Feasibility and Acceptability of the Self-Directed Career Guidance Project for Grade 9 Learners in the Cape Winelands

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

The South African COVID-19 National Lockdown restrictions and risk mitigation strategies necessitated the reformulation of the contact-based Grade 9 Career Guidance Project (CGP) into a self-directed career guidance booklet and supplementary resources (website, electronic and physical resource kits, and video content). The CGP provides Grade 9 learners from eight resource-constrained schools in the Cape Town area with career guidance and subject choice support, therefore the continuation of the project during the COVID-19 lockdown period was vital.

As time constraints prevented the self-directed CGP from being piloted, a mixed methods evaluative study was developed to ascertain the feasibility and acceptability of the development, implementation, and resources generated for the self-directed CGP among a sample of Grade 9 learners (n = 498), Life Orientation (LO) teachers (n =11), project volunteers (n = 7), and project team members (n = 4). The Grade 9 learners' and LO teachers' quantitative and qualitative survey data provided favourable evaluations of the booklet and confirmed the feasibility and acceptability thereof. In addition, the Grade 9 learners positively evaluated the perceived impact of the booklet on their career preparedness.

The LO teachers' and project team members' qualitative data identified WiFi and data limitations regarding the accessibility of the supplementary resources, which hinder current feasibility and acceptability of the resources. The project volunteers positively evaluated the volunteer work and coordination thereof. However, the volunteers identified the video development process as time-consuming, which hindered the acceptability of the volunteer work process. The project team members and LO teachers have advised implementing a hybrid format and presentation of the CGP (self-directed with additional in-person contact sessions) as a way forward.

Overall, the research findings confirm the feasibility and acceptability of the self-directed CGP implemented amid a global pandemic, and thereby have pertinent implications for career guidance research undertaken in resource-constrained settings.

OPSOMMING

Die Suid-Afrikaanse Nasionale COVID-19 inperkings en risiko versagtende strategieë het die herformulering van die kontak gebaseerde Graad 9 Loopbaanvoorligtingsprojek in ’n selfgerigte Loopbaanvoorligtingsboekie en aanvullende hulpbronne (webwerf, elektroniese en fisiese hulpbronstelle, en video-inhoud) vereis. Die Loopbaanvoorligtingsprojek bied loopbaanvoorligting en vakkeuse ondersteuning aan Graad 9-leerders van agt hulpbronbeperkte skole in die Kaapstad omgewing, dus was die voortsetting van die projek tydens die COVID-19 inperkings noodsaaklik.

As gevolg van tydsbeperkings kon ’n geloodsde studie van die selfgerigte Loopbaanvoorligtingsprojek nie plaasvind nie. Vandaar, is ’n gemengde metodes evaluerende studie ontwikkel om die haalbaarheid en aanvaarbaarheid van die ontwikkeling, implementering, en hulpbronne van die selfgerigte Loopbaanvoorligtingsprojek te bewys deur die terugvoer van ’n steekproef van Graad 9-leerders (*n* = 498), LO-onderwysers (*n* =11), projek-vrywilligers (*n* = 7), en lede van die projekspan (*n* = 4) te versamel. Die Graad 9-leeders en LO-onderwysers se kwantitatiewe en kwalitatiewe meningspeiling data het gunstige evaluasies van die selfgerigte Loopbaanvoorligtingboekie verskaf, en die haalbaarheid en aanvaarbaarheid daarvan bevestig. Die Graad 9-leeders het ook die impak van die boekie op die voorbereiding van hulle loopbane positief geëvalueer.

Die LO-onderwysers en projekspanlede se kwalitatiewe resultate het WiFi en data beperkings oor die toeganklikheid van die aanvullende hulpbronne geïdentifiseer, wat dus die haalbaarheid en aanvaarbaarheid daarvan belemmer. Die projek-vrywilligers het die vrywilligheidswerk en koördinasie daarvan positief geëvalueer. Alhoewel, die projek-vrywilligers het die video-inhoud ontwikkelingsproses as tydrowend beskryf, en dit het die aanvaarbaarheid van die vrywilligheidswerk belemmer. Die projeklede en LO-onderwysers adviseer ’n saamgevoegde formaat en aanbieding van die Loopbaanvoorligtingsprojek (selfgerigte met bykomende kontak sessies) in die toekoms.

Ter afsluiting bevestig die navorsingsresultate dat die selfgerigte Loopbaanvoorligtingsprojek haalbaar en aanvaarbaar is tydens ’n wêreldwye pandemie, en het dus belangrike insigte vir toekomstige loopbaansvoorligtingsnavorsing wat in hulpbronbeperkte omgewings onderneem word.

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CHAPTER 1

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Introduction

Grade 9 marks a significant career transition point for adolescents during secondary school. Developmentally, this transition into adolescence introduces important career and study-related decisions that will either facilitate or stymie learners' future career development (Gottfredson, 1981). For instance, the end of Grade 9 is the first formal exit point for learners, and research indicates that a significant portion of learners will choose to drop out of secondary school (Grade 10 to 11). In 2016, the percentage of South African learners enrolled in ordinary secondary schools per grade dropped from 8.6% in Grade 10 to 5.5% in Grade 12 (Department of Basic Education, 2018). The four main reasons for the high secondary school attrition rates include financial challenges, learners seeking employment, academic failure, and teenage pregnancy (among female learners) (Spaull, 2015).

For those continuing their secondary school education, Grade 9 learners are required to select the subjects they will continue with for the senior phase of their schooling career (Grades 10 to 12). The subjects selected play a decisive role in adolescents' academic and career trajectories (Maree, 2009), as many post-school study qualifications and career pathways require specific subjects taken up until Grade 12. Extant evidence indicates that access to adequate career guidance and counselling services bolsters adolescents' career decision-making self-efficacy (Miles & Naidoo, 2016), career preparedness (Shirley, 2018), and their ability to achieve their post-school aspirations (Grossen et al., 2017; Modiba & Sefotho, 2019; Pillay et al., 2014). Receiving career development support thus, is vital to Grade 9 learners to ensure their subject selection aligns with their future career plans.

During the apartheid era, full-time career guidance counsellors were employed at white-only schools to support the career development of these learners (Flederman, 2011; Watts, 1980). On the other hand, racially classified 'non-white' learners received minimal to no career-related counselling, which has left a significant career development gap in previously disenfranchised communities (Watson, 2010). Following the abolition of the apartheid regime, transformative education policies and legislature were introduced to redress the inequality of the past. For instance, since 2002, career guidance services have been integrated into the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum at schools (Department of Education, 2002). However, despite transformative efforts, resource-constrained schools in historically and still underserved communities continue to face endemic and systemic challenges to providing their learners with adequate career guidance as part of the LO curriculum (Albien

& Naidoo, 2017; Modiba & Sefotho, 2019; Pillay et al., 2014; Smit et al., 2015; Spaull, 2015). Such challenges include classroom overcrowding (Albien & Naidoo, 2016), lack of access to vital resources (such as computers or internet access) (Buthelezi et al., 2009), and poorly trained or underprepared teachers (Maree, 2013; Modiba & Sefotho, 2019).

As a result of these systemic challenges, Grade 9 learners from resource-constrained schools receive inadequate career guidance and career development support (Albien & Naidoo, 2017; Modiba & Sefotho, 2019; Pillay et al., 2014). Consequently, these learners are more likely to haphazardly select subjects that may not align with their post-school study and career aspirations (Maila & Ross, 2018; Naidoo et al., 2019). Conversely, Grade 9 learners from resource-rich schools and those who can afford private career guidance counselling currently receive the support needed to develop well-thought-out career plans and make informed subject choices (Maree, 2013; Modiba & Sefotho, 2019; Pillay, 2020). Uninformed subject choices may result in poor academic performance (Maree, 2006) and limit the study avenues and career pathways learners can pursue in the future (Dabula & Makura, 2013; Maila & Ross, 2018).

In addition, extant research has identified that underserved learners face additional contextual barriers that hinder their career development (Dabula & Makura, 2013; Jonck, 2015; Maila & Ross, 2018; Naidoo et al., 2019). These contextual barriers include limited access to resources to source career information (e.g., libraries, computers or internet access) (Buthelezi et al., 2009), poor caregiver/parental support or guidance (Albien & Naidoo, 2016), limited exposure to career role models (Albien & Naidoo, 2016), and insufficient funds to study further or pursue their future career aspirations (Maila & Ross, 2018). Furthermore, the lack or paucity of adequate career guidance support at secondary schools could introduce long-term social (Statistics South Africa, 2020), psychological (Cornell & Kessi, 2017; Kessi & Cornell, 2016; Liccardo, 2018; Pillay, 2020), and economic (O'Neil, 2021) challenges to young people's mental health and well-being.

In response to the current inequality of access to adequate career guidance services in the South African secondary school system, the Career Guidance Project (CGP) was developed (under the auspices of the Psychology and Industrial Psychology departments of Stellenbosch University) (Naidoo et al., 2019; Rabie et al., 2021). The project, rooted in a social justice imperative, sought to provide Grade 9 learners in eight secondary schools in the Cape Winelands district area with career guidance and subject choice support. In previous years, the project has been implemented in the form of in-person, group-based psychometric testing and interactive contact-based, career guidance workshops, which intended to equip

Grade 9 learners with the knowledge and insights to develop a career plan and select subjects in line with their career aspirations (detailed in Chapter 3) (Naidoo et al., 2019; Rabie et al., 2021).

In the wake of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 preparations for the implementation of the in-person group-based CGP were brought to an abrupt halt (WHO, 2020). In response to the World Health Organization's (WHO) announcement of the COVID-19 pandemic, the South African government instituted a National Lockdown on 26 March 2020 (Ramaphosa, 2020). As part of the risk mitigation strategies, South African schools were closed for a period, and non-essential direct contact was not permitted (Motshekga, 2020). Hence, the original contact-based format and implementation of the CGP had to be adapted to continue to provide Grade 9 learners from the eight schools in the Winelands district with career guidance services and subject choice support.

A self-directed adaptation of the CGP was developed to satisfy the COVID-19 risk mitigation regulations prohibiting non-essential direct contact. The self-directed learning process requires learners to take on the responsibility for their learning and development, which can promote a sense of agency and empowerment (Morris, 2019). Research studies have found that self-directed learning can positively enhance learners' career decision-making abilities (Briska & Dislere, 2018; De Bruin & Cornelius, 2011; Holland & Rayman, 2013). Moreover the self-directed adaptation of the CGP was modelled in accordance with John Holland's Self-Directed Search (SDS), a well-known self-directed learning approach to career guidance. The SDS comprises an assessment booklet that after completion would generate a code that aligns with career choices in the occupational finder (Holland & Rayman, 2013). The SDS was developed to improve the accessibility of career guidance services, as the self-administered and interpretive nature thereof does not require in-person guidance or a career counsellor. Researchers have shown that the SDS can support the self-understanding and overall satisfaction of individuals in their career aspirations. For instance, Osborn and Reardon (2006) found that the SDS was an effective psychometric instrument among American Middle School students (95% African American) who were at high risk of school attrition (poor school attendance rates, low grades, and the high number of discipline referrals).

The self-directed adaptation of the CGP entailed designing a self-directed career guidance booklet that comprised self-complete activities to assist learners in their career planning and subject selection. In addition, supplementary resources were developed to support learners in navigating the booklet and provide learners with additional career

planning information (detailed in Chapter 3). The Grade 9 learners from the eight secondary schools received the self-directed career guidance booklets to take home in October 2020.

The adaptation of the CGP to a self-directed career guidance booklet and supplementary resources had to take place within months. Thus, due to time constraints, the adapted version could not be piloted. This study proposed to evaluate the feasibility and acceptability of the self-directed CGP, and specifically aimed to investigate whether the project met the needs of the Grade 9 learners and from the evaluation process, make recommendations for improvements. The rationale for the research will be outlined below.

Rationale for the Research

The format and implementation of the CGP was adapted in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent South African National Lockdown in 2020. The CGP was revised from its previous group-based psychometric testing and interactive career guidance workshops format (Naidoo et al., 2019) to a self-directed format relying on a specially designed career guidance booklet and supplementary resources. Given that the entire project had to be adapted within months, a pilot study of the self-directed CGP was not possible. As such, this study conducted a mixed methods evaluation of the feasibility and acceptability of the self-directed career guidance booklet and supplementary resources, based on data collected from the Grade 9 learners, LO teachers, and school principals from the eight schools, as well as the project volunteers and project team members involved in the intervention.

In intervention research, feasibility studies are conducted to assess the development and implementation processes of an intervention to ascertain the practicality and perceived appropriateness of the intervention (Bowen et al., 2009; Gadke et al., 2021; Orsmond & Cohn, 2015). This may entail examining the appropriateness of the programme contents and procedures, and evaluating the implementation procedures of an intervention to determine the strengths and weaknesses thereof (Gadke et al., 2021). The purpose of a feasibility study is to determine how to eradicate any weaknesses of an intervention to support the successful implementation of an intervention (Bowen et al., 2009). Acceptability research focuses on investigating how the target population perceives an intervention and the extent to which the intervention meets their needs (Ayala & Elder, 2011; Nastasi et al., 2000). To measure the acceptability of an intervention, the target population and key informants can provide important insight into what they perceive as the strengths and limitations of the intervention.

Evaluating the feasibility and acceptability of the project from the perspectives of the Grade 9 learners and key informants (LO teachers, school principals, project volunteers, and

project team members) is of practical value to inform adjustments to be made to support the ideal format and implementation of the CGP. The insights gained from this study's evaluative analysis are of significant social value. The efficacy of the format and implementation of the CGP is necessary to ensure the project successfully achieves its social justice imperative of providing underserved learners with appropriate career guidance and subject choice support. Furthermore, amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, whilst social distancing and limiting social contact are advised, improving and consolidating the self-directed mode of delivery of the CGP became a significant objective.

Research Aims and Objectives

The study aimed to evaluate the feasibility and acceptability of the self-directed CGP (development, and implementation), the self-directed career guidance booklet, and supplementary resources based on the evaluative data collected from the Grade 9 learners and key informants.

To examine the feasibility and acceptability of the self-directed career guidance booklet, supplementary resources, and processes involved in the development and implementation of the project, quantitative and qualitative objectives were developed. The quantitative objectives of the study were fourfold:

1. To assess the Grade 9 learners' experiences and perceived acceptability (comprehensive, helpful, and enjoyable) of the booklet, and whether working through the booklet supported them in making their subject selections and developing a career plan.
2. To ascertain the LO teachers' perceptions of the feasibility (appropriateness and perceived efficacy) and acceptability (satisfaction with approach) of the self-directed career guidance booklet, supplementary resources, and adapted version of the CGP.
3. To examine the school principals' evaluations of the overall acceptability of the project and feasibility (managerial concerns) of the implementation of the CGP.
4. To ascertain the feasibility and acceptability of the coordination of the volunteering duties and volunteer work.

The qualitative objectives of the proposed research study are fourfold:

1. To assess the Grade 9 learners' perceived acceptability of the self-directed career guidance booklet based on their reflections on their experience of the booklet.
2. To determine the feasibility of the adapted version of the project and gain insights for adjustments to be made for future implementations of the project, based on the LO teachers' and school principals' evaluative feedback.

3. To ascertain how the feasibility and acceptability of the coordination of the volunteer work and overall volunteer responsibilities can be improved in the future, based on the evaluative feedback from the project volunteers.
4. To explore the project team's experiences of the development and implementation of the project and overall insights and evaluations of the resources developed for the project. The project team's feedback may contextualise the data collected from the Grade 9 learners, LO teachers, and school principals. Moreover, their feedback will help determine the feasibility and acceptability of the adapted project (development, implementation, and format).

Hypotheses

The quantitative research hypotheses of the research study comprise:

1. Grade 9 learners will provide a positive evaluation of the survey variables: Booklet Experience and Perceived Impact on Career Preparedness.
2. The LO teachers will provide a positive evaluation of the survey variables: Booklet Acceptability, Supplementary Resources Acceptability, and Reflection on New Format.
3. The school principals will provide a positive evaluation of the intervention and resources developed: Project and Supplementary Resources Acceptability, Managerial Coordination, and Reflection on New Format.
4. The project volunteers will provide a positive evaluation of the survey variables: Volunteer Experience Acceptability and Coordination of Volunteer Work.

Conclusion

This chapter sought to provide background and context to the social justice imperative of the CGP. In addition, this chapter sought to outline the challenges brought on by the global COVID-19 pandemic and South African National Lockdown in 2020, to contextualise the decision to develop and implement a self-directed adaptation of the CGP (self-directed career guidance booklet and supplementary resources). The time constraints placed on the development and implementation of the self-directed CGP prevented a pilot study of the intervention, which led to the mixed methods evaluation of the feasibility and acceptability of the 2020 iteration of the CGP. Furthermore, the project's social justice imperative and peculiar challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic contextualised the research rationale, and the aims and objectives of the study.

Chapter 2 will present a literature review pertinent to the scope of the study and outline the theoretical framework that informed this study. Thereafter, Chapter 3 will detail the research methodology incorporated in the study, and Chapter 4 will provide an in-depth

report of the results and findings of the study. Chapter 5 will entail a discussion and contextualisation of the findings within the theoretical framework and relevant research studies detailed in the literature review. To conclude, Chapter 6 will provide a conclusion to the study, expand on the extent to which the research aims, objectives and hypotheses were met, present the limitations and implications of the study, and provide recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Introduction

This study aimed to evaluate the feasibility and acceptability of the self-directed CGP implemented in 2020, amid a global pandemic and South African National Lockdown. In this literature review I will discuss the importance of career guidance services, as well as the history and current provision of such services in the South African secondary education system to provide context to the study. In addition, I will critically analyse the international research and South African studies that examine the efficacy of career guidance interventions. Thereafter, I will explore the specific systemic and contextual barriers underserved learners in resource-constrained schools face in terms of their career development and subsequent subject choice selection, and I will examine the long-term consequences of poor career development.

The features of a feasibility and acceptability approach to intervention research was used to analyse the evaluative data. In addition, Linda Gottfredson's (1981; 2002) theory of circumscription and compromise in career development comprises the theoretical framework of the research study. Gottfredson's (1981; 2002) theory places significant emphasis on the role self-concepts (sex, social class, intelligence, and perceived competencies) play in a person's career decision-making process. Furthermore, Gottfredson (1981; 2002) specifically highlights the role and influence the socialisation of these self-concepts from childhood into adulthood have on the career circumscriptions and compromises individuals make. The self-directed CGP is intended to provide career guidance and subject choice support, and subsequently intervene in the potential career circumscriptions and compromises Grade 9 learners may make. Thus, Gottfredson's (1981; 2002) theory as a theoretical lens played an integral part in developing the self-directed career guidance booklet and supplementary resources in the CGP. Moreover, the theoretical framework was integrated into the interpretation of the research findings in relation to the larger context of the study population. Lastly, the Community-Based Participatory Research approach is defined, and utilised as a secondary theoretical framework in the interpretation of the mixed methods data collected from the LO teachers and project team members.

Career Guidance

Traditionally, South African career guidance counselling has solely relied on psychometric testing to support the client's career development (Maree, 2013; Maree & Beck, 2004). In career assessments, a client's personality and interest profile are assessed,

and their personality traits are matched to careers deemed most suitable to their personality type (Maree, 2013). South African researchers have grown increasingly critical of solely relying on a quantitative approach to career counselling in the South African context (Albien & Naidoo, 2018; Maree, 2013; Maree & Beck, 2004).

Firstly, psychometric tests are predominantly developed internationally. Consequently, the tests have not been formulated and tested on a representative sample of the South African populous (Maree, 2013). The uncritical use of such tests could reduce the applicability of the test results to the client (Maree, 2013). Researchers argue that the lack of a multicultural research sample confines the reliability of the psychometric tests to the middle class, white, English/Afrikaans-speaking South African population. Thus, a significant portion of the population may not benefit from the insights gained from psychometric testing (Albien & Naidoo, 2018; Maree, 2013; Maree & Beck, 2004). Secondly, researchers argue that psychometric tests alone are prescriptive in nature and limit the agency and subjectivity of a client in the process of their career development (Maree, 2013; Maree & Beck, 2004). Maree (2013) posits that strictly matching clients to career profiles could lead to career disappointment, as clients may expect to enjoy or feel satisfied in their matched career pathways, which may not suit their life goals or aspirations.

South African career psychologists and researchers have begun to explore a qualitative approach to career guidance and counselling in the wake of the growing criticism of psychometric testing and the reliance on quantitative career counselling approaches (Alexander et al., 2010; Maree, 2018; 2020). Maree (2018) highlights the benefits of engaging with clients in a storied/narrative career counselling approach. Clients actively participate in the career counselling process by narrating their career life story (Maree, 2018). The focus is on guiding a client to gain an understanding about what they value, what they consider their life purpose is, and identify the problems and challenges they may encounter. The overall aim of a storied/narrative approach is to provide clients with the knowledge and insight to identify suitable career paths that may satisfy their life goals (Maree, 2013; 2018).

Recently, South African researchers have focused on the potential value of an integrative approach to career counselling that comprises the combination of quantitative and qualitative assessments (Albien & Naidoo, 2018; Maree, 2018). The triangulation of both assessment techniques has been argued to improve the reliability of the career assessment results and enhance the agency and career adaptability of the client. The process involves the subjectivity of the client in the assessment, and thereby becomes more collaborative and less prescriptive (Maree, 2013; Rappaport, 1984 cited in Riemer et al., 2020).

The administration of career guidance services plays a central role in school-aged learners' career development. Extant research demonstrates that career guidance services enhance learners' career decision-making self-efficacy (Aguiar & Conceição, 2015; David et al., 2020; Miles & Naidoo, 2016), improves their career maturity (Marciniak et al., 2020), and career preparedness (Babarović et al., 2020; Shirley, 2018). The benefits of career guidance extend to improving the likelihood of learners attending a tertiary education facility, graduating, and entering the labour market (Lapan et al., 2007; Watson, 2010; Watts & Sultana, 2004). Thus, career guidance services are integral in ensuring learners are supported in the transition from secondary school into the academic sphere or job market (Grossen et al., 2017; Modiba & Sefotho, 2019; Pillay et al., 2014).

International Career Guidance Interventions

International research studies have identified the efficacy of career guidance interventions in improving secondary school learners' vocational identity (Cadaret & Hartung, 2020), career development skills (Choi et al., 2015), career adaptability (Cadaret & Hartung, 2020), career readiness (Babarović et al., 2020), and career decision-making capabilities (Aguiar & Conceição, 2015; David et al., 2020). In this section I aim to specifically contextualise and detail the findings of the aforementioned research studies.

Cadaret and Hartung (2020) sought to support urban American learners of colour (African American, Puerto Rican, and Dominican) in developing their vocational identity and enhancing career adaptability by administering a six-week group-based career counselling intervention. The learners worked through the My Career Story workbook in a group-based counselling intervention. Their results demonstrated significant improvements in vocational identity and career adaptability scores post-intervention.

Babarović et al. (2020) aimed to support the career readiness of Eighth Grade students (n = 276) in Zagreb, Croatia, through the administration of group-based career guidance workshops. The manualised workshops were conducted over eight weeks and consisted of three parts: self-knowledge, career and educational exploration, and career planning. In addition, the learners' parents were engaged to effectively support their child in making career-related decisions through a parent's guide. Babarović et al. (2020) implemented a quasi-experimental pre- and post-test design to evaluate the efficacy of the career guidance intervention. Overall, the effects of the intervention were less profound than those of Cadaret and Hartung (2020). However, the intervention yielded statistically significant results in promoting learners' independence in career decision-making (Babarović et al., 2020).

South African research studies have similarly provided evidence in support of the integral role career guidance interventions play in bolstering adolescents' career development; these studies will be explored in detail in the section to follow.

South African Career Guidance Interventions

In the South African context, there is growing evidence for the efficacy of career guidance interventions in supporting the career development of adolescents in the South African education system (Maree, 2019; Cook & Maree, 2016; Miles & Naidoo, 2016; Shirley, 2018). Maree (2019), for instance, sought to examine the effects of a mixed methods group-based career counselling intervention on Grade 11 students' career adaptability in Mpumalanga Province. The comparison of the Grade 11 sample groups' (n = 57) pre-and post-test career adaptability scores indicated statistically significant high career adaptability scores post-intervention (Maree, 2019). Overall, the intervention supported the learners' ability to cope with future career-related transitions, ability to set career goals, and develop a clear career plan to meet these goals. In addition, Maree (2019) found that the learners' enhanced abilities to set career goals and plans promoted a sense of hope and optimism for the future.

Similarly, Miles and Naidoo (2016) implemented a group-based career intervention among a recruited sample of Grade 11 learners (n = 303) across three English-medium schools in East London, South Africa. The group-based career intervention sought to identify the learners' interests, potentially satisfying careers, and support learners to identify and overcome the various contextual and environmental barriers they may encounter (Miles & Naidoo, 2016). To measure the efficacy and impact the intervention had on the learners' career decision-making self-efficacy, the researchers implemented a quasi-intervention time-series design (pre- and post-intervention comparisons). The researchers divided the participants into an intervention (n = 111) and control group (n = 111). The research results indicated that the intervention group scored statistically significant high scores on the Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale. Moreover, the high scores were sustained eight weeks post-intervention. The scores were statistically significantly higher than those of the control group, which indicates that the career guidance intervention made a tangible difference in the learners' ability to make informed career decisions.

Shirley (2018) sought to investigate whether group-based career guidance workshops implemented at a resource-constrained school in Delft, South Africa, would support and improve the career maturity of the Grade 9 learners (n =176). Career maturity forms part of a person's career development. Indications of career maturity entail: being self-aware, having

consistent career aspirations, developing a career plan and taking the necessary steps to achieve one's career goals, seeking career-related advice from family, counsellors or career role models, and being able to resolve career-related challenges that may occur (Savickas & Porfeli, 2011; Swanson, 2013). The study incorporated a quasi-experimental evaluative mixed methods research design to assess the effectiveness of the career guidance workshop. The pre- and post-test quantitative results indicated a statistically significant improvement in the Grade 9 learners' Career Maturity. Furthermore, the rich narrative elicited from the focus group discussions concurred with the quantitative findings.

The extant evidence proving the efficacy of career guidance services (internationally and nationally) among school-age adolescents indicates the necessity of such services in supporting adolescents' career development in their secondary schooling career. The majority of the interventions rely on a group/workshop-based format; few have a self-directed element, which emphasises the unique nature of the self-directed CGP. To provide background to the current provision and efficacy of career guidance services in South Africa, the history of career guidance services in South Africa will be detailed in the section to follow.

History of Career Guidance Services in South Africa

Researchers have identified an inequality in access to adequate career guidance services among secondary school age learners (Grade 9 and onwards) (Albien & Naidoo, 2017; Buthelezi et al., 2009; Jonck, 2015; Maila & Ross, 2018; Modiba & Sefotho, 2019; Naidoo et al., 2019). Learners attending resource-rich schools or those who can afford private career counselling acquire the necessary career guidance to support their personal career development (Maree, 2013; Modiba & Sefotho, 2019; Pillay, 2020) whereas, underserved learners from resource-constrained schools do not receive the proper career development support needed. The current inequality in access to adequate career guidance services in South Africa is rooted in the legacy of the apartheid education system (Naidoo et al., 2017; Pillay, 2020; Watson, 2010).

Under the apartheid regime, access to quality education was mediated by learners' racial classification (Naidoo et al., 2017). The Bantu Education Policy, implemented in 1953, provided black South African learners access to an inferior education with the intent of confining the black South African populous to the menial and unskilled workforce (mining, infrastructure, and industrial sectors) (Naidoo et al., 2017; Pillay, 2020). In addition, career guidance services were solely available in white-only schools to support learners with their career aspirations (Flederman, 2011; Watts, 1980). Consequently, the lack of career guidance

services in 'non-white' schools significantly limited these learners' career trajectories. The poor quality of education and career guidance services available to racially classified under the apartheid regime 'non-white'[1] South Africans, stunted their economic and career development for generations (Watson, 2010).

In 1994, following the abolition of the apartheid regime and the ushering in of a new democratic era, transformative policies and legislature were introduced to begin to rectify the injustices of the past (Department of Education, 2002; Naidoo et al., 2017; Watson, 2010). To redress the legacy of the Bantu Education system, schools were desegregated, and the curriculum revisited (Spaull, 2015). As part of the new commitment to transformation, full-time career guidance teachers were removed from previously 'white-only' schools. In 2002, career guidance services were integrated into the subject, Life Orientation (LO) (Department of Education, 2002; Maree, 2013). Since then, researchers have identified numerous challenges and limitations to the provision of career guidance as part of the LO curriculum, specifically within resource-constrained schools (Albien & Naidoo, 2017; Maree, 2013; Miles & Naidoo, 2016; Modiba & Sefotho, 2019; Pillay et al., 2014; Prinsloo, 2007; Smit et al., 2015). The challenges and limitations will be discussed in the sections to follow.

Life Orientation Curriculum

According to the Department of Education (2002), the LO curriculum in schools should support learners' well-being, provide citizenship education, career guidance, and facilitate physical activity (Pillay et al., 2014; South African Department of Education, 2003). Given the focus on promoting holistic well-being, LO has the potential to provide learners with the support and guidance necessary to achieve their career aspirations. However, researchers have identified specific shortcomings to the current implementation of career guidance within the LO curriculum.

Time Constraints

LO is afforded a two-hour time slot per week (Flederman, 2009) in the school curriculum. The time allotted has been identified as a significant barrier to LO teachers' ability to meet the curriculum goals (Albien & Naidoo, 2016; Prinsloo, 2007; Smit et al., 2015). For instance, adolescents face many personal and emotional developmental challenges, and given the LO programme time constraints, researchers have found that career guidance is often side-lined (Flederman, 2009; Jacobs, 2011) or possibly neglected.

[1] The term 'non-white' specifically gained prominence under the apartheid regime and was utilized as a socio-political linguistic tool to maintain white hegemony, by establishing whiteness as the norm. It is important to note that race is a social construction, not a fixed biological marker.

Smit et al. (2015) conducted a qualitative research study amongst Grade 12 learners (*n* = 13) from under-resourced rural secondary schools in poor socio-economic areas in South Africa. The researchers incorporated participatory visual methods (mind mapping, photovoice, and group discussion) into their study. The study aimed to identify the risk and protective factors the learners face in making career and study-related decisions, and the role LO plays in the process. Smit et al. (2015) found that in resource-constrained schools, career guidance in LO consists of the mere provision of information about careers. The lack of discussion and facilitation of an introspective process, results in learners not properly engaging in their career planning processes.

The limited time allocated to LO places LO teachers under a considerable amount of time pressure, and hence not all aspects of the curriculum requirements are covered (Albien & Naidoo, 2016; Prinsloo, 2007; Smit et al., 2015). Unfortunately, career guidance is not always prioritised and learners are not sufficiently supported in their career development and adequately prepared for life after school.

Insufficient Teacher Training

The majority of South African LO teachers are not formally educated in the administration of career guidance or career counselling (Maree, 2013; Miles & Naidoo, 2016; Modiba & Sefotho, 2019; Prinsloo, 2007). Researchers have cited a lack of knowledge and training as a significant hindrance to LO teachers providing learners with adequate career guidance (Grossen et al., 2017; Prinsloo, 2007). Prinsloo (2007) disseminated semi-structured questionnaires and conducted interviews with school principals and LO teachers from 12 schools in South Africa to ascertain whether South African schools' LO programmes are achieving their curriculum goals and to identify the barriers they may encounter. The LO teachers indicated that they often felt they lacked the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the LO curriculum requirements (Prinsloo, 2007). Moreover, many South African teachers from rural schools mentioned they were unable to source information regarding the world of work to provide their learners with relevant career information.

In addition to a lack of formal training in career guidance, LO teachers in rural and resource-constrained schools/areas may lack other skills that limit their ability to provide learners with adequate career guidance. Modiba and Sefotho (2019) conducted a qualitative case study to ascertain the type of support LO teachers in rural South African secondary schools need to provide their learners with adequate career guidance. The semi-structured interviews identified the lack of computer skills as a significant barrier to LO teachers' ability to source information to provide their learners with career information and current trends in

the labour market. Thus, in addition to the need for formal training in the administration of career guidance, LO teachers from resource-constrained schools need training in computer literacy skills.

Resource-Constrained Schools

Resource-constrained schools and formerly classified 'non-white' schools under the apartheid regime face historic and systemic challenges in providing their learners with a quality education (Müller, 2014), which further hinders their ability to provide adequate career guidance as part of the LO curriculum (Buthelezi et al., 2009; De Bruin & Cornelius, 2011; Maree, 2013; Modiba & Sefotho, 2019; Pillay et al., 2014; Venter, 2018). Such challenges include classroom overcrowding (up to 40 learners per class) (Albien & Naidoo, 2016; Prinsloo, 2007), infrastructure problems, and dilapidated facilities (Pillay, 2021), high rates of teacher absenteeism, a lack of resources (internet or computer access) (Buthelezi et al., 2009), and teachers insufficiently trained to effectively administer career guidance services (Maree, 2013; Modiba & Sefotho, 2019; Prinsloo, 2007; Spaull, 2015). These historic and systemic challenges result in the poor career development of underserved learners from resource-constrained schools (Maree & Beck, 2004; Maree, 2013; Modiba & Sefotho, 2019; Naidoo et al., 2017; Pillay, 2020).

Thus, despite the abolition of the apartheid regime and desegregation of schools, the inequality of access to quality education and adequate career guidance remains, and thereby continues to stunt the career development and economic agency of underserved learners attending resource-constrained schools (Gumede & Biyase, 2016; Müller, 2014; Pillay et al., 2014; Spaull, 2015; Watson, 2010).

Contextual Challenges

In addition to the systemic barriers to the provision of adequate career guidance services within resource-constrained school settings, underserved learners face considerable contextual challenges in making informed career and subject choices. These include limited parental or caregiver involvement or support (Albien & Naidoo, 2016; Buthelezi et al., 2009; Seabi et al., 2014), the risk factors attributed to child-headed households (Pillay, 2021), poor access to career-related information (Buthelezi et al., 2009), a lack of exposure to positive career role models (Albien & Naidoo, 2016), and financial constraints (Akhurst & Mkhize, 2006; Albien & Naidoo, 2016; Maila & Ross, 2018; Spaull, 2015). These contextual challenges will be detailed in the sections to follow.

Limited Parental or Caregiver Involvement

Family support and parental/caregiver involvement in their child's education and learning have been shown to play an important role in supporting adolescents in pursuing their future endeavours. Soresi et al. (2014) argue that parents or caregivers can mobilise their children's knowledge and capabilities, foster a sense of self-efficacy, and bolster their children's career development. However, researchers have found that adolescents in historically and still underserved communities are not receiving the career support and guidance they need from their parents or caregivers (Albien & Naidoo, 2016; Buthelezi et al., 2009; Seabi et al., 2014). Consequently, underserved learners are making poorly informed career, school subject, and study-related decisions.

In a qualitative conversational data collection study, Buthelezi et al. (2009) examined the career needs and challenges of 12 South African adolescents from underserved communities. One of the significant challenges the researchers identified was the limited involvement of parents or caregivers in their child's education. The researchers found that the lack of parental or caregiver involvement became a serious impediment to the learners' academic progress and career development. Moreover, Buthelezi et al. (2009) found that many of the children within the study sample were either part of child-headed or single mother-headed households. In these cases, the learners' family composition limited or inhibited the parental or caregiver support available. In addition, Buthelezi et al. (2009) identified that household financial challenges can affect learners' abilities to focus on their academics, and limit the time a parent or caregiver has available to provide career and study-related guidance and advice. Overall, a family's composition and financial position significantly inform the extent to which a parent or caregiver is involved in a learner's education and career development.

Both Albien and Naidoo (2016) and Seabi et al. (2014) found that the legacy of apartheid's education policies and labour laws determined the extent to which parents are involved in their child's career development. Generations of black South Africans were confined to, and remain in, the unskilled or semi-skilled workforce (Albien & Naidoo, 2016; Seabi et al., 2014). The lingering legacy of the apartheid laws and legalisation limits underserved black South Africans' knowledge of the world of work and the academic sphere (Albien & Naidoo, 2016; Seabi et al., 2014). Thus, parents' lack of exposure to a variety of career pathways or lack of post-school qualifications limits their ability to impart knowledge and provide the guidance their child may need in the process of their career development (selecting school subjects and developing career plans) (Albien & Naidoo, 2016; Seabi et al.,

2014). As a result of limited career guidance and support from home and at school, underserved learners face considerable obstacles in terms of improving their socio-economic position and often remain in the same social position as their parents (Albien & Naidoo, 2016; Seabi et al., 2014).

Child-headed Households

As discussed, a family's composition and financial position play a determinant role in a child's career development. Child-headed households are defined by the Department of Social Development (2005) as cases whereby the parent or primary caregiver is terminally ill or deceased, and no extended family members are able to take on the role as primary caregiver. Consequently, a child (under the age of 18 years old) becomes the primary caregiver of the household and assumes responsibilities such as child rearing (provision of food, clothing, and psychological support). In South Africa, the HIV and AIDS epidemic contributes to a significant portion of children assuming the role of primary caregiver in their households after the loss of a parent or caregiver (Mogotlane et al., 2010). In these cases, the oldest sibling will often drop out of school to run the household and care for their younger siblings. Researchers have found that adolescent girls disproportionately assume the role as household caregiver, and consequently cannot further their education (Pillay, 2021).

There are considerable stressors and hardships that child-headed households face: living in poverty, a shortage of resources, a significant increase in responsibility, and an elevated risk of malnutrition and starvation (J. Pillay, 2016; I. Pillay, 2021). These children or adolescents often have a limited social support network and thus, have to tackle the day-to-day stressors and challenges associated with survival alone (Pillay, 2016). The hurdles child-headed households face are inextricably linked to financial instability, and this experience of extreme poverty can perpetuate a sense of social disempowerment (Pillay, 2016).

In terms of career development, children who take on the role of primary caregiver in their household often cannot prioritise their own career development because of the immense responsibilities associated with running a household (Pillay, 2021). Consequently, these children or adolescents often have difficulty keeping up with their academic work and thereby, perform poorly at school or are forced to drop out. The limited education children in child-headed households attain can stunt their career development and result in them remaining in impoverished circumstances (Pillay, 2021).

Poor Access to Career Information

Beyond the limited career guidance and information learners from resource-constrained schools receive in LO lessons, these learners face additional challenges in

sourcing career and study information for themselves. For instance, Buthelezi et al. (2009) point out that underserved learners may not have access to public libraries. Access to public libraries is vital for learners to acquire career and study-related resources and information. Furthermore, resource-constrained schools often do not have computer facilities or internet connectivity (Albien & Naidoo, 2016), and very few learners from impoverished communities have consistent access to smartphones, tablets, and computers with sufficient WiFi and data connectivity.

Statistics South Africa (2018) identified that only 10.6% of South African households had access to the internet via a computer. More recent statistics identify that the internet usage penetration in South Africa is between 57% and 64% of the total population (Johnson, 2021; Kemp, 2021), and indicate that 94.6% of the identified internet users access the internet using mobile devices (Kemp, 2021). Moreover, Kemp (2021) found that 98.2% of internet users between the ages of 16 and 64 years own a mobile device, 85.4 % a laptop or desktop computer, and 43.2% a tablet device. However, internet access remains inconsistent due to limited data or access to Wifi.

Thus, learners from poor socio-economic backgrounds with limited access to public libraries, smartphones, tablets, and computers, face significant barriers to sourcing information about the world of work. Poor access to career information can contribute to learners making haphazard and uninformed subject choices at school without a clear career plan in mind (Maila & Ross, 2018; Naidoo et al., 2019).

Limited Exposure to Career Role Models

Career role models can provide adolescents with career information, which may support adolescents in developing realistic career and study plans (Madhavan & Crowell, 2014). Adolescents who are exposed to a variety of career paths through the adults in their community, are able to build a knowledge base of the types of career paths they may wish to follow (De Bruin & Cornelius, 2011). However, community members in low socio-economic settings are predominantly part of the unskilled or semi-skilled labour force and very few have attended university or studied further (Albien & Naidoo, 2016). Thus, the lack of variety in career pathways people in underserved communities had access to, limits the type of occupational role models adolescents from these communities are exposed to (Albien & Naidoo, 2016).

Gangsterism, drug dealing, and other forms of criminal activity can be perceived as more accessible and lucrative ways of earning money in low socio-economic communities, such as townships, which may taint the type of ‘successful’ career role models adolescents

are exposed to (Buthelezi et al., 2009). Environmental risk factors (high rates of drug use, gangsterism, and other forms of criminal activity) in conjunction with limited exposure to positive career role models, contribute to career indecision, high levels of school attrition, and subsequently, the high percentage of youth unemployment in South Africa (Watson, 2010; Statistics South Africa, 2021).

Financial Constraints

Financial instability has been identified as a considerable impediment in the career decision-making process for adolescents (Albien & Naidoo, 2016; Buthelezi et al., 2009; Stead et al., 2004). Buthelezi et al. (2009) found that financial constraints can have negative implications for the academic potential of learners, as the stressors associated with financial challenges can hinder learners' ability to concentrate on their schoolwork. Similarly, Spaull (2015) identified a lack of financing as a contributing factor to school dropouts, as the risk factors associated with a poor socio-economic position makes it increasingly difficult to complete school. The high rates of school attrition in low socio-economic contexts result in adolescents not receiving the education necessary to support their career development and attain economic stability, which maintain the high levels of poverty and inequality in South Africa (Spaull, 2015).

Long-Term Consequences of Inaccessible Adequate Career Guidance Services

There are significant historic (Naidoo et al., 2017; A. L. Pillay, 2020; Watson, 2010), systemic (Maree, 2013; Modiba & Sefotho, 2019; I. Pillay, 2021), and contextual barriers (Albien & Naidoo, 2016; Buthelezi et al., 2009; Seabi et al., 2014) that underserved adolescents attending resource-constrained schools face when it comes to their career development. As a result, learners from low socio-economic backgrounds are disproportionately more likely to select unsuited subject choices without a well-thought-out career plan in mind (Maila & Ross, 2018; Naidoo et al., 2019), which often results in academic failure (Buthelezi et al., 2009; Maree, 2006) and contributes to the current high secondary school attrition rates (Spaull, 2015). Apart from the immediate consequences of limited career guidance at secondary school, inaccessible adequate career guidance services can have negative long-term social, economic, and psychological implications for young people.

For young people who choose to complete a university degree post matric, the lack of career guidance may result in the selection of poorly suited fields of study (A. L. Pillay 2020; I. Pillay, 2021). Young people may select a university degree or diploma without taking into consideration the suitability of the career field, the extent to which their chosen degree or

diploma improves their employability, and how the current market forces may affect the availability of job opportunities (Pillay, 2020). In addition, the academic consequences of selecting a poorly suited degree or diploma comprise: poor academic performance; and most commonly the inability to complete the degree or diploma (Bantjies et al., 2021; Pillay et al., 2020). Higher education failure or dropout in South Africa is quite high. Around 25−35% of university students drop out in their first year (Bantjies et al., 2021). Bantjies et al. (2021) found that first-generation first-year students were significantly more at risk of academic failure.

The high rates of attrition among tertiary education students has significant financial and emotional consequences for young people and their families (Pillay, 2020). For young people from impoverished settings, who have taken out a student loan or receive support from their families, an incomplete degree or diploma can have devastating long-term financial implications for the family unit. Furthermore, on a national scale many degree or diploma programmes are government funded or subsidised. Failure to complete a programme has financial ramifications for higher education institutions and also translates to a lost opportunity for another potential student.

In addition to the financial consequences of higher education dropout or failure, the stress thereof has been found to have negative implications for students' mental health and well-being (A.L. Pillay 2020; I. Pillay, 2021). Moreover, the stress associated with a poorly selected course of study and the fear of academic failure can become emotionally and mentally taxing for students. Researchers have found that a significant portion of students suffer from depression or feel overwhelmed while completing a degree or diploma (Bantjies et al., 2021; Pillay et al., 2020). In some cases, students may experience suicidal thoughts, and engage in suicidal behaviours (Pillay et al., 2020). The rates of suicide among higher education students are extremely concerning (Pillay et al., 2020). Though not always linked to the selection of an ill-suited course of study or academic failure, the stressors associated with academics can play a significant role in the overall mental health and well-being of a student (Pillay, 2020).

Students from historically and still marginalised groups disproportionately have difficulty adjusting socially, academically, and psychologically to university life, which can have negative implications for their well-being (Cornell & Kessi, 2017; Kessi & Cornell, 2016; Liccardo, 2018; Robertson & Pattman, 2018; Sennett et al., 2010). For instance, research studies have found that black South African students, attending historically white South African universities, become increasingly aware of the negative racial stereotypes

associated with their racial identity (laziness and low intelligence) in academic spaces such as lecture halls or tutorial rooms (Cornell & Kessi, 2017; Kessi & Cornell, 2016). This increased awareness was found to cause the participants, in both research studies, to doubt their academic capabilities and consequently, undermined their self-confidence (Cornell & Kessi, 2017; Kessi & Cornell, 2016).

Similarly, Liccardo (2018), in a biographic-narrative research study, identified that black South African scholarship students studying in Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics (STEM) fields at a South African university evaluated their academic capabilities based on their academic achievements. In other words, the participants did not perceive their academic capabilities as innate. Thereby, any instances of academic failure caused many of the participants to experience depressive symptoms and feel a sense of inferiority within their academic fields (Liccardo, 2018).

Overall, the researchers indicate that students from historically and still marginalised groups are at a greater risk of experiences of low academic self-confidence, sense of inferiority, or depression, which can hinder their academic performance and overall adjustment to university life (Cornell & Kessi, 2017; Kessi & Cornell, 2016; Liccardo, 2018). Thus, it is important that students from historically and still marginalised groups receive adequate career guidance during secondary school to bolster their confidence in the suitability of their chosen career path, and their ability to achieve their career aspirations.

For the young people who choose not to study further, the lack of a clear plan for the future can result in unemployment. In 2020, the estimated youth (15−24 years) unemployment rate, which has steadily increased since 2008, was at 55.75% (O'Neil, 2021). According to Statistics South Africa (2020), in the first quarter of 2020 around 1.9 million young people were unemployed and growing increasingly discouraged looking for work. The failure to build on skills through further education and training was identified as a contributing factor to the low employment rates of the age cohort (Statistics South Africa, 2020).

Sultana (2014) argues that career guidance services, from a social justice perspective, can make a tangible difference in individuals' lives, especially among marginalised groups. For instance, Sultana (2014) credits career guidance services in improving economic independence, supporting sustainable employment, enabling the fulfilment of personal aspirations, and enhancing the knowledge of personal capabilities. As discussed, the current inequality in access to adequate career guidance services in South Africa has significant short and long-term implications for adolescents' career development and overall well-being,

which underpins the social justice imperative of the CGP. The theoretical framework that informed the development and current evaluation of the self-directed iteration of the CGP implemented in 2020, will be explored in the sections to follow.

Theoretical Framework

Feasibility and Acceptability Research

This study is informed by a feasibility and acceptability perspective. The objectives, features, and importance of feasibility and acceptability studies in intervention research will be discussed, to detail the theoretical lens through which the evaluative data of this study was analysed.

Feasibility studies are run before the implementation of an intervention, usually in the form of pilot studies, to assess the preliminary practicality of an intervention to determine whether it can be run on a full scale. Orsmond and Cohn (2015) identified five objectives of a feasibility study: 1) evaluating the recruitment capabilities (appropriateness, plan, and procedure); 2) evaluation of the appropriateness of the data collection procedures and outcome measures (participants' comprehension and ability to complete the measures); 3) evaluation of the acceptability and suitability of the intervention to the participants (engagement, attendance, and understanding); 4) evaluating the resources, development, and implementation processes of intervention (challenges and shortcomings); 5) preliminary evaluation of the participants' feedback and response to the intervention (perceived success among target population). Based on the stated objectives, feasibility studies are important in the identification of the shortcomings and strengths of an intervention in terms of the design, implementation, and outcomes (Gadke et al., 2021). Thereby, feasibility research plays an integral role in identifying the most effective design and structure of an intervention to successfully meet the needs of its target population (Bowen et al., 2009).

The importance of running a pilot study in feasibility studies is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of intervention before the full-scale implementation. Unfortunately, the CGP had to be adapted and reconceptualised in a very short period to ensure the Grade 9 cohort of 2020 could receive career guidance and subject choice support amid a global pandemic. In its stead, vigorous attention was devoted by the project team to refining the career guidance workshop manual content to enhance its accessibility and its appeal as a self-directed exercise in which the reader could engage with the process of completing the designated activities and integrating the information. Thus, the time constraint and necessary attention that had to be given to the self-directed adaptation of the CGP, rendered a pilot study impossible. However, the evaluative data collected remains valuable in reflecting on the strengths and shortcomings

of the adapted version of the CGP, to assess the feasibility thereof for future iterations of the project.

Acceptability, as previously mentioned, is a component of feasibility studies. The focus of acceptability research is to determine the extent to which the target population benefited from the intervention, thereby whether the intervention met their needs (Ayala & Elder, 2011; Nastasi et al., 2000). Furthermore, determining the acceptability of interventions also entails an evaluation of the measures, components, and implementation of the intervention from the target population's and key informants' and stakeholders' perspective. Key informants and stakeholders comprise the individuals involved in the implementation and development of an intervention. Hence, obtaining their perspectives is essential in evaluating both the feasibility and the effectiveness of an intervention.

Gottfredson's Theory of Circumscription and Compromise

To provide theoretical context to the CGP and the 2020 adaptation thereof, Linda Gottfredson's (1981; 2002) theory of circumscription and compromise in career development was utilised. Gottfredson (1981) introduced a sociological lens to career development and identified sex, social class, intelligence, and competencies as salient vocationally relevant elements of a person's self-concept that play a determining role in a person's vocational aspirations and behaviours developmentally (from a young child into adulthood). Self-concept relates to how a person perceives him/herself/themselves concerning their appearance, attributes, personality, gender, and major life roles (Gottfredson, 1981; 2002). Gottfredson (1981) argued for the integration of psychological (personality) and non-psychological (social class, intelligence, and sex) determinants of a person's self-concept to understand the process of career development, arguing that social conditions and socialisation play a decisive role in an individual's career decision-making.

Gottfredson (1981) articulates how sex, social class, intelligence, and competencies are incorporated into a person's self-concept developmentally, starting at age three. Across the four unique stages of occupational development, a person begins to develop vocational self-concepts based on their perceived compatibility. First, starting at age three up until age five, children are oriented toward the 'size and power' of occupations. Children begin to relate to realistic occupations as opposed to fantasies, such as becoming a fictional character (e.g., Superman).

Second, from ages six to eight years old, the socialisation of gender roles results in children forming career-related gender stereotypes. For instance, fashion design is predominantly considered a feminine career, which young boys (who identify as boys)

starting at age six, may not consider a career option based on the socially constructed feminisation of the career path. Third, adolescents (9−13 years) begin to recognise and internalise abstract concepts such as socio-economic differences and the perceived prestige of certain occupations. Thereby, adolescents begin to identify their socio-economic status and mediate their career aspirations according to what they may perceive as acceptable to their family and community's prestige level. Fourth, adolescents (from age 14 and older) become more introspective (values, competencies, and motivations). Adolescents will begin to evaluate careers that seem accessible based on their own perceived skills and abilities.

Overall, Gottfredson (1981; 2002) theorised that vocational compromises and eliminations occur based on the perceived prestige and sex type of career pathways, the perceived personal compatibility of personality traits associated with a career, the perceived accessibility and availability of opportunities to pursue a specific career, and the general familiarity and knowledge of a career. The two primary dimensions that define the circumscription or compromise of career-related decisions are sex and social status. Circumscription of career pathways is predominantly influenced by social values. For instance, an individual's awareness of what careers are deemed socially acceptable for people of their gender and social class can limit what they perceive as acceptable career aspirations. Compromise entails individuals reconsidering their career aspirations based on what they deem possible, despite other career pathways being more suitable. Career compromises are usually veiled by self-doubt (pertaining to abilities and skills), and thereby, suited career pathways are rejected based on self-held beliefs that may not reflect reality.

In relation to the CGP, as previously discussed, underserved adolescents from resource-constrained communities have limited exposure to various career pathways, career role models, and adequate career guidance support and resources. The limited exposure to career information, and low socio-economic status may affect learners' career interests and aspirations, which may circumscribe and compromise their career-related decision-making. For instance, they may compromise or circumscribe certain career pathways based on their perceived incompatibility and accessibility (perceived difficulty, expensive, and resource-intensive to pursue), which could severely stunt their career development (Gottfredson, 2002).

Moreover, according to Gottfredson (1981), Grade 9 learners are developmentally becoming orientated towards their internal and unique self, which further informs their job-self concepts. Adolescents in this developmental phase often experience an identity crisis. Therefore, career guidance that focuses on supporting learners in exploring and identifying

their personality traits, vocational interests, personal career attributes, and ways to overcome environmental career and study obstacles is of value to their career development. Further, career guidance support that focuses on the provision of career and study-related information, and the engagement with potential systemic and contextual career barriers learners may face, would be useful in redressing the potential career compromises and circumscription learners may make.

Gottfredson's (1981; 2002) theory played an integral role in the development of the resources and social justice objectives of the CGP. For instance, as part of the video content developed for the project, a video pertaining to Gender and Prestige in career planning was created, which aimed to dissuade learners from circumscribing or compromising on certain career paths based on perceptions of the careers being unsuited to their gender or not prestigious enough. Moreover, the self-directed booklet emphasised paying attention to pertinent career-related self-concepts such as personality (16 personality profile), socio-economic status (environmental risk profile), and intelligence and competencies (Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats and Opportunities Analysis). Moreover, readers were encouraged to consider the supports and challenges that were part of their environmental assessment. Overall, Gottfredson's (1981; 2002) theory was pertinent to the development of the CGP and thus, was integrated into the data analysis process to relate the evaluation of the project to the target population.

Community-Based Participatory Research

In Community Psychology, mental health and well-being are holistically considered by contextualising individuals within multiple interconnected social systems and environmental contexts (Riemer et al., 2020). Community psychologists aim to intervene in social injustices through community engagement interventions, to promote social change and overall well-being (Riemer et al., 2020). The CGP's social justice imperative of redressing the unequal access to adequate career guidance services within the South African Education system is informed by Community Psychology practices and values.

In recent years, Community Psychology researchers have begun to critically engage with the complexities associated with academically-led community engagement initiatives. One of the main points of contention is the power imbalance present between academics and the community recipients of the interventions (Ogunniyi, 2011 as cited in Lazarus et al., 2015). From this criticism, the Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) approach was developed (Lazarus et al., 2015). CBPR places emphasis on the shared knowledge and

wisdom of community members, and the value community members can add to the sustainability and longevity of a community-based initiative (Lazarus et al., 2012; 2015).

Through the formation of community partnerships, the CBPR approach requires the active participation of community members in the planning, implementation, and overall evaluation of a community intervention. The direct involvement of community members in community interventions can promote a sense of community agency and empowerment (Churchman et al., 2017; Lazarus et al., 2015). Moreover, the maintenance of a strong relationship between academics and their community partners can support the longevity of a community intervention. The CBPR approach was utilised as a theoretical framework in the interpretation of the mixed methods data collected from the LO teacher survey and project team member semi-structured interviews, and to analyse the feasibility and acceptability of the self-directed CGP as a whole.

Conclusion

Career guidance interventions, both locally and internationally, have proven to significantly improve adolescents' career adaptability (Cadaret & Hartung, 2020; Maree, 2019), career maturity (Shirley, 2018), career decision-making capabilities (David et al., 2020; Miles & Naidoo, 2016), career readiness (Babarović et al., 2020), and bolster their vocational identity (Cadaret & Hartung, 2020). In South Africa, the remnants of the legacy of the apartheid education system and the current ineffective administration of the LO programme in schools result in adolescents receiving inadequate career guidance support (Dabula & Makura, 2013; Maila & Ross, 2018; Modiba & Sefotho, 2019; Naidoo et al., 2019). Moreover, resource-constrained schools face endemic challenges that further hinder their capabilities to provide their learners with effective career guidance services (Albien & Naidoo, 2016; Buthelezi et al., 2009; Maree, 2013; Modiba & Sefotho, 2019; Pillay, 2020). Furthermore, underserved adolescents from poor socio-economic communities face contextual barriers that significantly hinder their ability to make informed career plans and decisions (Albien & Naidoo, 2016; Buthelezi et al., 2009; Seabi et al., 2014).

The lack of adequate career guidance support contributes to Grade 9 learners potentially making haphazard, uninformed subject choices without a clear career plan in mind (Akhurst & Mkhize, 2006; Maila & Ross, 2018; Naidoo et al., 2019). Moreover, the lack of sufficient career development support can potentially have negative long-term social (Statistics South Africa, 2020), psychological (Cornell & Kessi, 2017; Kessi & Cornell, 2016; Liccardo, 2018; Pillay, 2020), and economic (O'Neil, 2021; Pillay, 2020) consequences for young people's well-being. The social justice concern and evidence of the efficacy of career

guidance interventions led to the development of the CGP (Naidoo et al., 2019; Rabie et al., 2021). The format and implementation of the project were adapted into a self-directed learning career guidance intervention in response to the unforeseen circumstances brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This mixed methods study aimed to evaluate the feasibility and acceptability of the adaptations made to the format and implementation of the self-directed CGP from the perspectives of the Grade 9 learners and key informants (LO teachers, school principals, project team members and project volunteers). In the next chapter, I will describe the context of the study and delineate the methodology used to execute the study. Furthermore, I will thoroughly detail the original and adapted version of the CGP in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3

Research Methods

Introduction

In this chapter I will outline the research methodology that informed the present research study. To start, I will discuss the mixed methods research design and outline the quantitative and qualitative measures. I will detail the sampling strategy, and inclusion and exclusion criteria for selected participants of the study. To follow, I will contextualise the CGP and detail both the original and adapted iterations of the project. Thereafter, I will explain the procedures for data collection and the proposed data analysis strategies. Furthermore, I will discuss the ethical considerations applied to the research study. To end, I will provide a reflexive account of conducting the research.

Design

The present research study is a sub-study of the parent project, the self-directed CGP (Project Number: 3072), implemented in 2020. The time constraints imposed on the reformulation of the CGP prevented a pilot study of the self-directed approach, which instigated the development of a mixed methods evaluative research study to ascertain the feasibility and acceptability of the self-directed CGP. Mixed methods research comprises the collection, analysis, and integration of qualitative and quantitative data to meet the aims and objectives of the research study (Bryman, 2012; Clark & Ivankova, 2017).

A combination of a structured and in-depth approach to data collection and analysis is valuable to produce a thorough evaluation of the CGP. The quantitative data provides a general blueprint of the target population and key stakeholders' perceptions of the self-directed CGP. In addition, the qualitative data allows for the participants' subjectivities to be explored, providing multiple in-depth perspectives (Clark & Ivankova, 2017), which broaden the scope of the evaluation and enable me to develop more nuanced recommendations for improvements to be made.

Initially, after the implementation of the parent study, the evaluative feedback, in the form of mixed methods surveys (quantitative Likert scale questions and qualitative open-ended response questions), was obtained from the Grade 9 learners, school principals, and LO teachers from the eight schools, as well as the project volunteers. The survey data followed a concurrent qualitative and quantitative mixed methods design wherein the qualitative and quantitative survey data were compared and contrasted to provide insight and contextualise the Grade 9 learners', project volunteers', LO teachers' and school principals' evaluations of the project (Clark & Ivankova, 2017).

In addition to the survey data, the primary qualitative data (semi-structured interviews) were collected from the project team members and project volunteers. The semi-structured interviews allowed for the exploration of the project team members' and project volunteers' experiences of working on the development and implementation of the adaptations to the CGP amid the COVID-19 pandemic and South African National Lockdown. The semi-structured interviews allowed for in-depth conversations to be had, which produced a rich narrative of qualitative data. A sequential quantitative to qualitative mixed methods design was employed in the data analysis process. The data collected from semi-structured interviews provided background to and expanded upon the existing quantitative and qualitative evaluative data collected from the survey research (Clark & Ivankova, 2017). The participant sample and recruitment procedure implemented will be discussed in the section to follow.

Recruitment of Participants

Survey Research

The participants involved in the survey evaluative research were recruited using a convenience sampling approach (Bryman, 2012). The participant population included a total of 1 684 Grade 9 learners, eight school principals, and 16 LO teachers from the eight secondary schools in the Cape Town area involved in the project, and the 12 volunteers from Stellenbosch University's Psychology (undergraduate and postgraduate) and Industrial Psychology (postgraduate) Departments involved in the development and implementation of the CGP.

In October 2020, the Grade 9 learners from the eight schools received the self-directed career guidance booklet and project evaluation survey. The completed surveys were later collected in November 2020. The learners' participation inclusion criteria were as follows: learners must be in Grade 9; both male and female; from the eight schools involved in the project; and must have completed the self-directed career guidance booklet. Moreover, parent or caregiver consent and assent were required of the Grade 9 learners, early in 2020, to participate in the study (Appendix A).

To participate in the evaluative survey research component of the study, the LO teachers, school principals, and project volunteers were contacted via e-mail. On 18 November 2020, the project coordinator e-mailed the LO teachers and school principals to thank them for their contributions in facilitating the successful implementation of the project and inviting them to complete a survey to evaluate the self-directed CGP. The e-mail contained a link to the Google Forms survey, which included an informed consent form

(Appendix B). The project coordinator had established a good rapport with the LO teachers and school principals from communicating with them throughout the year. This informed my decision to have the project coordinator recruit the LO teachers and school principals. However, I recruited the project volunteers as their feedback included an evaluation of the project coordinator. The inclusion criteria for LO teachers were as follows: currently teaching the Grade 9 learners involved in the CGP (at one of the eight schools) and providing informed consent. The school principals had to be from the eight schools involved in the CGP and provided informed consent. Lastly, the student volunteers' inclusion criteria were as follows: Stellenbosch University Psychology (undergraduate or postgraduate) students or Industrial Psychology (postgraduate) students, who volunteered in the 2020 implementation of the CGP and provided informed consent.

Semi-Structured Interviews

The participants who participated in the semi-structured interviews were recruited using convenience sampling methods (Bryman, 2012). The e-mail addresses of the project team members (eight staff members and postgraduate students at Stellenbosch University's Industrial Psychology and Psychology Departments) and project volunteers (12 Stellenbosch University Industrial Psychology postgraduate students and Psychology postgraduate and undergraduate students) were obtained from my supervisor and the project coordinator. The project team members were each sent an introductory e-mail from my supervisor, introducing them to the research project and informing them that I will contact them to participate in the study. The project coordinator disseminated a similar e-mail to the project volunteers.

Thereafter, I sent an e-mail to the project team members (Appendix C) and project volunteers (Appendix D) introducing them to the research study and formally inviting them to participate in the study. I informed the potential participants that their participation would be entirely voluntary and any personal/identifying information they provide would remain confidential. I indicated that the participants would need to complete the informed consent form (Appendix E) attached in the e-mail and a data requirements survey. Participants who did not have access to Stellenbosch University's free WiFi or uncapped WiFi from Monday to Friday (8 a.m. to 5 p.m.) would be eligible to receive a data voucher to complete the interview.

I contacted the participants who signed the informed consent form and indicated their willingness to participate to schedule the interview in the month of May 2020. Only the project team members and project volunteers directly involved in the development and

implementation of the 2020 self-directed CGP, who had given informed consent and were available for an interview were considered for inclusion in the semi-structured interviews.

Career Guidance Project

The shortcomings of the provision of career guidance services as part of the LO curriculum, specifically in resource-constrained schools, has been argued to contribute to in Grade 9 learners making haphazard and uninformed selection of subjects that they will take for the rest of their senior career (Grade 10 to 12) (Akhurst & Mkhize, 2006; Maila & Ross, 2018; Naidoo et al., 2019). Poorly suited subject choices without proper career planning can negatively affect learners' academic performance (Maree, 2006), and limit the potential study avenues and career trajectories learners may aspire to follow (Dabula & Makura, 2013; Maila & Ross, 2018). In addition, the intersection of systemic and contextual challenges facing underserved learners attending resource-constrained schools experience further contribute to career indecision, secondary school attrition, and the high youth unemployment rates in South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2018). Thus, the inequality in access to adequate career guidance services present in South Africa can be considered a significant social justice issue (Sefotho, 2017).

The CGP, under the auspices of Stellenbosch University's Industrial Psychology and Psychology Departments, with a social justice imperative, sought to redress the inequality of access to adequate career guidance services in resource-constrained schools. The project is run yearly in eight resource-constrained schools around the Cape Town and Cape Winelands area. The project aims to provide underserved learners with career planning and subject choice support. To achieve its aims, the main objectives of the project are: to support Grade 9 learners in the exploration and identification of their career attributes and aspirations, to create a link between their career attributes and career goals, to provide learners with subject choice support, to help learners to identify contextual career-related barriers they may face, and to provide learners with career counselling based on their individual needs (Naidoo et al., 2019; Rabie et al., 2021).

In past iterations of the project, career guidance was provided through structured group-based interactive workshops (3×4 hours) and group-based psychometric testing (Naidoo et al., 2019). In 2019, to accommodate the curriculum time constraints of the eight schools, the CGP format was reduced to two contact sessions (Rabie et al., 2021). The first session entailed a two-hour test administration of the South African Career Interest Inventory and the Career Maturity Inventory form. The second session comprised career guidance workshops, wherein learners worked through a workshop booklet. Both Naidoo et al. (2019) and Rabie et

al. (2021) reported that the implementation of the project had a significant effect on learners' ability to engage in the career decision-making process. More specifically, both iterations of the project rendered statistically significant improvements in learners' curiosity (the extent to which learners seek out career and study-related information) and confidence (improved self-exploration and agency), as measured on the Career Maturity Inventory Scale.

At the start of 2020, the initial plan was to continue with the group-based workshop and psychometric testing format. However, in March 2020, the WHO declared the spread of the COVID-19 virus a pandemic. In response, the South African government instituted a Nationwide Lockdown on 26 March 2020. Under Level Five of the National Lockdown restrictions, all non-essential services were non-operational, and South Africans were urged to stay home, practice social distancing, and wear a mask. Moreover, as part of the South African government's risk mitigation strategy, schools were closed for a period and non-essential interaction with the learners was not permitted. The original format and presentation of the CGP was no longer a viable option. The CGP format and presentation were, therefore, reformulated to ensure the Grade 9 learners in the eight schools still received career guidance and subject choice support in 2020. The adaptations made to the project will be discussed below.

Self-Directed Career Guidance Project

To comply with the South African government COVID-19 containment measures and risk mitigation strategies, a self-directed career guidance booklet and supplementary resources (physical and electronic resource kit, video content, and website) were developed. The self-directed career guidance booklet and supplementary resources replaced the contact-based workshops and psychometric testing format of previous iterations of the CGP. Extant research indicates that self-directed learning is successful in promoting learners' career decision-making abilities (Briska & Dislere, 2018; De Bruin & Cornelius, 2011). The learning process requires the learner to take responsibility for their work and progress, which has been found to promote learners' sense of empowerment and agency (Morris, 2019). Despite the reformulation of the project happening out of necessity, the decision to develop a self-directed adaptation of the project was based on evidence of the efficacy of such an approach.

The self-directed career guidance booklet was initially designed in English and later translated into Afrikaans to better support the Afrikaans home language learners. The booklet itself consisted of self-complete tasks, detailed in (Appendix F), that functioned to equip the learners to complete their Career Flower (Figure 1). The *My Career Flower* (Naidoo, 2011)

aims to support learners to develop a holistic conceptualisation of their career life narrative. By completing the Career Flower activities, Grade 9 learners are guided to engage with self-knowledge activities that can assist their subject choice selection and career planning. In the booklet, the Grade 9 learners are introduced to the characters Thabo and Maria, who were designed to encourage learners to work through the whole booklet. Moreover, the characters each have a backstory and mock-up Career Flowers, which serve as examples for the learners to assist them with completing their Career Flower. In total, 1 684 booklets were disseminated amongst the learners from the eight schools in October 2020. Once completed, the learners could keep the booklet as a resource to continue to support them in their career planning beyond Grade 9.

Figure 1

My Career Flower

Note. Adapted from *Career flower-enhancing vocational self-awareness* by A.V. Naidoo, 2011, Stellenbosch University.

To replace the support and guidance provided during the contact-based workshops, video content was developed by student volunteers from the Stellenbosch University Industrial Psychology and Psychology Departments. In total, 18 videos were uploaded onto

the CGP's website and YouTube page (Appendix G). Each video related to the various self-completion tasks in the booklet and functioned to guide the learners in completing each task. Moreover, to further support the learners, the video content provided career, study, and subject choice-related information.

As previously discussed, LO teachers, specifically those from resource-constrained schools, face significant challenges when it comes to sourcing career and study-related information to provide their learners with adequate and relevant career guidance. Many resource-constrained schools lack access to computers or the internet, which constitutes a further barrier to LO teachers' ability to easily access information regarding the world of work. To better support the LO teachers, a physical and electronic resource kit that contained information regarding universities, colleges, service careers, and bursary opportunities was provided.

Additionally, an interactive website was developed for the CGP, (https://careerguidanceproject.co.za). The website sought to provide secondary school learners access to resources and information related to career pathways, study skills, and study opportunities (university, college, and bursary opportunities) (CGP, 2020a; 2020b). Moreover, the CGP website grouped the various video content developed for the CGP under user-friendly headings such as: Booklet Exercises, Self-Knowledge, Subject Choices, Career Action Plan, General Career Guidance, and World of Work (CGP, 2020c). In addition, learners can contact the project team via the e-mail address (info@careerguidanceproject.co.za) provided on the website should they have any questions.

Measures

Grade 9 Learner Survey

The Grade 9 learners received the self-directed career guidance booklet and a project evaluation survey (Appendix H) to complete. The survey questions were developed by the project team and comprised quantitative (Likert scale) and qualitative (open-ended) questions designed to measure their evaluation of the self-directed career guidance booklet and the extent to which learners felt the project provided them with career planning and subject choice support.

Biographical Information. The Grade 9 learners were required to indicate the date the survey was completed, their school, class, gender, home language, and age. Their name and surname were not required.

Booklet Experience. The Grade 9 learners were presented with 10 statements to rate their experience of completing the booklet on a Likert scale of 5 (strongly agree) to 1

(strongly disagree) to, e.g., "I found completing this booklet quite an interesting exercise." The 10 items were computed into a total score 'booklet experience', and to ensure the reliability and internal consistency of the Booklet Experience measure a Cronbach's Alpha was run using a cut off score of ≥ 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The total scores ranged between 10 and 50 and were interpreted on a continuum. The higher scores indicate a favourable experience, and lower scores indicate a less favourable experience. Furthermore, Grade 9 learners were asked to complete the qualitative component of the survey, which consisted of five open-ended questions related to their evaluation of the booklet, e.g., "What was your favourite part of the booklet? Please also shortly describe why."

Perceived Impact on Career Preparedness. Four statements were included about the effect the project had on the Grade 9 learners' career, and the questions/statements were rated on a Likert scale of 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree), e.g., "I believe that I will be able to accomplish the career goals that I set for myself." The four items measuring Impact on Career were computed into a total score, ranging between 4 and 20. To ensure the reliability and internal consistency of the Perceived Impact on Career Preparedness measure a Cronbach's Alpha was run using a cut off score of > 0.50, given that the scale consisted of less than 10 items (Pallant, 2020). The total scores were interpreted on a continuum, with higher scores indicating greater impact on career and lower scores indicating less of an impact on career.

LO Teacher Survey

The LO teacher survey (Appendix I) sought to measure the LO teachers' evaluation of the new self-directed format of the CGP. The survey measures comprised quantitative (Likert scale) and qualitative (open-ended) questions.

Booklet Acceptability. LO teachers were asked to rate six statements (Questions $1-6$) about the acceptability of the self-directed career guidance booklet e.g., "From your perspective as a Life Orientation teacher, the information in the self-directed career guidance booklet helped, the Grade 9 learners, with their subject choices" on a Likert scale of 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). The six items measuring Booklet Acceptability were collated into a total score, ranging between 6 and 30, to ensure the reliability and internal consistency of the Booklet Acceptability measure a Cronbach's Alpha was run using a cut off score of > 0.50, given that the scale consisted of less than 10 items (Pallant, 2020). The lower scores indicate a negative perception of the acceptability of the booklet and higher scores indicate a positive perception of the acceptability of the booklet. In addition, teachers were

asked five open-ended questions about the booklet, e.g., “Describe how you used or will use the booklet during LO class time”.

Supplementary Resources Acceptability. The LO teachers were required to rate four statements (Questions 7−10) on the acceptability of the video content, physical and electronic resource kits, and website developed for the intervention e.g., “From your perspective as a Life Orientation teacher, the Grade 9 learners found the video content helpful” on a Likert scale of 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). The items measuring Supplementary Resources Acceptability were computed into a total score, ranging between 4 and 20, to ensure the reliability and internal consistency of the Supplementary Resources Acceptability measure a Cronbach’s Alpha was run using a cut off score of > 0.50, given that the scale consisted of less than 10 items (Pallant, 2020). Higher scores indicate positive perceptions of the acceptability of the project resources and lower scores indicate negative perceptions of the acceptability of the project resources.

Reflection on New Format. LO teachers were asked to rate two statements (Question 3 and 11) regarding the new format of the CGP on a Likert scale of 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree), e.g., “Given the changes to the group-based Career Guidance Intervention used in the past due to the COVID-19 pandemic and South African National Lockdown, the self-directed booklet was an adequate replacement for face-to-face discussions and contact-based workshops with learners used in the past.” The two items were collated into a total score that ranged between 2 and 10, to ensure the reliability and internal consistency of the Reflection on New Format measure a Cronbach’s Alpha was run using a cut off score of > 0.50, given that the scale consisted of less than 10 items (Pallant, 2020). Higher scores indicate a positive reflection on the new format and lower scores indicate a negative reflection on the new format.

Future Recommendations. LO teachers were asked in one open-ended question to describe how the intervention can be improved for future projects, “How can the self-directed career guidance booklet be improved for future projects?” This item was subjected to qualitative analysis.

School Principal Survey

The school principals’ survey (Appendix J) sought to measure the principals’ perception of the efficacy of the project and the managerial coordination of the project. Further, the survey required the principals to provide insight into Grade 9 subject choice trends and provide future recommendations for the CGP.

Grade 9 Subject Choices. Principals were required to rate Grade 9 learners' preparedness to make meaningful subject choices on a Likert scale of 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree), e.g., "Grade 9 learners are relatively unprepared to be able to make meaningful subject choices." In addition, the principals were required to elaborate on Grade 9 subject choice trends in an open-ended question, "Have you noticed any trends in how the Grade 9s approach doing their subject choices at your school? Please indicate the trends you have observed and whether our project is making a difference."

Project and Supplementary Resources Acceptability. The school principals were asked to rate three statements regarding the acceptability of the CGP and the self-directed career guidance booklet on a Likert scale of 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree), e.g., "The Career Guidance Project is an important intervention in supporting Grade 9 learners with their subject choices." Thereafter, the principals were asked to indicate, "Yes" or "No," if they have reviewed the supplementary resources developed for the CGP. The school principals that selected "Yes" were asked to rate three statements regarding the acceptability of the content developed for the project on a Likert scale of 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree), e.g., "The information provided in the physical and electronic resource kits was useful to Grade 9 students." The school principals that selected "No" were asked to skip ahead to Question 9. The first three items measuring Project Acceptability were computed into a total score, ranging between 3 and 15, to ensure the reliability and internal consistency the measure a Cronbach's Alpha was run using a cut off score of > 0.50, given that the scale consisted of less than 10 items (Pallant, 2020). Higher scores indicate positive perceptions of the acceptability of the project, and lower scores indicate negative perceptions. The three items measuring Supplementary Resources Acceptability were collated into a total score that ranges between 3 and 15, similarly a Cronbach's Alpha was run using a cut off score of ≥ 0.50. Higher scores indicate positive perceptions of the acceptability of the supplementary resource, and lower scores indicate negative perceptions of the supplementary resources.

Managerial Coordination. Principals were required to rate two statements regarding the managerial coordination of the implementation of the project on a Likert scale of 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree), e.g., "The coordination of the project implementation at my school was a managerial challenge because of COVID-19." The two measures for Managerial Coordination were computed into a total score, ranging between 2 and 10, to ensure the reliability and internal consistency the measure a Cronbach's Alpha was run using a cut off score of > 0.50, given that the scale consisted of less than 10 items

(Pallant, 2020). Higher scores indicated that the managerial coordination of the project was easy, and lower scores indicate that managerial coordination of the project was a challenge.

Reflection on New Format. Four open-ended questions required the school principals to reflect on the efficacy of the new project format, the feedback from LO teachers on the new format and thereby, provide suggestions for improvements, e.g., "Please indicate if you have any suggestions regarding how the adaptations can be improved for future projects."

Volunteer Survey

The volunteer survey (Appendix K) sought to measure the volunteers' overall experience from volunteering for the CGP. The survey questions required the volunteers to provide feedback regarding the efficacy of the coordination of the volunteer work and future recommendations for improvements to be made.

Prior Volunteering Experience. Volunteers had to indicate whether they had engaged in volunteer work in the past, "This is my first experience of volunteer work," on a Likert Scale of 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree).

Volunteer Experience Acceptability. Volunteers had to rate three statements (Question 2, 3 and 4) regarding how positive their experience volunteering for the CGP was, on a Likert scale of 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree), e.g., "I enjoyed the volunteering process." Question 3 asked volunteers to indicate whether their volunteering duties were time consuming on a Likert Scale of 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree), "I found the volunteering process time-consuming." Question 3's scores were reversed, and thereafter the three Likert scale items were computed into a total score, ranging between 2 and 10, a Cronbach's Alpha was run using a cut off score of > 0.50, given that the scale consisted of less than 10 items, to confirm the reliability of the scale (Pallant, 2020). Higher scores indicate a positive experience and lower scores indicate a negative experience. In addition, the volunteers were asked to answer three open-ended questions also related to their volunteering experience, e.g., "What was your overall takeaway (benefits gained) from your volunteer experience in the project?"

Coordination of Volunteer Work. Volunteers were asked to rate the acceptability of the coordination of their volunteer work in three statements on a Likert scale of 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree), e.g., "The e-mail communication from the project coordinator (Francois van den Berg) was clear." The three items were collated into a total score, ranging between 3 and 15, Cronbach's Alpha was run using a cut off score of > 0.50, given that the scale consisted of less than 10 items (Pallant, 2020). Higher scores indicate efficient coordination, and lower scores indicated inefficient coordination of volunteer work.

Future Recommendations. In one open-ended question, volunteers were asked to describe how the intervention can be improved for future projects, "Do you have any recommendations that can be implemented in improving the Career Guidance Project?"

Semi-Structured Interviews

The interviews held with the project team members (Appendix L) and project volunteers (Appendix M) followed a semi-structured interview schedule. The semi-structured interview schedule acted as an interview guide wherein the sequence and composition of the questions could vary between the (total) interviews conducted (Bryman, 2012). The flexibility of the schedule allowed me to pose additional follow-up questions suited to the participants' replies, which broadened the scope of the interview and allowed for a rich narrative of data to emerge.

The series of questions in the semi-structured interview schedule aimed to elicit the project team members' and project volunteers' experiences of the process of redeveloping the format and presentation of the project. In the project volunteer interviews, the questions more specifically focused on attaining the project volunteers' assessment of the practicality (feasibility) and acceptability of their volunteering responsibilities and coordination of the volunteering process by the project coordinator. The questions posed to the project team members sought to engage the project team on the practicality (feasibility) and perceived appropriateness (acceptability) of the new format and implementation of the self-directed CGP. Moreover, the interviews were used to ascertain the project team members' assessments of the shortcomings and strengths of the project contents and development and implementation processes.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Data Analysis Strategy

The data collected from the Grade 9 learners', LO teachers', school principals' and project volunteers' evaluation forms were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 24). The paper-and-pencil data were double-captured in Microsoft Excel and underwent data cleaning to identify and correct any data entry errors and inconsistencies. Thereafter, the data were imported into SPSS, wherein the parametric assumptions of normality were tested on the data skewness $(-2, +2)$ and kurtosis $(-7, +7)$. Once the parametric assumptions of normality were met, a descriptive frequency table of the biographical information obtained from the Grade 9 learners' evaluation forms was generated to describe the sample. LO teachers', school principals' and project volunteers' evaluation forms did not require their biographical information.

Following the biographical information analysis, the questions related to each measure, described above, were transformed into test variables. To ascertain the acceptability of the booklet and the impact thereof on the Grade 9 learners' career paths, both test variables, Booklet Experience and Perceived Impact on Career Preparedness were analysed using descriptive statistics (range, maximum and minimum values, mean, trimmed mean, mode, and standard deviation). The results from the descriptive data analysis were interpreted with the quantitative hypotheses, overall research objectives of the study, and theoretical framework of the study in mind, to evaluate the feasibility and acceptability of the project based on the Grade 9 learners' evaluative feedback.

The quantitative test variables of the LO teacher survey, Booklet Acceptability, Supplementary Resources Acceptability, and Reflection on New Format were each analysed using descriptive statistics. The aim was to ascertain the LO teachers' perceptions of the acceptability and feasibility of the self-directed CGP and supplementary resources. The results from the descriptive analysis were interpreted per the research study objectives and quantitative hypotheses.

The school principals' survey quantitative test measures were collated into Project Acceptability, Supplementary Resources Acceptability, and Managerial Coordination test variables, and Grade 9 Subject Choices consisted of a single measure. Thereafter, a descriptive statistical analysis of each test variable was run. Lastly, the volunteers' survey quantitative test variables Prior Volunteer Experience, Volunteer Experience, and Coordination of Volunteer Work were analysed by running a descriptive statistics analysis.

To determine whether the test variables of the Grade 9 learners', LO teachers', school principals' and project volunteers' quantitative survey results reflected a positive or negative response rate, the scores were interpreted using an 80% benchmark. Thus, total scores between a calculated percentage of 80% and 100% reflected a positive response, while scores below 80% were interpreted as a negative response. The descriptive statistics results were reported referring to the quantitative research objectives of the research study.

Qualitative Data Analysis Strategy

Open-ended Survey Responses. The answers from the open-ended responses received from the hardcopy Grade 9 learners' evaluative feedback forms were entered verbatim and imported into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The open-ended responses received from the LO teachers', school principals' and volunteers' Google Forms were also imported into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The LO teachers', project volunteers', school principals' and Grade 9 learners' open-ended responses were all uploaded into the qualitative data analysis

programme, AtlasTI.9, to be analysed using a thematic analysis approach (Bryman, 2012). AtlasTI.9 is computer software that enables me to develop codes and make annotations to the text and transcripts during the analysis process (Smit, 2002). The participants' responses to the open-ended questions were individually read and reread, thereafter the coding process took place.

The coding process entailed the line-by-line analysis of participants' responses and the inductive identification of common themes and subthemes present in the data (repetitions, similarities, and theory-related materials). The coding process was conducted separately for each participant group. Some of the codes I developed were influenced by the project's theoretical framework, multiple codes were applied to a participant's response (sentences, words, or phrases) because of more than one theme or idea being present.

After the codes were generated, the codebook was examined and refined. This process entailed the re-examination and simplification of code names and code groups, to ensure that the codes were concise and that certain codes were not too similar or merely repetitions of one another. The codes that were too similar were collated into a single code. Thereafter, the data set was then re-read, and codes were removed or added to sections in the process. The final codes were analysed, and those that shared similarities were grouped into themes and subthemes. A network analysis was generated whereby mind maps were created to visually illustrate the relationship between the themes and subthemes that emerged from the thematic analysis.

To further support the consistency and trustworthiness of the thematic analysis, the data was triangulated between three independent coders (two masters students and myself) (Bryman, 2012). In a Microsoft Teams meeting, the three coders, blinded to each other's initial codes, shared their codebooks and resulting themes to identify the similarities and differences yielded from each coder's analysis. This process allowed for the refinement and consolidation of the themes and subthemes identified in the thematic analysis.

Thereafter, I interpreted the results from the thematic analysis within the research study's theoretical framework to ascertain the feasibility and acceptability of the project. I then employed a concurrent mixed methods approach, whereby I compared and contrasted the analysed data from qualitative and quantitative survey research to develop a nuanced evaluation of the feasibility and acceptability of the project (Clark & Ivankova, 2017). In this process, I compared the open-ended responses and merged them with the results yielded from the descriptive statistical analysis of the test variables, to contextualise and expand on the quantitative findings. From the data analysis process, I identified the shortcomings and

strengths of the self-directed CGP, which informed my recommendations for improvements to be made for future implementations of the project.

Semi-Structured Interviews. In the semi-structured interviews, project team members and project volunteers provided pertinent accounts of their experiences of developing and implementing the self-directed CGP in 2020. The interviews were recorded on Microsoft Teams as well as on my personal iPhone and then transcribed using the programme Otter.ai and transferred onto separate Microsoft Word documents. During the transcription process, I imported the interview recordings into Otter.ai, which generated a rough transcription of the interview. I then listened to the recordings and amended the transcription where needed. Thereafter, I transferred the transcripts onto a Microsoft Word document, and listened to the recording again to review the transcription to ensure that all the content in the interviews was transcribed accurately. Once the transcription process was complete, the document was imported into AtlasTI.9. The transcription process took place whilst the interviews were conducted to ascertain when data saturation had occurred. Data saturation occurs once no new or relevant data emerges from the data analysis (Bryman, 2012).

The thematic analysis of the interviews followed a similar process to the inductive interpretation of the open-ended responses from the survey research (Bryman, 2012). Both the project team members' and volunteers' interview transcripts were imported into AtlasTI.9 for analysis. The analysis process for the project team members' and volunteers' interview transcripts was conducted separately. To start the coding process, the transcripts were read and reread line by line to identify the commonalities and anomalies in the data, and generate codes for the pertinent themes that arose. Some of the codes were developed through the lens of the feasibility and acceptability approach to the research. Moreover, given the in-depth nature of the interviews, some excerpts, phrases, or sentences in the data related to multiple codes. After the four project volunteer and four project team member interview transcripts were coded, the codebooks were re-examined to ensure that some codes were not too similar or redundant. After the codebooks had been refined, the codes were analysed to identify themes and subthemes pertinent to the data. A network analysis of the themes and subthemes was generated to provide a visual representation of the relationship between the various themes and subthemes identified.

To follow the sequential mixed methods design, the thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews was interpreted with the quantitative and qualitative survey results in mind, to further elaborate, confirm and contextualise the quantitative and qualitative findings

and produce a more detailed evaluation of the feasibility and acceptability of the self-directed CGP (Clark & Ivankova, 2017).

Trustworthiness of Research Study

Survey Research

To ensure the trustworthiness of the data collected from the evaluative survey research, the first drafts of the LO teacher, school principal and project volunteer surveys, that I developed, were disseminated among the project team members (Dr M. Visser, Professor A.V. Naidoo, Dr S. Rabie, Dr I. van Schalkwyk, and Mr F. van den Berg) for constructive feedback. The feedback and recommendations received were incorporated in the revisions made to the surveys before they were disseminated among the research participants. The multiple perspectives and insights the project team members brought to their revisions were integral in ensuring the trustworthiness of the evaluative surveys.

Before embarking on the quantitative data analysis process, my co-supervisor, Dr Rabie and I, held a Microsoft Teams meeting to discuss the data analysis process using SPSS. Moreover, as part of the Stellenbosch University Honours programme I had received training in using SPSS as a quantitative data analysis platform. Moreover, to code the open-ended quantitative responses, Mr van den Berg assisted me in providing a tutorial on how to use AtlasTI.9 and further explained the steps to conducting a thematic analysis. In addition, I had prior knowledge of qualitative data analysis from Stellenbosch University's Honours Research Methodology module.

Semi-Structured Interviews

For the trustworthiness of the semi-structured interviews, I had to be adequately prepared to conduct the interviews and analyse the data. The following steps were taken to ensure the trustworthiness of the data collected. First, the first drafts of semi-structured interview schedules for the project team members and project volunteers were sent to the my supervisor, Professor Naidoo, and co-supervisor, Dr Rabie, for constructive feedback. Second, a meeting was held between my co-supervisor, Dr Rabie and I, before embarking on the interviewing process.

Dr Rabie provided insights: Dr Rabie raised the importance of making notes throughout the interview, to pose follow-up questions. Paraphrasing participants' responses was identified as helpful to confirm the participants' responses, and also to create room for elaboration. Dr Rabie expressed that silence is a useful tool to create space for the participants to further explore their answer. Moreover, given the interviews would take place virtually with some participants I had not met previously, Dr Rabie advised building rapport

with the participants by making conversation before commencing with the interview. This played an important role in putting the participants at ease. Third, to ensure the trustworthiness of the semi-structured interviews, the initial interview transcripts and codebooks generated were shared among my supervisor and co-supervisor to attain their insights and inputs in the data collection and analysis process.

Ethical Considerations

Before the implementation of the parent study and commencement of the data collection, ethical clearance and approval was obtained from Stellenbosch University's Human Research Ethics Committee for the 2020 iteration of the CGP (Project number: 3072) (Appendix N) and the 2021 iteration of the CGP (Project number: 22013) (Appendix O). In addition, research approval was obtained from the Western Cape Education Department (20180301-9937) (Appendix P). In addition, informed assent was obtained from each school principal of the eight schools. The evaluative data collected from the Grade 9 learners, LO teachers, school principals, and volunteers in 2020 under the ethical clearance of the parent study, were analysed as part of the research study. The ethical procedures that were followed during the data collection process will be outlined below.

To take part in the parent study and complete the evaluative survey, the Grade 9 learners' caregivers were requested to complete an informed consent form. Before the completion of the electronic evaluative survey, the LO teachers', school principals', and volunteers' informed consent was requested. The electronic informed consent form outlined the purpose of the research study, and what was expected from the participants regarding the survey. The participants were reminded that their participation was entirely voluntary, and they could decline to participate at any point within the study without any negative implications. No participants indicated their desire to exit the study. Moreover, the participants were assured that their anonymity would be protected, and the confidentiality of their responses ensured.

During the data analysis process, the Grade 9 learners', LO teachers', school principals' and volunteers' anonymity had been maintained through the use of case numbers (e.g., 1 to 436). Moreover, the confidentiality of the data collected had been assured by storing the data on a password-protected computer (Bryman, 2012). The data collected had only been shared among the key project team members, i.e., the primary researcher, her supervisor, and co-supervisor, and the data will be retained for five years.

The research study collected primary data from the project team and project volunteers under the ethical clearance of the parent study. In the first semester of 2021, the project team

and project volunteers were e-mailed requesting their participation in a semi-structured interview. The e-mail delineated the purpose of the interview and research study, requesting their informed consent should they decide to participate in the interview. The informed consent form included a brief description of the study, and informed the participants that their identity would remain confidential, the data collected would remain confidential, and that their participation was entirely voluntary (they could withdraw at any point without any consequences) (Bryman, 2012).

I recorded the interviews on the Microsoft Teams platform (on my password-protected laptop) as well as on my iPhone. Each participant was made aware of this and their permission requested before the recordings started. Once the interviews were transcribed, I deleted the Microsoft Teams recordings, and transferred the voice recordings onto my laptop (deleted from the iPhone). I maintained the confidentiality of the participants' identities through the use of identity labels and sequential numbering (e.g., V1; postgraduate volunteer; PS1; Psychology Department staff member). I stored the transcriptions and relevant documents on my password-protected laptop. My supervisor, co-supervisor and I had sole access to the data collected, and after the study has commenced the data will be deleted.

Reflexivity

My involvement in the CGP emanated from my interest in the field of Community Psychology and prior volunteering experience in community interventions. During the Community Psychology lectures I attended in my third and Honours year of Psychology, the focus on systemic social change, social justice, and the holistic approach to health and well-being spurred my interest in becoming involved in the field of Community Psychology. Moreover, during my undergraduate studies, I volunteered for WON Life. The volunteering process entailed working with Grade 2 and 3 learners on their English literacy skills. This process introduced me to the complex challenges resource-constrained schools face in providing learners with a quality education.

In 2020, I was completing my Honours degree in Psychology at Stellenbosch University. At the start of the year, I had signed up for the Applied Community Psychology module and was looking forward to the prospect of witnessing the various theories of Community Psychology in practice. Unfortunately, the module was cancelled, following the COVID-19 pandemic announcement and social distancing mandates. However, Professor Naidoo (module coordinator) presented the opportunity to continue with the module as an individual project.

I applied for the individual project and was thereby introduced to Professor Naidoo and the CGP initiative. My involvement and contribution to the CGP entailed compiling resources for the physical and electronic resource kits, developing video content, and writing a project report. The project report comprised a proposed mixed methods evaluation protocol, whereby I developed and helped disseminate the LO teacher, project volunteer, and school principal surveys. Thereafter, Professor Naidoo approached me to expand the proposed mixed methods evaluation into a master's thesis research study and involved Dr Stephan Rabie as co-supervisor.

In our initial conversations regarding the CGP, Professor Naidoo detailed the project history and the CGP's social justice imperative of redressing the inequality in access to adequate career guidance services within the South African education system (specifically in resource-constrained settings). From our conversations, I reflected on my own experience in Grade 9 and became starkly aware of my privilege. I had gone to a private career guidance counsellor, and both my parents were university graduates who could offer support and guidance throughout my career and subject choice process. Most of my friends had similar experiences, which further normalised my experience. However, I have come to realise how unique my experience was from my ongoing involvement in the CGP and research process throughout the completion of my thesis. Access to adequate career guidance services in South Africa is limited to the minority of the population, which is a significant social injustice. The consequences thereof are significant in terms of career development and perpetuating the current inequalities in our society.

Reflexivity requires the researcher to be self-reflexive of their position within their research study, such as the values they impose on their research and the interplay of power dynamics that may occur during the research process (Bryman, 2012). For instance, during the semi-structured interview process, I had to navigate some power dynamics. For the volunteer interviews, I was aware of my position of seniority. To address this, I engaged in casual conversation with the volunteers before starting each interview. I found that this dispelled any anticipatory nerves the volunteers may have had and helped them feel comfortable to be open and honest about their volunteer experience. On the other hand, I faced an inverse power dynamic during the project team member interviews. Initially, I was nervous to conduct the interviews and felt conscious of my interview style. However, I reminded myself to approach the interviews with confidence and found that each interviewee was willing to share their knowledge and insights regarding the CGP.

Over the past two years, I have become more actively involved in the CGP (working closely with the project coordinator). Consequently, I have become more invested in the success and sustainability of the CGP. I am aware that I am a participant-researcher in the evaluation process, as I was directly involved in the development of resources for the project in 2020. Thus, my subjectivity had the potential to introduce an element of bias within the evaluation process. To counter the potential bias, specifically in the qualitative analysis process, I tried to stay close to the words and sentiments expressed by the participants and incorporated unbiased coders to triangulate the thematic analysis process. I kept regular field notes starting in 2020, to remain cognisant of my perspectives and the biases that may unconsciously influence my evaluation of the process. In this process, regular contact and feedback from both my supervisors was important to confirm my evaluation was as thorough as possible.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the research study design, participant recruitment process, mixed methods data measures, context of the study (with regards to the CGP history), and quantitative and qualitative data analysis strategies were outlined. In addition, the overall research ethical protocol considerations that were addressed were explained and I provided a reflexive account of my own experience throughout the research study. The research mixed methods evaluative results will be presented in Chapter 4 to follow.

CHAPTER 4

Results

Introduction

In this chapter, I report the quantitative and qualitative analyses and results from the survey research. I will discuss the results from the descriptive analysis of the quantitative survey questions, and detail the themes that emerged from the thematic analysis of the qualitative data from the surveys. Thereafter, I will described the pertinent themes that emerged from the thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews.

Quantitative and Qualitative Survey Research Results

Grade 9 Learners Survey Quantitative Results

Biographical Information. The population of 1 684 Grade 9 learners attending the eight resource-constrained schools in the Cape Town area received the self-directed career guidance booklet and a feedback survey in October 2020. A convenience subsample of 498 participants (29.57%) returned their evaluation forms in November 2020. The demographic characteristics of the Grade 9 subsample (n = 498), indicated that the mean age demographic of the Grade 9 learners age was 15.27 years (SD = .792), and the age group ranged between 13 and 18 years old. The majority of the participants were female (n = 237), 35.1% male (n = 175) and 17.3% participants (n = 86) did not indicate their gender. Moreover, 57.6% (n = 287) of participants indicated Afrikaans as their home language, 7.4% English (n = 37), 17.9% isiXhosa (n = 89), and 17.1% (n = 85) failed to indicate their home language.

Preliminary Analysis. Descriptive analysis was conducted to assess whether the Grade 9 learners' quantitative survey data met the parametric assumptions of normality. Per the study's parametric assumptions of normality skewness $(-2, +2)$ and kurtosis $(-7, +7)$, the Grade 9 learners' responses for the fourteen Likert Scale questions on the survey satisfied the study's parametric assumptions for normality. The descriptive statistics are summarised in Table 1, below.

Table 1.

Descriptive Statistics of Grade 9 Learners' Feedback on the Evaluative Survey

Survey Question	*n*	*M*	*S*	*K*
Booklet 1	433	4.24	−1.264	3.766
Booklet 2	432	4.09	−.846	1.260
Booklet 3	434	3.90	−.622	.303
Booklet 4	432	4.02	−.889	1.449
Booklet 5	435	4.19	−1.146	1.863
Booklet 6	425	4.19	−.811	.486
Booklet 7	433	4.46	−1.361	2.215
Booklet 8	429	3.98	−.921	1.074
Booklet 9	431	3.95	−.846	1.183
Booklet 10	433	4.30	−1.368	2.201
Career 11	425	4.50	−1.284	2.527
Career 12	424	4.21	−.922	1.766
Career 13	425	4.15	−1.083	1.280
Career 14	425	4.40	−1.320	2.746

Booklet Experience. The Grade 9 learner survey sought to assess the learners' experience of completing the self-directed career guidance booklet, and thereby, the Grade 9 learners' perceived acceptability of the booklet. Upon closer examination of the Grade 9 learners' responses to each question, the modal and mean central tendency measures were used to identify and compare the most frequently endorsed responses per question and overall average scores. Questions 7 (*mode* = 5) and 10 (*mode* = 5) both received the highest modal scores. In accordance with the mode scores, the Grade 9 learner participants most frequently strongly agreed that the booklet information was helpful when selecting their subjects and that they learnt something about themselves in the process of completing the booklet. Moreover, both Question 7 and 10 received the highest mean average scores (as detailed in Table 1 above), which confirms that a majority of the Grade 9 learners agreed with both items statements.

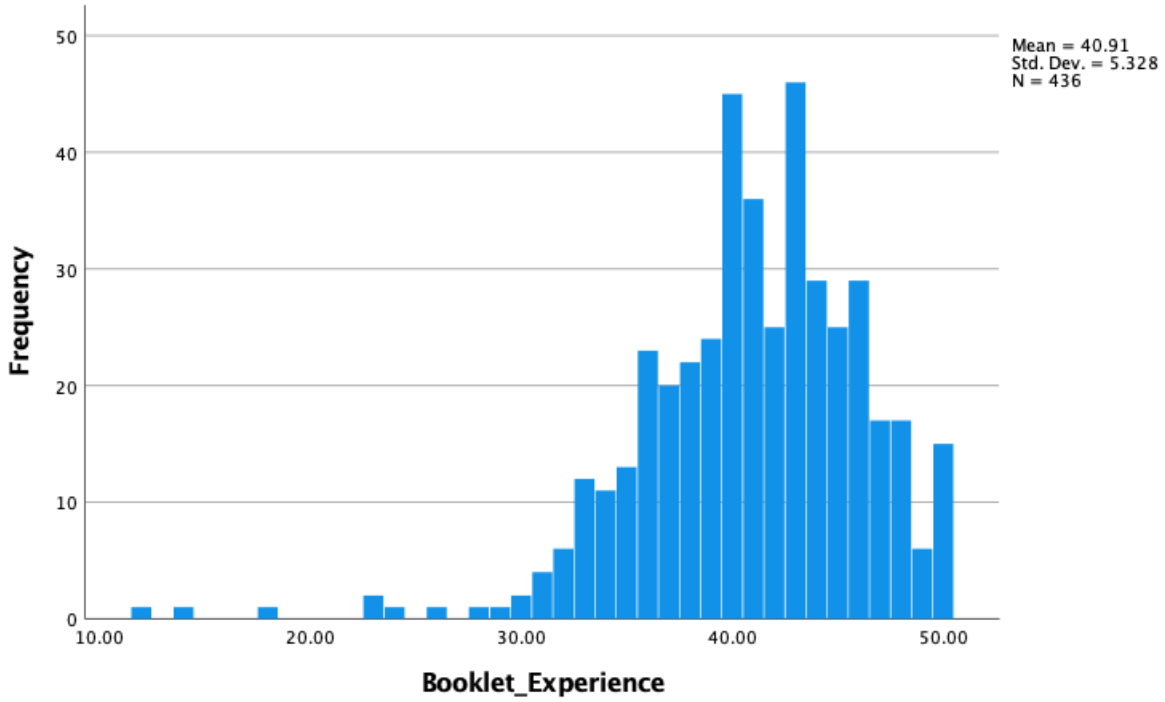
Questions 1 to 9, excluding Question 7, each received a modal score of 4 and as detailed in Table 1 each item's mean score did not meaningfully deviate from the modal scores. From the most frequently endorsed responses per question, the Grade 9 learners agreed that completing the booklet was an interesting exercise (Question 1). Moreover, the Grade 9 learners agreed that the purpose of the booklet was made clear to them (Question 2), they understood the booklet instructions (Question 3), and that the expectations of the various exercises were clear (Question 4). Furthermore, the Grade 9 learners most frequently agreed

that the completion of the booklet was enjoyable (Question 5), the information was helpful (Question 6), that they felt motivated to complete the booklet (Question 8), and found that completing the booklet was time well spent (Question 9).

Questions 1 to 10 were computed into the test variable Booklet Experience (n = 436). The Booklet Experience Scale, demonstrated sufficient internal consistency (α = .813). The distribution of the Grade 9 learners' Booklet Experience scores was negatively skewed (S = −1.15) and leptokurtic (K = 3.69), indicating a higher concentration of positive Booklet Experience scores. This trend is represented in a histogram (Figure 2) below.

Figure 2

The distribution of Booklet Experience Scores for Grade 9 Learners (n = 436)



As summarised in Table 2 below, the median ($Mdn = 41$) and mean ($M = 40.91$) Booklet Experience scores of the Grade 9 learners diverge slightly. However, the difference is not meaningful which suggests that the skewed distribution of the data does not have a large effect on the central tendency measures. Moreover, the 5% trimmed mean (41.17) and mean (M = 40.91) Booklet Experience scores for the Grade 9 learners were similar, which indicates the outliers in the data set do not have an effect on the distribution of the total scores. Overall, the Booklet Experience scores, a composite mean of Grade 9 learners' scores across the eight schools, indicate a largely positive response rate (M = 40.91) out of 50, in

accordance with the 80% benchmark. The Grade 9 learners' positive response rate toward their experience of the booklet suggests the preliminary acceptability thereof.

Table 2.

Central Tendency Measures of Booklet Experience Scores for Grade 9 Learners (n = 436).

Variable	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*Median*	*5% Trimmed Mean*	*Minimum*	*Maximum*
Booklet Experience	436	40.91	5.33	41	41.17	12	50

Upon examination of the descriptive statistics of Booklet Experience Scores, summarised in Table 3 from the eight schools, each indicates a majority of positive responses from the learners. School 5 (n = 11) and School 3 (n =14) obtained the highest mean average Booklet Experience scores. However, this may be because of the smaller response rate obtained from both schools respectively. School 8 (n = 56) and School 6 (n =26) obtained the lowest mean average Booklet Experience Scores. However, both scores remain positive.

Table 3.

Descriptive Statistics of Booklet Experience Scores among Grade 9 Learners per school

School	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*5% Trimmed Mean*	*Median*
School 1	157	41.84	4.862	41.94	42
School 2	46	41.22	4.5	41.27	41.5
School 3	14	43.00	2.83	43.06	43
School 4	44	40.61	6.932	41.32	43
School 5	11	44.64	3.64	44.76	46
School 6	26	39.31	3.792	39.34	40
School 7	82	40.11	6.367	40.74	41
School 8	56	38.92	4.47	38.996	39.5

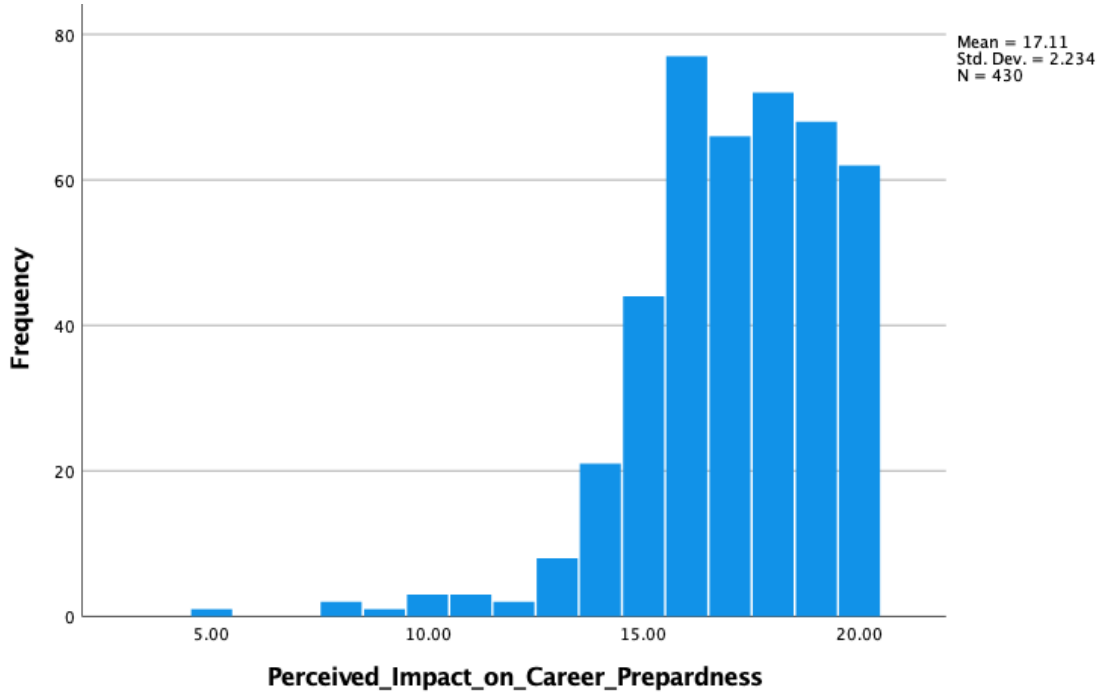
Perceived Impact on Career Preparedness. In addition, the Grade 9 learner survey sought to ascertain the learners' perceptions of whether the CGP enhanced their career preparedness. First, the mode value and mean score of each question was examined to identify and compare the most frequently endorsed response per question and the average score. The career-related Questions 11(M = 4.50) and 14 (M = 4.40) both attained mode scores of 5, which does not meaningfully diverge from their respective mean scores. The modal scores indicate that the most frequently endorsed response by the Grade 9 learners was

strongly agreed, indicating that they believe they can accomplish the career goals they set for themselves (Question 11) and that the booklet was helpful when thinking about their future career plans (Question 14). Questions 12 (M = 4.21) and 13 (M = 4.15) attained mode scores of 4 respectively. Therefore, a majority of the Grade 9 learners agreed that they obtained the necessary resources to pursue the career they are interested in (Question 12) and that the information gained about themselves caused them to think differently about their career after they matriculated (Question 13).

Questions 11 to 14 were collated into the test variable Perceived Impact on Career Preparedness (n = 430). The Perceived Impact on Career Preparedness scale, consisting of 4 items, was found to be reliable (α = .650). The distribution of the Perceived Impact on Career Preparedness scores is negatively skewed (S = −1.16) and leptokurtic (K = 2.98), demonstrating a trend of higher positive scores as present in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3

The distribution of Perceived Impact on Career Preparedness Scores for Grade 9 Learners (n = 430).



The central tendency measures summarised in Table 4 show that the median (Mdn = 17) and mean (M = 17.11) Perceived Impact on Career Preparedness scores are similar. This similarity indicates that the negative distribution of the scores does not have a meaningful effect on the central tendency measures of the data. Similarly, the 5% trimmed mean (17.27)

and mean (M = 17.11) are only marginally different. Therefore, the outliers present in the data set do not have a meaningful effect on the distribution of the Grade 9 learners' Perceived Impact on Career Preparedness scores. The descriptive analysis of the central tendency measures of the Perceived Impact on Career Preparedness scores confirms predominantly positive feedback from the Grade 9 learners, (M = 17.11) out of 20 which satisfies the 80% benchmark. Thus, in general the booklet had a positive effect on the Grade 9 learners' Career Preparedness, which again supports the preliminary acceptability of the booklet.

Table 4.

Central Tendency Measures of Perceived Impact on Career Preparedness Scores for Grade 9 learners (n = 430).

Variable	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*Median*	*5% Trimmed Mean*	*Minimum*	*Maximum*
Impact on Career	430	17.11	2.234	17	17.27	5	20

The distribution of the central tendency measures of Perceived Impact on Career Preparedness Scores among the eight schools is summarised in Table 5 below. Grade 9 learners attending School 3 (n = 14) and School 5 (n = 11) reported the highest average in Perceived Impact on Career Preparedness Scores, which, however, should be interpreted with caution considering the small sample size. In contrast, School 4 (n = 43) and School 8 (n = 56) reported the lowest average in Perceived Impact on Career Preparedness Scores. However, these scores remain positive, and thereby reiterate the preliminary perceived acceptability of the booklet among the Grade 9 learners.

Table 5.

Descriptive Statistics of Perceived Impact on Career Preparedness Scores among Grade 9 Learners per school

School	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*5% Trimmed Mean*	*Median*
School 1	155	17.35	2.20	17.52	17
School 2	46	16.72	2.20	16.79	17
School 3	14	17.93	1.49	17.92	18
School 4	43	16.37	2.58	16.57	17
School 5	11	17.55	1.69	17.55	18
School 6	25	16.92	2	16.96	16
School 7	80	17.39	2.52	17.69	18
School 8	56	16.73	1.81	16.74	17

Grade 9 Learners' Survey Qualitative Results

The thematic analysis of the Grade 9 learners' open-ended responses on the survey yielded seven prominent themes, which will be discussed in the sections to follow.

Booklet Content Acceptability. The majority of the Grade 9 learners expressed a general satisfaction with the booklet content. One learner expressed that s/he found the booklet "perfect" because it had "everything I needed to know." Moreover, the majority of the learners found the content clear, comprehensive, and easy to understand. In terms of specifics, the most popular aspects of the self-directed career guidance booklet were the Personality Profile, SWOT analysis, and Career Flower.

A minority of the Grade 9 learners expressed some dissatisfaction with the booklet content. Approximately 19% of the Grade 9 learner respondents felt that the booklet did not include all the information they needed, "there was not enough information in the book." Some participants identified shortcomings in the booklet content with regards to career and study-related information. For instance, some participants had specific career and study-related questions that were not answered in the booklet: "I need help finding out more about the different types of electrical engineering," and another learner enquired about "what choices must I make to become a doctor?" (translated from Afrikaans). Despite some negative feedback, the Grade 9 learners' evaluations of the booklet content remain overwhelmingly positive.

Career Flower Acceptability. The *My Career Flower* (Naidoo, 2011) was developed as a visual conceptualisation of career, subject, and self-knowledge information. The Grade 9 learner feedback regarding the Career Flower was consistently positive. The Grade 9 learners' responses indicate that the Career Flower played a role in bolstering their self-knowledge. The Grade 9 learners expressed that the Career Flower activities helped them learn more about themselves, "think more about yourself and you found out more about yourself" (translated from Afrikaans), and learn about "what are my strengths and weaknesses." The self-exploration facilitated by the Career Flower helped to guide learners in making informed decisions regarding their career plans and subject choices, "integrating the information into your career flower, helped me make my career decision." The Grade 9 learners credited the Career Flower as a vital support mechanism concerning career directionality. Specifically, the Career Flower helped learners "realise what I want to become one day" (translated from Afrikaans), "choose my career carefully,", and "think about my career plans. To help me make good career choices." In addition, a few Grade 9 learners expressed that the Career Flower was helpful when choosing their subjects, "choose my

subjects correctly" (translated from Afrikaans). Overall, the Grade 9 learners' feedback suggests that the Career Flower was a useful resource to developing their career plans, selecting their subjects, and improving their overall self-knowledge.

Booklet Completion. Beyond the booklet contents, the Grade 9 learners' feedback helped identify the facilitating factors to completing the booklet. First and foremost, the Grade 9 learners' responses illuminated the user-friendly nature of the self-directed booklet. Many of the Grade 9 learners expressed that they had no "difficulty completing the booklet", it was "very easy and fun" (translated from Afrikaans), and they had "no problems" (translated from Afrikaans) in the completion process. The user-friendly aspect of the booklet then lends to the positive responses to the self-directed format of the booklet. Some of the Grade 9 learners found the self-assessment aspect of the booklet easy and enjoyable to answer because the questions were about themselves. In addition to the format of the booklet facilitating the completion thereof, the Grade 9 learners indicated how their support networks helped them complete the booklet. For a handful of the Grade 9 learners, their parents or extended family members went through the booklet with them. One learner said that "I understood everything, my parents and I went through the booklet together." (translated from Afrikaans).

On the other hand, the Grade 9 learners' feedback helped identify booklet completion challenges. A portion of the Grade 9 learners found the booklet instructions unclear and thereby, had difficulty answering the questions "some of the questions I did not understand" and this made the booklet completion process time-consuming "there was not enough time." In addition, a handful of Grade 9 learners specifically expressed difficulty completing the SWOT analysis and environmental assessment. The expressed uncertainty may have been exacerbated by the self-directed learning format of the booklet, to which a small portion of learners indicated that they had difficulty understanding and completing the self-assessed aspect of the booklet, "The section of self-assessment, that was a little difficult." (translated from Afrikaans). Thus, a weakness of the self-directed approach is that any uncertainty or confusion cannot be directly addressed. Consequently, some learners may take longer to complete the booklet, or not complete the booklet entirely.

Contextual Challenges. Beyond the booklet and CGP, some learners identified contextual challenges that may hinder their ability to achieve their future aspirations. For instance, a portion of learners expressed the difficulties they face with certain school subjects: "I don't understand a few subjects" (translated from Afrikaans), "I do need help in mathematics and I am struggling a lot in it," and "I need support in history and natural

sciences because I don't do well in those two subjects." From the sentiments expressed, the learners may benefit from additional school subject support. Apart from school subject challenges, some learners expressed their need for financial assistance, "I would like to get support financially because I think I can't afford everything." Thus, financial limitations are recognised as a barrier to meeting their career goals.

Self-Discovery. For many learners, the experience of completing the career guidance booklet facilitated self-discovery and resulted in improved self-knowledge. The process enabled learners to gain a "deeper insight about myself" (translated from Afrikaans) and "get to know myself way better than I ever did before." The process of introspection facilitated the improvement in learners' sense of self-confidence, for instance, a learner expressed that process led them to "realise more things about myself and to what I am capable of." (translated from Afrikaans). Some learners expressed greater positivity and courage towards themselves and their dreams for the future. This confidence is further evident in some of the learners becoming motivated regarding their future. One learner expressed that they want to "work hard or do my best to make it" (translated from Afrikaans).

A small portion of learners had difficulty with the introspective process. Some indicated that they did not enjoy talking about themselves. Specifically, with regards to their personality, "I don't like talking about my personality" and weaknesses "I know anyone has weaknesses, but I do not want to point out my weaknesses, I will keep it to myself." (translated from Afrikaans).

Career Directionality. The insights learners gained about themselves played a role in learners feeling a sense of confidence to start developing plans for their future, "it had me learn more about myself and understand what jobs are for me." (translated from Afrikaans). The booklet sought to enable the Grade 9 learners to develop informed career plans and select subjects for the rest of their senior schooling career suited to their future career aspirations. The learners' responses indicate a clearer sense of career directionality, specifically in terms of choosing a career path and developing a career plan. The greater sense of directionality gained from the booklet motivated the learners and increased their sense of hope for the future. One learner poignantly stated that the booklet provided an "image of how life could change after high school and some guidelines needed to be followed." Furthermore, the process illuminated to many learners the link between the subjects they choose and the career paths they can consequently follow. Thus, the subject choice insight gained and improved sense of career directionality went hand in hand.

Additional In-Person Support. The COVID-19 pandemic and South African lockdown prevented contact-based workshops with the Grade 9 learners. In previous iterations of the project, the learners were able to ask the student facilitators questions about the booklet, their school subjects, and career aspirations. Despite the positive feedback regarding the helpful and supportive nature of the self-directed career guidance booklet, many learners expressed the need for further support, guidance, and advice regarding selecting career pathways and subject choices. Some responses requested general guidance: "I want a person who will advise me and stand by me through my studies and influence me in a good way," "I need someone who is going to support me," and "I need more support and I need to learn more." (translated from Afrikaans). Other responses were more specific such as questions about the completion of the booklet, as well as career and subject-related questions "what subjects must I take for a mechanic?" During the dissemination of the booklet, the learners were guided to direct any questions to an e-mail address provided. However, the learners did not make use of this option. Therefore in-person support and individual counselling may be pertinent to directly address the learners' questions.

LO Teacher Survey Quantitative Results

Preliminary Data Analysis. In December 2020, an electronic feedback survey was e-mailed to the LO teachers (n = 16) from each of the eight resource-constrained schools. A convenience sample of (n = 11) LO teachers' evaluative feedback was obtained. A descriptive analysis was conducted to examine whether the data met the parametric assumptions of normality. The descriptive statistics were obtained and are detailed in Table 6 below, and satisfy the parametric assumptions of normality skewness (−2, + 2) and kurtosis (−7, + 7).

Table 6.

Descriptive Statistics of LO Teachers' Responses on the Electronic Survey.

Survey Questions	*n*	*M*	*S*	*K*
Booklet_1	10	4.70	−1.035	−1.224
Booklet_2	11	4.45	−.932	.081
Booklet_3	11	4.00	.000	−1.111
Booklet_4	11	4.55	−.213	−2.444
Booklet_5	11	4.73	−1.189	−.764
Booklet_6	11	4.18	−.329	−.878
Video_1	10	3.40	.389	.370
Video_2	10	3.50	.000	.107
Resource Kit	11	4.00	.000	5.000
Website	10	4.00	.000	.080
New Format	11	3.09	.431	−.932

Booklet Acceptability. Questions 1 to 6 sought to gauge the LO teachers' (n = 11) perceptions of the acceptability of the self-directed career guidance booklet. The modal value and mean score of each question was interpreted to identify and compare the most frequently endorsed response to each question and average score. Questions 1 to 5, excluding Question 3, each attained a mode score of 5 and their mean scores, identified in Table 6, correspond with the modal values. Thus, a large portion of the LO teachers strongly agreed that the booklet helped the Grade 9 learners with their subject choices (Question 1), developing their career goals and plans (Question 2), the booklet instructions were clear and easy to follow (Question 4), and questions in the booklet were age-appropriate (Question 5). Furthermore, Questions 3 (M = 4.00) and 6 (M = 4.18) both attained mode scores of 4. Thus, a large portion of the LO teachers agreed that the booklet was an adequate replacement to the previous contact-based iterations of the CGP for learners (Question 3) and that the learners enjoyed the booklet (Question 6).

Questions 1 to 6 were collated to form the test variable Booklet Acceptability. The Booklet Acceptability scale, consisting of 6 items, was found to be reliable (α.= .796). The Booklet Acceptability scores among the LO teachers were slightly negatively skewed (S = −.584) and leptokurtic (K = −1.048), which suggests a trend of positive evaluations of the self-directed career guidance booklet. A descriptive statistical analysis was conducted and the results are detailed in Table 7 below. The mean score (M = 26.18) and median (Mdn = 27) differ slightly, which suggests that the slight negative skewness of the data set does not have a meaningful effect on the central tendency measures. The Booklet Acceptability mean score is 26.18 out of 30, which satisfies the 80% benchmark. Moreover, the lowest score was 22

out of 30, which indicates that the majority of the LO teachers provided a positive evaluation of the overall acceptability of the self-directed career guidance booklet. The results suggest the acceptability of the self-directed career guidance booklet.

Table 7.

Descriptive Statistics of LO Teachers' Perceptions of the Booklet Acceptability.

Variable	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*Median*	*Minimum*	*Maximum*
Booklet Acceptability	11	26.18	2.750	27	22	30

Supplementary Resources Acceptability. In addition to the LO teachers' perception of the self-directed career guidance booklet, the electronic survey sought to assess the LO teachers' perceptions of the acceptability of the supplementary resources developed. The mode score and mean score of each question was analysed to identify and compare the most frequently reported responses for each question and average score. Questions 9 (M = 4.00) and 10 (M = 4.00) both attained a mode score of 4 which directly corresponds with their respective mean scores. Thus, a majority of the LO teachers agreed that both the electronic and physical resource kits and the website were helpful to the Grade 9 learners. Questions 7 and 8 related to the video content developed to replace the guidance provided in contact-based workshops in the pre-COVID iterations of the CGP. Question 7 (M = 3.40) had a mode score of 3 and Question 8 (M = 3.50) had both 3 and 4 as mode scores. In conjunction with Question 7 and 8's mean scores, it can be deduced that a large portion of the LO teachers were ambivalent toward whether the video content was helpful, and only some agreed that the video content was an adequate replacement to the workshops previously implemented.

Questions 7 to 10 were collated into the test variable Supplementary Resources Acceptability (n = 11). The Supplementary Resources scale, consisting of 3 items, was found to be reliable (α = .838). A preliminary analysis of Supplementary Resources Acceptability scores indicated that the data was negatively skewed (S = −1.412), and platykurtic (K = 3.896), which satisfies the parametric assumptions of normality specified in Chapter 3. As detailed in Table 8 below, the mean score of the Supplementary Resources Acceptability is 13.909 out of 20, with a minimum value of 4 out of 20 and a maximum score of 20 out of 20. The mean score of Supplementary Resources Acceptability falls slightly below the 80% benchmark, which indicates an evaluation of the acceptability of the supplementary resources as mediocre. The mean value (M = 13.909) does diverge from the median value (Mdn = 15).

Overall, there is a greater variance in the feedback provided by the LO teachers, which may bring into question the overall acceptability of the supplementary resources.

Table 8.

Descriptive Statistics of LO Teachers' Perceptions of the Supplementary Resources Acceptability.

Variable	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*Median*	*Minimum*	*Maximum*
Supplementary Resources Acceptability	11	13.909	3.986	15	4	20

Reflection on New Format. The final question in the LO teacher survey sought to gather the LO teachers' perspective of the adapted format of the CGP. The question specifically sought to identify whether the LO teachers preferred the new format and implementation of the CGP to the previous iteration of the project. The question was labelled as the test variable Reflection on New Format (n = 11). The preliminary descriptive data analysis confirmed that the data met the study's parametric assumptions of normality. The data were positively skewed (S = .650) and slightly platykurtic (K = .809).

Table 9.

Descriptive Statistics of LO Teachers' Reflections on the New Format

Variable	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*Median*	*Minimum*	*Maximum*
Reflection on New Format	11	3.09	1.044	3	2	5

As detailed in Table 9 above, the mean score (M = 3.09) and median (Md = 3) reveal that the positive skewness of the data does affect the central tendency measures. Upon a detailed examination of the LO teachers' scores, four indicated that they did not prefer the new format (36.33%), three indicated a neutral response to the new format (27.27%), and four indicated a preference for the new format (36.33%). The mean value of 3.09 out of 5 does not satisfy the benchmark of 80%, thereby a majority of the LO teachers did not express an explicit preference for the self-directed format of the CGP.

LO Teacher Survey Qualitative Results

The thematic analysis of the LO teachers' responses to the open-ended questions in the survey identified four prominent themes and will be detailed in the sections to follow.

Booklet Content Acceptability. The LO teachers expressed satisfaction with the booklet content. The positive evaluations were as follows: “the booklet is very detailed,” “very comprehensive,” “very colourful and fun,” and “there is nothing that needs to be improved, everything is still on point.” In addition to the general positive sentiments expressed, a LO teacher also indicated that “the language used was age-appropriate.” Moreover, a LO teacher found that the booklet is very “learner-friendly” and “caters for all types of learners.”

Further, the LO teachers provided positive evaluations of the career guidance and subject choice support the learners gained from the booklet. A LO teacher praised the booklet as a “guideline to set goals for the future careers.” Another pointed out that the booklet’s activities and information were “crucial for career choices.” Furthermore, the booklet was defined as a useful tool when it came to “help the learners to make a clear subject choice.”

Supplementary to Curriculum. A significant portion of the LO teachers expressed that the booklet was complementary to the South African curriculum: the booklet “enhances the curriculum” and “the booklet speaks to the curriculum.” The booklet was defined as an additional teaching resource when approaching career guidance, “will use it in the 2 terms for career guidance” and subject choice support, “I can use it when teaching and guiding my learners in choosing their career subjects” in the LO curriculum. Moreover, the LO teachers identified that the booklet could serve as a “useful source of reference” when learners have to complete their school based LO assessment task. Furthermore, a LO teacher spoke to the flexibility of the booklet as a resource, “I used some of the questions as icebreakers or to have an open discussion about certain topics.” Thus, the functionality and flexibility of the booklet allows it to become a supplementary resource that can complement and enhance the current provision of career guidance and subject choice support within the LO curriculum.

Contextual Barriers to Completion. The LO teachers identified some contextual barriers to Grade 9 learners’ completion of the booklet. First, the lack of parent or family support was identified, “we have an issue with absent parents” and consequently, “learners do not have proper support at home to help and guide them through the booklet.” Second, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on attendance was indicated as another barrier, “others did not get it [booklet] due to the poor attendance because of COVID.” Another LO teacher pointed out a local bus strike, during the dissemination of the booklet, as contributing to learners' “weak attendance” at school. Third, the LO teachers identified the WiFi and data constraints that their schools and many of the learners face as a barrier to accessing the video content developed: “not all our classes had the resources to always play the videos.”

Lastly, a significant portion of the LO teachers identified time constraints as a barrier to completion. The LO teachers face contextual challenges such as high rates of learner absenteeism, and shorter in-person lesson time, which affects their ability to meet the LO curriculum goals. Many expressed that they "did not have enough time in class to guide them [the learners] through it [the booklet] page by page." Moreover, the time constraints meant that the teachers could not make use of all supplementary resources, especially the video content.

Recommendations for the Future. The LO teachers provided recommendations for how the CGP could potentially grow and evolve to further address the Grade 9 learners' needs. Upon reflecting on the adapted format and implementation of the CGP, the LO teachers expressed that an "integration of the booklet, resources and contact sessions" would be a preferred way forward. An LO teacher made the point that "it is good for them to at least see your faces." Thus, despite the necessity amid a global pandemic to develop supplementary resources to replace the contact-based sessions with the learners, the benefits the learners receive from the engagement with the facilitators cannot be virtually replicated.

Moreover, to counter the WiFi and data constraints the schools and learners face, one LO teacher suggested creating an opportunity for the learners to access computer labs. Access to computers and WiFi can enable the learners to access the video content and electronic resources generated. Furthermore, another LO teacher suggested altering the booklet to include assessment tasks related to the LO curriculum, thereby integrating the booklet into the curriculum. Lastly, an LO teacher suggested facilitating a career day. The LO teacher expressed that the advantage of implementing a career day intervention was that learners could gain access to important information about their career interests. Further, a career day could be motivational to the learners when it comes to stimulating their career aspirations.

Project Volunteer Survey Quantitative Results

Preliminary Data Analysis. The project volunteer electronic survey was e-mailed to the active volunteers (n = 12) in December 2020. The convenience sample of volunteers' (n = 7) feedback was analysed to ascertain whether the data met the study's parametric assumptions of normality, skewness (−2, + 2) and kurtosis (−7, + 7). As summarised in Table 10 below, the data met the parametric assumptions of normality, except for Question 1, (S = 2.646). Given that the question sought to measure whether the participants had prior volunteering experience, the significant variance in the distribution of the participants' responses is to be expected.

Table 10.

Descriptive Statistics of Volunteers' Responses on the Electronic Survey

Survey Questions	*n*	*M*	*S*	*K*
Prior_Volunteer_Experience_1	7	2.29	2.646	7.000
Volunteer_Experience_2	7	4.29	1.230	−.840
Volunteer_Process_3	7	3.14	−.353	−1.817
Volunteer_Experience_4	7	4.14	−.353	−1.817
Coordination_5	6	4.50	−1.537	1.429
Coordination_6	7	4.43	−1.115	.273
Coordination_7	7	4.43	−1.115	.273

Prior Volunteer Experience. When asked about whether this was their first experience of volunteer work, 85.7% of the volunteer respondents indicated that this was not their first experience, and 14.3% indicated that it was. Thus, the majority of the volunteers (n = 7) had prior volunteering experience to their involvement in the CGP.

Volunteer Experience Acceptability. Questions 2, 3 and 4 sought to gauge the project volunteers' perception of their volunteer experience to ascertain the acceptability of their volunteering experience. The mode score and mean score for each question was analysed to ascertain the most frequently selected responses and average score for each question. Question 2 (M = 4.29) attained a mode score of 4, which indicates that most frequently endorsed response was an agreement that the volunteering experience was enjoyable. Question 3 (M = 3.14), attained a mode score of 2, of which the reverse score is 4. The mean and mode scores diverge slightly, however given the small sample size a greater variance is to be expected. However, the result indicates that a larger portion of the volunteers agreed that the volunteer process was time-consuming. Question 4 (M = 4.14) attained a mode score of 5, and thereby a large portion of the volunteers strongly agreed that they would volunteer again for the project if reinstated in 2021.

Questions 2, 3 and 4 were collated to form the test variable, Volunteer Experience Acceptability (n = 7). The Volunteer Experience Acceptability Variable, consisting of 3 items, (α = .750), Question 3 was phrased differently and had to be reverse scored which affected the reliability score. The distribution of the Volunteer Experience Acceptability score was positively skewed (S = .249) and slightly leptokurtic (K = −.944), which indicates a slight negative trend in Volunteer Experience Acceptability scores. The descriptive analysis of the Volunteer Experience acceptability scores, as summarised in Table 11, identifies the mean (M = 11.29) and median (Mdn = 11) scores as similar, which indicates that the positive distribution of the data did not meaningfully affect the central tendency measures of the data

set. Moreover, the mean score (M = 11.29) out of 20 falls below the 80% benchmark, with a minimum score of 10 out of 15 and a maximum score of 13 out of 15. Thus, the results preliminarily indicate that despite the volunteers finding the volunteer experience enjoyable and expressing a desire to volunteer again in 2021, the time-consuming nature of their volunteering duties had a negative effect on their overall evaluation of the acceptability of the volunteering experience.

Table 11.

Descriptive Statistics of Volunteer Experience Acceptability Scores.

Variable	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*Median*	*Minimum*	*Maximum*
Volunteer Experience Acceptability	7	11.2857	1.113	11	10	13

Coordination of Volunteer Work. Questions 5 to 7 sought to ascertain the volunteers' perspectives of the volunteering work coordination to assess the feasibility (practicality) thereof. The mode values and mean scores of each question were analysed to identify the most frequently endorsed responses and average scores of each question. Question 5 *(M* = 4.50), Question 6 *(M* = 4.43*)* and Question 7 *(M* = 4.43*)* each attained a mode score of 5. Thus, that most of the volunteers were in agreement that the coordination of the volunteer work by the project coordinator was efficient, the e-mail communication from the project coordinator was clear, and the volunteer work responsibilities and expectations were clear and easy to follow.

Questions 5, 6, and 7 were collated to form the test variable, Coordination of Volunteer Work (n = 7). The Coordination of Volunteer Work scale, consisting of 3 items scored (α = 1.00). However, this was expected considering the small number of items included in the scale. The distribution of Coordination of Volunteer Work scores was slightly negatively skewed (S = −.856), and leptokurtic (K = −1.357). The descriptive statistics, as summarised in Table 12, indicate that the majority of volunteers positively evaluated the volunteering experience coordination, (M = 12.71) out of 15, within the 80% benchmark. The results preliminarily suggest the volunteering coordination was facilitative and acceptable.

Table 12.

Descriptive Statistics of the Coordination of Volunteer Work Scores.

Variable	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*Median*	*Minimum*	*Maximum*
Coordination of Volunteer Work	7	12.714	3.094	15	8	15

Project Volunteer Survey Qualitative Results

The thematic analysis identified two pertinent themes present in the data, which are discussed below.

Volunteer Experience Acceptability. Overall, the project volunteers provided a positive evaluation of their volunteering experience. A positive outcome of the volunteering experience for many of the volunteers was that their contribution to the project would have positive implications for Grade 9 learners. For some, it was the feeling of making a difference, helping kids "who are uncertain about their futures, like I was", sharing knowledge, and for others, it was playing a role in helping the community as a whole.

Apart from their practical contributions to the development and implementation of the project, the volunteers identified how the volunteering experience resulted in certain personal gains. One volunteer expressed how the process enabled personal growth, "challenged my creative side, which I think will lead to some growth in the end." Other volunteers benefited from developing a new skill in using the Powtoons software in producing the videos.

Coordination Improvements. The feedback regarding the project coordinator's role in coordinating the project was generally positive. A small portion of the volunteers had some suggestions regarding improving the process. Some felt that there needs to be more communication throughout the year and that volunteers should receive their duties further in advance. A volunteer specifically felt that more guidance, specifically the "ins and outs of PowToons," would be beneficial.

Project Volunteer Semi-Structured Interviews Results

Four volunteers participated in semi-structured interviews. The thematic analysis by the three independent coders, yielded five prominent themes that will be discussed in detail.

Volunteering Motivations

Each volunteer interviewee (n = 4) had personal motivations for their involvement in the CGP. One of the volunteer interviewees, a Stellenbosch University Psychology master's student, was initially part of the 2020 iteration of the CGP as a project team member. Subsequent to the COVID-19 pandemic and reformulation to the format and implementation

of the CGP, her responsibilities in the project changed, and she ended up carrying on in the project as a volunteer.

Two volunteer interviewees were completing their undergraduate degrees. A Stellenbosch University Psychology undergraduate student volunteer expressed that she always had the desire to become involved in volunteer work. However, she had been working concurrently to completing her studies and did not have the time to volunteer. Thus, when the flexibility of the CGP volunteering opportunity came along, she was very motivated to become involved. The Stellenbosch University's Industrial Psychology undergraduate student volunteer had a long history of volunteering experience. She felt drawn to the project because of the focus on career guidance services. The fourth volunteer was completing her Honours in Psychology at Stellenbosch University and was going to facilitate some of the CGP workshops as part of the Career Psychology Module. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the in-person workshops were cancelled. However, despite this she still decided to continue working on the CGP as a volunteer. Her decision was informed by her vested interest in the social justice aims of the CGP.

Beyond their motivations to become involved in the project, each of the project volunteer interviewees expressed an investment in the CGP as a whole. The Psychology master's student had volunteered in the previous iteration of the project and gone on to link her master's research to the project. She indicated that "I've grown very attached to the project" and that she wants to continue her involvement in the project to see how it grows. Another volunteer indicated that her investment in the project stems from the recognition of the importance of career guidance to Grade 9 learners because she never had access to such resources as a learner:

> I remember when I was in Grade 9, there wasn't enough. I wish there was this resource available to me … I feel like we weren't properly informed… about the different … career options … and I wasn't properly guided, ah especially when it came to subject choices.

Similarly, one volunteer interviewee expressed that the project's intentions to redress the current inequality in access to career guidance and subject choice support affirmed her investment in the project "I just wanted to be a part of a process that would help somebody else." Lastly, a volunteer reiterated the importance of the project being "something that is needed … I like believe … that it's necessary that we do it." Moreover, when asked whether the volunteers would consider volunteering again for the project in 2021, all expressed definite interest.

Volunteer Coordination Feasibility and Acceptability

The circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic changed the coordination of the student volunteers' responsibilities in the development and implementation of the CGP. The communication of the volunteers' duties and responsibilities (developing video content and compiling resources for the physical and electronic resource kits, and website) was limited to e-mail. In-person meetings and conversations were not permitted in accordance with the COVID-19 risk mitigation strategies.

The four volunteer interviewees each provided a generally positive evaluation of the volunteer coordination process. They expressed that the project coordinator was dependable, readily available when needed, and that overall, they were "well informed" of what was expected of them throughout the development process. One of the volunteers expressed that the project coordinator "was always on time and on top of things. And he answered promptly." Another reiterated that sentiment "he was always available … and he would immediately answer you so then there wasn't a lag." Overall, the four interviewees emphasised the project coordinator's patience and competence throughout the coordination process. Thus, despite the challenging circumstances, the coordination of volunteering duties and responsibilities was positively evaluated by the volunteer interviewees.

In addition to the positive feedback, two of the volunteers provided some practical recommendations to improve the volunteer coordination process. One of the interviewees explained that she does not have her e-mail on her phone, and thereby, did not receive the e-mail communication immediately. Therefore, she found the e-mail communication was not very accessible. She suggested creating a WhatsApp group through which their duties are communicated, as most of the volunteers have their phones with them constantly. Moreover, some of the volunteers accompanied the project coordinator to deliver the booklets to the schools in the week of 5 October. One of the volunteer interviewees expressed that she found the process time-consuming, "We had to wait between periods …We had to present in one period and then wait for two periods and then we could only present again in like the fourth period." She suggests that "when we delivered the booklets to the school, maybe just streamline that process."

Volunteer Experience Acceptability

All four of the project volunteer interviewees expressed that the volunteer experience was enjoyable, "it was a very good experience." One of the volunteers specifically pointed out that the flexibility of the volunteer work was a positive feature of the volunteering process. In addition, a project volunteer who compiled resources for the physical and

electronic resource kits found the process of finding useful resources interesting, and that it was “an extremely great initiative” and indicated that she wished she had access to such resources in Grade 9.

The project volunteers comprised Stellenbosch University Psychology students (undergraduate and postgraduate students) and Industrial Psychology students (postgraduate). Thus, each project volunteer had academic responsibilities concurrent to their volunteering duties. In the interviews, in response to whether their volunteering responsibilities were doable alongside their academic work, the three interviewees stated that their volunteering duties did not interfere with their academic work. One of the volunteers expressed that, “I was able to juggle both.”

Moreover, two of the interviewees indicated their desire for greater involvement in the CGP. One volunteer expressed that “there wasn’t a lot of opportunity to do more” and that in general the “volunteers didn’t have a lot of duties.” Similarly, another volunteer expressed that “I would have loved to be part of those meetings [project team meetings] just to get a holistic idea of everything that’s going on.” Both volunteers’ sentiments indicate a willingness and desire from students to become more meaningfully involved in the CGP and to be given more responsibilities.

Video Content Development Feasibility

A shared volunteering duty among the interviewees was video content creation for the CGP’s YouTube channel. Most of the volunteers expressed that the process was enjoyable. In addition, the volunteers indicated that they acquired video content creation as a new skill from the process. One volunteer used iMovie’s to develop her videos and explained that the process “was quite easy.” The other three volunteers used the programme PowToons.

One of the three volunteers had used PowToons before and therefore found it very easy to follow and did not have any problems. The other two volunteers had no prior experience and pointed out specific challenges associated with navigating the programme. Firstly, PowToons has a free trial option that allows you to use all the features that you have to pay for if you choose to subscribe. An interviewee expressed the challenges that came along with using the free trial option:

> Originally, we had like a free trial, and we just all did the free trial and it was amazing, we developed these amazing videos. But then when we tried to download you couldn't download because you had the free trial … You have to change your video again um make it a lot less cool. That was a bit stressful, so I think we should know from the

> beginning… what the scope of this … is … And I know that happened to another girl too.

The other volunteer interviewee faced similar challenges when using PowToons, expressing how she was concerned that her work might disappear when working in the free trial programme, "it was a bit complex for me." Both indicated that they did not receive instructions on how to use the programme before they started working on their videos, which contributed to the challenges they experienced: "communication was sent after I already started."

To address this challenge, a volunteer suggested that the volunteers should be made aware of the free-trial scope before starting the video content creation process. All four volunteers indicated that developing the videos (developing a script and producing the video) took between three days and a week to finish. Therefore, having to start over because of programme challenges can make the process excessively time-consuming and not feasible.

Recommendations for Improvements

Three of the project volunteer interviewees expressed a preference for the contact-based presentation of the CGP. The first interviewee had previously volunteered for the project as a workshop facilitator and said that she preferred the contact sessions with the learners because it "makes it [the volunteering experience] worthwhile." For another first-time volunteer, she also expressed that "I think that hopefully, when COVID … becomes a bit like appropriate to go out and safe, hope that we can definitely do it face to face again." Furthermore, a volunteer pointed out how in-person contact may be beneficial for the Grade 9 learners:

> Certain things are better communicated when you see the person. And then as much as we tried to make the videos as interesting as we could. Sometimes you just need … the personal experience where you can actually ask questions, because I can imagine some of them watched the videos. And it's like, Okay, I get that. But personal to me, I wish I could understand where I am and where I'm going.

As indicated in the sentiment above, the volunteers also helped identify the limitations or shortcomings of the supplementary resources. For instance, a volunteer expressed that video content was not an adequate replacement for the contact-based workshops. In the workshops, the learners could ask questions and have them answered immediately. A further limitation identified was the Grade 9 learners' limited access to WiFi or data, which affected their ability to access the electronic-based supplementary resources. It was recommended to organise a day to show the learners the YouTube videos, or to incorporate the videos in the

workshops when in-person contact is permitted. Furthermore, a volunteer suggested involving the Stellenbosch University's marketing team to promote the CGP YouTube channel to expand the reach of the videos to secondary school learners provincially and nationally.

Project Team Semi-Structured Interview Results

Four project team members participated in semi-structured interviews, the thematic analysis of thereof identified nine prominent themes in the data, which will be outlined in the sections to follow.

Career Guidance Project History

In 2010, Professor Anthony V. Naidoo, from the Stellenbosch University's Psychology Department, was working in the Kayamandi community. From his direct involvement in the community, the need for adequate career guidance among Grade 9 learners became apparent. The CGP launched in 2016 and subsequently expanded to involve the Stellenbosch University's Industrial Psychology Department as a joint venture. In addition, the project received funding from Stellenbosch University and the Rupert Foundation, which enabled the project to include the eight schools in the Cape Town area.

The CGP is not only a community engagement intervention. In addition, the project has an academic research component. Since the expansion of the project, doctoral, masters, and honours year students' research has emanated from the CGP, "So the project has been really a community engagement … catalyst." The research that has emanated from the project has led to the publication of academic articles, which contributes to the current knowledge base of the effects of career guidance interventions implemented in resource-constrained settings.

Project Team Responsibilities

The CGP team comprises a multi-disciplinary team from the Stellenbosch University Industrial Psychology and Psychology Departments. Each member plays an integral role in the development and implementation of the project. A total of four project team semi-structured interviews were conducted, and in each interview, the project team member detailed their respective roles and responsibilities within the project team.

In the 2020 iteration of the CGP, the project coordinator acted as a "bridge between the project and the schools and the project and the volunteers and obviously the volunteers and the schools." His responsibilities were to coordinate the project volunteers' duties, act as the point of communication between the schools and the project team, and liaise with the school principals, LO teachers, and volunteers to arrange the implementation of the CGP.

One of the project leaders outlined his responsibilities in the project as conceptualising and developing the project resources (playing a central role in the booklet development), liaising with the project team regarding the development of particular sections in the booklet, and "providing the coordination report back to the funders, or the Rupert Foundation." Another project team interviewee played an integral role to "reimagine the book", and one of her significant contributions was the suggestion of including the characters Thabo and Maria to guide the learners through the booklet.

Lastly, the third project team member acted as a consultant on the team. Previously, he played a more central role as a co-investigator and coordinator of the project. However, he has recently taken on an academic position at the University of Cape Town and thereby become a consultant in the CGP team. In the 2020 iteration of the project, his contributions were as follows: brainstorming the self-directed format of the project and suggesting the inclusion of virtual supplementary resources in the project (specifically, developing the video content).

Adaptability to COVID-19 Pandemic

Once the seriousness of the COVID-19 pandemic became apparent and the National Lockdown measures instated, the contact-based format and implementation of the CGP was no longer viable. The project team members each recalled their initial reactions to the unforeseeable circumstances brought on by the pandemic and National Lockdown. The project team's reactions varied from confusion and to worry about the future of the project: "originally there was a lot of confusion … we didn't really know what to expect" and "I first thought, wow this means shutdown … there were just too many imponderables. How will you make this work?" Other reactions reflected a determination to continue, "it was necessary for me to emphasise we need to do something" and optimism to improve the project, "when COVID hit, I thought, this is actually a great opportunity for us to take the content we have, firstly, look at the problematic areas that we knew didn't work previously, refine that."

Once the initial shock of the pandemic wore off, the shared desire to continue with the project became apparent, "one of the biggest things that came from the project team was that they did not want to abandon the project." In addition, communication with the school teachers initiated "almost a plea … we need this to continue," which led the project team to seriously consider how they could adapt the project to continue to provide the Grade 9 learners with career guidance and subject choice support amid a global pandemic.

Once the project team was set on continuing with the project, they started to strategize on how they could adapt the delivery and implementation of the project to adhere to the

South African Government, Stellenbosch University, and Department of Education COVID-19 guidelines and regulations and still meet the Grade 9 learners' needs. The process of reimagining the project entailed weekly meetings and led to the decision that a self-directed booklet and electronic-based supplementary resources were the best way forward, under the prevailing lockdown circumstances.

Self-Directed Booklet Development

The project team leader identified the Self-Directed Search developed by John Holland (1972), as a significant theoretical influence when conceptualising the self-directed career guidance booklet. The development process of the self-directed career guidance booklet was a slow process of adapting and reformulating a working version of the booklet week by week. A manual was used to facilitate the Career Guidance workshops in the past. In the process of adapting the project, the manual became the starting point for the development of the self-directed booklet. In the past, the workshops consisted of three different sessions of psychometric testing, self-exploration, and study skills and motivation. Thus, the project team initially thought of merging the three sessions into one booklet with three distinct sections. However, the idea was disregarded because it was not practical or feasible "it was quite confusing, didn't flow nicely."

Thus, from this point, the focus was on refining the content included in the self-directed booklet to be the most pertinent information to the Grade 9 learners. This process was quite slow and challenging:

> The biggest part of the development was deciding what needs to go in there … how do we convert the stuff that's in our head or the stuff that we train the students on so that it's accessible to the learners?

One of the interviewees used the metaphor to describe the process of deciding on the information to include, referring to the information as "muscles as the most important stuff… a very secure neat focus of what it's about."

Once the project team established the booklet contents, the booklet was edited multiple times between the project team and the booklet graphic designer, "went through something like 18 iterations between ourselves and the … graphic artist." In the process of developing the self-directed booklet, certain aims were established. First, to ensure that the booklet was "user-friendly." To ensure the booklet was user-friendly, one of the project team members expressed that:

> We just made sure that the instructions were quite clear in the booklet itself, so that they [the Grade 9 learners] could do it on their own without the need of someone who's trained in administering or facilitating this thing.

Second, the project team wanted to ensure that the booklet is a local product, and thus, the characters Thabo and Maria were created with a South African context in mind to be relatable to Grade 9 learners. Third, to ensure that the language used in the booklet "is really on the level of the learner" and to translate the booklet into Afrikaans "because 60% of the Grade 9 participants in the eight schools are Afrikaans speaking." Overall, the project team leader reflected on the end product and remarked that "the self-directed approach was kind of almost gifted by COVID. We would not have gotten out of the box; we would have continued in the way that we were doing it in the past."

Self-Directed Career Guidance Booklet Acceptability

In general, the project team felt that the self-directed booklet was a valuable resource, "the content is very good," and "this booklet converts that knowledge [of someone who's knowledgeable or trained in counselling] in a self-directed form to guide them through." However, each interviewee provided recommendations on how to improve and consolidate the booklet's acceptability and usefulness. Content-wise the suggestions made were: "something that I think we could add to the booklet that would be beneficial is a focus on entrepreneurial skills," and "I think the wording needs to improve … still very academic and not accessible to our learners, so they don't always understand."

In the first quarter of 2021, the project team held a CGP meeting to incorporate the evaluative feedback collected in 2020 into the 2021 iteration of the CGP. To address the booklet completion challenges, the project team decided to include a Question and Answer contact session with the Grade 9 learners after they had completed the booklet. In this session, the learners would have been able to pose their career and subject-related questions to the student volunteers, and thereby gain a sense of clarity and directionality regarding their career and subject choices.

Moreover, in a feedback meeting held with the LO teachers from the eight schools, some points were raised by the LO teachers on how to improve the booklet. From the meeting, the suggestions that the project team decided to incorporate were: include space for notes for the learners, include a removable summary page at the back of the booklet for the learners to write the most pertinent insights gained from the booklet, provide more information about the RIASEC (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and

Conventional interests) (Holland & Rayman, 2013), include careers that fit the different combinations, and include an action plan template similar to the Career Flower.

Supplementary Resources Development

A second problem the project team faced was how to support the Grade 9 learners to complete the self-directed booklet without the in-person contact they had in previous years "I knew we cannot just give them the booklet with the information. We need somebody's voice or need somebody, you know, the additional resources." Moreover, the need for supplementary resources emanated from:

> Our funders require that we have the study skills and motivation component … and that's also how the supplementary resources came about, because the stuff that we didn't feel worked in the book that we put online, and linked it to that.

Overall, the supplementary resources enabled the project team to include more information that, if incorporated, could have made the self-directed booklet too cumbersome.

Per the contact-based restrictions of the pandemic, the decision to develop electronically-based supplementary resources seemed the most logical way forward. The decision to create YouTube videos specifically was explained by a project team member as: "Although I'm not a young person myself anymore. I know, that's the go-to place in social media … YouTube … So that's a way to access more people."

Supplementary Resources Acceptability

The project team members provided feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the supplementary resources and ways to expand and improve the resources. The resources' strengths identified were their scalability, accessibility, "a lot more people can access it much easier," and that they are visually pleasing, "I have visited the website, and I really think it's beautiful. And I really think it's great." A pertinent strength of the electronically-based supplementary resources is that they enable the expansion of the project beyond the eight schools, "accessible and available … for learners wherever they might be."

Despite the virtual nature of the resources making them widely available, a barrier to the accessibility of the supplementary resources is the learners' access to WiFi, data, and electronic devices. One of the project team members pointed out that "our partners are mainly low resource schools, poor schools, schools in poor areas, and therefore learners don't have access to the internet like we would assume." Moreover, the project coordinator expressed that some of the learners may not have their own smartphone, which limits their personal access to the electronic supplementary resources.

The project team speculated that the Grade 9 learners and LO teachers did not use the supplementary resources as extensively as they hoped. One of the project team members expressed that "I think the teachers focused much more on the booklet, which is actually a lost opportunity." Another reiterated that sentiment, "I have a suspicion that the supplementary resources aren't being used the way they're supposed to … I think a lot of the kids think … the booklet is the intervention." Furthermore, a project team member said, "that connection is not yet there for the learners."

The project team members agree that the supplementary resources could reach secondary school learners on a national level and thereby, improve learners' access to adequate career guidance and subject choice support. However, a significant hindrance is the WiFi and data constraints the learners may face. Their recommendation on improving the reachability of the supplementary resources is to make the website data-free so that the learners wouldn't incur any costs when visiting the site. In addition, a project team member recommended to integrate the supplementary resources directly into the intervention, for instance:

> ... they've got computer rooms. So rather than giving them a hard copy of this booklet … that they can take home … we should give them access to the website, and then from the website, they can click on the links, go watch the videos … because, at the moment, it's like a parallel process and not integrated.

Project Implementation Feasibility

The handoff of the self-directed career guidance booklets and Grade 9 learner evaluation forms at the eight schools required effective coordination and communication with the eight schools' LO teachers and school principals. In previous years, the project team and coordinator "had quite a strong structure to engagement with the schools." However, the COVID-19 restrictions limited the communication with the schools to telephone calls and e-mails. This new remote-based relationship with the schools was initially challenging to establish and nurture.

Beyond the communication established with the eight schools, COVID-19 introduced barriers to the project implementation. Firstly, each school reacted differently to adapting to the COVID-19 regulations, which meant the implementation of the project relied on accommodating multiple contexts. For instance, some schools had a week on, week off schedule and others had alternating days, "the learners are coming to school Monday, Tuesday and the other group … Wednesday, Thursday." Thus, there was no standardised way of engaging with the schools. The project team had to fit in with the various schools'

availability. Moreover, during the project implementation, School 5 had a bus strike, which "had a big impact on the school since many learners who stayed outside of walking distance of the school could obviously not attend school due to this bus strike."

One of the lessons learnt from the 2020 iteration of the project is that continuous conversations with the schools, keeping them updated about the project and the progress made could be beneficial to building a stronger relationship with the schools. The project coordinator remarked that:

> In previous years we had limited contact, we only focused on the implementation. But last year we had a lot of continuous contact with them and I think to leverage that and keep developing that relationship is a good way of improving contact with the schools in future so that we get to get to know each other well.

Establishing a good relationship with the schools was reiterated as very important to ensure the project success.

Project Format Acceptability Reflections

When asked to reflect on the ideal format and implementation of the CGP, three of the project team interviewees suggested a hybrid format and presentation (integrating virtual and contact-based elements into the project). To better support the Grade 9 learners, a project team member suggested continuing with the self-directed format and including shorter contact-based sessions. Similarly, another project team member suggested having a contact-based session facilitated by master's students after the Grade 9 learners have completed the booklet to allow the Grade 9 learners to ask questions. The project team member remarked that, "I remember some of the qualitative feedback we've got … the booklet was great, but I'm still unsure, I still have questions."

One of the project team members reiterated the value of in-person contact to the Grade 9 learners, "just to see, but there's a student somebody … really interested in me somebody coming from the University of Stellenbosch… it is adding to the worthiness of the learner." The connections the learners can form with the student facilitators were identified as valuable. Thus, the project team members felt strongly that post-COVID-19 the CGP should continue with the implementation of the workshops within the eight secondary schools.

Conclusion

The focus of this evaluative research study was to ascertain the feasibility and acceptability of the 2020 self-directed iteration of the CGP from the perspectives of the target population (Grade 9 learners) and key stakeholders in the project (LO teachers, project volunteers, and project team members). In order to gain a holistic conceptualisation of the

adapted CGP, quantitative and qualitative survey data was obtained from the Grade 9 learners, LO teachers, and project volunteers. In addition, in-depth semi-structured interviews were held with the project volunteers and project team members.

The mixed methods evaluation of the project yielded resoundingly positive results. The Grade 9 learner survey quantitative data (n = 498) indicate that the learners positively evaluated the booklet completion experience (M = 40.91) out of 50, and perceived the booklet to have a largely positive impact on their career preparedness (M = 17.11) out of 20. The qualitative survey data indicate that the learners found the booklet informative and supportive in terms of career directionality. The learners referred to the efficacy of the My Career Flower (Naidoo, 2011) when it came to career planning, subject choice and self-discovery. A small portion of learners identified some challenges regarding booklet completion. Some found the instructions unclear, while others expressed the need for additional support to answer their specific career and subject-related questions. Despite some challenges faced, the majority of the learners enjoyed the booklet "I enjoyed everything in the booklet" and found it very helpful "the booklet was well informing and I don't think there is a part that wasn't useful."

The LO teachers from the eight schools were instrumental in the successful implementation of the project. The quantitative feedback from the LO teacher surveys (n = 11) indicates the teachers' satisfaction with the booklet, (M = 26.18) out of 30. Their positive sentiments were reiterated in their qualitative feedback. However, the LO teachers' quantitative evaluations of the supplementary resources, (M = 13.909) out of 20, and the adapted self-directed format of the project (M = 3.09) out of 5 identify the limitations and weak points of the 2020 iteration of the CGP. Congruent to the quantitative feedback, the qualitative feedback indicates that the LO teachers did not find the supplementary video content very helpful. The LO teachers identified their schools' and learners' WiFi and data constraints as limitations to the accessibility of the video content. Moreover, the LO teachers recommended integrating in-person contact sessions into the self-directed format of the project going forward, citing the benefits the learners gain from in-person contact.

The development and implementation of the 2020 project would not have been possible without the valuable contributions from the student volunteers (Stellenbosch University Psychology undergraduate and postgraduate, and Industrial Psychology postgraduate students). From the quantitative feedback from the Volunteer Survey (n = 7), the volunteers agreed that the experience was enjoyable, and that they would volunteer again. However, the majority of the volunteers indicated that the volunteering experience was time-consuming.

Congruent to the quantitative results, the qualitative results obtained from the survey (n = 7) and semi-structured interviews *(*n = 4) indicate that developing video content using PowToons for the project was very time consuming (three days to a week). The volunteers expressed that they did not receive adequate instructions on how to use the video development programme, and thereby, navigating the programme features contributed to the significant time spent developing videos. Beyond these challenges, the volunteers positively evaluated the Coordination of the Volunteer Work (M = 12.714) out of 15, expressing that the project coordinator was always on time and on top of things. And he answered promptly".

The project team reflected on their initial fears and doubts regarding the future of the project once the seriousness of the COVID-19 pandemic became clear. Thereafter the project team, determined to continue with the project, started to strategize how they could adapt to the COVID-19 regulations and guidelines set by the South African Government, Stellenbosch University, and the Department of Education. This led to the development of the self-directed career guidance booklet and supplementary resources. Upon reflecting on the reformulated project, the team agreed that the booklet "content is very good" and that the booklet contains the most pertinent information Grade 9 learners would need. The main improvements going forward would be to ensure the language used is accessible to the learners, including an action plan template, space for notes, removable summary page, and more information on RIASEC interests and career options. In terms of the supplementary resources, the project team recognised that the resources have the potential to reach Grade 9 learners beyond the eight schools. The current challenges to overcome are addressing the WiFi and data constraints learners may face so that the learners can use the resources as intended. In the chapter to follow, I will interpret and contextualise the research results within the research study's theoretical framework and relevant literature as detailed in Chapter 2

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

Introduction

In this chapter, I will contextualise the mixed method results of the study within the study's theoretical framework and relevant literature explored in Chapter 2. I will discuss the pertinent themes that have emerged from the qualitative data within the theoretical framework of feasibility and acceptability intervention research. In this evaluation, I will critically examine the research results with the research study's aim in mind, i.e., to evaluate the feasibility and acceptability of the self-directed CGP (in terms of development, implementation, and resources generated). In addition, I will examine the LO teachers' and project team members' qualitative and quantitative research findings within the CBPR approach, and I will specifically explore the extent to which the CGP has involved community members (LO teachers) in the planning, implementation, and overall assessment of the intervention. Thereafter, I will interpret the qualitative and quantitative results in relation to Linda Gottfredson's (1981; 2002) theory of circumscription and compromise in career development.

Feasibility and Acceptability of the CGP

This research study aimed to evaluate the feasibility and acceptability of the development, implementation, and resources of the self-directed CGP based on the evaluative mixed-methods data collected from the Grade 9 learners, LO teachers, project volunteers, and project team members. As discussed in Chapter 2, feasibility research examines the development, implementation, and resources generated of interventions to ascertain the challenges, shortcomings, and strengths thereof (Gadke et al., 2021; Orsmond & Cohn, 2015). The purpose of this evaluative process is to consolidate the most effective design and structure of an intervention (Bowen et al., 2009). In congruence, acceptability research specifically focuses on whether the resources and overall intentions of an intervention met the needs of the target population based on the evaluative feedback from the target population and key stakeholders (Ayala & Elder, 2011; Nastasi et al., 2000). In the sections to follow, I will discuss the feasibility and acceptability of the development, implementation, and resources of the 2020 iteration of the self-directed CGP.

Booklet Development and Implementation Feasibility

Development Process. In reaction to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the project team was determined to ensure the continuation of the CGP. The South African Government initiating school closures and social distancing mandates forced the project team

to adapt to these obstacles and develop novel ways to deliver the intervention that did not require in-person guidance. This led to the decision to develop a self-directed career guidance booklet that each Grade 9 learner could easily engage with and complete on their own without requiring assistance.

Extant research identifies the benefits of a self-directed learning approach to promoting learners' career decision-making abilities and overall sense of agency (Briska & Dislere, 2018; De Bruin & Cornelius, 2011; Morris, 2019). Moreover, the project leaders identified John Holland's (1972) Self-Directed Search, a self-complete, self-interpreted vocational counselling tool, as a significant theoretical influence when conceptualising the self-directed booklet. Empirical and experimental research has shown that the Self-Directed Search promotes self-understanding and overall satisfaction in career aspirations (G.D. Gottfredson, 2002; Gottfredson & Holland, 1975; Holland & Rayman, 2013; Osborn & Reardon, 2006). Furthermore, researchers have identified the Self-Directed Search as a relevant and suitable career guidance tool for children and adolescents (Holland & Rayman, 2013; Osborn & Reardon, 2006). Thus, the self-directed career guidance booklet was developed in reference to the efficacy of previous self-directed approaches to career guidance (Briska & Dislere, 2018; De Bruin & Cornelius, 2011; Holland & Rayman, 2013; Morris, 2019; Osborn & Reardon, 2006).

The project team members defined the conversion of the information within the CGP workshop manual into a self-directed booklet as a gradual process that took place over weekly Microsoft Teams meetings and ultimately went through 18 iterations. Therefore, despite the time constraints placed on developing the booklet, the project team did not rush the process. A significant strength of the development process was the collaboration among the project team members, with each member introducing unique perspectives and insights, in taking their time to develop the self-directed career guidance booklet.

In addition to converting the CGP manual into a self-directed career guidance booklet, the CGP team sought to expand the language accessibility of the booklet by translating it into Afrikaans, given that Afrikaans is the home language of approximately 60% of the learners from the eight schools. Developing the booklet in the learners' home language was aimed at improving the learners' comprehension of and relatability to the booklet.

In hindsight, the project team described the unforeseeable circumstances brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic as an opportunity for them to creatively engage with and re-evaluate their approach to the CGP to continue to attain the social justice imperatives of the project. The self-complete (do-it-yourself) nature of the self-directed career guidance booklet

led the project team to begin to consider the feasibility of expanding the project nationally, as the booklet could potentially be implemented in most South African schools. Therefore, the COVID-19 pandemic allowed for the generation of creative solutions and innovations during the development process, despite the many imponderables and challenges faced.

Implementation Process. The implementation of the CGP in 2020 comprised: the delivery of the booklet and project evaluation form to the Grade 9 learners (n = 1684) from the eight schools. Upon reflection on the challenges associated with COVID-19 during the implementation process, the project team members and volunteers provided important insights into the strengths and limitations of the implementation process. Each of the eight schools had different COVID-19 mitigation strategies, some an alternating weekly schedule and others an alternating day. The project leaders and the project coordinator all identified the varied schedules as challenges they had to navigate when developing an implementation schedule. The project volunteers were involved in the in-person booklet and evaluation forms delivery process. In the semi-structured interviews, a volunteer pointed out that the delivery process was time-consuming as they had to wait to present in specific periods. This insight should be kept in mind when planning the 2021 implementation process, to ensure the process does not take up unnecessary time.

Moreover, during the implementation of the project School 5 faced a bus strike. Consequently, many of the Grade 9 learners could not attend school, thus some may not have received the booklet. As a further consequence of the bus strike, only eleven learner feedback forms were collected.

The coordination of the implementation process relied on a good remote-based relationship with the school principals and LO teachers from the eight schools. The school principal survey disseminated among the eight school principals in December 2020 sought to ascertain the school principals' evaluation of the managerial aspects involved in the CGP implementation process. After three rounds of invitations, only one school principal managed to complete the survey. My supervisors and I reflected on the limited response rate and recognised that the stressors and challenges school principals had to contend with during the COVID-19 pandemic may have played a role in the limited response rate. On the other hand, the qualitative data collected from the project coordinator and project team leader provided some insight into the remote-based relationship dynamic between the project team and the eight schools. In hindsight, the project leader and project coordinator credited consistent communication with the LO teachers and school principals and the project team's

adaptability to each school's schedule as key to ensuring the successful implementation of the project.

Overall, amid a global pandemic, the multi-disciplinary CGP team was able to adapt to the challenging circumstances and collaborate to develop a self-directed career guidance booklet. The multiple iterations and time taken to develop the self-directed booklet affirm the feasibility of the development process. The implementation of the CGP (booklet and feedback forms) was a managerial challenge to the CGP coordinator and project leader when it came to accommodating the eight schools' various COVID-19 mitigation schedules. However, despite the scheduling challenges faced, the necessary consistent communication with the LO teachers led to the development of a strong remote-based relationship (relying on SMS communication) with the eight schools (LO teachers and school principals). The strong relationships and good communication were instrumental in ensuring the feasibility of the implementation process. Thus, to sustain the feasibility of the CGP implementation process, nurturing a consistent relationship with the eight schools and remaining amenable to changing circumstances is necessary.

Booklet Feasibility and Acceptability

Booklet Acceptability. The project team designed the self-directed career guidance booklet to address Grade 9 learners' need for adequate career guidance and subject choice information and support. The Grade 9 learners provided positive evaluations of the two main quantitative survey variables measuring the learners' experiences of completing the booklet and their perceptions of the impact the booklet had on their career preparedness. Moreover, the Grade 9 survey item-level results indicate that the majority of the Grade 9 learners strongly agreed that the information in the booklet was helpful when making their subject choices and thinking about their future career plans.

The Booklet Experience and Perceived Impact on Career Preparedness scores varied slightly between the eight schools. For instance, School 5 attained the highest average Booklet Experience variable scores. In addition, School 3 (n = 14) and School 5 (n = 11) reported the highest average Perceived Impact on Career Preparedness scores. However, as previously mentioned, the response rate for School 5 was (n = 11) as a result of the bus strike, and thereby the high average may be a consequence of the smaller sample size, and these results should be interpreted with caution.

In congruence with the quantitative results, the Grade 9 learners' qualitative feedback reiterates how the booklet helped the learners develop career plans and select their school subjects. The learners specifically credited the *My Career Flower* (Naidoo, 2011) as a helpful

resource when making career and subject-related decisions. Moreover, the learners expressed that the knowledge gained about themselves (personality, interests, strengths, and weaknesses) provided them with a sense of directionality in their future career aspirations and school subject choices. This greater self-knowledge and insight into their life goals improved the learners' confidence and motivation to attain their career aspirations. The connection between improved self-knowledge and career directionality in the research findings, align with Maree's (2013; 2018) research findings. Maree (2013; 2018) credits the introspective process facilitated in qualitative approaches to career counselling in enabling clients to make informed decisions about their career plans and life goals. Overall, the Grade 9 learners' positive quantitative and qualitative feedback confirms that the self-directed career guidance booklet is an acceptable career guidance and subject choice resource.

The LO teachers' (n = 11) survey quantitative results concur that the self-directed career guidance booklet helped the Grade 9 learners with their subject choices and developing their career goals and plans. The LO teachers provided positive scores of the Booklet Acceptability variable. Similarly, the LO teachers' qualitative results reiterate that the booklet was successful in guiding the Grade 9 learners to make informed subject choices and the information provided was integral to the learners' development of suitable career choices.

In addition, the LO teachers identified the booklet as a valuable resource to be used in conjunction with the LO curriculum. The LO teachers identified the functionality and flexibility of the booklet to be of practical value to teachers when approaching career guidance and subject choice in the LO curriculum. Thus, according to the LO teachers, the self-directed career guidance booklet is an acceptable resource commentary to the LO curriculum. Moreover, based on the evaluative feedback, the self-directed booklet can potentially redress the barriers LO teachers face when providing learners with adequate career guidance support. These include a lack of training and challenges associated with sourcing career and study-related resources (Grossen et al., 2017; Modiba & Sefotho, 2019; Prinsloo, 2007).

The positive qualitative and quantitative feedback received from both the Grade 9 learners and LO teachers affirms the acceptability of the self-directed career guidance booklet as a helpful career guidance and subject choice resource. Furthermore, the LO teachers' feedback identifies the booklet as complementary to the LO curriculum, which supports the acceptability of the booklet as a resource to be used during LO lessons. The complementary nature of the self-directed career guidance booklet to the LO curriculum reiterates the

feasibility of formally incorporating the booklet into the LO curriculum across South African schools.

Contextual Challenges. In Chapter 2, the specific contextual challenges underserved learners face when making informed career and subject choices were detailed. The qualitative data collected from the Grade 9 learners and LO teachers in this evaluative study reiterate these contextual challenges. Albien and Naidoo (2016), Buthelezi et al. (2009), and Seabi et al. (2014) concur that in South Africa, within historically and still underserved communities, adolescents are not receiving sufficient support and guidance from their parents, family members, or caregivers when it comes to career and subject choices. In congruence to this research, the LO teachers' qualitative responses identified that many of their Grade 9 learners do not receive career and subject advice from their parents or caregivers, and that each of the schools face significant challenges with absent parents. Moreover, the lack of parental or caregiver support meant that some learners could not ask for help at home when working through the booklet. The lack of support from family is evident in the Grade 9 learners' qualitative feedback whereby a large portion of the learners expressed the need for in-person guidance. Many learners expressed the desire for a person who can positively influence them throughout their lives and provide them with support needed during their schooling career.

Buthelezi et al. (2009) and Albien and Naidoo (2016) indicate that in addition to limited parental guidance and support, underserved learners have limited access to resources to source career and subject-related information. The need for access to career and study-related information was apparent among the Grade 9 learners' qualitative feedback. Many of the Grade 9 learners posed specific subject and career-related questions in their evaluation forms requesting advice. The questions varied from the type of subjects needed to study medicine, to whether they need to take Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy for specific career paths, and the request for advice on how to attain certain career goals. The CGP aimed to redress the learners' limited access to career and subject-related information. However, from the high volume of career and subject-related questions, an additional form of support was indicated to directly address the Grade 9 learners' specific questions.

Lastly, financial constraints were identified as a contextual risk factor to poor academic performance (Buthelezi et al., 2009), school dropout (Spaull, 2015), and difficulties in the career decision-making process (Albien & Naidoo, 2016; Buthelezi et al., 2009; Stead et al., 2004). A handful of Grade 9 learners expressed the need for financial assistance to meet their career aspirations, while some specifically expressed the need for financial support in order to pursue a tertiary education.

The Grade 9 learners' and LO teachers' feedback indicates that learners continue to face significant contextual barriers that may hinder their ability to make informed subject and career choices. Thus, implementing a form of additional support (in-person or electronically) may be a feasible solution to provide Grade 9 learners with the career and subject-related information they need, and to help the learners identify how they can attain their career goals despite financial barriers. Moreover, to enhance the parental and caregiver support learners receive, the CGP can develop a parent's guide similar to the guide created by Babarović et al. (2020) (detailed in Chapter 2), or facilitate a parent information evening. The guide or parent information evening can provide parents/caregivers with information on how to effectively support their children's career-related decisions.

Booklet Feasibility. Apart from the acceptability of the career guidance and subject choice support provided by the self-directed career guidance booklet, this study also sought to evaluate the feasibility of the booklet format. The purpose of this evaluation is to ascertain whether the CGP's self-directed booklet format and presentation of career guidance and subject choice support is a feasible replacement to the contact-based workshops implemented in previous iterations of the CGP. First and foremost, the CGP was able to deliver 1 684 booklets to the Grade 9 learners attending the eight schools amid a pandemic. The significant amount of booklets disseminated highlights the preliminary feasibility of the reachability of the self-directed CGP.

The Grade 9 learners' quantitative feedback indicates that a majority of the learners agreed that completing the booklet was an interesting exercise. In terms of the booklet contents, the purpose was clear, and the booklet instructions and expectations of the various exercises were made comprehensible. Moreover, the Grade 9 learners agreed that the booklet was enjoyable, they felt motivated to complete it, and it was not a waste of their time. Therefore, the Grade 9 learners' positive quantitative responses support the feasibility of the self-directed format of the career guidance booklet as an adequate replacement to the contact-based workshops.

The qualitative Grade 9 learner and LO teacher feedback provided a more nuanced evaluation of the feasibility of the booklet. A majority of the Grade 9 learners expressed that the booklet contents were clear, comprehensive and helpful, and the exercises easy to complete. The LO teachers reiterated that the booklet was detailed, comprehensive, and learner-friendly. The user-friendly nature of the booklet is vital, as the self-directed format thereof required the learners to complete it without additional support. Overall, a large portion of the learners expressed that they did not have difficulty with the self-completion

aspect of the booklet and reported finding the process enjoyable as the exercises were all based on their own subjectivity.

Despite the positive reflections, a portion of the Grade 9 learners identified challenges faced with booklet completion. For instance, some of the Grade 9 learners expressed that the booklet instructions were unclear, the booklet completion process was time-consuming, and they had difficulty with the self-completion aspects of the booklet. A handful of Grade 9 learners identified their parents or extended family members as sources of support when completing the booklet. However, most of the learners who had difficulty with completion did not identify any support networks, and some specifically requested in-person guidance. The LO teachers reiterated the importance of in-person support to the learners, expressing that the contact with the project team and student volunteers is of significant value to the Grade 9 learners. The self-directed booklet did identify an e-mail address the learners could use to ask questions directly. However, the project coordinator indicated few of the Grade 9 learners had used any of the electronic-based options to pose their questions, i.e., the project website or e-mail address.

Overall, despite a majority of the LO teachers and Grade 9 learners evaluating the self-directed booklet as clear and comprehensive, the integration of an additional form of support (in-person or electronically) may be necessary to support the learners who faced booklet completion challenges. Moreover, to redress the challenges some learners had with understanding the instructions, it may be useful to recruit some student volunteers to read over the booklet instructions and identify where some comprehension challenges may arise (given that students can relate better to Grade 9 learners). In addition, to redress the uncertainty surrounding the self-complete assessments in the booklet, it should be made clear that there is no right or wrong answer and that the questions are aimed at the learners' subjectivity. Overall, ensuring that the learners face minimal booklet completion challenges can improve the overall feasibility of the self-directed format of the career guidance booklet.

Booklet Short-Term Adjustments. The project team had decided to implement a Question and Answer contact session with the Grade 9 learners, to answer their individual career and study-related questions. This additional contact session with the Grade 9 learners is set to take place after the learners have completed their booklet and does rely on the South African Government and Department of Education's regulations and recommendations amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

To further extend the language accessibility of the booklet, the project team aims to translate the booklet into isiXhosa in 2021. From the Grade 9 learner survey biographical

information (*n* = 498), nearly a fifth of the learners identified isiXhosa as their home language. Thus, translating the booklet into isiXhosa can improve the learners' comprehension and relatability to the booklet. Furthermore, the expansion of the language accessibility to accommodate the Grade 9 learners' home languages is a feasible initiative moving forward, specifically in terms of potentially expanding the booklet for integration into schools across the Western Cape.

In terms of the booklet contents, there will be minimal changes made based on the LO teachers' and Grade 9 learners' feedback. The additions to the current contents of the booklet entail: providing more space for learners to make their own notes and annotations, integrating more career options into the career interests and personality sections of the booklet, adding a new section on entrepreneurship, and adding a summary section at the back that will contain all the important information the learner has explored in the booklet. The changes to the current format and content of the booklet include: changing the gloss paper to regular paper to make it easier for learners to write in the booklet, integrating the self and environmental SWOT analysis assessments into one part, replacing the term 'Weaknesses' in the SWOT analysis with 'Limitations', clearly linking the Career Flower and SWOT analysis to the career resources map, and removing the study skills section to the CGP website. The small adjustments to be made intend to improve the user-friendliness and informative nature of the current version of the self-directed booklet.

Lastly, to further redress the difficulties some learners had with understanding all the questions and activities in the booklet, the project team came up with an idea to develop a facilitator's manual and video content for the LO teachers. The initiative is referred to as 'Train the Trainer'. The manual would contain in-depth booklet activity completion instructions, prompts for teachers to use in class (e.g., introspective prompts), and lesson plan ideas for the LO teachers to follow. The intention behind developing the facilitator's manual is to empower the LO teachers with the knowledge and information to assist the Grade 9 learners in the booklet completion process and to resolve any potential uncertainty the learners may have. The LO teachers will receive training on how to use the manual, and video content will be developed to supplement the training they receive. A potential additional benefit to training the LO teachers to facilitate the booklet completion process, is that this limits the need for additional in-person contact whilst in the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

As detailed in Chapter 2, LO teachers' lack of formal training in career guidance has been identified as a significant barrier to providing learners with adequate career guidance

support (Maree, 2013; Miles & Naidoo, 2016; Modiba & Sefotho, 2019; Prinsloo, 2007). The facilitator's manual could bolster LO teachers' confidence in providing learners with career guidance and subject choice support. Thus, the facilitator's manual has the potential to enhance the feasibility and acceptability of the self-directed career guidance booklet moving forward.

Booklet Long-Term Goals. The adaptations made to the CGP have led to the generation of long-term goals for the project. The project team acknowledges that the need for adequate career guidance services goes well beyond the eight schools involved in the project. The self-completion and self-assessment format of the self-directed booklet has presented the opportunity for the CGP to expand nationally. The project team has envisioned the self-directed career guidance booklet incorporated into the LO curriculum in Western Cape schools and eventually nationally.

As detailed in Chapter 2, the LO curriculum is allotted a two-hour time slot a week (Flederman, 2009), which limits the time LO teachers have to meet the curriculum requirements (Albien & Naidoo, 2016). The self-assessment nature of the self-directed career guidance booklet allows learners to complete the activities in their own time. Thus, the LO teachers can dedicate more in-person lesson time to properly engage with their learners regarding their subject choices and career plans.

In addition, the LO teachers and project team members highlighted that learners needed career guidance for the rest of their senior schooling career (Grade 10, 11, and 12). For instance, both Maree (2019) and Miles and Naidoo (2016) found that Grade 11 learners significantly benefited from career guidance interventions. Maree's (2019) research findings showed that career guidance supported the Grade 11 learner research sample's ability to develop career plans and this significantly enhanced their hope for the future. Miles and Naidoo (2016) found that Grade 11 learners who received career guidance were able to make informed career decisions. Thus, the idea of expanding the CGP to include booklets for each year that act as career guidance stepping stones have the potential to support the long-term career development of the learners attending the eight resource-constrained schools. The project team envisions the Grade 10, 11, and 12 booklets to entail: insights into how to begin to explore career paths such as scheduling job-shadowing opportunities, how to conduct a career search, how to attain funding for studying (bursary opportunities), and how to develop a career portfolio or Curriculum Vitae.

Supplementary Resources Development and Implementation Feasibility and Acceptability

Development Process. The video content and resource kits were developed by the project volunteers and their contributions were overseen and managed by the project coordinator. The project coordinator was limited to e-mail communication because of the COVID-19 social contact restrictions. However, despite the communication limitations, the project volunteers provided positive feedback regarding the coordination process. The project volunteers' (n = 7) quantitative feedback indicates that the Coordination of the Volunteer Work was facilitative and acceptable. Similarly, volunteer qualitative survey feedback and semi-structured interview data reiterate the project coordinator's dependability and competence. When asked about recommendations to improve the communication process in the future, one of the volunteers recommended creating a WhatsApp group to communicate pertinent information about the volunteer work.

In terms of the acceptability of the volunteer responsibilities, the quantitative data indicates that the majority of the volunteers strongly agreed that they would volunteer again, and agreed that the experience was enjoyable. The overall negative evaluation of the volunteer experience acceptability was because a majority of the volunteers found the volunteering process time-consuming. This sentiment was reiterated in the qualitative data collected from the volunteer surveys and semi-structured interviews.

Each volunteer interviewee (n = 4) developed video content for the project. Two out of the four volunteers identified challenges navigating the video development programme, PowToons, specifically in using the free trial version. The challenges experienced meant that the video content creation process took between three days and a week to complete. Both interviewees indicated that they only received instructions regarding the programme after developing their videos. Therefore, to improve the feasibility and acceptability of the video content creation process, the volunteers should receive instructions well in advance to ensure that the process is not too time-consuming.

Apart from the video content development challenges, the volunteers indicated that their volunteer duties did not interfere with their academic commitments. In addition, some expressed a willingness for greater involvement and responsibility in the CGP. In the CGP discussions regarding the volunteers' role in the 2021 iteration of the project, the suggestion to expand the volunteers' contributions was raised. The decision has been made to continue with the video content creation, as well as recruit volunteers to write articles for the project website about career and subject-related content relevant to secondary school learners. Thus,

the 2021 iteration of the CGP is making progress to use the eagerness of student volunteers to contribute to a community engagement intervention.

Implementation Process. The project volunteers also disseminated the booklet and project evaluation forms in-person to the Grade 9 learners from each school. In this process, each volunteer was sent to the classroom and given roughly 5 to 10 minutes to briefly explain the intentions of the booklet, introduce the supplementary resources, and brief the learners on the prizes to be won (essay competition and booklet evaluation form incentive). However, based on the LO teacher and project team feedback, the learners did not use the supplementary resources available. One of the project team members expressed that the Grade 9 learners had not yet made the connection between the project and the supplementary resources, and therefore the learners mainly focused on the self-directed career guidance booklet. Thus, the availability of supplementary resources must be explicitly conveyed to the learners during the implementation process to improve the feasibility thereof.

Supplementary Resources Feasibility and Acceptability

The supplementary resources were developed to provide the Grade 9 learners with additional support and information related to career guidance and subject choice support. From the LO teachers' (n = 11) quantitative feedback, the LO teachers agreed that the electronic and physical resource kit and the website were helpful. However, the LO teachers expressed ambivalence to whether the video content is helpful to the Grade 9 learners and an adequate replacement for the guidance learners received in the contact-based workshops implemented in previous iterations of the CGP. Consequently, a majority of the LO teachers negatively evaluated the Supplementary Resource Acceptability variable in the LO teacher survey.

Based on the qualitative feedback received from the LO teachers and project team members, the greatest impediment to the acceptability and feasibility of the supplementary resources is the learners' and schools' limited WIFI and data accessibility. In the semi-structured interviews, the project team indicated that they are working to redress the WIFI and data challenges the learners face by getting a sponsor to make the website zero-rated. Thereby, any learner can access the website and not incur the data costs. Moreover, a project team member indicated that two of the schools have computer rooms, wherein the learners attending those schools could watch the videos. In addition, the LO teachers suggested developing posters from the booklet content to display in the classroom. The posters could additionally promote the supplementary resources and thereby, increase the Grade 9 learners' awareness thereof.

The limited connection with the video content developed is further evidenced in the number of views the CGP YouTube channel videos amassed as detailed in Appendix G. The highest number of views on a video was 98 and the lowest was two. Overall, the CGP YouTube channel did not gain a significant amount of traction.

Upon reflection of the CGP YouTube channel, I identified certain inconsistencies and areas for improvement were identified by the researcher. These limitations are based on my personal reflections and evaluations. First, the videos have not been uploaded in sequential order on the channel, which could be confusing for a learner to follow as they would need to search for the next video to be able to watch all the videos in their sequential order. Second, the videos do not have a uniform style, some are filmed in person, and others were developed in PowToons. Moreover, the videos developed in PowToons use different animation style characters, some in black and white, and others in bright colours. The limitation with this approach is that overall the videos lack cohesion and can appear disjointed, which is a hindrance as the videos have been developed to flow into one another. Third, the section labels of the videos are not standardised. Section 8 is missing and there are two introduction videos to the project (Grade 9 Self-directed CGP Introduction Part 1 and 2, and Introduction Part 1 to 3), which may become confusing to the viewers. Lastly, some of the images used in the videos appear pixelated, which hinders the professionalism of the videos. Based on the researcher's evaluation, the current style and presentation of the video content on the CGP YouTube Channel is not yet feasible or acceptable.

In the 2021 iteration of the project, the student volunteers will develop video content that does not rely on the learners' access to the booklet. The aim is to expand the accessibility of career guidance and subject choice support to adolescents beyond the eight schools involved in the CGP. Moreover, in addition to the PowToons programme instructions, the project volunteers will receive guidelines regarding video content development (colour scheme, text font, text size, and cartoon figures used). The aim is to produce uniform video content to improve the overall presentation of the CGP YouTube Channel. Moreover, video content on the CGP YouTube Channel will be uploaded in order, to ensure that the channel is user-friendly to all viewers.

Overall, the supplementary resources have yet to be fully utilised as intended and thereby, the limitations posed to their accessibility hinder the feasibility and acceptability of the resources. However, once the accessibility challenges are addressed, the supplementary resources can be considered feasible and acceptable to support Grade 9 learners in developing

career plans and choosing subjects. In the section to follow, the feasibility and acceptability of the self-directed CGP as a whole will be evaluated.

Career Guidance Project 2020 Feasibility and Acceptability

The mixed methods evaluation data from Grade 9 learners, LO teachers, and project team members identify the booklet as a feasible and acceptable career guidance and subject choice resource. On the other hand, despite the potential usefulness of the supplementary resources developed, the WiFi and data constraints the Grade 9 learners from resource-constrained settings face limit the accessibility of these resources. Thus, the supplementary resources in their current form and presentation are not yet the most feasible and acceptable replacement for the in-person workshops presented in previous iterations of the CGP.

The LO teachers, project volunteers, and project team members were asked to evaluate the adapted format of the CGP and provide recommendations for future iterations of the project. The quantitative data from the LO teachers survey indicate that the majority of the LO teachers did not express a preference and were inconclusive in their assessment of the adapted format of the project. In the open-ended response section of the LO teacher survey, the LO teachers requested a hybrid format of the CGP, whereby additional contact sessions are integrated into the current presentation of the self-directed CGP. The project team member interviewees similarly suggested implementing a hybrid format and presentation of the CGP going forward. Lastly, the project volunteers expressed a preference for integrating contact-based sessions back into the project once the COVID-19 pandemic becomes safer.

Moreover, one of the project team members mentioned that the Western Cape government has an after-school programme running in resource-constrained schools that focuses on social and academic skills. The idea the project team member has, is to incorporate the CGP workshops into the after-school programme. It is recommended that masters or honours students (Industrial Psychology and Psychology students) implement the CGP workshops as a form of community experience work.

In addition to the practical insights of the research findings, the mixed methods results have theoretical implications. In the sections to follow, the research findings will be interpreted within the research study's theoretical frameworks: Community-based participatory research and Linda Gottfredson's (1981; 2002) theory of circumscription and compromise in career development.

Contextualising the Results within the Community-Based Participatory Research Framework.

As outlined in Chapter 2, the CBPR approach argues that community members should be agentic partners in community interventions instead of mere recipients (Churchman et al., 2017; Lazarus et al., 2015). This approach requires the active involvement of community members in the planning, execution, and assessment of community interventions to promote the sustainability and long-term success thereof (Lazarus et al., 2015). The partnerships established with the LO teachers from the eight schools will be evaluated based on this study's research results and the information acquired from the ongoing CGP meetings.

The LO teachers were not directly involved in the planning phase of the 2020 iteration of the CGP. The project coordinator noted that before 2020, communication with the LO teachers was limited to the coordination of the implementation of the CGP. Thereby, the CGP team had not actively involved the LO teachers in the planning and development phases of the 2020 iteration of the CGP. However, as discussed, the continuous contact with the LO teachers throughout 2020 supported the development of a strong relationship and facilitated the greater involvement of the LO teachers in the planning process of the 2021 iteration of the CGP.

The implementation of the 2020 CGP was reliant on the cooperation of the LO teachers from the eight schools and was mostly successful. However, as previously discussed, the mixed methods evaluative feedback from the Grade 9 learners identified the need for additional support and guidance when working through the booklet, which informed the development of the LO teachers' facilitator's manual for the 2021 iteration of the CGP. Equipping the LO teachers with the knowledge and information to support the Grade 9 learners in their completion of the booklet has the potential to empower the LO teachers, and overall bolster the longevity and sustainability of the self-directed CGP (Churchman et al., 2017; Lazarus et al., 2015).

This study sought to include the LO teachers in the evaluative process of the 2020 iteration of the CGP. The quantitative and qualitative data collected from the LO teacher survey provided valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the 2020 CGP. In addition, the insights and contributions from the in-person meeting held with the LO teachers have been taken into consideration in the 2021 iteration of the CGP. Overall, the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated the development of a partnership between the CGP team and LO teachers. The greater involvement of the LO teachers in the planning, implementation, and assessment of the CGP fulfils the basic requirements of CBPR, and can thereby significantly

improve the sustainability of the intervention and overall feasibility and acceptability of the self-directed format of the CGP.

Contextualising Results within Gottfredson's Theory of Circumscription and Compromise

As detailed in Chapter 2, Linda Gottfredson's (1981; 2002) theory of circumscription and compromise in career development examines how non-psychological (social, class, intelligence, and sex) and psychological (personality) self-concepts play a decisive role in a person's career decision-making process developmentally. The participants in this study – Grade 9 learners, approximately 15 years of age – are going through the fourth stage of occupational development. In this stage, adolescents (aged fourteen and older) become more introspective, whereby they explore their values, competencies, and motivations. Consequently, adolescents begin to make career-related decisions based on their evaluations of their skills and abilities.

Self-Knowledge and Career-Related Decisions

This study's research findings indicate that the activities in the self-directed career guidance booklet facilitated an introspective process for the Grade 9 learners when contemplating their career plans and subject choices. The Grade 9 learner survey quantitative results show that the majority of the learners strongly agreed that they learnt something about themselves in the process of completing the booklet, and agreed that the information they gained about themselves caused them to think differently about their careers after they matriculated.

Similarly, the qualitative data revealed how the booklet promoted introspection. The Grade 9 learners identified the *My Career Flower* (Naidoo, 2011) as facilitative in a self-explorative process. Overall, the Grade 9 learners experienced the Career Flower as an important component of the booklet and accredited the self-knowledge gained from the Career Flower activities as supportive when making their career decisions and subject choices.

However, as noted in Chapter 4, some of the Grade 9 learners found it challenging to write about themselves and evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses. According to Gottfredson (1981; 2002), career compromises emanate from self-doubt in one's abilities and skills. Therefore, the sentiments expressed by the Grade 9 learners regarding their hesitance in writing about their personality and weaknesses may reside in self-doubt, which could lead to career compromises. However, it is important to note that this study did not collect data specifically measuring these variables.

Socio-Economic Status and Career Circumscriptions and Compromises

Gottfredson (1981; 2002) identified social class as a contributing factor to the career circumscription and compromises adolescents make. For instance, as adolescents become more conscious of their socio-economic status, they may develop career plans they perceive as socially attainable for people of their social class. Thus, circumscriptions of career plans involve limiting the variety of career choices adolescents perceive as attainable. Career compromises involve rejecting or reconsidering certain suitable career choices based on internalised social norms and values.

In South Africa, there is a stark inequality in access to quality education and career guidance services, which severely limits the career development and economic agency of underserved learners attending resource-constrained schools (Gumede & Biyase, 2016; Pillay et al., 2014). As previously discussed, Grade 9 subject choices can either stunt or promote learners' career development. Grade 9 learners from resource-constrained schools do not receive adequate career guidance and subject choice support, and thereby often haphazardly select their subjects for the remainder of their school career (Albien & Naidoo, 2017; Modiba & Sefotho, 2019).

Haphazardly selected and poorly informed subject choices can lead to poor academic performance (Maree, 2006), and overall limit learners' future career and study opportunities (Dabula & Makura, 2013; Maila & Ross, 2018). In addition, Grade 9 is the first secondary school exit point within the South African education system, and learners from resource-constrained schools are disproportionately likely to drop out of school as a result of financial challenges and seeking employment (Spaull, 2015). Thus, per Gottfredson's (1981; 2002) theory, factors associated with socio-economic status play a significant role in the career and study-related decisions adolescents make.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, socio-economic status further mediated the quality of education learners received (Pillay, 2021; Shepard & Mohohlwane, 2021). Both the LO teachers and project team members within this study identified the COVID-19 pandemic as contributing directly to the high rates of learner absenteeism and limiting in-person class time in 2020. Shepherd and Mohohlwane (2021) examined the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the South African education system in 2020 using the data collected from the National Income Dynamics Study – Coronavirus Rapid Mobile Survey. From the data collected, the researchers estimated that nationally at least one learner from approximately 10% of households, between the ages 7 to 17 years old, dropped out of school. This roughly translates to between 650 000 to 750 000 learners (aged 7 to 17 years old) not returning to

school by May 2021. Shepherd and Mohohlwane (2021) attributed the increased learner school attrition rates to the decline in the socio-economic status of South African households, as a result of periods of lost income during the National Lockdown restrictions. Moreover, the school attendance rates among this age cohort were estimated to be between 4 and 5% lower than the percentage pre-COVID-19.

In March 2020, subsequent to the announcement of the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic, South African schools were closed for a period of time. Throughout the year, South African schools faced multiple school closures and learners were required to work from home. In response, many resource-rich and private schools adopted an online learning approach as a new mode of learning. This approach, however, was only suited to privileged learners who had access to devices such as tablets, smartphones, and computers, with sufficient connectivity to WiFi or data (Mdepa, 2020). Statistics South Africa (2018) has estimated that only 10.6% of South African households have access to WiFi or data. Thus, a significant portion of South African learners could not continue their education virtually (Jamieson & van Blerk, 2021; Pillay, 2021). Consequently, the inequality in access to quality education was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic (Jansen & O'Ryan, 2020; Pillay, 2021). Based on their analysis, Shepherd and Mohohlwane (2021) estimate lost learning in resource-constrained schools to be between 50 and 75%, which corresponds with the sentiment expressed by a CGP team member whereby a Delft secondary school principal referred to the 2020 school year as merely "*window dressing*." For learners attending resource-constrained schools, the periods of school closure meant a complete loss of learning and this may have detrimental long-term implications for underserved learners' career development.

This research study did not specifically examine the relationship between learner absenteeism, dropout rates, and lost learning, and career circumscription or compromises made by the Grade 9 learners in the eight secondary schools. However, from LO teachers' and project team members' evaluative data collected and the insights researchers are contributing to the literature body regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (Jamieson & van Blerk, 2021; Pillay, 2021; Shepard & Mohohlwane, 2021), it is clear that the pandemic negatively affected the quality of education learners received, specifically those within resource-constrained settings. The poor quality of education, high learner absenteeism, lost learning time, and decline in household socio-economic status could lead to increased career circumscriptions and compromises made by learners (Gottfredson, 1981; 2002). For instance, learners may drop out of school to join the workforce to contribute to their family

income, or limit their career aspirations post-matric in response to increased family financial challenges.

The socio-economic challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic may have a long-term generational effect (Jamieson & van Blerk, 2021). Thus, the CGP providing learners in resource-constrained settings with career and study-related support and resources, and the knowledge and information on how to overcome environmental barriers becomes increasingly valuable. It is pertinent that the self-directed CGP is evaluated to be feasible and acceptable.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion, Limitations, and Recommendations

Introduction

The main research aim of this study was to evaluate the feasibility and acceptability of the self-directed CGP based on the mixed methods I evaluative data collected. In the final chapter, I will discuss the main quantitative and qualitative research objectives and quantitative hypotheses in the context of the study's results and findings to ascertain whether the study's research objectives and hypotheses have been satisfied. Thereafter, I will critically explore the limitations and practical and theoretical implications of the study. Lastly, based on this study's research findings, I will present recommendations for future research and the practical implications of the research results.

Quantitative and Qualitative Research Objectives and Hypotheses

Grade 9 Learners' Perceived Booklet Acceptability

This study sought to assess the Grade 9 learners' survey to perceptions of the acceptability of the self-directed career guidance booklet and the usefulness of the booklet in terms of making their subject choice and developing career plans. Both the qualitative and quantitative research findings satisfied the research study objectives. The Grade 9 learners' survey quantitative results satisfied the research hypotheses.

The Grade 9 learners' survey qualitative findings detailed how the self-directed career guidance booklet supported Grade 9 learners' career directionality, self-discovery, and overall subject choices. The learners specifically credited the *My Career Flower* (Naidoo, 2011) as a particularly useful resource in the booklet. Some learners did identify some challenges associated with booklet completion (the booklet instructions are unclear, the learners required more career and subject-related information, and additional support). However, the majority of the learners expressed that the booklet was clear and comprehensive. Overall, the Grade 9 learners' positive quantitative and qualitative evaluative feedback confirms the acceptability of the booklet.

LO Teachers' Evaluations of the Feasibility and Acceptability of the Self-Directed CGP

The research objectives set for the quantitative and qualitative data collected from the LO teacher survey was to ascertain the feasibility and acceptability of the self-directed CGP. The quantitative data collected from the LO teacher survey support the acceptability of the self-directed career guidance booklet, which satisfied the research hypothesis. The LO teachers positively evaluated the acceptability of the project website and resource kits.

However, the LO teachers negatively evaluated the acceptability of the video content. Hence, the quantitative hypothesis was not supported.

Congruent to the quantitative findings, the qualitative results reiterate the LO teachers' satisfaction with the booklet as a helpful resource to Grade 9 learners when making career plans and subject choices, and further identifying the booklet as complementary to the LO curriculum. The qualitative feedback identified the WiFi and data challenges the schools and learners face as limiting the accessibility of the video content, and thereby hindering the feasibility and acceptability of the video content as a supplementary resource. Furthermore, the LO teachers agreed that the self-directed format and presentation of the CGP is acceptable, but requested a hybrid implementation of the CGP in future iterations (self-directed booklet with complimentary in-person sessions).

Volunteers' Evaluations of the Feasibility and Acceptability of the Volunteer Work and Coordination

The volunteers' survey and semi-structured interviews sought to ascertain the feasibility and acceptability of the volunteers' responsibilities and the coordination of the volunteer work. The quantitative feedback from the volunteer survey confirmed that the volunteers enjoyed the volunteering experience and that they would volunteer for the project in the future. However, the volunteers indicated that their volunteer duties were time-consuming. Thus, the quantitative research hypothesis was not supported. Moreover, the volunteers positively evaluated the Coordination of the Volunteer Work, which satisfied the research hypothesis.

The qualitative results from the volunteers' survey and semi-structured interviews indicated the volunteers' enjoyment of the volunteer experience, investment in the project, and desire for greater involvement in the CGP. The main challenge identified was developing video content using the video development software programme, PowToons. The volunteers indicated that the lack of instructions resulted in the video development process becoming incredibly time-consuming. Furthermore, the volunteers reiterated the project coordinator's efficiency and competence in coordinating the volunteer work. Overall, the volunteers positively evaluated the volunteer work and coordination process. However, the challenges some of the volunteers faced in navigating the PowToons programme affected their evaluations of the feasibility and acceptability of the volunteering process.

Project Team Members' Evaluations of the Feasibility and Acceptability of the Self-Directed CGP

The semi-structured interviews conducted with four project team members sought to gauge the project team's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the thought processes involved in developing the adapted CGP, insights into the implementation of the project, and overall evaluations of the self-directed CGP. The COVID-19 pandemic posed a significant obstacle to which the project team had to adapt, which led to the development of the self-directed career guidance booklet and supplementary resources. Upon reflection, the project team agreed that the self-directed booklet is a feasible and acceptable career guidance and subject choice resource for Grade 9 learners. In the 2021 iteration of the CGP, the project team aims to make minor adjustments to the booklet in compliance with the LO teachers' and Grade 9 learners' evaluative feedback (as detailed in Chapter 5). The project team acknowledges that the supplementary resources in their current form and implementation are not effectively utilised by the Grade 9 learners. Thus, the supplementary resources are not feasible and acceptable as yet. However, the project team has begun to strategize to improve the format and accessibility of the supplementary resources. Furthermore, the majority of the project team member interviewees agree that a hybrid format and implementation of the CGP moving forward is a feasible and acceptable strategy.

Limitations and Implications

Limitations

There are several limitations to the study to be noted. First, only limited feedback was received from the schools' principals, with only one of the eight principals in the sampling frame providing feedback. Given their central role at the eight schools, their feedback is necessary to provide insight into the feasibility and acceptability of the coordination of the implementation of the CGP in 2020 and onwards. My supervisors and I recognised the immense pressure school principals were under in managing the significant challenges introduced by the COVID-19 pandemic, and thereby for many completing a survey was not a priority. Overall, the project team members' and LO teachers' insights provided sufficient information regarding the implementation process. Moreover, the LO teachers' direct contact with the Grade 9 learners was valuable to gain insight into the feasibility and acceptability of the 2020 iteration of the CGP.

Second, standardised measures such as the Career Adaptability Scale, Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale, South African Career Interest Inventory, or Career Maturity Scale as used in South African and International Career Guidance Intervention studies were

not included in the scope of this research study to determine effectiveness of the CGP. These scales could have identified a causal relationship between the self-directed CGP and associated career development attributes, and should be considered in a post-COVID-19 context.

From the Grade 9 learners' quantitative data, the learners positively evaluated the self-directed career guidance booklet's Perceived Impact on Career Preparedness (M = 17.11) out of 20. In addition, from the qualitative data, the learners credited the self-directed career guidance booklet as supportive in providing career directionality and helpful when making subject choices. However, the implementation of standardised career development scales would enable the research to directly measure the efficacy of the booklet in accordance with standardised career development measures. Consequently, the research results could have been interpreted in relation to International and South African career guidance intervention findings. Moreover, in previous iterations of the CGP, the South African Career Interest Inventory and Career Maturity Scale were integrated into the data collection strategies. Had this study implemented these measures, the results could be interpreted in relation to the findings from previous iterations of the CGP and compared, to analyse the career development outcomes from different approaches to the format and implementation of the CGP.

Third, in the initial iterations of the study research proposal, the intention was to conduct focus group interviews with the Grade 9 learners and semi-structured interviews with the LO teachers and school principals. However, the researcher's co-supervisor raised an important concern regarding recall bias among the Grade 9 learners, LO teachers, and school principals, as the focus groups and semi-structured interviews would have taken place 6 months after the implementation of the CGP. The researcher's co-supervisor indicated that the qualitative data collected from the Grade 9 learners' and LO teachers' evaluative surveys would be sufficient, and recommended including the project team members and project volunteers in the semi-structured interview process. Thus, the research scope was amended to semi-structured interviews with the project volunteers and project team members. This approach had certain limitations. The project team members' direct involvement and investment in the CGP were likely to introduce some bias in their evaluations of the project. However, it must be noted that the weaknesses identified by the project team members were reiterated by the LO teachers. Thus, their bias was deemed to be of insignificant value in the overall findings.

During the initial recruitment process of the project team members for the semi-structured interviews, the sampling frame excluded the researcher's supervisor and co-supervisor (both are directly involved in the CGP team). However, after three rounds of invitations, only two project team members participated in the interviews and data saturation had not yet been attained. As a consequence of the COVID-19 circumstances, some project team members were less involved than others. This contributed to their reticence to be interviewed. Therefore, the research protocol was amended to include the researcher's supervisor and co-supervisor in the sample frame. The researcher was cognisant of both supervisors' bias regarding their knowledge of the research study's parameters and semi-structured interview schedule. However, the research study was evaluative in nature and required the project team members' reflections on the 2020 iteration of the CGP. Thus, their extensive knowledge outweighed the potential effects of their bias, and thus was not assessed as a significant concern. Moreover, their valuable insights enabled the attainment of data saturation and added valuable contextual information about the adaptations to the project.

On the other hand, the project volunteers that took part in the semi-structured interviews comprised Psychology and Industrial Psychology students, which could introduce some hesitance to criticise the coordination of the volunteer work and, specifically, the project coordinator's role. Notwithstanding, the volunteers provided constructive feedback regarding the coordination of the volunteer work and overall volunteering experience.

Lastly, the research study sought to evaluate the feasibility and acceptability of the self-directed CGP, booklet, and supplementary resources. However, the data collected only captured the LO teachers', project team members', and project volunteers' reflections on the development and implementation of the supplementary resources. Feedback on the acceptability of the supplementary resources was not obtained from the Grade 9 learners (target population) and thus, the data collected did not sufficiently allow for the exploration of the feasibility and acceptability of the supplementary resources developed.

Implications

Despite the limitations identified, the research study findings enhance the current understanding of the functionality of the self-directed CGP. In addition, the research provides extensive knowledge regarding the feasibility and acceptability of the implementation of a self-directed career guidance intervention in a resource-constrained setting. For instance, the research results are relevant to the existing body of literature pertaining to career guidance interventions and brings a unique perspective regarding the feasibility and acceptability of a

self-directed career guidance approach, as most of the research studies discussed implemented a group contact-based intervention.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative data enabled generalised and in-depth reflection of the self-directed CGP (implementation, development, and resources generated). The Grade 9 learners' and LO teachers' perspectives were integral in identifying to what extent the self-directed CGP fulfilled its social justice imperative of providing underserved learners with adequate career guidance and subject choice support. The insights of the project team members, volunteers and LO teachers significantly increased the understanding of the feasibility and acceptability of the CGP development and implementation processes. Overall, the research participants' evaluations of the project were integral to investigating the feasibility and acceptability of the self-directed CGP.

In addition to the evaluative contributions of the mixed methods results, the research findings provided theoretical insights, specifically, within Linda Gottfredson's (1981; 2002) theory of circumscription and compromise in career development. Gottfredson explored the role socio-economic status plays in adolescents' career choices and the potential career circumscription and compromises they make. The research study's findings identified that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the eight resource-constrained schools faced high rates of learner absenteeism and lost significant learning time, which could have long-term negative implications for learners' career development. In congruence, researchers have identified how the challenges resource-constrained schools faced during the COVID-19 pandemic have exacerbated the inequality in access to quality education and adequate career guidance services (Pillay, 2021; Shepard & Mohohlwane, 2021). The clear evidence of the severe impact the COVID-19 pandemic had on the accessibility to quality education further necessitates the success and functionality of the self-directed CGP to support the career development of underserved learners.

Lastly, the research study confirmed the feasibility and acceptability of the self-directed CGP implemented amid a global COVID-19 pandemic and the insights have begun to inform the development and implementation of the 2021 iteration of the CGP. Overall, the research results provide insight into what can be accomplished during a pandemic. Furthermore, the knowledge and insights have important implications for career guidance research, specifically within resource-constrained settings across the continent with limited access to career guidance services and information. This study illustrates that it is feasible and acceptable to implement a non-contact-based career guidance intervention in a context whereby in-person counselling is a challenge or limited.

Recommendations

Per the research study limitations identified, it is recommended that future research incorporate standardised career development measures such as the South African Career Interest Inventory or Career Maturity Scale, in an experimental design. These measures could allow for an evaluation of the efficacy of the CGP, as well as enable comparisons to be made with the previous iterations of the CGP. Following the 2021 iteration of the CGP, it is recommended to schedule focus group discussions with Grade 9 learners and semi-structured interviews with the LO teachers for November and December 2021. The focus-group discussions and semi-structured interviews can provide in-depth narratives regarding the Grade 9 learners' and LO teachers' experiences of the CGP and generalised reflections regarding the career planning and subject choice process. In recognition of the recruitment challenges faced with the school principals, it is recommended to integrate a portion of the school principal survey measures into the LO teacher survey. Furthermore, it is recommended to incorporate questions regarding the supplementary resources in the Grade 9 survey to measure the learners' insights about these resources in future evaluations. Future research can specifically assess the extent to which supplementary resources can effectively support the career plans and subject choices Grade 9 learners make.

Conclusion

The pervasive legacy of the apartheid regime, limitations of the LO curriculum, and continued systemic challenges faced by resource-constrained schools perpetuate the unequal access to career guidance services and quality education in South Africa (Albien & Naidoo, 2017; Modiba & Sefotho, 2019; Pillay et al., 2014; Smit et al., 2015; Spaull, 2015; Watson, 2010). The CGP was developed to redress this social injustice and support the career development of underserved South African learners (Naidoo et al., 2019; Rabie et al., 2021). In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic introduced significant challenges to the continuation of the CGP, to which the project team adapted and developed the self-directed CGP. This research study sought to evaluate the feasibility and acceptability of the self-directed CGP to support the success and sustainability of future iterations of the project.

In conclusion, the feasibility and acceptability of the self-directed booklet were confirmed in the Grade 9 learners' (n = 436), LO teachers' (n = 11), and project team members' (n = 4) mixed methods findings. However, the LO teachers' (n = 11) and project team members' (n = 4) quantitative and qualitative results identified that learners' and schools' inaccessibility to WiFi and data hinders the feasibility and acceptability of the current form and implementation of the supplementary resources.

The LO teachers' (n = 11), project volunteers' (n = 7), and project team members' (n = 4) evaluations of the self-directed format of the CGP varied slightly. However, the majority consensus indicates that a hybrid format and implementation of the CGP is the best way forward, slowly incorporating more contact sessions with the learners as it becomes safer to do so. The survey data and semi-structured interview data collected from the project volunteers indicate the necessity of improving the instructions regarding video development, specifically in terms of navigating the PowToons programme, to support the feasibility and acceptability of the volunteering experience.

In conclusion, the constructive feedback obtained from the Grade 9 learners, LO teachers, project volunteers, and project team members in this research study will be integrated into the planning, development, and implementation processes of the 2021 iteration of the CGP to support the efficacy of the project. Moreover, the research findings contribute to the current knowledge and understanding regarding the feasibility and acceptability of the implementation of a career guidance intervention in resource-constrained settings with the intention of bolstering underserved learners' proactive career development and planning.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Parent or Caregiver Consent and Assent Form

Afrikaans

UNIVERSITEIT•STELLENBOSCH•UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvennoot • your knowledge partner

UNIVERSITEIT STELLENBOSCH

TOESTEMMING VIR DEELNAME AAN ONDERSOEK

Investigating gender and racial differences on the South African Career Interest Inventory among secondary school students

Geagte voog,

Ons vra jou toestemming om jou kind toe te laat om deel te neem aan 'n navorsingstudie uitgevoer met Graad 9 studente by hoërskole in die groter Stellenbosch-omgewing. Die studie sal ook vir jou kind bied, deur hom/haar te help met hul loopbaan besluite en vakkeuses en sal help om toekomstige loopbaan voorligtingsprogramme vir Suid-Afrikaanse studente te ontwikkel. Jou kind is gekies as 'n moontlike deelnemer aan hierdie studie omdat hy/sy manlik of vroulike en `n Graad 9 hoërskool-student is.

1. DOEL VAN DIE STUDIE

Die doel van hierdie studie is om taalverskille op die South African Career Interest Inventory (SACII) onder Graad 9 hoërskool leerder in die Wes-Kaapse Wynland Distrik van Suid-Afrika te ondersoek. Die SACII is 'n vraelys wat bestaan uit 'n lys van 143 aktiwiteite wat uitgevoer word in verskillende beroepe en dit word gebruik om jou loopbaan belangstellings te bepaal. Verder is daar ook ten doel gestel om te bepaal of die SACII kan gebruik word as `n beroepsvoorligtingsinstrument vir skool leerder – om ten einde leerder te help met hulle vakkeuses.

2. PROSEDURES

As jy toestemming verleen vir jou kind om vrywillig deel te neem aan hierdie studie, sal ons haar/hom vra om die volgende te doen:

'n Demografiese vraelys voltooi:

Die demografiese vraelys bestaan uit vrae wat verband hou met ouderdom, geslag, etnisiteit en die huistaal van jou kind. Die doel van hierdie vraelys is om die biografiese en demografiese kenmerke van die steekproef van hierdie studie te

vestig. Hierdie inligting sal vertroulik en heeltemal anoniem gehou word nie - slegs die primêre navorser en die studieleier sal toegang tot hierdie inligting te hê.
'n Papier-en-potlood weergawe van die SACII voltooi:

Deelnemers sal gevra word om al die items op die SACII tydens `n klasperiode by die skool te voltooi. Die SACII is ontwikkel om 'n individu se loopbaan belangstellings te meet. Die items op die SACII word as stellings voorgestel waarop die deelnemers hul ooreenkoms of meningsverskil op 'n skaal sal aandui, wat wissel van (1) stem glad nie saam nie tot (5) stem ten volle saam. Die deelnemers se antwoorde op hierdie items sal vertroulik en anoniem behandel word en gestoor word op 'n wagwoord-beskermde rekenaar. Deelnemers aan hierdie studie sal gevra word om al die items op die SACII te voltooi tydens klas. Die SACII is ontwikkel om die loopbaan waarin u kind belangstel, te meet. Die items op die SACII word aangebied as stellings waaraan die deelnemers hul ooreenkoms of meningsverskil sal aandui op 'n 5-punt Likert-tipe skaal, wat wissel van (1) sterk verskil om (5) sterk saam te stem. Die deelnemers se antwoorde op hierdie items sal vertroulik gehou word en beskerm word op 'n wagwoord beskermde rekenaar. Ons sal dan na jou kind se antwoorde kyk sodat ons u terugvoering kan gee oor watter beroepe jou kind belangstel. Daarna sal jou kind deelneem aan 'n loopbaanwerkswinkel, waar loopbaanbelangstelling ondersoek en geïdentifiseer sal word, hierdie beroepskenmerke koppel aan vakkeuse by die skool, asook die loopbaanuitdagings wat jou kind in sy/haar konteks ervaar te bespreek.

1. POTENSIËLE RISIKO'S EN ONGEMAKLIKHEDE

Hierdie studie stel die deelnemers bloot aan minimale tot geen risiko, aangesien die inhoud wat behandel sal word, nie indringend of skadelik is nie. Die response van die deelnemers is totaal vrywillig en hulle is onder geen verpligting om enige vraag waarmee hulle ongemaklik voel te beantwoord nie.

2. POTENSIËLE VOORDELE VIR DEELNEMERS EN/OF VIR DIE SAMELEWING

Die deelnemers sal nie geldelike voordeel verkry uit deelname nie. Deelname in hierdie studie sal egter bydra tot die gelyke toepaslikheid van die SACII oor verskillende taalgroepe in Suid-Afrika. Verder sal hierdie studie bydra tot 'n psigometriese instrument wat die spesifieke belange van Suid-Afrikaners kan meet, asook die deelnemers blootstel aan die verskillende beroepskeuses wat aan hulle beskikbaar is.

3. BETALING VIR DEELNAME

Deelname is heeltemal vrywillig en geen betaling sal vir deelname aangebied word nie.

4. VERTROULIKHEID

Enige inligting wat verkry word in verband met hierdie studie of wat geïdentifiseer kan word met die deelnemers sal vertroulik bly en sal slegs bekend gemaak word op gronde van jou toestemming of as dit wettig vereis word. Vertroulikheid sal gehandhaaf word deur die data op 'n wagwoord-beskermde rekenaar te stoor, waartoe slegs die navorser en die studieleier toegang sal hê.

5. DEELNAME EN ONTTREKKING

Jou kind het `n keuse om deel te neem aan hierdie studie of nie. Indien jy toestemming verleen vir jou kind om vrywillig deel te neem, mag hy/sy enige tyd sonder enige gevolge onttrek. Jou kind kan ook weier om enige vrae te beantwoord, maar sal steeds toe gelaat word om deel neem aan hierdie studie. Die ondersoeker kan jou kind te onttrek van hierdie navorsing indien omstandighede ontstaan wat dit noodsaaklik maak.

6. IDENTIFISERING VAN ONDERSOEKSPAN

Indien u enige vrae of kommentaar oor die navorsing het, skakel gerus die studieleier (die persoon wat verseker dat alle navorsing korrek gedoen word) of die primêre navorser:

Professor Anthony Naidoo
Departement Sielkunde
Universiteit Stellenbosch
(021) 808 3461 / avnaidoo@sun.ac.za

7. REGTE VAN DEELNEMERS

Jou kind mag jou/sy/haar toestemming terugtrek enige tyd en deelname staak sonder enige benadeling. As jy enige vrae het oor die regte van jou kind as 'n deelnemer, kontak Me Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] by die Afdeling Navorsingsontwikkeling.

HANDTEKENING VAN NAVORSINGSDEELNEMER OF REGSVERTEENWOORDIGER

Die inligting hierbo is aan die deelnemer beskryf in Afrikaans en die deelnemer is bevoeg in hierdie taal of dit is bevredigend vertaal aan hom/haar. Die deelnemer is die geleentheid gebied om vrae te vra en die vrae is beantwoord tot sy/haar bevrediging.

_____

Deelnemer se voog

_____

Naam van regsverteenwoordiger (indien van toepassing)

_____

_____

Handtekening van deelnemer of regsverteenwoordiger **Datum**

HANTEKENING VAN NAVORSINGSDEELNEMER OF REGSVERTEENWOORDIGER

Ek verklaar dat ek die inligting wat in hierdie dokument is verduidelik het aan _____[naam van die deelnemer] en/of [sy/haar] verteenwoordiger _____ [naam van die verteenwoordiger]. [Hy/sy] is aangemoedig en genoeg tyd gegee om my enige vrae te vra. Hierdie inligting is in [Afrikaans / * Engels / * Xhosa / * Ander] verduidelik of [geen vertaler is gebruik / hierdie gesprek is in _____ vertaal deur _____].

_____ _____

Handtekening van ondersoeker Datum

English/isiXhosa

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CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

A comparison of the Afrikaans, English, and Isixhosa versions of the South African Career Interest Inventory among university students and high school learners

Dear caregiver, / Mzali obekekileyo,

We ask your permission to allow your child to participate in a research study conducted with grade 9 students at high schools in the greater Stellenbosch area. The study will also have benefits for your child in helping him/her with their career decisions and will help develop future career guidance programmes in Kayamandi. Your child was selected as a possible participant in this study because she/he is a male or female, grade 9 high school student.

Ndicela imvume yokuba umntana wakho athabathe inxaxheba kwisifundo esisebenzisa abafundi be bakala le-9 kwezikolo zaseStellenbosch ngobubanzi. Esisifundo siyokumnceda umntwana wakho ekuthabatheni isigqibo malunga nobomi bemfundo okanye bomsebenzi wakhe kwaye, singanceda kubekho nezinye izifundo ezilandelayo ezizakuthi zibancede abafundi.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY/ ISIZATHU SOLUPHANDO

The aim of this study is to investigate language differences on the South African Career Interest Inventory (SACII) among first year university students and Grade 9 high school students in the Western Cape Winelands District of South Africa. The SACII is a questionnaire that consists of a list of 143 activities that are performed in different jobs and it is used to determine your career interests.

Owona mxholowolo wesisifundi kukuphanda ngeyantlukwano zobuni nobuhlanga kwi- South African Career Interest Inventory (SACII) kubafundi bebakala le-9 kwizikolo eziphakamileyo zeNtshona Koloni. I-SACII liphetshana lemibuzo elinemibuzo elinemibuzo eliquka izenzo engama 143 ezenziwa kwimisebenzi eyahlukileyo kwaye isetyenziselwa ukwazi ukuba ithini iminqweno yakho yomsebenzi.

2. PROCEDURES/ INKQUBO

If you provide consent for your child to volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask her/him to do the following:

Ukuba uyavuma ukuba umntwana wakho athabathe inxaxheba koluphando, siyakuncela ukuba enze oku kulandelayo:

Complete a biographical questionnaire/ Aphendule imibuzo echaza ngobuyena

The biographical questionnaire consists of questions related to your child's age, gender, ethnicity, home language, and school grade. The purpose of this questionnaire is to establish the biographic and demographic characteristics of the sample of this study. This information will be kept confidential and completely anonymous – only the primary researcher will have access to this information.

Imibuzo echaza ngobuyena yimibuzo enento yokwenza neminyaka yobudala, ubuni, uhlanga kunye nolwimi lomntwana. Isizathu salemibuzo kukwazi ubuni nemvelaphi yabantu abathabatha inxaheba koluphando. Lenkcukacha iyakukhuselwa kwaye ibeyimfihlo – ayakukwaziwa ngumphandi kwakunye nomphathi wakhe kuphela.

Complete a paper-and-pencil version of the SACII/ Aphendule imibuzo kwiphepha ngepensile.

Participants will be asked to complete all the items on the SACII during class. The SACII was developed to measure the career your child is interested in. The items on the SACII are presented as statements to which the participants will indicate their agreement or disagreement on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from *(1) strongly disagree* to *(5) strongly agree.* The participants' responses to these items will be kept confidential and safeguarded on a password-protected computer. We will then look at your child's answers so that we can give him/her feedback on what career they are interested in. After this, your child will take part in a career workshop, where he/she will explore and identify their career interest, link these career attributes to their choice of secondary school subjects, and engage with the career barriers they encounter in their contexts

Abathabathi nxaxheba baya kucelwa ukuba baphendule yonke imibuzo ye SACII ngexesha lezifundo eklasini. I-SACII yacetya ukuqinisekisa ulwakhiwo lomdla womntu malunga nemisebenzi. Le-SACII yakhiwe ngendlela yokuba iziintetho ezithile ayakuthi umfundi aphendule ukuba uyavumelana na okanye akavumelani nazo, apho ayakuthi akhethe inani ukusuka ku-*1 Andivumelani kwaphela* ukuya ku-*5 Ndivumelana ngokugqibeleleyo.* Iimpendulo zabathabathi nxaxheba ziyakukhuselwa zibeyimfihlo zigcinwe kwigumbi elivulwa ngamanani ayimfihlo.
Emva koko, siza kujonga iimpendulo zomntwana wakho ukuze sikwazi ukumnika ingxelo yakhe kwinqanaba elithandayo. Emva koko, umntwana wakho uya kuthatha inxaxheba kwiworkshop yomsebenzi, apho uya kuhlolisisa kwaye achaze umdla wabo wemisebenzi, ukudibanisa le miba yenkqubela ekukhethweni kwezikolo eziziisekondari, kwaye zibandakanye nemingcipheko yomsebenzi abahlangabezana nayo kwiimeko zabo

3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS/ IZINTO EZINGABUBUNGOZI OKANYE ZINGATHANDEKI

This study poses minimal risk to the participants, seeing that the content which will be discussed is not intrusive or harmful. Participants' responses are completely voluntary and they are under no obligation to answer any question with which they feel uncomfortable.
Kuba oluphando lungesosiphazamiso kwaye lungabeki mfundi mngciphekweni, alunabungozi lunabo. Inxakheba yomfundi ngamnye iyintando yakho ngokugqibeleleyo kwaye abanyanzelekanga ukuba baphendule imibuzo abangayithendiyo okanyi abangakwaziyo ukuyiphendula.

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY/ IGALELO ELINALO KUBAFUNDI NASEKUHLALENI

The parti will not benefit monetarily from participation. However, this study will contribute to the equal applicability of the SACII across different gender and racial groups in South Africa. Furthermore, this study will contribute to provide a psychometrically sound instrument to measure the specific interests of South Africans.

Abathabathi nxaxheba abayi kufumana mali koluphando. Kodwa, oluphandoluyakunceda ukusetyenziswa kwe-SACII ukufumanisa iiyantlukwano zobuni nobuhlanga mbombo zone zoMzantsi Afrika

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION/ UBHATALO LWABATHABATHI NXAXHEBA

Participation is completely voluntary and no payment for participation will be offered.
Abathabathi nxaxheba bathabatha inxaxheba mahala nangokuthanda kwabo kwaye abayi kubhatalwa ngexaxheba yabo
.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY/IMFIHLELO

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of keeping the data in a password protected document that only the researchers will have access to
Yinke ingcombolo nenkcukacha efumaneka koluphando nemalunganawe iyakuba yimfihlo kwaye iyakubhentswa xa uthe wavuma okanye umthetho wavuma ukuba ibhentsiswe.

7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL/ UKUTHABATHA INXAXHEBA NOKUYEKA

Your child can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you provide consent for your child to volunteer to be in this study, she/he may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. Your child may also refuse to answer any questions they don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw your child from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

Umntwana wakho angavuama okanye angavumi ukuthabatha inxaxheba kwesisifundo. Ukuba wena mzali uyavuma ukuba athabathe inxaxheba, angangavumi yena okanye ayeke nanini na efuna kungekho sinyanzeliso. Umntana uvumelekile ukungavumi ukuphendula imibuzo angafuni kuyiohendula kodwa aqhubekeke noluphando. Umphandi angamkhupha umntwana koluphando xa efumanisa kunyanzelekile ukuba enze njalo.

8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS/ IINKCUKACHA ZABAPHANDI

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact the research supervisor (the person who oversees that all research is conducted correctly):
Ukuba unemibuzo onayo malunga noluphando unganxibelelana nomphathi womphandi (umntu oqinisekisa ukuba uphando lwenziwa ngendlela eyiyo):

Professor Anthony Naidoo
Department of Psychology
Stellenbosch University
(021) 808 3461 / avnaidoo@sun.ac.za

9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS/ AMALUNGELO ABATHABATHI NXAXHEBA

Your child may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. Your child is not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of her/his participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your child's rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.
Umntwana angayeka nanini na ukuthabatha inxaxheba kungekho sohlwayo. Umntwana wakho akaphulukani namalungelo ache ngokuthabatha inxaxhela koluphando. Ukuba unemibuzo onayo malunga namalungelo omntwana wakho ngokuthabatha inxaxheba kuphando unganxibelelana noMs Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] kwi Division for Research Development.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE/ Umtyikityo womthathi nxaxheba okanye u meli womthetho.

The information above was described to the participant by a researcher in English/isiXhosa and the participant is in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to him/her. The participant was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to his/her satisfaction.
Ndonelisekile, nma mzali, nge ngecukacha endizinikiweyo kweliphepha ngaso isi ngesi nesixhosa kwaye ithe yatolikwa k a k u hle . N diy a q o n d a u k u b a ik h o n a imib u z o e n din a y o , n din a k o u k u b a n diq h a k a m s h ela n e n o m p h a n di k w a y e imib u z o y a m iyakuphendulwa ngokupheleleyo

Name of Subject/Participant / Igama lomthabathi nxaxheba

_____

Name of Legal Representative (if applicable) Igama lommeli mthetho

_____ _____

Signature of Subject/Participant or Legal Representative **Date**

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR/ Umtyikityo womphandi

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to _____ [*name of the subject/participant]* and/or [his/her] representative _____ [*name of the representative]. [H*e/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in [*Afrikaans/*English/*Xhosa/*Other*] and [*no translator was used/this conversation was translated into* _____ by _____].

Ndiyavuma ukuba ezincukacha zicaciswe kakuhle kum_____ [Igama lomthathi nxaxheba] kwakunye/okanye

Um-meli wakhe _____ [ig a m a lo m m eli] . U y e w a k h u t h a z w a k w a y e w a nik w a ix e s h a ela n ele y o lokundibuza iimibuzo

_____ _____

Signature of Investigator/ **Date**

Umtyikityo womphandi

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

Dear Sir/Ma'am,

My name is Chantel Streicher, an honours student at Stellenbosch University's Department of Psychology. would like to invite you to take part in a survey regarding your involvement and overall perception of Grade 9 Career Guidance Project implemented in 2020. Your feedback will provide important pointers to improve the Grade 9 Career Guidance Project for 2021 and beyond

Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this projec

The purpose of this survey is to gain your perceptions of strengths and weaknesses of the Grade 9 Career Guidance Project, in order to identify aspects of the project to be improved for 2021 and beyond.

The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete and will contain a combination of questions regarding your opinion of the the various aspects of the Grade 9 Career Guidance Project.

Your response to the survey will remain anonymous, and the confidentiality of your data collected from the survey will be maintained by being stored on a password protected computer, that only the researchers involved in the survey will have access to. Please feel comfortable to answer each question truthfully and honestly.

Your participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to decline to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You have the right to decline to answer any questions and yo can exit the survey at any time without giving a reason. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact Mrs Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

If you have any questions or concerns about the survey, please feel free to contact Chantel Streicher, 20688520@sun.ac.za, or Professor Naidoo, avnaidoo@sun.ac.za.

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information provided for the survey.

   Mark only one oval.

   - ◯ Yes
   - ◯ No

2. I agree to take part in this survey.

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

Appendix C

Project Team Member Semi-Structured Interview Invitation

Dear [Participant Name and Surname],

I hope this e-mail finds you well.

You are invited to participate in this mixed methods research study on the feasibility and acceptability of the self-directed Career Guidance Project, conducted by myself, Chantél Streicher, a research master's student in the Department of Psychology (under the supervision of Professor Anthony V Naidoo and Dr Stephan Rabie).

You have been selected as a potential participant because of your involvement in the adaptation of the Career Guidance Project into the self-directed format in response to the unforeseen circumstances brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Your participation in this research study will make a valuable contribution to the evaluation of the feasibility and acceptability of the self-directed Career Guidance Project.

To participate in this research study, you are invited to participate in a semi-structured interview conducted by myself. You will be asked to reflect on your involvement in the process of adapting the format and presentation of the project, and the implementation of the project at the eight schools. The interview process should take more or less 35 minutes. Please note that should you feel uncomfortable answering any question that you are free to withdraw at any point throughout the interview. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and the information you provide in the interview will remain anonymous and confidential.

The interviews will take place virtually, using a platform of your choice (Skype, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or WhatsApp call) during the week (Monday to Friday, anytime between 8am to 5pm). To ascertain your data requirements, I ask that you please complete this survey https://forms.gle/oWrErS7aKbxLMF677. In addition, an informed consent form is attached in this e-mail, that will delineate the terms and conditions of your potential participation in the study.

If you agree to participate, please attach your completed informed consent form in your reply and indicate a date and time, in the month of May, that will suit you to schedule the interview. You will receive a reminder e-mail of the interview the day before.

Kind regards,

Chantél Streicher

Appendix D

Project Volunteer Semi-Structured Interview Invitation

Dear [Participant Name and Surname],

I hope this e-mail finds you well.

You are invited to participate in this mixed methods research study on the feasibility and acceptability of the self-directed Career Guidance Project, conducted by myself, Chantél Streicher, a research master's student in the Department of Psychology (under the supervision of Professor Anthony V Naidoo and Dr Stephan Rabie).

You have been selected as a potential participant because of your contribution as a volunteer to the implementation of the Career Guidance Project in 2020. Your participation in this research study will make a valuable contribution to the evaluation of the feasibility and acceptability of the self-directed Career Guidance Project.

To participate in this research study, you are invited to participate in a semi-structured interview conducted by myself. You will be asked to reflect on your volunteer experience for the project and provide feedback on the coordination of your volunteering duties. The interview process should take more or less 35 minutes. Please note that should you feel uncomfortable answering any question that you are free to withdraw at any point throughout the interview. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and the information you provide in the interview will remain anonymous and confidential.

The interviews will take place virtually, using a platform of your choice (Skype, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or WhatsApp call) during the week (Monday to Friday, anytime between 8am to 5pm). To ascertain your data requirements, I ask that you please complete this survey, https://forms.gle/TWhdfrdrVMUqPMxTA. In addition, an informed consent form is attached in this e-mail, that will delineate the terms and conditions of your potential participation in the study.

If you agree to participate, please attach your completed informed consent form in your reply and indicate a date and time, in the month of May, that will suit you to schedule the interview. You will receive a reminder e-mail of the interview the day before.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Chantél Streicher

Appendix E

Project Team Members and Volunteers Informed Consent Form

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You are invited to take part in a study conducted by Chantél Streicher, from the Department of Psychology at Stellenbosch University. You were approached as a possible participant because of your support and involvement in the Grade 9 Career Guidance Project in 2020.

10. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The successful implementation of the Grade 9 Career Guidance Project in 2020 could not have occurred without your hard work and dedication to the project. We express our deep gratitude for your dedication to the project among the COVID-19 challenges of the past year. Your participation in this interview will provide a valuable perspective for the funders of the project and will help to improve the project for the future.

11. WHAT WILL BE ASKED OF ME?

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to participate in a single interview conducted by Chantél Streicher. The purpose is to engage with you in a discussion regarding the involvement and contribution to the Grade 9 Career Guidance booklet and project, and the implementation thereof. Specifically, regarding your involvement in the changes and adaptations made to the format and implementation of the project in response to the challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. The interview will take place over a Zoom or Microsoft Teams meeting, at a time most convenient for you.

12. POSSIBLE BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO THE SOCIETY

Your feedback and perspective on the Grade 9 Career Guidance Project are of great value to ensure the project fulfils its objectives. Moreover, your feedback will help identify whether any changes can be made to improve the project for the future.

13. PROTECTION OF YOUR INFORMATION, CONFIDENTIALITY AND IDENTITY

The data collected from this interview will be used in a research master's thesis in 2021. Any information you share with me during this study and that could identify you as a participant will be protected. This will be done by using a code label for the data collected from your interview. Your name or any identifying information will not be mentioned in the research master's thesis. Moreover, the recording of this interview will be stored on a password-protected computer to which only the researchers involved in the study have access. Once the research masters has been completed, the interview recordings will be permanently erased.

14. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you agree to take part in this study, you may withdraw at any time without any consequence. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and remain in the study. The researcher may withdraw you from this study if deemed necessary by the researcher.

15. RESEARCHERS' CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact Chantél Streicher at 20688520@sun.ac.za, and/or the supervisor Professor Naidoo, at avnaidoo@sun.ac.za

16. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

DECLARATION OF CONSENT BY THE PARTICIPANT

As the participant I confirm that:

- I have read the above information and it is written in a language that I am comfortable with.
- I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been answered.
- All issues related to privacy, and the confidentiality and use of the information I provide, have been explained.

By signing below, I _____ *(name of participant)* agree to take part in this research study, as conducted by Chantél Streicher.

_____ _____

Signature of Participant **Date**

DECLARATION BY THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

As the **principal investigator,** I hereby declare that the information contained in this document has been thoroughly explained to the participant. I also declare that the participant has been encouraged (and has been given ample time) to ask any questions. In addition, I would like to select the following option:

	The conversation with the participant was conducted in a language in which the participant is fluent.
	The conversation with the participant was conducted with the assistance of a translator (who has signed a non-disclosure agreement), and this "Consent Form" is available to the participant in a language in which the participant is fluent.

_____ _____

Signature of Principal Investigator **Date**

Appendix F

Self-Directed Booklet Contents

Chapter	Title	Summary
1	Purpose of the Booklet	Outlines the importance of Grade 9 subject choices and how they affect your career path. Explains how the booklet is designed to provide subject choice support and career guidance. Objectives outlined: To help you think about your personal career plans, help you make good career choices based on your personal strengths, interests, opportunities, and abilities, and help you draft suitable action plans based on your career plan.
2	My Career Flower	The Career Flower is introduced, and it is explained that the activities in the booklet relate to the petals of the Career Flower.
3	Self-Assessment	The section entails activities related to the learner's interests and special talents. Further the chapter includes a SWOT analysis and supports learner in identifying their role models.
4	What are your career interests?	RIASEC career types explained and the learner is asked to identify their dominant career types and the top three jobs they identify with within their three identified career interest types.
5	What is personality?	16 personality profile, learners complete a short personality questionnaire and then based on their profile they can read the profile descriptor that entails: a personality summary, characteristics, possible careers and famous people who share the personality profile.
6	Environmental Assessment	SWOT analysis regarding a learners environmental strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
7	Integrating your Career Flower Information	Thabo and Maria's Career Flowers are completed as examples for the learner to follow when integrating the information gained from the booklet into their own Career Flower. A Career Resource Map is provided to identify the various resources learners have available when they have questions regarding career choices, study options, school subject choices, finances, school-dropout and general career-related matters.
8	Making wise subject choices in Grade 9	The subject choices available are explained, the Compulsary and optional subject choices detailed, and the subject requirements for university degrees and faculties provided.
9	Goal Setting	A guide to setting short and long term career goals is provided. Moreover an action plan with

		leading questions is included to provide learners a template for setting their future goals.
10	My formal options after school	The various options after school are explained and the institutions' telephone and website addresses provided (Colleges, University of Technology, University, South African National Defence force, apprenticeships, learnerships, FET College, work).
11	Improve your study skills as part of your Action Plan	The study skill approach is briefly introduced and the learners are guided to the CGP website for further details.
12	The Journey of Success	The Journey of Success activity is explained for learners to follow and Thabo and Maria are used as examples for learners to follow.

Appendix G

Video Content

Title	Views	Summary	Link
Introduction Part 1: Gender and Career Decisions	98	Problematises the ways in which gender norms often restrict and limit career choices. Aim to emphasise that all careers are gender neutral..	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0xaCnD6gJA
Introduction Part 2: Career Prestige	20	Problematises how certain career choices are viewed as prestigious and others not. Tries to encourage learners to consider career options that may not be viewed as prestigious.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yBEFDCOMSvY
Introduction Part 3: Thabo and Maria's Story (Part One)	8	Introduces the characters Thabo and Maria.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fwiCJcx0_N4
Introduction Part 3: Thabo and Maria's Story (Part Two)	5	Background information for each character and how they will support the learners throughout the booklet.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uO2oB9PvQn4
Section 1 and 2: Purpose of the Booklet and My Career Flower	17	Explores the different objectives of completing the self-directed booklet and introduces the Career Flower and all its components.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6DCUFnYER-U
Section 3: Self-Assessment	4	Focusing on how you will learn more about yourself through the assessments and how this will help learners make informed career and subject choices.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1LR1jYIhSuE
Section 4: What are your career interests? (Part 1)	10	Explores career choices and the RIASEC model.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_THO2poCys
Section 4: What are your career interests? (Part 2)	11	In-depth exploration of the RIASEC model.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CD9vgMZKHps
Section 5: What is personality? (Part 1)	25	Personality refers to individual differences of thinking, feeling, and behaving. The aspects of personality are explained.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JR-XOz9Q_2c&t=17s
Section 5: What is personality? (Part 2)	11	The personality traits: extrovert, introvert, sensor, intuitive, feeler, thinker, judger and perceiver are detailed, to support learners in understanding their own personality profile.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Kcu92YNO0M&t=19s
Section 6: Environmental Assessment	7	Considers how learners' environment can impact their career planning (SWOT analysis).	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5LUbx2cL8KQ

Section 7: Integrating Your Career Flower Information	13	Each aspect of the Career Flower is examined and how they inform each other is explained.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vgMcVQNcHFk&t=33s
Section 9: Goal Setting	11	Goals are defined, long-term and short-term goals are differentiated.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i6P2ah2EBpE
Section 10: My Formal Options after School	2	Outlines and explains the various options learners have after they have matriculated.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9anNUqViqj0
Section 11: Improve Your Study Skills as Part of Your Action Plan	3	SQ3R technique method explained as a study skill.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D0cCzj9-7AQ
Section 12: The Journey of Success	3	Video recording of a presentation by Dr van Schalkwyk to Grade 9 learners in Delft explaining the journey of success.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7sEFHG7PvWc
The Grade9 Self-Directed Career Guidance Project – Part 1	8	Introduces the project and booklet.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bF36aRHbYY4
The Grade 9 Self-Directed Career Guidance Project – Part 2	3	Introduces the Career Flower, other resources in the booklet, the project website, and project e-mail address for further questions.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QDFvOP2lXRI

Appendix H

Grade 9 Learner Survey

SELF-DIRECTED BOOKLET EVALUATION FORM

Wow! Well done in completing the Self-directed Career Guidance booklet. We are very interested in getting your opinion of the booklet. By giving us your feedback, you can help us improve the booklet for the future Grade 9 Learners and you will get a reward!

If you complete the evaluation form below and hand it to your LO teacher by **5 November 2020**, you will receive a **R20** reward. Even better, you can win a R200 prize for the best essay related to the booklet if you enter for your school's best Grade 9 Career Essay- see information for the competition below. Please fill in the information below in order to receive your R20 reward.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Name *(optional)*					
Surname *(optional)*					
Date					
School					
Class	9A	9B	9C	9E	9F
Gender	Male	Female			
Home Language	Afrikaans	English	isiXhosa	Other	
Age					

Give us your honest feedback about the booklet by answering the statements and questions below:

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BOOKLET.

Instructions:

- *Please answer the statements below by selecting the option that you feel fits best with your experience while completing the booklet and your thoughts about your career.*
- *The answers range from strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree or strongly disagree. Just tick (✓) the box indicating your best answer.*

1. Completing the booklet was an interesting exercise.

Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	

2. The purpose for completing this booklet was clear to me.

Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	

3. The instructions in the booklet were easy to understand.

Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	

4. It was clear what I had to do to complete the different exercises in the booklet.

Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	

5. I enjoyed completing the different exercises.

Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	

6. The information in the booklet was helpful.

Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	

7. I believe that the information in the booklet will help me with my subject choices at the end of Grade 9.

Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	

8. I was motivated to complete the booklet.

Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	

9. The time I spent completing the exercises in the booklet was time well spent.

Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	

10. I learned something about myself, by completing the booklet.

Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	

QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR CAREER.

11. I believe that I will be able to accomplish the career goals that I set for myself.

Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	

12. I believe that I have the necessary resources to pursue the career I am interested in.

Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	

13. The information I learned about myself made me think differently about my own career when I leave school.

Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	

14. This booklet is helpful when I think about my future career plans.

Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	

OPEN ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. What was your favourite part of the booklet? Please state why.

2. What part of the booklet was least useful to you? Please state why.

3. Did you have any difficulty completing the booklet? If so, please shortly share why.

4. After completing the booklet, do you feel that you require further support? If yes, please shortly elaborate on the support you would like to receive.

5. Was there something that you would have liked to know but it was not part of the booklet? If yes, please describe what should be included in future.

Please hand this form to your LO teacher and sign the Evaluation list. Your reward to the value of R20 will handed to you when the forms are collected on 5 November 2020.

ESSAY COMPETITION:

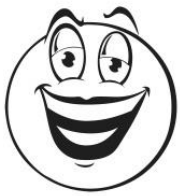
If you enjoyed doing the Self – directed career guidance booklet and completing the evaluation survey, why not write an essay about your experience and stand a chance to win a R200 prize.

All you have to do is write an **essay of maximum 1000 words** in English, Afrikaans or isiXhosa describing how the booklet helped you with thinking about your subject choice for Grades 10-12 and your career aspiration (what you would like to do) after matric.

The best essay at each school will win a voucher valued at R200. The best essay of each of the 8 different schools involved will be also posted on the www.careerguidanceproject.co.za website. You can email your essay to info@careerguidanceproject.co.za or give it to your LO teacher by 5 November 2020. Winners will be announced by 23 November 2020.

If you have any queries, send an email to info@careerguidanceproject.co.za

Thank you for completing the evaluation survey.



Appendix I

Life Orientation Teacher Survey

The successful implementation of the Grade 9 Career Guidance Project in 2020 could not have occurred without the tremendous support of the principals and the LO teachers at our partner schools. We express our deep gratitude for accommodating and supporting the project at your school among the COVID-19 challenges the past year.

Your brief feedback to the questions below will provide a valuable perspective for the funders of our project and will help us improve the project for 2021.

Instructions

Please provide feedback to the questions by selecting the option that you feel fits best with your perception of how the Grade 9 learners experienced completing the Career Guidance booklet and your thoughts about the impact of the booklet.

The responses to each question range from strongly agree (SD), agree (A), neutral (N), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD):

1. From your perspective as a Life Orientation teacher, the information in the self-directed career guidance booklet helped the Grade 9 learners, with their subject choices.
2. From your perspective as a Life Orientation teacher, the booklet helped Grade 9 learners start to develop their career goals and plans.
3. Given the changes to the group-based Career Guidance Intervention used in the past due to the COVID-19 pandemic and South African National Lockdown, the self-directed booklet was an adequate replacement for face-to-face discussions and contact-based workshops with learners used in the past.
4. The booklet instructions were clear and easy to follow.
5. The activities in the booklet are age-appropriate for Grade 9 learners.
6. From my perspective, the Grade 9 learners enjoyed engaging with the booklet.
7. In previous years, the career guidance initiative held workshops as part of the process. However, this year supplementary videos were developed to help guide the learners through the booklet.

The supplementary videos on the website were an effective replacement of contact-based workshops.

8. From your perspective as a Life Orientation teacher, the Grade 9 learners found the video content helpful.

9. This year we developed physical and electronic resource kits that included university and college information, bursary options, and other information regarding career development options.

The information provided in the physical and electronic resource kits was useful to Grade 9 students.

10. The website that was developed for the project is a helpful resource for the Grade 9 learners.
11. I prefer the new intervention with the booklet, videos and new website rather than the face-to-face workshops of previous years.

Open Answer Questions:

1. How can the self-directed career guidance booklet be improved for future projects?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Can you identify any challenges that Grade 9 learners faced in completing the booklet, and any aspects of the intervention that motivated Grade 9 learners to complete the booklet?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Describe how you used or will use the booklet during LO class time?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Can you identify the strengths and challenges associated with how you used or will use the booklet during Life Orientation class time?

5. Do you agree that the booklet can be used as a resource for Grade 9 Life Orientation teachers? Please motivate your answer.

6. Please recommend how your school would like this project to be implemented in future?

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO PROVIDE THIS VALUABLE FEEDBACK

Appendix J

School Principal Survey

The successful implementation of the project in 2020 could not have occurred without the tremendous support of the principals and teachers at our partner schools. We express our deep gratitude for accommodating and supporting the project among the COVID-19 challenges the past year.

Your brief feedback to the questions below will provide a valuable perspective for the funders of our project and will help us improve the project for 2021.

Instructions

Please answer these questions by selecting the option that you feel fits best with your perspective of the Grade 9 Career Guidance booklet and the project for the Grade 9 learners. The responses to the questions range from strongly agree (SA), agree (A), neutral (N), disagree (D) to strongly disagree (SD):

1. Grade 9 learners are relatively unprepared to be able to make meaningful subject choices.
2. The Career Guidance Project is an important intervention in supporting Grade 9 learners with their subject choices.
3. The Career Guidance Project plays a significant role in supporting Grade 9 learners with developing their career goals and plans.
4. The self-directed booklet was an adequate replacement for the face-to-face discussions and contact-based workshops with learners used in the past.
5. Have you reviewed the content of the project?
   Yes/No
   If yes, please continue to Question 6 to 8. If no, please skip to Question 9.

6. The supplementary videos on the new website were an effective replacement of contact-based workshops.
7. The information provided in the physical and electronic resource kits was useful to Grade 9 students.
8. The website that was developed for the project is a helpful resource for Grade 9 learners.
9. The coordination of the project implementation at my school was a managerial challenge because of COVID-19.
10. The Grade 9 Career Guidance Project was implemented successfully at my school.

Open Answer Questions:

1. Have you noticed any trends in how the Grade 9s approach doing their subject choices at your school? Please indicate the trends you have observed and whether our project is making a difference.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. What was the general feedback from the Life Orientation teachers regarding the new adaptations (self-directed booklet, illustrative videos and website) we introduced into the Grade 9 project this year?

_____

_____

_____

3. Please indicate if you have any suggestions regarding how the adaptations can be improved for future projects.

_____

_____

_____

4. For the continuation of the Grade 9 Career Guidance Project, would your school prefer the new intervention using the booklet, videos and new website OR rather prefer the face-to-face workshops used in previous years? Please provide a reason to help us understand your preference.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. In your ideal school scenario what would you expect from a project such as this?

_____

_____

_____

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_____

_____

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO PROVIDE THIS VALUABLE FEEDBACK

Appendix K

Volunteers Survey

Thank you for your valued contribution to the Grade 9 Career Guidance Project this year. The success of the project was largely due to the creative inputs of our student volunteers working behind the scenes.

Your feedback to the questions below can provide us with important pointers to improve the project for 2021 and beyond.

Instructions

Please answer these questions by selecting the option that you feel fits best with your experience while engaging with the project as a volunteer.

The responses to the questions range from strongly agree (SA), agree (A), neutral (N), disagree (D) to strongly disagree (SD):

1. This is my first experience of volunteer work.
2. I enjoyed the volunteering process.
3. I found the volunteering process time-consuming.
4. I would volunteer for this project if it were reinstated next year.
5. The coordination of the volunteer work by the project coordinator (Francois van den Berg) was efficient.
6. The e-mail communication from the project coordinator (Francois van den Berg) was clear.
7. Instructions pertaining to volunteer work responsibilities and expectations were clear and easy to follow.

Open Answer Questions:

1. How much time did you spend on your volunteer work responsibilities?

_____

_____

_____

2. What do you consider to be your main contributions to the project?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. What were your overall takeaways (benefits gained) from your volunteer experience in the project?

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Do you have any recommendations that can be implemented in improving the Career Guidance Project?

_____

_____

_____

_____

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO PROVIDE THIS VALUABLE FEEDBACK

Appendix L

Project Team Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

1. What was your role in the Career Guidance Project?
2. When the seriousness of the COVID-19 pandemic was clear and the South African lockdown instated, what were your initial thoughts regarding the future of the project?
3. What contribution did you make regarding the adaptation of the Career Guidance Project to a self-directed career guidance booklet and supplementary resources?
4. What were the most challenging aspects associated with the development of the new format of the project?
5. What informed the decision to develop a self-directed career guidance booklet? (Posed specifically to the project team members involved in the development of the booklet.)
6. What informed the decision to develop supplementary resources for the Career Guidance Project? (Posed specifically to the project team members involved in the development of the booklet.)
7. Could you identify how the implementation process of the project differed from previous years?
8. The implementation of the project required good communication and coordination with the schools. Could you identify any challenges to the coordination of the implementation of the project to be addressed for the future? (Posed to the project coordinator.)
9. The implementation of the project took place over the week of 5 October. Could you identify any difficulties faced in the process and please identify the school where the difficulties or challenges were experienced. (Posed to the project team members actively involved/ present during the implementation of the project.)
10. In an ideal scenario, how would the implementation of the project take place?
11. Are there any changes you would suggest be made to the self-directed career guidance booklet?
12. Are there any changes you would suggest be made to the supplementary resources (website, video content and physical, and electronic resource kit) developed for the project?
13. In your opinion, which format of the Career Guidance Project do you prefer (in-person format or self-directed format)? Please explain your reasoning.
14. What are your goals for the project to achieve in the future?

15. Is there anything you would like to add about the adaptations made to the project in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 situation?

Appendix M

Project Volunteers Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

1. Is this your first-time volunteering for a community intervention, or have you done volunteer work in the past?
2. What informed your decision to volunteer for the self-directed career guidance intervention?
3. What aspects of your volunteering experience did you enjoy?
4. What aspects of the volunteer experience did you not enjoy?
5. Would you volunteer for this project if it were reinstated next year?
6. The coordination of the volunteer work was communicated through the project coordinator (Francois van den Berg). How did you find the e-mail communication?
7. Do you have any recommendations that can be implemented in future projects?

Questions posed to volunteers regarding their contribution to the project:

Video Content Creation

1. Can you tell me about your experience developing video content for the project?
2. Were the instructions on how to make the video comprehensive and easy to follow? If not, how could it be improved?
3. How much time did you spend developing the script for the video and making the actual video?
4. What did you learn from the process of developing videos for the project? For instance, did you learn something about your personality or your career goals?

Electronic Resource Kit

1. Can you tell me about your experience compiling resources for the electronic resource kit?
2. Were the instructions regarding the type of resources needed for the electronic resource kit clear and comprehensive? If not, how can they be improved?
3. How much time did you spend searching and collecting resources for the electronic resource kit?
4. What type of resources and information regarding after school opportunities would you have found helpful in your Grade 9 year?

Physical Resource Kit

1. Can you tell me about your experience compiling resources for the physical resource kit?
2. Were the instructions regarding the type of resources needed for the physical resource kit clear and comprehensive? If not, how can it be improved?
3. How much time did you spend searching and collecting resources for the physical resource kit? Please identify your role in compiling resources for the physical resource kit.
4. What type of resources and information regarding after school opportunities would you have found helpful in your Grade 9 year?

Website

1. What was your role in supporting the development of the website for the project?
2. Were the expectations of the role you played in the development of the website clear? If not, how could it have been improved?
3. How much time did you spend contributing to the development of the website for the project?
4. What did you learn from the process of developing the website for the project?

Is there anything further you want to add about your experience as a volunteer in the project?

Appendix N

Stellenbosch University's Human Research Ethics Committee Letter of Approval

Project 3072

UNIVERSITEIT STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

NOTICE OF APPROVAL

REC: SBER - Annual Progress/ Final Report

8 May 2020

Project number: 3072

Project Title: A randomised comparison of the isiXhosa-English version of the South African Career Interest Inventory among first year university students

Dear Prof Anthony Naidoo

Your REC: SBER - Annual Progress Report submitted on 12 March 2020 was reviewed and approved by the REC: Social, Behavioural and Education Research (REC: SBE).

Please note below expiration date of this approved submission:

Ethics approval period:

Protocol approval date (Humanities)	Protocol expiration date (Humanities)
8 May 2020	7 May 2021

GENERAL COMMENTS:

1) There is currently a **postponement of all research activities at Stellenbosch University,** apart from research that can be conducted remotely/online and requires no human contact, and research in those areas specifically acknowledged as essential services by the South African government under the presidential regulations related to COVID-19 (e.g. clinical studies).

2) Remote (desktop-based/online) research activities, online analyses of existing data, and the writing up of research results are strongly encouraged in all SU research environments.

3) All remaining/additional data gathering is subject to original rules and limitations, however additional limitations will apply as per the REC: SBE rules and guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic. Should this impact the data collection methods, an amendment application must be submitted to the REC.

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

If the researcher deviates in any way from the proposal approved by the REC: SBE, the researcher must notify the REC of these changes.

Please use your SU project number (3072) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your project.

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.

FOR CONTINUATION OF PROJECTS AFTER REC APPROVAL PERIOD

You are required to submit a progress report to the REC: SBE before the approval period has expired if a continuation of ethics approval is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary).

Once you have completed your research, you are required to submit a final report to the REC: SBE for review.

Included Documents:

Document Type	File Name	Date	Version
Informed Consent Form	Consent_Form_Afrikaans	12/03/2020	2
Informed Consent Form	English_isiXhosa Consent forms	12/03/2020	2
Informed Consent Form	English_Assent form	12/03/2020	2
Informed Consent Form	Afrikaans Assent form	12/03/2020	2

Informed Consent Form	IsiXhosa_Assent form	12/03/2020	2
Research Protocol/Proposal	Proposal_REC_2019 AMENDMENT	12/03/2020	2

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at cgraham@sun.ac.za.

Sincerely,

Clarissa Graham

REC Coordinator: Research Ethics Committee: Social, Behavioral and Education Research

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number: REC-050411-032.
The Research Ethics Committee: Social, Behavioural and Education Research complies with the SA National Health Act No.61 2003 as it pertains to health research. In addition, this committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research established by the Declaration of Helsinki (2013) and the Department of Health Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes (2nd Ed.) 2015. Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

Principal Investigator Responsibilities

Protection of Human Research Participants

As soon as Research Ethics Committee approval is confirmed by the REC, the principal investigator (PI) is responsible for the following:

Conducting the Research: The PI is responsible for making sure that the research is conducted according to the REC-approved research protocol. The PI is jointly responsible for the conduct of co-investigators and any research staff involved with this research. The PI must ensure that the research is conducted according to the recognised standards of their research field/discipline and according to the principles and standards of ethical research and responsible research conduct.

Participant Enrolment: The PI may not recruit or enrol participants unless the protocol for recruitment is approved by the REC. Recruitment and data collection activities must cease after the expiration date of REC approval. All recruitment materials must be approved by the REC prior to their use.

Informed Consent: The PI is responsible for obtaining and documenting affirmative informed consent using **only** the REC-approved consent documents/process, and for ensuring that no participants are involved in research prior to obtaining their affirmative informed consent. The PI must give all participants copies of the signed informed consent documents, where required. The PI must keep the originals in a secured, REC-approved location for at least five (5) years after the research is complete.

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 the PI's responsibility to submit the progress report in a timely fashion to ensure a lapse in REC approval does not occur.** Once REC approval of your research lapses, all research activities must cease, and contact must be made with the REC immediately.

Amendments and Changes: Any planned changes to any aspect of the research (such as research design, procedures, participant population, informed consent document, instruments, surveys or recruiting material, etc.), must be submitted to the REC for review and approval before implementation. Amendments may not be initiated without first obtaining written REC 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.

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 the REC within **five (5) days** of discovery of the incident. The PI must also report any instances of serious or continuing problems, or non-compliance with the RECs requirements for protecting human research participants.

Research Record Keeping: The PI 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 and approvals from the REC.

Provision of Counselling or emergency support: When a dedicated counsellor or a 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.

Final reports: When the research is completed (no further participant enrolment, interactions or interventions), the PI must submit a Final Report to the REC to close the study.

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

Appendix O

Stellenbosch University's Human Research Ethics Committee Letter of Approval

Project 22013

UNIVERSITEIT
STELLENBOSCH
UNIVERSITY

CONDITIONAL APPROVAL GRANTED
REC: Social, Behavioural and Education Research (SBER) - Initial Application Form

11 June 2021

Project number: REC-2021-22013

Project title: Promoting self-knowledge and career preparedness: An evaluation of the impact of a career guidance intervention among secondary school learners

Dear Dr M Visser

Your REC: Social, Behavioural and Education Research (SBER) - Initial Application Form submitted on 12/05/2021 14:17 was reviewed by the REC: Social, Behavioural and Education Research (REC: SBE) and approved with certain conditions.

This conditional approval means that the researcher may proceed with the envisaged research provided that they respond or adhere to the stipulations/conditions.

Ethics approval period:

Protocol approval date (Humanities)	Protocol expiration date (Humanities)
11 June 2021	10 June 2022

REC STIPULATIONS/CONDITIONS:

The researchers need to provide the REC with their COVID-19 risk mitigation protocol for obtaining consent and assent from learners in the schools. [ACTION AND RESPONSE REQUIRED]

HOW TO RESPOND:

Some of these stipulations/conditions may require your response. Where a response is required, you must respond to the REC within **three (3)** months of the date of this letter.

Your conditional approval will lapse automatically should your response not be received by the REC within 3 months of the date of this letter.

For instructions on how to respond to these stipulations, please download the FAQ on how to edit your application and follow the steps carefully: HOW TO RESPOND TO REC FEEDBACK.

Where revision to supporting documents is required, please ensure that you replace all outdated documents on your application form with the revised versions.

INVESTIGATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

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

If the researcher deviates in any way from the proposal approved by the REC: SBE, the researcher must notify the REC of these changes.

Please use your SU project number (22013) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your project.

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.

CONTINUATION OF PROJECTS AFTER REC APPROVAL PERIOD

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

Included Documents:

Document Type	File Name	Date	Version
Privacy Impact Self-Assessment Report	Ethics Document - Risk Assessment MVisser	06/04/2021	1
Co-investigator CV	Resume-Sarah-Janse-van-Rensburg (1)	06/04/2021	1
Data collection tool	Ethics Uploading of Questionnaire MVisser	06/04/2021	1
Informed Consent Form	English Consent_Retrospective	07/04/2021	1
Proof of permission	Research Permission US	07/04/2021	1
Research Protocol/Proposal	High School Career Guidance Project_Revised Research Proposal_REC_2021_ 11052021	11/05/2021	Revised version
Budget	Appendix A_Project Budget	11/05/2021	1
Proof of Ethics Clearance	REC_Letter of Ethics Approval	11/05/2021	2020
Non-disclosure agreement	NDA INTERNAL-FIELDWORKER-High School Career Guidance Project	11/05/2021	1
Parental consent form	English Parental Consent_Current study	11/05/2021	Current Intervention
Assent form	English Assent form_Current intervention	11/05/2021	Current research
Proof of permission	WCED_ Research approval letter_2020-2021	11/05/2021	2020-2021
Default	Naidoo et al Chapter_2019_Group based career guidance intervention_Springer	11/05/2021	1
Default	Rabie, Visser, Naidoo et al_2020_Beyond the individual..	11/05/2021	1
Default	Booklet cover page	11/05/2021	1
Default	Response to REC Feedback _Project IPSY-2021-2201 _ 11 May 2021	11/05/2021	1
Proof of Ethics Clearance	Grade 9 Career Guidance Project_Research Proposal_REC_2020_20022020	11/05/2021	1
Proof of Ethics Clearance	REC_Letter of Ethics Approval	11/05/2021	1

If you have any questions regarding this application or the conditions set, please contact the REC Secretariat at cgraham@sun.ac.za.

Sincerely,

Clarissa Graham
Secretariat: Research Ethics Committee: Social, Behavioural and Education Research (REC: SBE)

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number: REC-050411-032.
The Research Ethics Committee: Social, Behavioural and Education Research complies with the SA National Health Act No.61 2003 as it pertains to health research. In addition, this committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research established by the Declaration of Helsinki (2013) and the Department of Health Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes (2nd Ed.) 2015. Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

Principal Investigator Responsibilities

Protection of Human Research Participants

As soon as Research Ethics Committee approval is confirmed by the REC, the principal investigator (PI) is responsible for the following:

Conducting the Research: The PI is responsible for making sure that the research is conducted according to the REC-approved research protocol. The PI is jointly responsible for the conduct of co-investigators and any research staff involved with this research. The PI must ensure that the research is conducted according to the recognised standards of their research field/discipline and according to the principles and standards of ethical research and responsible research conduct.

Participant Enrolment: The PI may not recruit or enrol participants unless the protocol for recruitment is approved by the REC. Recruitment and data collection activities must cease after the expiration date of REC approval. All recruitment materials must be approved by the REC prior to their use.

Informed Consent: The PI is responsible for obtaining and documenting affirmative informed consent using **only** the REC-approved consent documents/process, and for ensuring that no participants are involved in research prior to obtaining their affirmative informed consent. The PI must give all participants copies of the signed informed consent documents, where required. The PI must keep the originals in a secured, REC-approved location for at least five (5) years after the research is complete.

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 the PI's responsibility to submit the progress report in a timely fashion to ensure a lapse in REC approval does not occur.** Once REC approval of your research lapses, all research activities must cease, and contact must be made with the REC immediately.

Amendments and Changes: Any planned changes to any aspect of the research (such as research design, procedures, participant population, informed consent document, instruments, surveys or recruiting material, etc.), must be submitted to the REC for review and approval before implementation. Amendments may not be initiated without first obtaining written REC 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.

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 the REC within **five (5) days** of discovery of the incident. The PI must also report any instances of serious or continuing problems, or non-compliance with the RECs requirements for protecting human research participants.

Research Record Keeping: The PI 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 and approvals from the REC.

Provision of Counselling or emergency support: When a dedicated counsellor or a 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.

Final reports: When the research is completed (no further participant enrolment, interactions or interventions), the PI must submit a Final Report to the REC to close the study.

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

Appendix P

Western Cape Education Department Research Approval Letter

Western Cape Government
Education

Directorate: Research

Audrey.wyngaard@westerncape.gov.za
tel: +27 021 467 9272
Fax: 0865902282
Private Bag x9114, Cape Town, 8000
wced.wcape.gov.za

REFERENCE: 20180301-9937
ENQUIRIES: Dr A T Wyngaard

Dr Stephan Rabie
4 De Lorentz
Gardens
8001

Dear Dr Stephen Rabie

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: RESEARCH PROPOSAL: OVERCOMING CAREER CIRCUMSCRIPTION AND COMPROMISE: CAREER GUIDANCE AND DEVELOPMENT TO HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS FROM LOW INCOME COMMUNITIES

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 **16 March 2020 till 18 September 2020**
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: 13 March 2020