, as they were either able to form part of more than one influence or they had a significant impact on a different influence (Schulteiss et al., 2001). This illustrates the multi-dimensional nature of these influences, the intricacy of the theory and the different ways in which relationships are used to explore career pathways and make career decisions (Schulteiss et al., 2001).

The participants' low SES was identified as having a major influence on their career choices in terms of access to resources. The participants specifically mentioned being worried about finances, transport and having access to work opportunities. Also, Dass-Brailsford (2005) mentioned that when children have limited access to basic resources it has a detrimental effect on their academic performance. This, in turn, will have a negative influence on the career choices that are available to them. Therefore, the influence of access to resources ultimately leads to issues pertaining to social justice in South Africa's systems and structures such as education, the labour force and the welfare system (Goodman, Liang, Helms, Latta, Sparks & Weintraub, 2004), and how it contributes to maintaining the status quo.

The participants' lack of power and control is a further influence that has widespread consequences. Prilleltensky et al. (2001) are of the opinion that power and control provides individuals with the foundation that is needed to develop wellness and health. The participants' lack of power and control was consequently leaving them disempowered which would have a negative impact on their wellbeing. This is reason for concern as wellbeing influences individuals' competence and self-efficacy (Prilleltensky et al., 2001), which in turn, influence their ability to make career choices. This influence also raises social justice issues as power and control is a result of reciprocal determinism between the individual and

the environment (Prilleltensky et al., 2001). Although power and control appears to be inherent to individuals, it is not possible for them to develop it without the environment providing them with appropriate opportunities. The environment, in turn, is only able to provide such opportunities if governments of countries develop and implement social policies which promote the wellness of all their citizens. The values that these governments hold, as well as the class interests that they represent, regulate the resources that they will provide (Prilleltensky et al., 2001). In South Africa there is currently a vast difference between the wealthy and the disadvantaged in terms of access to resources and thus the ability to take power and control.

Although the participants showed a lack of control and power, without consciously being aware of it, it was evident that they still had high aspirations for the future of their families and themselves. The undertone of their responses indicated desires of gaining high-status jobs, material wealth and broadening their horizons by moving away from their community. This influence is viewed as being both positive and negative. Positively, it demonstrated that the participants had a high measure of aspiration capital which, as explained in the literature review, refers to a need for ‘social mobility’ due to the encouragement of different role players (Basit, 2012, p.135). Negatively, due to the participants’ limited exposure to the practicality of their aspirations, they might not have an accurate understanding of the potential barriers they might encounter to achieve their aspirations (Watson, McMahon, Foxcroft, & Els, 2010).

The objective of the current research study was furthermore to add to the underexplored field of the influences on career choices of adolescents attending a low-income school in the Western Cape. Consequently, the findings may contribute to the body of extant literature on career choices (Kruger, 2011, p.121). The findings could also assist teachers, career



counsellors, the DoBE, policy and theory developers in gaining a deeper understanding of how adolescents from a low SES background perceive the Construct of career, as well as the different influences on their career choices. Lastly, the recommendations can be employed to develop indigenous approaches to career counselling with the purpose of providing relevant career counselling to the majority of the South African youth by addressing the challenges and building on the strengths.

### **5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

As mentioned earlier, the current research explained adolescents' career constructions, as well as the different influences on their career choices. Both positive and negative influences were identified in order to gain context-specific insight which may be used to develop relevant career counselling programmes. It was also highlighted that traditional approaches to career counselling are still favoured in South Africa, resulting in the upholding of the status quo which raises issues of social injustice.

#### **Individual system**

A lack of career maturity was identified as a major negative influence on the participants' career constructions and their ability to identify influences on their career choices. As explained in Chapter 4, career maturity is a complex phenomenon that involves a number of processes. It is important that interventions are developed and executed in order to develop career maturity. According to Miller (2006), this can be realised by ensuring that topics such as self-knowledge, decision-making, problem-solving, access to information with regard to different careers, as well as job shadowing are incorporated in the life orientation curricula of schools.

Additionally, Watson et al. (2010) found that adolescents who attend low-income schools are deprived of the opportunity to have proper exposure to the realities of the world of work. The

authors recommend that programme developers should design career programmes in such a way that adolescents can form a link between career information and their career aspirations.

### **Social system**

The influences identified in the social system played a significant role in affecting the participants' career constructions, as well as shaping many of the influences on their career choices. Schultheiss et al. (2001) contend that relationships are important as there are high levels of stress involved when engaging in career exploration and decision-making. These relationships thus provide a sense of emotional support and closeness needed during this time.

It is therefore important to make adolescents aware of the importance of these relationships and other influences, as well as to educate them in how these factors may affect their career choices. According to Albien (2013), previous research results emphasised the importance of encouraging adolescents from disadvantaged backgrounds, and those who lack sufficient role models, to reinforce their relationships and also find mentoring relationships. In other words, they should be encouraged to establish positive relationships with people whom they trust and admire, as well as be given the opportunity to be exposed to individuals with different careers who could inspire them and act as role models.

Furthermore, Seabi et al. (2010) found that parents can be a vital influence in adolescents' career choices through encouragement, but that it is important that parents do not force their children to make certain career choices as this can strain the relationship. Cooperation and negotiation must therefore be emphasised to ensure that adolescents experience their parents' involvement in a positive manner (Seabi et al., 2010). As mentioned earlier, the parents' involvement in their children's career choices are mostly limited to encouraging them to

attain high-status jobs. It is thus recommended that parents are included in the career counselling process so that they can understand how they can best support their children.

### **Environmental-societal system**

Issues of social justice were identified as having major influences on the participants' career choices and it is therefore important to redress these issues in different ways. Watson (2010) asserts that, in order to properly understand social justice, it is essential to consider the context, as social justice issues vary from country to country and in different societal contexts. It is therefore vital to see career development in its broader, existing context to be able to identify issues pertaining to social justice (Hansen, 2003).

In his article about redressing social justice, Watson (2010) lists several ways in which South Africa can redress issues of social justice. He mentions that up to now South Africa has developed many policies, but that it has not led to any action. The focus is largely on developing inputs and not evaluating whether the outputs are effective (Hemson & O'Donovan, as cited in Watson, 2010). This has contributed to social transformation that benefits the middle- and upper-class, hence maintaining a culture of inequality. It is thus important that more attention is paid to ensure that career development policies are applied so that career development becomes accessible to all. Additionally, he mentions that a major effort should be made to ensure collaboration between policy makers, career academics and researchers who have been working individually. This fragmented approach has resulted in an absence of leadership which makes it difficult to redress social justice issues (Watson, 2010, p.27).

Africa, and more specifically South Africa, should furthermore apply their resources to develop indigenous approaches to psychology in order to provide career counselling services that are relevant to the majority of the country's citizens, especially those who live in scarce

resourced communities (Ebersöhn, 2012). Only when the theory and practice psychology of deviates from Westernised approaches to career development will it be relevant and able to address inequalities by developing resilience and empowerment.

### **Change over time**

The participants were mostly future-oriented in their responses with regard to the way in which time influenced and will influence their career choices. They did not demonstrate real insight into how their past and present could possibly influence their career choices. It is therefore important to incorporate this aspect into career counselling approaches as this will challenge and encourage adolescents to be assertive when taking responsibility for their career development. It will also assist them with gaining a more holistic understanding of the career development process, the construct of career, and the fact that their present choices may potentially have an influence on their future career choices. Additionally, it is important for psychologists in the field of career counselling to be aware of how change over time has influenced the development of theory and practice, as well as the way in which the political climate over time has contributed to issues of social justice faced currently. This will allow for the development and implementation of a vision for career theory as well as counselling methods that are inclusive in nature.

### **5.4. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Several limitations were identified in this research study. Firstly, the scope of the study was relatively narrow as it made use of a collective instrumental case study. As a result, the case study could not provide trustworthy information that could be generalised to the wider population (Flyvberg, 2011). It was nevertheless not the purpose of this study to provide generalised information, but to gain insight into the participants' career constructions and the influences on their career choices.

Secondly, as the research was qualitative in nature and had a focused scope, only a small sample size was used consisting of grade nine learners from only one high school. The results were thus not representative of the general population of high school learners and thus not generalisable to the wider population.

Finally, also due to the narrow scope of the research, the focus was on the perceptions and experiences of grade nine learners, but it would have been of value if the perceptions of learners from different grades could have been included, as well as the perceptions of teachers, career counsellors and parents who are in close contact with the learners on a continual basis.

#### **5.5. STRENGTHS OF THE STUDY**

This study had several strengths. Firstly, it gave the participants the opportunity to become aware of and possibly take ownership of their own career development by engaging in different qualitative approaches to career development. The participants mentioned that the process was beneficial to them, because it motivated them to believe in their abilities and to achieve success. Participant five also specifically stated that it encouraged him to be part of a group discussing career counselling. He said the following:

*Yes, M'am, it was very interesting for me to more learn about what other children like and what I like. The lifestyle that they live and I live, see M'am, I always thought that my lifestyle is lower than the rest's lifestyle and I have more problems than other people, but now I think to myself it is not like that. There are people and children that have bigger problems as I have, see M'am, then it now makes my problems bigger than theirs. I learned a lot about other people and I learned a lot about myself. So, the*

*process was really interesting to learn about other people and what I learned about myself.*

Secondly, the study provided me with first-hand, in-depth knowledge and understanding of the participants' career constructions and the different influences on their career choices. It thus contributed in a positive way to the extant field of literature when it comes to qualitative approaches towards career research, which in turn, are needed develop effective context-specific approaches to career counselling.

Lastly, by using the STF, the study was able to provide insight into the way in which the different systems influenced adolescents' career constructions, as well as their career choices. These insights can be used to implement change in the different systems.

## **5.6. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

As the current research made use of a small sample size and the findings are therefore not generalisable to the whole population of adolescents, it is suggested that similar studies are conducted in different low-income schools (Patton et al., 2003). This will assist in gaining a holistic understanding of the different career constructions, as well as the different influences on career choices. It is furthermore suggested that a comparative study is conducted in both a low-income and an affluent school to shed more light on how these different settings influence the participants' career constructions and influences on career choices.

Furthermore, Watson and Stead (2002, p.30) infer that it is important to become involved in "qualitative, participatory, action-orientated, and indigenous approaches" in research to encourage the advocating of developing and implementing policies which are "overtly moral enterprises" and therefore have the ability to address social inequality. It is therefore evident that, to address issues of social inequality, further research is needed that will contribute to

the production of indigenous knowledge systems that can formulate and implement inclusive policies in terms of career development.

## **5.7. CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS**

I decided to focus my research on the career constructions of and the influences of career choices on adolescents attending a low-income school as a result of my involvement and interactions with children coming from low socioeconomic backgrounds. It made me increasingly aware of the fact that their career choices and aspirations were mostly unrealistic and based on misconceptions. I thus started questioning the reasons behind their thinking and it led to the development of my research questions.

The current research helped me to gain a deeper understanding of the different influences on the career choices of adolescents attending a low-income school. The use of the STF and qualitative methods of inquiry made it clear that career development and career choices are multi-faceted constructs in which all the different systems play a role.

The research findings specifically highlighted the way in which the current social, political and economic climate in South Africa is contributing to maintaining the status quo. The same is true for the current stance of career counselling. In order for this field to take a stance against social injustices it is essential that researchers, policy developers and practitioners move away from the traditional westernised approaches to career counselling and focus on the development and implementation of indigenous approaches to career counselling that will consider and incorporate the daily realities of the majority of South Africa's citizens.

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# APPENDIX A: LETTER OF ETHICAL CLEARANCE BY THE RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE



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jou kennisvenoot • your knowledge partner

## Approval Notice New Application

20-Jun-2015  
Van Wyk, Liesl L

**Proposal #:** DESC/VanWykMay2015/8

**Title:** The career constructions of and influences on career choices of adolescents in a low-income school

Dear Miss Liesl Van Wyk,

Your New Application received on 07-May-2015, was reviewed  
Please note the following information about your approved research proposal:

**Proposal Approval Period:** 29-May-2015 -28-May-2016

Please take note of the general Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

Please remember to use your proposal number (DESC/VanWykMay2015/8) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your research proposal.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

Also note that a progress report should be submitted to the Committee before the approval period has expired if a continuation is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary).

This committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research, established by the Declaration of Helsinki and the Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes 2004 (Department of Health). Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number REC-050411-032.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research.

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at 218089183.

**Included Documents:**  
DESC Application forms

Sincerely,

Clarissa Graham  
REC Coordinator  
Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

# Investigator Responsibilities

## Protection of Human Research Participants

Some of the general responsibilities investigators have when conducting research involving human participants are listed below:

1. Conducting the Research. You are responsible for making sure that the research is conducted according to the REC approved research protocol. You are also responsible for the actions of all your co-investigators and research staff involved with this research. You must also ensure that the research is conducted within the standards of your field of research.

2. Participant Enrollment. You may not recruit or enroll participants prior to the REC approval date or after the expiration date of REC approval. All recruitment materials for any form of media must be approved by the REC prior to their use. If you need to recruit more participants than was noted in your REC approval letter, you must submit an amendment requesting an increase in the number of participants.

3. Informed Consent. You are responsible for obtaining and documenting effective informed consent using only the REC-approved consent documents, and for ensuring that no human participants are involved in research prior to obtaining their informed consent. Please give all participants copies of the signed informed consent documents. Keep the originals in your secured research files for at least five (5) years.

4. Continuing Review. The REC must review and approve all REC-approved research proposals at intervals appropriate to the degree of risk but not less than once per year. There is no grace period. Prior to the date on which the REC approval of the research expires, it is your responsibility to submit the continuing review report in a timely fashion to ensure a lapse in REC approval does not occur. If REC approval of your research lapses, you must stop new participant enrollment, and contact the REC office immediately.

5. Amendments and Changes. If you wish to amend or change any aspect of your research (such as research design, interventions or procedures, number of participants, participant population, informed consent document, instruments, surveys or recruiting material), you must submit the amendment to the REC for review using the current Amendment Form. You may not initiate any amendments or changes to your research without first obtaining written REC review and approval. The only exception is when it is necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants and the REC should be immediately informed of this necessity.

6. Adverse or Unanticipated Events. Any serious adverse events, participant complaints, and all unanticipated problems that involve risks to participants or others, as well as any research related injuries, occurring at this institution or at other performance sites must be reported to Malene Fouch within five (5) days of discovery of the incident. You must also report any instances of serious or continuing problems, or non-compliance with the REC's requirements for protecting human research participants. The only exception to this policy is that the death of a research participant must be reported in accordance with the Stellenbosch University Research Ethics Committee Standard Operating Procedures. All reportable events should be submitted to the REC using the Serious Adverse Event Report Form.

7. Research Record Keeping. You must keep the following research related records, at a minimum, in a secure location for a minimum of five years: the REC approved research proposal and all amendments; all informed consent documents; recruiting materials; continuing review reports; adverse or unanticipated events; and all correspondence from the REC.

8. Provision of Counselling or emergency support. When a dedicated counsellor or psychologist provides support to a participant without prior REC review and approval, to the extent permitted by law, such activities will not be recognised as research nor the data used in support of research. Such cases should be indicated in the progress report or final report.

9. Final reports. When you have completed (no further participant enrollment, interactions, interventions or data analysis) or stopped work on your research, you must submit a Final Report to the REC.

10. On-Site Evaluations, Inspections, or Audits. If you are notified that your research will be reviewed or audited by the sponsor or any other external agency or any internal group, you must inform the REC immediately of the impending audit/evaluation.

**APPENDIX B:**  
**RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER FROM**  
**WESTERN CAPE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

Directorate: Research



[Audrey.wyngaard@westerncape.gov.za](mailto:Audrey.wyngaard@westerncape.gov.za)

tel: +27 021 467 9272

Fax: 0865902282

Private Bag x9114, Cape Town, 8000

wced.wcape.gov.za

**REFERENCE:** 20150312-44899

**ENQUIRIES:** Dr A T Wyngaard

Ms Liesl Van Wyk  
19 La Belle Vie  
Klein Welgevonden Street  
Klein Welgevonden  
Stellenbosch  
7600

**Dear Ms Liesl Van Wyk**

**RESEARCH PROPOSAL: THE CAREER CONSTRUCTIONS OF AND INFLUENCES ON CAREER CHOICES OF ADOLESCENTS IN A LOW-INCOME SCHOOL**

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **01 April 2015 till 30 June 2015**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

**The Director: Research Services**  
**Western Cape Education Department**  
**Private Bag X9114**  
**CAPE TOWN**  
**8000**

We wish you success in your research.  
Kind regards.

Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard

**Directorate: Research**

**DATE: 12 March 2015**



**APPENDIX C:**  
**RESEARCH APPROVAL AND CONSENT LETTER FROM THE**  
**PRINCIPAL**



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Die hoof

Mnr. XXX

XXX Skool

3 April 2015

Versoek om 'n studie te doen te XXX Skool.

Titel van studie: Die konstruksies van die term loopbaan en invloede op loopbaankeuses van adolessente in 'n lae-inkomste skool.

Ek is tans geregistreer as 'n meesterstudent in die Departement Opvoedkundige Sielkunde aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch. Om my graad suksesvol af te handel, vereis dit 'n tesis waarvoor ek navorsing moet doen. Daar word ook vereis dat ek toestemming kry van die Weskaap Departement van Onderwys, sowel as die skool waar ek beplan om die studie te doen.

Ek wil graag my navorsing by XXX Skool doen. Dus vra ek u toestemming om navorsing in u skool te doen. Die fokus van my studie is om adolessente in 'n lae-inkomste skool se konstruksies van die term loopbaan en die invloede op hul loopbaankeuses te verken. Daarom sal ek graag tydens twee lewensoriënteringsperiodes die '*My Systems of Career Influences*' (MSCI) boek saam met Graad 9 leerders wil voltooi en daarna wil ek 'n groep van ongeveer dertig leerders vra om deel te neem aan 'n 'photovoice' projek en 'n fokusgroep onderhoud wat dan as die navorsing sal dien. Die navorsing is dus beide 'n loopbaan inligting intervensie en 'n navorsingsprojek.

Die navorsing sal plaasvind vanaf April tot Junie. Die navorsing sal in vier fases plaasvind. Die eerste fase behels die voltooiing van die MSCI boek met al die graad nege leerders. Die tweede fase behels die seleksie van die deelnemers, asook 'n verduideliking van die konfidensialiteits- en anonimiteitsooreenkoms en die teken van toestemmingsvorme deur die deelnemers en hul ouers. Die derde fase behels die insameling van die data deur middel van foto's wat die leerders self sal neem en die vierde fase behels die fokusgroep onderhoud.

Dit sal hoog op prys gestel word indien u vir my toestemming kan verleen om die navorsing in u skool te doen. Die inligting wat die Graad 9-leerders sal verskaf oor hul konstruksies van die term loopbaan en die invloede op hul loopbaankeuses, sal ryk data voorsien wat ek kan gebruik vir my studie en ook later kan gebruik in die ontwikkeling van loopbaanvoorligtingsprogramme wat spesifiek gerig is op leerders in lae-inkomste skole.

Vriendelike groete,

Liesl van Wyk

Hiermee gee ek.....hoof van XXX  
Skool toestemming dat Me. Liesl van Wyk navorsing in hierdie skool mag doen.

Geteken te.....op hierdie.....dag van  
.....2015.

**APPENDIX D:**  
**PARENT CONSENT FOR CHILD TO PARTICIPATE IN THE**  
**RESEARCH STUDY**



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INWILLIGING OM DEEL TE NEEM AAN NAVORSING

---

**DIE KONSTRUKSIES VAN DIE TERM LOOPBAAN EN INVLOEDE OP**  
**LOOPBAANKEUSES VAN ADOLESSENTE IN 'N LAE-INKOMSTE SKOOL**

Beste Ouers/Voogde

Ek is Liesl van Wyk, 'n meesterstudent in Opvoedkundige Sielkunde aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch en doen navorsing oor adolessente se idees aangaande loopbane. Ek vra u toestemming sodat u kind kan deelneem aan die navorsing wat met graad 9 leerders by XXX skool plaasvind. Die huidige studie sal my help om my Meesters in Opvoedkundige Sielkunde te voltooi en sal lei tot 'n navorsingstesis. Hierdie studie sal ook voordelig vir u kind wees deurdat dit hom/haar sal help met loopbaankeuses, soos byvoorbeeld vakkeuses vir graad 10, en dit sal ook help met die beplanning van toekomstige loopbaanvoorligtingsprogramme in Jamestown.

**1. DOEL VAN DIE STUDIE**

Die doel van die studie is om ondersoek in te stel oor die idees, mense en omgewing wat adolessente se loopbaankeuses beïnvloed, asook hoe hulle die term loopbaan verstaan. Hierdie inligting sal gebruik word om inligting te kry oor die loopbaanontwikkelingsproses om toekomstige loopbaanvoorligtingsprogramme vir XXX leerders te verbeter.

**2. PROSEDURES**

Indien u, u kind toestemming gee om aan die studie deel te neem, sal die volgende van u en u kind gevra word:

- 'n “My System of Career Influences (MSCI) boek gaan deur u kind, gedurende 'n lewensoriënteringsperiode, met toestemming van die hoof, voltooi word. Die navorser sal u kind help om die boek te voltooi. Die boek bestaan uit vrae wat gaan oor u kind se loopbaanidees, stap-vir-stap instruksies, voorbeelde en ook diagramme wat u kind se loopbaaninvloede uitbeeld.
- U kind sal hierna in 'n sessie, gedurende 'n saalperiode of na skool deelneem, waarin hy/sy meer sal leer oor die neem van foto's en daarna gevra sal word om foto's te gaan neem wat sy/haar loopbaanidees en/of invloede daarop uitbeeld.
- Hierna sal u kind in 'n fokusgroeponderhoud(groepsgesprek) deelneem waar hy/sy die geleentheid sal kry om terugvoer te gee oor die foto's wat hy/sy geneem het, asook oor sy/haar loopbaanidees.

### **3. MOONTLIKE RISIKO'S EN ONGEMAKLIKHEID**

U kind kan aanvanklik skaam voel, maar die navorser sal haar beste probeer om u kind gemaklik te laat voel. As hy/sy nie iets verstaan nie kan hy/sy enige tyd net vra en dit sal aan hom/haar verduidelik word, want wat hy/sy dink is baie waardevol vir ons. Hy/sy kan dalk angstig voel oor sy/haar toekomstige loopbaanidees en die keuses wat hy/sy moet maak. As hy/sy nodig het om met iemand te praat oor loopbaanadvies, kan hy/sy vir Amecia Ferreria, geregistreerde berader, skakel by 083 320 1771 of 021-5921363 of [ameciaferreira@hotmail.com](mailto:ameciaferreira@hotmail.com).

### **4. MOONTLIKE VOORDELE VIR DEELNEMERS EN/OF VIR DIE SAMELEWING**

Dit mag moontlik voordelig wees vir u kind deurdat hy/sy bewus gaan word van die loopbaaninvloede, hindernisse en behoeftes wat sy/haar loopbaanbesluite beïnvloed. Die inligting wat van die leerders verkry word sal gebruik word om toekomstige loopbaanvoorligtingsprogramme te verbeter om leerders te help om loopbaankeuses te maak.

### **5. VERGOEDING VIR DEELNAME**

Daar sal geen betaling wees vir die deelname aan die studie nie. U kind sal, deur sy/haar deelname aan die studie, gratis beroepsvoorligting ontvang wat normaalweg standaard loopbaanvoorligtingstariewe sou kos.

## 6. VERTROUOLIKHEID, DEELNAME EN ONTTREKKING

U kind se naam sal nie in die studie geïdentifiseer word nie. Slegs my supervisors, Professor Ronelle Carolissen en Mev. Karlien Conradie by die Departement Opvoedkundige Sielkunde, sal toegang tot die inligting hê. U kan kies of u kind in hierdie studie mag deelneem of nie. Indien u ingestem het dat u kind aan die studie mag deelneem, mag u hom/haar enige tyd, sonder enige gevolge van enige aard, onttrek. Die navorser mag u kind van die studie onttrek indien dit nodig raak.

## 7. IDENTIFIKASIE VAN ONDERSOEKERS

Indien u enige vrae of besorgdheid omtrent die navorsing het, staan dit u vry om in verbinding te tree met die navorser, Liesl van Wyk, by 084 667 0352 of [lieslvw22@gmail.com](mailto:lieslvw22@gmail.com), die Navorsings supervisors, Professor Ronelle Carolissen, by [rlc2@sun.ac.za](mailto:rlc2@sun.ac.za) of \_\_\_021-8082306/8\_\_\_, en Mevrou Karlien Conradie, by [karlienl@sun.ac.za](mailto:karlienl@sun.ac.za) of \_\_\_\_\_021-8082306/8\_\_\_\_\_.

## 8. REGTE VAN DEELNEMERS

U kan enige tyd u kind se inwilliging terugtrek en u kind se deelname beëindig, sonder enige nadelige gevolge vir u of u kind. Deur u kind se deelname aan die navorsing doen u of u kind geensins afstand van enige wetlike regte, eise of regsmiddel nie. Indien u vrae het oor u kind se regte as deelnemer by navorsing, skakel met Me Maléne Fouché [[mfouche@sun.ac.za](mailto:mfouche@sun.ac.za); 021 808 4622] van die Afdeling Navorsingsontwikkeling van die Universiteit van Stellenbosch.

|   |
|---|
| <p><b>VERKLARING DEUR DEELNEMER OF SY/HAAR<br/>REGSVERTEENWOORDIGER</b></p> |
|---|

Die bostaande inligting is aan my, die deelnemer se ouer, gegee en verduidelik deur Liesl van Wyk in Afrikaans en ek is dié taal magtig of dit is bevredigend vir my vertaal. Ek, die deelnemer se ouer, verstaan dat as ek vrae het ek die navorser moet kontak en dat sy dit dan bevredigend sal beantwoord.

Ek gee hiermee toestemming dat die deelnemer (my kind) aan die studie mag deelneem. 'n Afskrif van hierdie vorm is aan my gegee.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Naam van deelnemer (my kind)**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Naam van Ouer/Voog**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Handtekening van Ouer/Voog**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Datum**

**VERKLARING DEUR ONDERSOEKER**

Ek verklaar dat ek die inligting in hierdie dokument vervat verduidelik het aan \_\_\_\_\_ [*naam van die deelnemer*] en/of sy/haar regsverteenvoordiger \_\_\_\_\_ [*naam van die regsverteenvoordiger*]. Hy/sy is aangemoedig en oorgenoeg tyd gegee om vrae aan my te stel. Dié gesprek is in Afrikaans gevoer en geen vertaler is in hierdie gesprek gebruik nie.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Handtekening van ondersoeker**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Datum**

## APPENDIX E: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND ASSENT FORM



### INLIGTINGSTUK EN TOESTEMMINGSVORM VIR DEELNEMERS



**TITEL VAN NAVORSINGSPROJEK:** Die verstaan van die term loopbaan en die invloede op loopbaankeuses van adolessente in 'n lae-inkomste skool

**NAVORSER(S):** Liesl van Wyk

**ADRES:** Departement Opvoedkundige Sielkunde, Universiteit Stellenbosch, Privaatsak X1, Matieland, 7602

**KONTAKNOMMER:** 084 667 0352

#### **Wat is navorsing?**

Deur navorsing leer ons hoe dinge (en mense) werk. Ons gebruik navorsingsprojekte of -studies om meer oor siektes of in dié geval invloede op loopbaankeuses uit te vind. Navorsing leer ons ook hoe om siek kinders beter te help of te behandel of om kinders te help om loopbaankeuses in die wêreld van werk te maak.

### **Waaroor gaan hierdie navorsingsprojek?**

Hierdie navorsing gaan oor die idees wat jy het oor loopbaankeuses. Jy sal gevra word om 'n boekie te voltooi wat gaan oor die dinge/mense wat jou loopbaankeuse beïnvloed. Daarna sal jy gevra word om foto's te neem van enige iets wat die woord loopbaan of invloede op 'n loopbaan vir jou uitbeeld. Laastens sal jy in 'n fokus groeponderhoud (groepsgesprek) deelneem waar jy die geleentheid sal kry om jou ervaringe met my en die res van die groep te deel.

### **Hoekom vra julle my om aan hierdie navorsingsprojek deel te neem?**

Jy word gevra om aan hierdie navorsingsprojek deel te neem, want jy is in graad 9 en moet dus aan die einde van die jaar vakkeuses maak. Hierdie keuse het reeds 'n invloed op jou loopbaankeuses eendag. Die navorsing probeer uitvind wat jy dink as jy die woord loopbaan hoor, asook watter verskillende invloede in jou lewe jou loopbaankeuse beïnvloed.

### **Wie doen die navorsing?**

My naam is Liesl van Wyk. Ek is 'n Meesterstudent in Opvoedkundige Sielkunde aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch en ek doen navorsing oor hoërskoolleerders se idees oor die wêreld van werk om hulle te help om ingeligte besluite te neem in terme van hulle loopbaankeuses.

### **Wat sal in hierdie studie met my gebeur?**

In die eerste sessie sal jy 'n boekie met behulp van die navorser voltooi, naamlik My System of Career Influences (MSCI). Hierdie boekie handel oor jou loopbaanidees, met stap-vir-stap instruksies, voorbeelde en self-diagramme wat die invloede op jou loopkeuse beïnvloed. Die invul van hierdie boekie sal gedurende 'n saalperiode plaasvind en sal ongeveer 40 minute lank neem.

Die tweede sessie sal na skool plaasvind of gedurende 'n saalperiode, sodat jy nie klastyd hoef te mis nie. Tydens hierdie sessie gaan jy meer leer oor die neem van foto's en gaan jy gevra word om deur die loop van die week foto's te gaan neem wat jou idees rondom loopbane uitbeeld.

Tydens die derde sessie gaan jy deelneem aan 'n fokusgroep onderhoud (groepsgesprek). Gedurende die fokusgroep onderhoud gaan jy vrae gevra word oor jou foto's asook jou idees



oor 'n loopbaan. Ons stel regtig belang in wat jy te sê het so probeer asseblief jou beste en beantwoord die vrae so eerlik as moontlik.

### **Kan enigiets fout gaan?**

Jy kan aanvanklik skaam voel, maar die navorser sal haar beste probeer om jou gemaklik te laat voel. As jy nie iets verstaan nie kan jy enige tyd net vra en dit sal aan jou verduidelik word, want wat jy dink is baie waardevol vir ons. Jy kan dalk angstig voel oor jou toekomstige loopbaanidees en die keuses wat jy moet maak. As jy nodig het om met iemand te praat oor loopbaanadvies, kan jy vir Amecia Ferreria, geregistreerde berader, skakel by 083 320 1771 of 021-5921363 of ameciaferreira@hotmail.com.

### **Watter goeie dinge kan in die studie met my gebeur?**

Jy kan moontlik meer leer van jouself deur uit te vind wat jou belangstellings is, oor idees aangaande loopbane waarvan jy nie bewus was nie of wie/wat het 'n groot indruk op jou gemaak. Jy kan ook meer leer oor hoe om loopbaankeuses te maak en hoekom dit vir jou belangrik is om beheer oor jou loopbaan storie te neem. Die sessies word ook vir jou verniet aangebied en onder normale omstandighede sou jy loopbaanvoorligtingsfooie moes betaal vir dieselfde inhoud.

### **Sal enigiemand weet ek neem deel?**

Slegs jou klasonderwyser, die navorser en navorserings supervisors sal weet wie jy is, want hulle speel 'n belangrike rol in die navorsing. Niemand anders sal weet jy neem deel nie en jou naam en inligting sal nie bekend gemaak word nie.



### **Met wie kan ek oor die studie praat?**

Die navorser, Liesl : 084 667 0352

### **Wat gebeur as ek nie wil deelneem nie?**

Jy het die reg om nie aan die navorsing deel te neem nie, selfs al het jou ouers ingestem dat jy mag deelneem. Jy kan enige tyd onttrek (sê jy wil nie meer deelneem nie) aan die studie sonder om in die moeilikheid te kom.

Verstaan jy hierdie navorsingstudie, en wil jy daaraan deelneem?

 JA NEE

Het die navorser ál jou vrae beantwoord?

 JA NEE

Verstaan jy dat jy kan ophou deelneem net wanneer jy wil?

 JA NEE

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**Handtekening van kind**

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**Datum**

**APPENDIX F:  
DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Demografiese Vraelys**

|  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| <b>Naam:</b>   | <b>Graad:</b>           |
| <b>Ouderdom:</b>   | <b>Geslag:</b>          |
| <b>Moontlike loopbane<br/>waaraan jy dink:</b><br><br>1.<br><br>2.<br><br>3. | <b>Huistaal:</b>        |
| <b>Ma se beroep:</b>   | <b>Pa se beroep:</b>    |
| <b>Ma se opvoeding:</b>  | <b>Pa se opvoeding:</b> |

**APPENDIX G:  
SYSTEMS-BASED ACTIVITY**



Loopbaankeuses

**Watter loopbaanbesluite moet jy in die toekoms maak?  
Byvoorbeeld: Watter vakkeuses jy moet maak om jou droomwerk te doen of jy moet begin dink oor jou eerste naweek/vakansiewerk wat jy moontlik wil doen.**

**Lys enige naweek/vakansiewerk wat jy nou doen, al gedoen het of sal oorweeg om te doen.**

**Dink aan die verskillende rolle wat jy vervul, behalwe om 'n leerder te wees. Bv. 'n sportspersoon, klaskaptein of koorlid.**

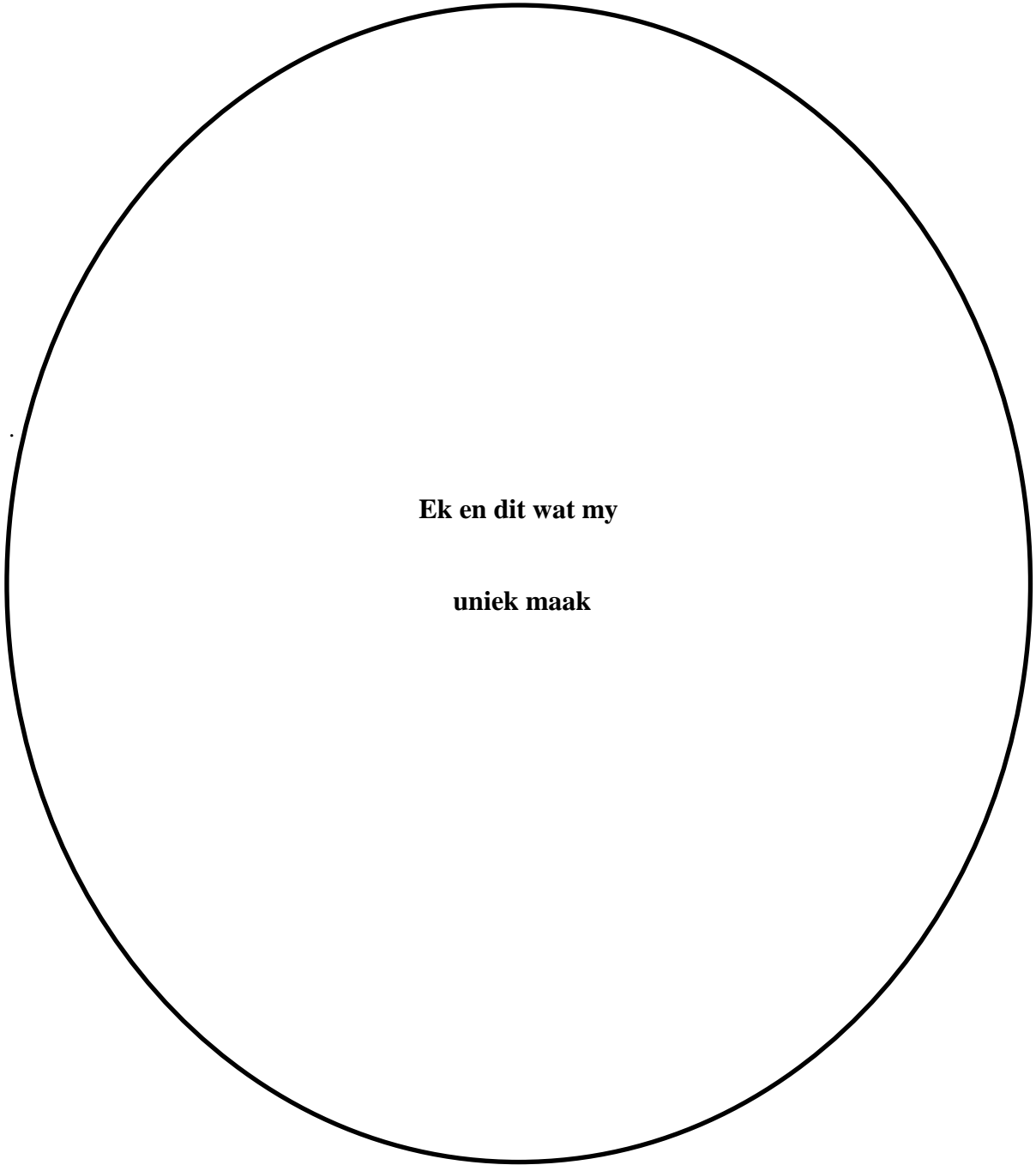
**Lys enige werke wat jy al vir die toekoms oorweeg het.**

**Indien jy 'n belangrike besluit moet maak, soos byvoorbeeld jou vakkeuses, watter strategieë sal jy gebruik om jou te help?**

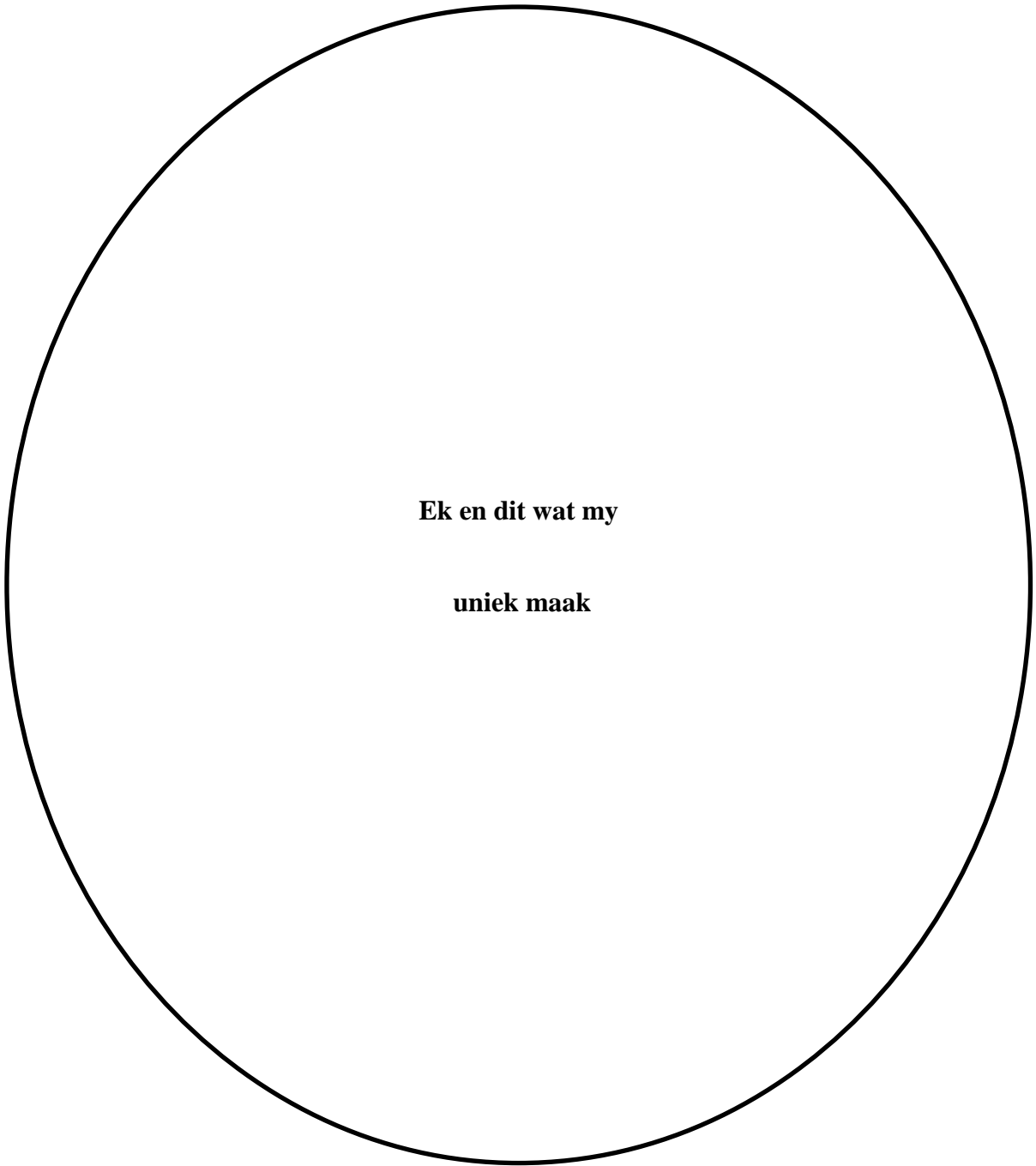
**Is daar iemand met wie jy kan praat oor loopbaankeuses en wie?**

**Hoe sal jy weet dat jy suksesvol was?**

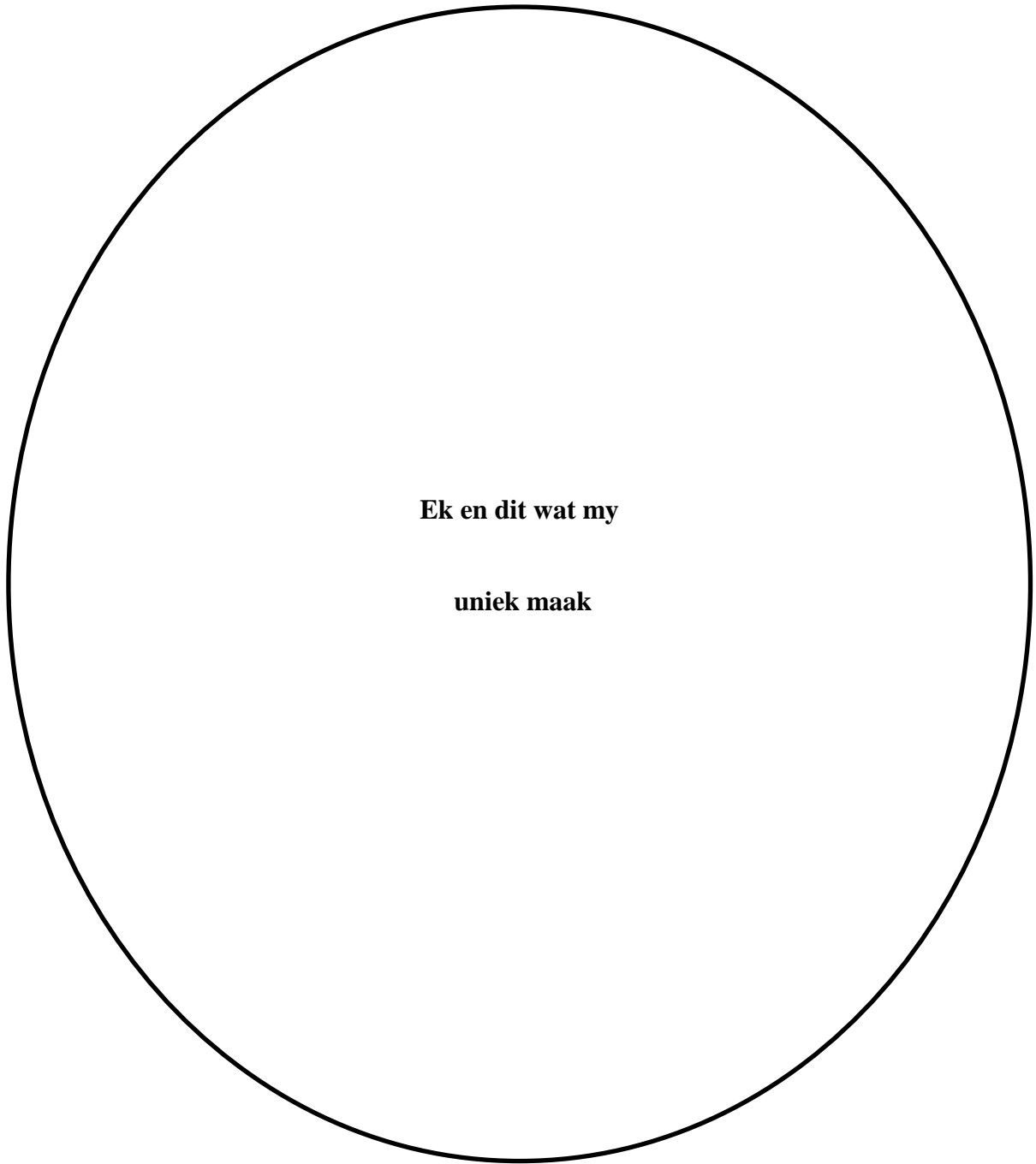
## **Wie is ek?**



## **Die mense rondom my?**

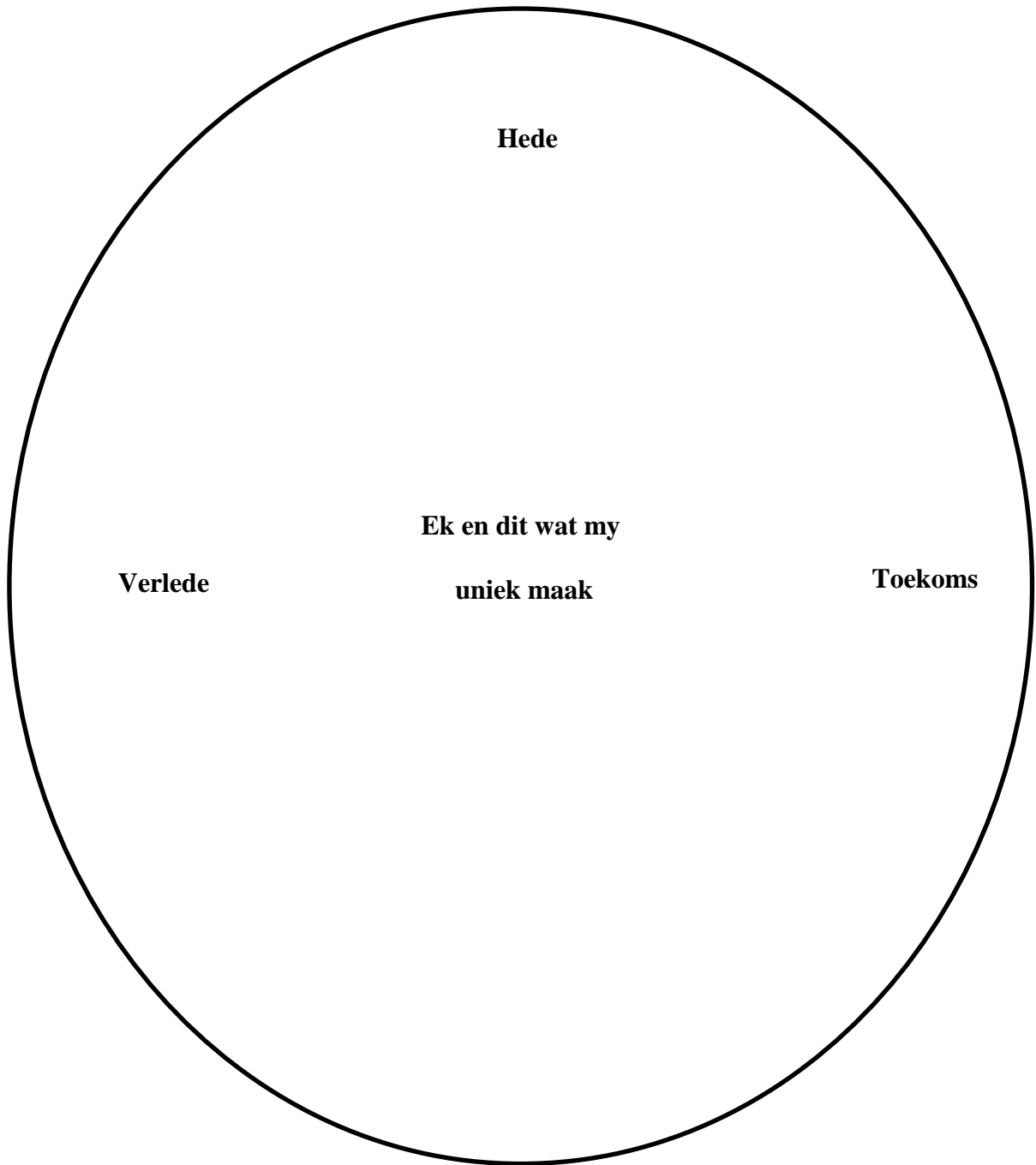


## **Die samelewing en my omgewing**

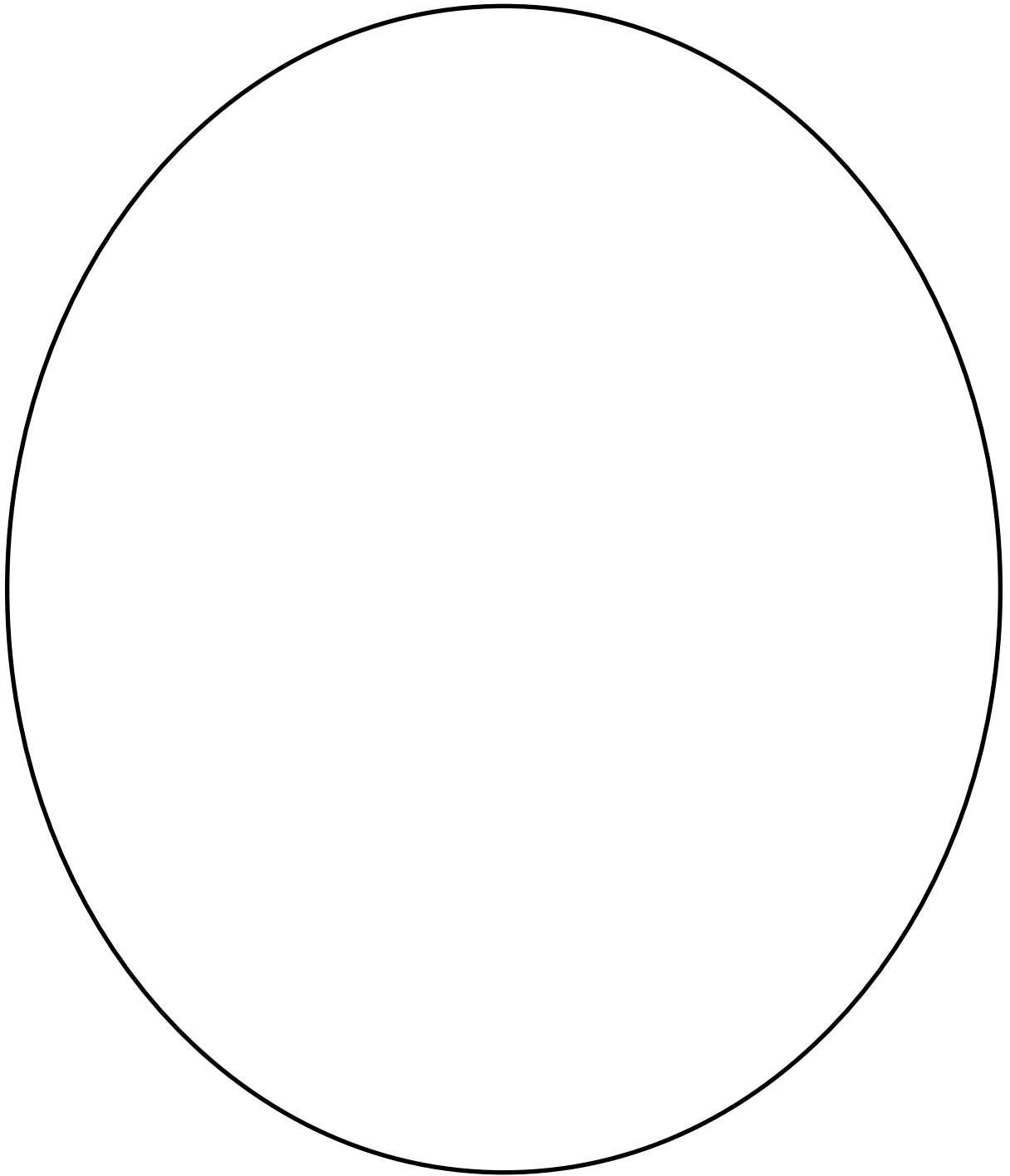




## **My verlede, hede en toekoms**



## **My sisteem van loopbaaninvloede**



|   |
|---|
| <b>Wat staan die meeste vir jou uit?</b>                          |
| <b>Wat staan die minste vir jou uit?</b>                          |
| <b>Wat het jou verras oor jou sisteem van loopbaaninvloede?</b>   |
| <b>Wat het jy agterkom waarvan jy nie voorheen bewus was nie?</b> |
| <b>Wat is vir jou bevestig?</b>                                   |
| <b>Wat sal jy graag wil verander?</b>                             |
| <b>Wat sal jy graag wil hê moet dieselfde bly?</b>                |
| <b>Hoe voel jy as jy na jou sisteem van loopbaaninvloede kyk?</b> |
| <b>Watter invloed is vir jou die belangrikste? Hoekom?</b>        |

## **APPENDIX H:**

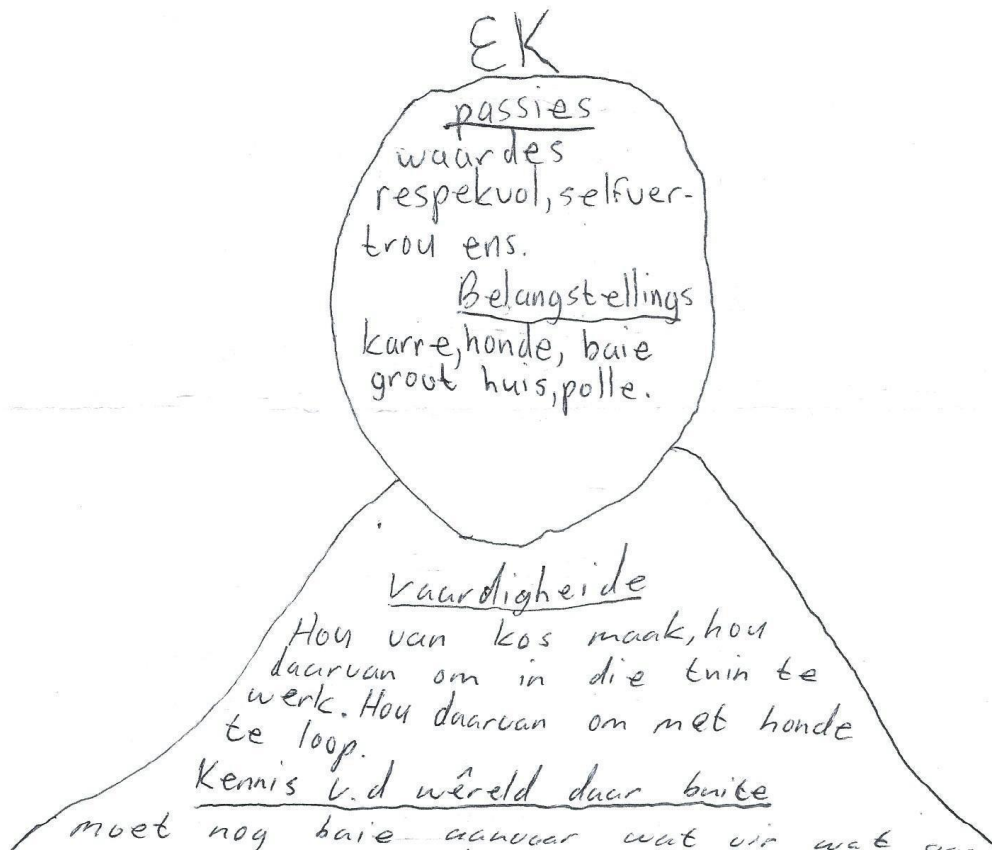
### **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW**

1. As jy die woord loopbaan hoor, wat is die eerste ding waaraan jy dink?
2. Wat sien ons op jou foto's?
  - a. Wat gebeur op jou foto's?
  - b. As jy na jou foto's kyk hoe verteenwoordig dit die konsep van loopbaan vir jou?
  - c. Is daar iets positief aan die foto's?
  - d. Is daar iets negatief aan die foto's?
3. Watter loopbaankeuses moet jy in die toekoms maak? (Byvoorbeeld: Jy moet vakkeuses by die skool maak, jy moet besluit op 'n deeltydse werk of wat jy wil doen wanneer jy die skool verlaat)
4. Is daar enige invloede in jou lewe wat jou 'n sekere loopbaan laat oorweeg of laat besluit om 'n seker loopbaan nie te oorweeg nie.
  - a. Wie en/of wat is hierdie invloede?
  - b. Wie en/of wat is die belangrikste invloede?
5. Dink jy jou loopbaankeuse en hierdie invloede gaan altyd dieselfde bly of kan dit moontlik in die toekoms verander?
6. Hoe het die proses, indien enigsins, jou denke oor loopbane en die invloede daarop verander? Wat is nou vir jou anders?
7. Is daar iets wat vir jou uitgestaan het of wat jy graag sal wil verander?
8. Is daar enige iets wat jy nog vir my wil vra?
9. Is daar nog enige iets wat jy graag sal wil sê wat jy voel is nie gedurende die sessie bespreek nie voordat ons die fokusgroep afeindig?

## APPENDIX I:

### EXAMPLE OF GRADE 9 CAREER INTERVENTION

My droom is om eendag 3  
Besigheidsman te word.



Vriende

dwelmsmisbruik, drank  
groepedruk, seks ens.

ouers

huiswerk, kos, iets word in  
die lewe, neem vir jou besluite

onderwysers

moet my huiswerk doen moet nooit  
op gee nie van jy kan dit maak.  
punte.

Rolmodelle

Drake, Weezy, Rick Ross, User hulle  
music beindruk my van dit is nie  
enige music nie.

Gemeenskap

mense drink te veel en rook tuak  
laat die hane huil en dit skink  
verskriklike ernstig

Finansies

**APPENDIX J:**  
**PARTICIPANTS IN DIFFERENT DATA COLLECTION ACTIVITIES**

| <b>Name</b> | <b>Adjusted MSCI</b> | <b>Focus Group</b> | <b>Photos</b> | <b>Individual Interviews</b> |
|-------------|----------------------|--------------------|---------------|------------------------------|
| 11. Marsha  | x                    | x                  | x             | x                            |
| 3. Kim      | x                    | x                  | x             | x                            |
| 5. Brad     | x                    | x                  | x             | x                            |
| 4. Kyle     | x                    |                    |               | x                            |
| 6. Chanelle | x                    | x                  | x             |                              |
| 10. Naya    | x                    | x                  | x             |                              |
| 8. Michelle | x                    | x                  | x             |                              |
| 7. Bianca   | x                    | x                  |               |                              |
| 9. Stewardt | x                    | x                  |               |                              |
| 1. Jess     | x                    |                    |               |                              |
| 2. Will     | x                    |                    |               |                              |

**APPENDIX K:**  
**ANALYSIS OF SYSTEMS-BASED ACTIVITY**

|    | Loopbaan besluite   | Naweek/Vakansie werk  | Verskillende rolle   | Lys van werke   | Belangrike besluite maak?                        | Iemand praat oor loopbaankeuses |
|----|---|---|--|---|--|---------------------------------|
| 1. | Besluit neem oor watter loopbaan voltooi; om my eendag gelukkig te hou. | Enige soort naweek werk, bv. groente & vrugte afdeling, cashier, ens. | Prek<br>Hoofdogter<br>VRL                                  | Dans<br>Act<br>Kosmaak<br>News Report<br>Hollywood ster | Sal kyk na hoe ek in my vorige graad gevaar het. | My vriendin<br>My opvoeder      |
| 2. | Vakkeuse<br>Vakansiewerk  | Werk in tuin<br>Maak winkel skoon<br>Help spraypainter                | Broer<br>Sportsman<br>Lidmaat van kerk<br>Lidmaat van jeug | Ingenieur<br>Kartograaf<br>Rugbyspeler<br>Atleet        | Doen navorsing<br>Vra vir mense                  | My ma<br>My pa<br>My oom        |



|    |  |  |  |  |   |   |
|----|--|--|--|--|---|---|
|    |  | Maak agterplase skoon<br><br>Karre was en skoonmaak          |  |  |   |   |
| 3. | Vakkeuses<br><br>As jy vir 'n vakansie wil weggaan, gaan kyk na verskillende werke | Waiter<br><br>Maak iemand se huis skoon                      | 'n Persoon wat alles bymekaar hou                              | Spraypainter<br><br>Met diere werk<br><br>Onderwyser by 'n kleuterskool<br><br>Chef                            | 'n Lys maak van van werke wat ek van hou.<br><br>Vir iemand gaan vra.         | Ja, my ouers<br><br>My onderwysers                          |
| 4. | Vakkeuses<br><br>Skoolloopbaan klaarmaak<br><br>Goeie werk                         | Om te werk elke naweek<br><br>Om te werk en my geld te spaar | Om 'n goeie pluimbal speller te word<br><br>Om 'n goeie vrl te | Ek het eendag 'n engerniering word<br><br>Ek het tuin skoon te maak<br><br>Ek het al karre gewas van die mense | Ek gaan 'n lys maak wat ek wil doen.<br><br>Ek sal die nadele en die voordele | Ek sal sê my friendin Susan.<br><br>Ek sal my pa of pa fra. |

|    |  |   |   |  |  |   |
|----|--|---|---|--|--|---|
|    | Goeie rapport  | Om te werk en vir my iets goed te koop  | word<br>Om 'n goeie klaskaptein te wees vir my klas                                   | Ek het al huis skoongemaak<br>Ek het al buite die huis skoon gemaak in die tuin<br>Ek het al iemand se karats skoon gemaak al<br>Ek het al iemand 'n huis bou                                    | doen om af te lei watter keuses ek sal maak.<br>Ek sal van ander mense af leer.                      | Ek het al met my onderwyser gepraat oor vakkeuses.<br>Ek het al met 'n persoon gepraat wat ek trust.        |
| 5. | Om moet vakkeuses neem.<br>Ek wil graag eendag by die dokters gaan help om mense en vriende ook te help. | Ek het al hout verkoop en dit was baie lekker vir en ek het genoeg sakgeld ook gekry. | Ek is 'n sportpersoon en ek is ook 'n sokkerkaptein en ek is 'n lidmaat van ons kerk. | Ek wil 'n dokters wees, maar as ek dit nie gaan maak nie wil ek graag 'n polisieman wees of ek wil 'n engeneer wees, want dit is vir my lekker om mense te help en ek wil ook ons omgewing help. | Ek gaan by mense om vir hulle vra wat dokters en gaan by mense vra wat niks weet van dokters af nie. | Ja, ek kan met my ma praat en met my ouma, want hulle is ook dokters. Hulle sal vir my sê wat ek moet doen. |

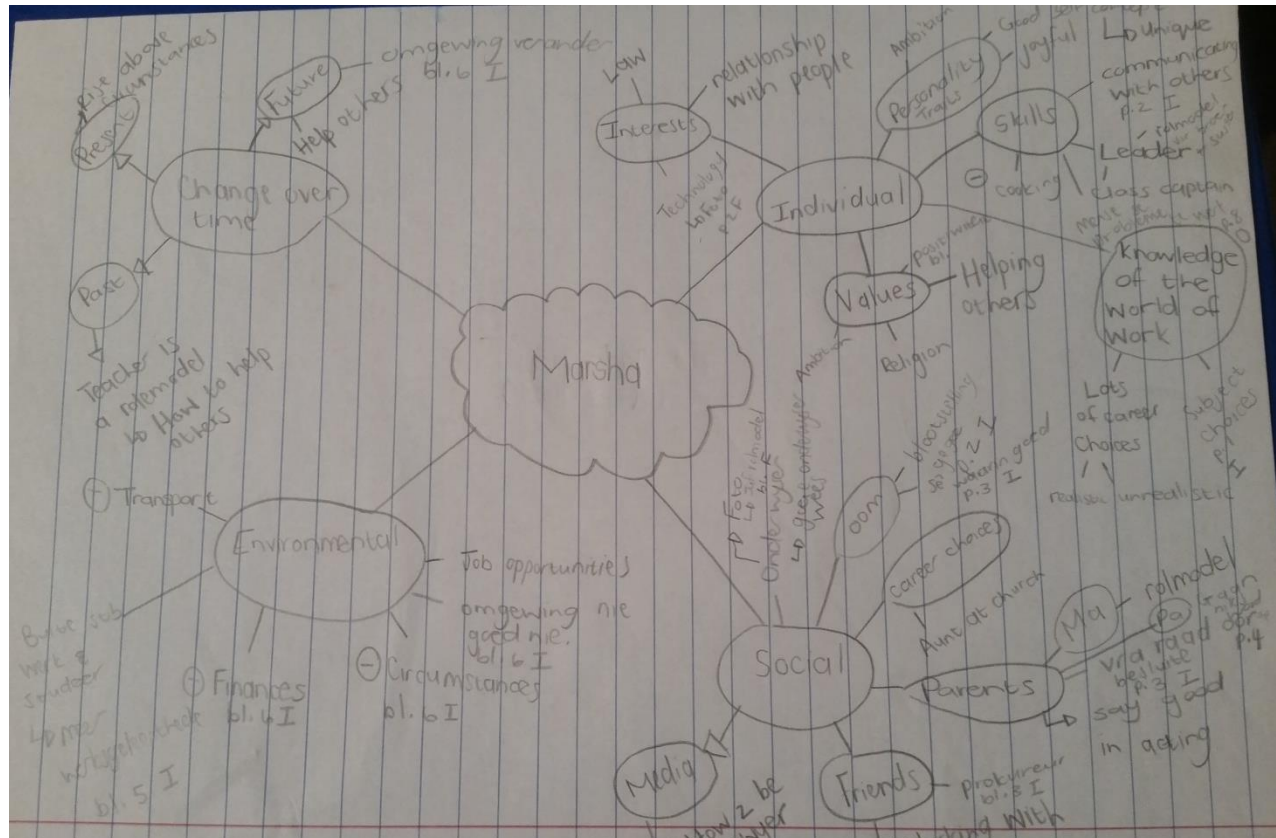
|    |                                    |  |  |   |  |  |
|----|------------------------------------|--|--|---|--|--|
| 6. | Vakkeuses<br><br>Vakansie          | Werk vir sakgeld   | Kerklid  | Polisiewerk<br><br>Verpleegsterwerk<br><br>Onderwyserwerk<br><br>Staatwerk  | Ek sal mense gaan<br>vra<br><br>Ek sal my 'n lys<br>maak   | Jy kan met jou pa<br>praat<br><br>Onderwyser     |
| 7. | Vakkeuses<br><br>Vakansiewerk      | Huisskoonmaak  | Netbalspeler   | Onderwyseres<br><br>Prokureur<br><br>Chef   | Ek gaan kyk na<br>die voordele en<br>nadele om 'n<br>besluit te maak.                                      | My ouers   |
| 8. | Vakkeuses<br><br>Kinders op te pas | Om skoon te<br>maak by 'n plek<br><br>Om tyd te<br>spandeer aan<br>kinders | Om 'n klaskaptein<br>te wees om vir<br>leerders meer te<br>leer wat respek<br>beteken. | Om skoon te<br>maak.<br><br>Om met kinders te<br>werk.<br><br>Om mense te help<br>met behoeftes.<br><br>Om om te gee vir<br>mense<br><br>Om altyd jou | Ek sal mense gaan<br>vra wat weet wat<br>aangaan.<br><br>Ek sal ook op<br>internet inligting<br>gaan soek. | Met jou broer of<br>met jou susters of<br>ouers. |

|     |  |   |  |  |   |   |
|-----|--|---|--|--|---|---|
|     |  |   |  | beste te doen.   |   |   |
| 9.  | Vakkeuses<br><br>Opvoeding   | Ek doen stock-taking by 'n klerewinkel naweek en vakansies              | Boy Bragade-leier<br><br>Jeugkoor (kerk) | Forensiese beampte<br><br>Polisie<br><br>Onderwyser<br><br>Chef<br><br>Rekenmeester<br><br>Prokureur   | Eerste kyk wat is jou sterkpunte en jou swakpunte.                                  | 'n Onderwyser en iemand wat reeds in daardie veld is.                                 |
| 10. | Ek wil vakkeuses doen.<br><br>Ek wil atletiek doen eendag, want dit is my sport. | Ek wil 'n werk soek om sakgeld te maak om my ouers te help in die huis. | Ek wil danser wees.                      | Ek wil dokter wees om mense te help wat baie siek wees.<br><br>Ek wil eendag 'n atletiek persoon wees om ver te kom om my ouers uit te help.<br><br>Ek wil 'n singer wees vir 'n kerk en ek moet ver | Ek gaan 'n lys maak vir die nadele en voordele wat ek gaan opstel vir my vakkeuses. | Ek sal met iemand praat wat vir my vertrou en respek het dit is met my ouers en omgee |

|     |                            |                                  |  |   |   |   |
|-----|----------------------------|----------------------------------|--|---|---|---|
|     |                            |                                  |  | kom daar uit.<br>Ek wil 'n danser ook wees.                               |   |   |
| 11. | Vakkeuses<br><br>Prokureur | Om te waiter te wees vir naweeke | Ek is 'n rolmodel vir my susters en broertjie<br><br>Ek vil ook 'n rol aan as klaskaptein. | Acting Prokureur<br>Onderwyser<br>'n Wynmaker<br>'n Sielkindige<br>Doktor | Om 'leis te maak van voordele en nadele op die regte besluit te neem. | Ja, daar is een van ons kerk lud 'n jonk dame antie mercy |

### APPENDIX L:

### EXAMPLE OF MIND MAP TO IDENTIFY WITHIN CASE CATEGORIES AND THEMES



**APPENDIX M:**  
**EXAMPLE OF DATA ANALYSIS OF**  
**THE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW**

| Coding   | Category  | Theme  |
|--|---|--|
| <u>LIESL</u> : Okay nou wil ek by julle hoor as jy die woord loopbaan hoor wat is die eerste ding waaraan jy dink?   |   |  |
| <u>PUPIL VOICE</u> : Vakkeuse.   | Construct of career                                 | Limited planning   |
| <u>LIESL</u> : Vakkeuse? En jy?  |   |  |
| <u>PUPIL VOICE</u> : Regte besluite.   | Construct of career/<br>Individual system           | Inability to think independently                                       |
| <u>LIESL</u> : Regte besluite. Michelle? Julle hoef nie so in 'n ry te praat nie, julle kan vir my sê. As jy aan 'n loopbaan dink wat dink jy? Hoe voel jy? Brad?  |   |  |
| <u>PUPIL VOICE</u> : Senuweeagtig, jy weet nie wat om eintlik regtig te maak nie. Daar is baie dinge wat inkom in jou gedagtes wat jy moet kies.   | Construct of career                                 | Confused/Unsure<br>Career uncertainty                                  |
| <u>LIESL</u> : So, wat kom in jou gedagtes op?   |   |  |
| <u>PUPIL VOICE</u> : Soos wil jy byvoorbeeld 'n dokter, onderwyser.  | Construct of career/<br>social system<br>influences | Unrealistic career expectations, school do not have adequate resources |
| <u>LIESL</u> : So jy is onseker? En Marsha? As jy dink aan loopbaan wat dink jy of voel jy? Naya? Het iemand julle al gevra daarvoor? Wie het al vir julle gevra oor loopbaan? Is julle bietjie ongemaklik om daarvoor te praat? Is julle bietjie snaaks? Lag gou almal klaar, dit is bietjie snaaks nê, om soms so te moet praat. Nou sê gou vir my wat dink jy Naya? Dink jy hy sê dit baie mooi, jy voel senuweeagtig? Dit is goed om dit te sê, dit is 'n groot besluit, nê? | Environmental<br>Societal                           | Lack of power and control  |
| <u>PUPIL VOICE</u> : Groot besluit want jou toekoms hang daarvan af.   | Construct of career                                 | Pressure linear understanding  |
| <u>LIESL</u> : Waarvan hang die toekoms af?  |   |  |

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <u>PUPIL VOICE</u> : Die besluite wat jy neem.   |   |  |
| <u>LIESL</u> : Ja die besluite wat jy neem waaroor?  |   |  |
| <u>PUPIL VOICE</u> : Oor die loopbane wat jy gaan loop.  |   |  |
| <u>LIESL</u> : So, jy voel besluite is nogals belangrik as dit kom by loopbane? En Marsha? Stem jy saam of dink jy verskillend daaroor?  |   |  |
| <u>PUPIL VOICE</u> : Ek stem saam.   |   |  |
| <u>LIESL</u> : En hoe voel jy as jy dink oor loopbane? Brad wat dink jy? As jy dink oor die toekoms en die werk wat jy moet doen hoe voel jy dan? Joline wat dink jy?  |   |  |
| <u>PUPIL VOICE</u> : Ek <b>voel onseker</b> oor wat ek wil word. Voel net onseker.   | Construct of career   | Unsure   |
| <u>LIESL</u> : So, hoe laat dit jou voel? Jy voel onseker maar hoe voel jy dan? Wat daarvan maak jou onseker? Hoekom voel jy onseker?  |   |  |
| <u>PUPIL VOICE</u> : Want <b>jou vriende sê jy moet dit doen en jou ouers sê jy moet dit doen en die mense rondom jou hulle wil ook vir jou besluite maak.</b> Jy <b>kan nie jou eie besluite maak nie.</b>                                | Social system influences<br><br>Environmental-societal system | External pressure (parents, members of the community)<br><br>Lack of power and control |
| <u>LIESL</u> : So, daar is baie mense wat eintlik 'n eier te lê het?   |   |  |
| <u>PUPIL VOICE</u> : Ja.   |   |  |
| <u>LIESL</u> : Hoe laat dit julle voel? Naya?  |   |  |
| <u>PUPIL VOICE</u> : Ongemaklik.   |   |  |
| <u>LIESL</u> : Hoekom voel jy ongemaklik?  |   |  |
| <u>PUPIL VOICE</u> : Want jy wil nie altyd jou <b>ouers se besluite volg nie.</b> Dan kom daar nog <b>ander mense in jou buurt en vertel jou jy is nie goed in dit nie, maar jy is goed in dit</b> en so <b>maak dit jou heel onseker.</b> | Social influences   | Negative influences – creates confusion  |



|   |                     |  |
|---|---------------------|--|
| <u>LIESL</u> : Voel jy jy het ‘n idee in jou kop en dan kom al die ander mense met hulle eiertjie te lê en dan is dit soos wat nou?   |                     |  |
| <u>PUPIL VOICE</u> : <b>Nou kan ons nie besluite maak nie.</b>  | Social influences   | Negative influence – creates confusion |
| <u>LIESL</u> : Dan voel jy jy kan nie jou eie besluite maak nie? Sê gou vir my hoe laat dit jou voel as jy nie jou eie besluite kan maak nie?   |                     |  |
| <u>PUPIL VOICE</u> : Swak.  |                     |  |
| <u>LIESL</u> : Laat jou swak voel. Maar voel julle dat julle in staat is om julle eie besluite te maak?   |                     |  |
| <u>PUPIL VOICE</u> : Ja.  |                     |  |
| <u>LIESL</u> : As ons nou kyk na loopbaan keuses en besluite wat in die, kom ons maak dit sommer in die volgende drie jaar, watsen loopbaan keuses of werkskeuses moet julle nog maak in die toekoms? Moet jy lank kan dink nou? Wil julle dink aan julle keuses wat julle moet maak? Naya, watsen loopbaan keuses moet julle nou maak? Kom ons vat nou eers hierdie jaar, watsen loopbaan keuses moet julle nog maak hierdie jaar? Weet julle wat beteken loopbaan? <b>Wie kan vir my sê wat beteken loopbaan?</b> |                     |  |
| <u>PUPIL VOICE</u> : <b>Jou toekoms.</b>  | Construct of career | Far away                               |