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**UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF CAREERS
GUIDANCE IN AFRICAN SCHOOLS**

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**SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
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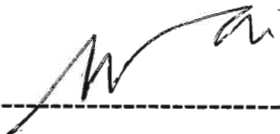
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DECLARATION

I ZITHULELE ZONDI declare that the research study on **University Students' Perceptions of Careers Guidance in African Schools** is my own work and all the sources I have used have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at investigating African students' perceptions of careers guidance in African schools. It aimed at determining the extent to which students viewed careers guidance and the effectiveness to which careers guidance programmes in schools have been able to assist them to make informed career decisions and choices.

Literature reviewed revealed that careers guidance services were inadequate in schools due to the legacies of the apartheid era. As a result a lot of school leavers found themselves unable to make occupational choices. The relevance of careers guidance in relation to career development theories argues that a holistic approach to careers guidance in African schools is important because of a variety of factors (personal, situational and developmental) which influence career decisions and choices. Also, the negative views held by teachers and learners of careers guidance greatly impacts on its success.

The study drew its data from a sample of University of Zululand students enrolled in the faculties of Arts, Education, Commerce and Administration, Law and Science. The research used a questionnaire with closed-ended questions to elicit the data required. The questionnaire focussed on the importance of careers guidance, effectiveness of careers guidance programmes in career decision making and choices, and the influence parents have on career decisions and choices. The study also tested the relationship between students' perceptions of careers guidance and the variables of gender, family composition, and degree registered at the university.

The findings revealed that students perceived careers guidance to be important. However, careers guidance is perceived by students as having been ineffective in helping them make informed career decisions and choices. Parents were also found not to have been influential in career decisions and choices of their children. The study also revealed significant differences between males and females, single and both parent families, and the different degrees registered. Females were found to be more wanting of careers guidance than males. Students from single parent families were found to rely more on the school than the home for careers guidance as opposed to both parent students. Females found parents to have been more influential in their career decisions and choices than males who considered parents unimportant in influencing career decisions and choices.

The implications of the findings were that careers guidance programmes ineffectively enhance learners' career development. As a result they are unable to make sound career decisions and choices. Learners' decisions and choices may still be influenced by gender, family and academic constructs. It is recommended that careers guidance be enforced in schools and given equal status to the other subjects. Relevant careers guidance programmes which are context specific and related to the job market are also an absolute necessity for learners. Only effective careers guidance programmes would lead to effective career decisions and choices.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1	STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	1
1.2	RESEARCH QUESTIONS	5
1.3	AIMS OF THE STUDY	6
1.4	DEFINITIONS OF TERMS	6
1.4.1	UNIVERSITY STUDENTS	7
1.4.2	PERCEPTION	7
1.4.3	CAREERS GUIDANCE	7
1.4.4	AN AFRICAN SCHOOL	8
1.5	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	8
1.5.1	PERSONALITY THEORIES	9
1.5.1.1	Trait-Factor Theory	9
1.5.1.2	Holland's Theory	10
1.5.2	PROCESS-ORIENTED OR DEVELOPMENT THEORIES	13
1.5.2.1	Ginzberg's Theory	13
1.5.2.2	Super's Theory	15
1.5.3	SITUATIONAL OR SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES	19
1.6	RESEARCH REPORT	22
1.7	CONCLUSION	23

CHAPTER 2

THE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1	INTRODUCTION	25
2.2	BACKGROUND TO CAREER TRENDS IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS	27
2.3	THE ROLE AND RELEVANCE OF CAREERS GUIDANCE IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS' CONTEXT	32
2.4	CAREERS GUIDANCE SERVICES IN AFRICAN SCHOOLS	40
2.5	CAREERS GUIDANCE CURRICULUM IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS	44
2.6	ATTITUDES TOWARDS CAREERS GUIDANCE	52
	2.6.1 TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS CAREERS GUIDANCE	52
	2.6.2 LEARNERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS CAREERS GUIDANCE	54
2.7	SOME FACTORS INFLUENCING CAREER DECISIONS AND CHOICES	57
	2.7.1 GENDER	57
	2.7.2 PARENTS	60
2.8	CONCLUSION	62

CHAPTER 3

THE RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1	INTRODUCTION	64
3.4	RESEARCH DESIGN	65
	3.2.1 THE PURPOSE AND RATIONALE FOR THE QUANTITATIVE APPROACH	66
3.3	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	67
	3.3.1 EX POST FACTO RESEARCH	67
	3.3.2 THE SAMPLE	69
3.4	DATA COLLECTION METHOD AND PROCEDURE	74
	3.4.1 THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT	75
	3.4.1.1 Why the Questionnaire?	75
	3.4.1.2 The Nature and Structure of the Questionnaire Constructed	78
	3.4.1.3 The Type of Scale and Scoring Procedure of the Questionnaire	80
	3.4.1.4 Reliability and Validity of the Instrument	81
	3.4.1.5 Administration of the Questionnaire	84
3.5	CONCLUSION	85

CHAPTER 4

THE RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1	INTRODUCTION	87
4.2	DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES	87
	4.2.1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS	88

4.2.2	INFERENTIAL STATISTICS	89
4.3	PERCEPTIONS ON IMPORTANCE, EFFECTIVENESS, AND PARENTAL INFLUENCE REGARDING CAREERS GUIDANCE	92
4.4	GENDER EFFECTS ON THE PERCEPTIONS OF CAREERS GUIDANCE	94
4.5	EFFECTS OF FAMILY COMPOSITION ON THE PERCEPTIONS OF CAREERS GUIDANCE	95
4.6	INFLUENCE OF THE DEGREE REGISTERED ON THE PERCEPTIONS OF CAREERS GUIDANCE	97
4.7	CONCLUSION	101

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

5.1	INTRODUCTION	103
5.2	OVERVIEW OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF CAREERS GUIDANCE	103
5.3	THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENDER AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF CAREERS GUIDANCE	110
5.4	THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY COMPOSITION AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF CAREERS GUIDANCE	116
5.5	THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DEGREE REGISTERED AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF CAREERS GUIDANCE	118
5.6	CONCLUSION	119

CHAPTER 6

IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

6.1	INTRODUCTION	122
6.2	THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY	122
6.3	THE LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	128
	6.3.1 CAREERS GUIDANCE PROGRAMMES	128
	6.3.2 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE	129
	6.3.3 THE QUESTIONNAIRE	130
6.4	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	131
6.5	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CAREER GUIDANCE SERVICES	133
6.6	CONCLUSION	134
	REFERENCES	136
	ANNEXURE	142

LIST OF TABLES

	PAGE
Table 3.1: Stratified Random Sample of Students Registered in each faculty at the University.	74
Table 4.1: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of the Sample's Responses to each Question on the Likert Scale.	92
Table 4.2: Mean Ranks and Significant P Values on Students' Perceptions Of Career Guidance on Gender.	94
Table 4.3: Mean Ranks and Significant P Values on Students' Perceptions Of Career Guidance for Family Composition.	95
Table 4.4: Mean ranks and Significant P Values on Students Perceptions of Career Guidance for the Degree Registered on Students' Perceptions.	98
Table 4.5: Mean ranks and P Values Showing Effectiveness by Degree Registered.	101

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Since the researcher started teaching at a tertiary institution four years ago, he has heard and listened to a number of students expressing their dismay about the degrees or careers they were pursuing. They highlight that their schools have not offered them any information regarding different career opportunities or even information regarding the kinds of degrees or courses offered in different tertiary institutions. As a result they enter tertiary institutions having not absolutely decided on degree courses they intended to pursue. de Haas, van der Merwe and Basson (1995) argue that a similar situation, which is attributed to the lack of careers guidance in many schools in KwaZulu/Natal (KZN), exists in other institutions. A number of students gain admission in tertiary institutions without any background on different areas of study offered. This usually results in indecision and ignorance about the degrees and career opportunities available in different tertiary institutions. This is indeed likely to create confusion and frustration for some of the school-leavers who are expected to decide on career prospects in institutions which are supposed to shape and nurture their chosen career paths.

Mtolo (1996) confirms the arguments advanced by Naicker (1994), de Haas, van der Merwe and Basson (1995) on the impact the lack of career guidance programmes have had on school-leavers. Her study further reveals that some students did not receive any career guidance in schools, but even those who did receive career guidance in their schools felt that it has been inadequate in helping them make career decisions and

choices. Only about 41% of the students were found to have continued with their secondary school career choices at tertiary institutions (Mtolo, 1996). Some reasons which influenced their career decisions and choices included peer and friendly advice on degree courses considered soft as options and easy to complete, rejection by the institutions of preference or failing to meet the entrance requirements for certain courses. Other reasons included the fear of failing at a tertiary institution because of the poor background in certain school subjects, failing to achieve a matric exemption for entry into different tertiary institutions, inadequately trained guidance teachers and counsellors in schools and illiteracy among most African parents (Naicker, 1994; de Haas, van der Merwe & Basson, 1995).

The lack of careers guidance and the numerous factors which influence career decisions and choices lead most students to change their career paths (de Haas, van der Merwe & Basson, 1995; Mtolo, 1996). Other students change their career paths even before they complete their degrees. For instance, some students in the four years of the researcher's teaching at a tertiary institution have consulted the researcher seeking help in restructuring their curriculum and/or degree courses in order to fit particular careers and certain future work environments. Others sought assistance in changing their whole degree programmes because their curricular courses did not provide possible employment opportunities or clear career paths. Others still sought help because they did not pass some of the required courses in order to continue to the next level. Mtolo (1996) found out that approximately 59% of students involved in the investigation changed their secondary school career choices and pursued other options. These changes were influenced by realizing where their interests lay or as a result of lack of progress for them in their chosen degree programmes. Others or even contemplated

employment opportunities. The foregoing factors and other numerous factors show that careers guidance services inadequately provide proper career preparation for students which bring about a lot of frustration for them, en-route to secure careers in this rapidly changing and demanding world.

Stead (1996) states that the sociopolitical changes in South Africa have major implications for career development for African adolescents in particular, since there has been minimal improvement on career development for them. He further argues that African adolescents need to make career decisions that are context specific to socio-economic and political changes which demands them to cope with environmental changes that complicate career exploration and planning activities. South Africa's new found democracy is likely therefore to place a further strain on students as they are expected to enter the work force and contribute to the betterment of the country's socioeconomic environment. Career guidance therefore needs to inform curricular development in preparing students for the looming eco-technological millennium. The National Minister of Education (Professor S.M.E. Bengu) echoes these sentiments by pointing out that South Africa's economic growth and development rests on the development of human capacities, knowledge and skills to be catered for during post-compulsory education prior to entry into higher education and training (Green Paper on Further Education and Training, 1998). This statement is one amongst many which is likely to worry many students in preparation for their career paths and the world of work that is supposed to provide occupational security and mobility. It is against this background that the researcher intended to determine the views of students at university regarding the effectiveness of career guidance they received in their schools in enhancing their ability to decide and choose appropriate careers.

Mthenjane (in Moela, 1998) reports that career information for students in townships is still lacking because of inadequate social and educational provisions. She contends that this lack of sufficient career information results in students choosing careers in which they have no interest. Another argument is that learners choose inappropriate school subjects which tend to restrict their career options and others fall into the trap of choosing careers at tertiary level just because their friends have done so. As a result they perform badly in those courses (Your Career, 1998). Hartman (in Stead, 1996) argues that the career decisions and choices made by many African adolescents are based on trial-and-error because they lack skills of obtaining career information and knowledge that will help them choose occupations and careers. These arguments present fair warnings as to the repercussions many students suffer in their decisions and choices of careers. This eventually impacts on the rest of their lives and in the working environment. It is therefore paramount that the reconceptualisation and transformation of the guidance programmes are undertaken in order to meet the needs of the changing, democratic society (Interim Core Syllabus for Guidance, 1995).

Stead (1996), Mtolo (1996), and Sithole (1997) point out that guidance is still an undervalued extracurricular activity of no significance or consequence in African schools. Teachers still use guidance periods for other main content subjects which are considered to be more important than career guidance. Guidance and career guidance is still being taught by teachers who have no background whatsoever in the subject. The auxiliary services and infrastructure are still inadequately provided in most African schools. Most of the African students' parents are also unable to assist them in making career choices because their poor educational and occupational knowledge holds them to the status of unskilled or semiskilled workers. The inability of most African parents

to assist in career decisions and choices influences their children to make uninformed decisions and choices about their careers. As a result most of them are forced to make career compromises and change their career paths. It is such contentious issues which make careers guidance provisions an absolute urgent necessity in the country today.

Mtolo (1996) in her recommendations states that further research on “Black students’ perceptions of secondary school guidance” is necessary since little research has been conducted (p. 98). In essence, adequate literature is not available in the area of secondary school career guidance. In search of South African literature on views regarding career guidance, the researcher found it difficult to locate as much research work as possible on African students’ views regarding career guidance. The researcher therefore aimed to respond to Mtolo’s call (1996) for further research on students’ perceptions of career guidance, particularly those in African schools.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

On the basis of the above problem statement the research questions were formulated as follows:

- ▶ Do university students perceive careers guidance they received at school as important?
- ▶ Do university students perceive careers guidance and careers guidance programmes to have been effective in assisting them to make career decisions and choices?
- ▶ Do university students perceive parental influences as having been helpful in their career decisions and choices?

1.3 AIMS OF THE STUDY

The aims of this study were based on the above research questions. This study aimed to partially replicate Mtololo's study (1996) which investigated tertiary students' perception of secondary school career guidance. Her study aimed at determining the extent to which the role of the guidance teachers was understood and whether they were effective in teaching career guidance to assist students with career choices. On this premise, this study aimed at investigating whether university students perceive:

- ▶ Careers guidance they received at school as important.
- ▶ Careers guidance in schools to have been effective in assisting them to make career decisions and choices.
- ▶ Parental influences to have been helpful in their career decisions and choices.

This study also aimed at investigating the relationship between students' perception of career guidance and such variables as gender, family composition and the degree to be studied at the university.

1.4 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

The terms were defined operationally as they were used in this study, but where necessary a theoretical definition was given so as to form the background of an operational definition.

1.4.1 UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

University students in this study refer to persons admitted to study for either undergraduate or postgraduate degrees or diplomas at a historically disadvantaged African university for the prescribed duration of the registered degree or diploma courses.

1.4.2 PERCEPTION

Hamachek (1990) explains perception as the attachment and organisation of meaning to the information received about reality in terms of own interpretations and beliefs about the world. He maintains that students have conscious minds which enable them to think and make decisions and choices on the basis of their point of view of how they perceive the world. Therefore, perception in this study refers to students' thoughts and points of view about the effectiveness of career guidance and its programmes in assisting them to make career decisions and choices.

1.4.3 CAREERS GUIDANCE

Hamachek (1990), Brownell, Craig, de Haas, Harris, and Ntshangase (1996) define careers guidance as a helping process that is given to learners in an attempt to help them gain self-knowledge, educational knowledge and occupational knowledge so as to prepare them to make occupational decisions and choices that will impinge on their life and own livelihood. Therefore, career

guidance in this study refers to a process of advising and assisting the learners to gain relevant information about their own self and the world of work in order to enhance their career development. This enables them to make meaningful decisions and choices about careers they intend to follow by considering a variety of factors which influence their career development and aspirations. This includes developing a sense of self identity, realising personal potential, and considering environmental factors that influence decisions on occupational opportunities in life.

1.4.4 AN AFRICAN SCHOOL

An African school in this study refers to an educational institution which accommodates predominantly indigenous African learners in either a rural, semi-rural or urban setting. These learners have also been previously disadvantaged in terms of resources both financial and human by the previous apartheid government. This includes schools that have been previously marginalised by the apartheid laws prior to the 1994 elections of a democratic government.

1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A variety of theories have been advanced and developed in order to determine and explain what makes certain people decide on particular occupations over others. All theories highlight a variety of factors thought to be influential in career decision making and choices. This research study discussed a variety of theoretical assumptions of career development, but only those theories that are relevant to the study were

discussed. The researcher did not pay particular attention to one theoretical approach since he believes that they complement one another and no answer to what informs career decision making has been found (Jacobs, van Jaarsveld, & von Mollendorf, 1991). The theories discussed are the personality theories (i.e. Trait-factor, and Holland's theories), the developmental or process-oriented theories (i.e. Ginzberg and Super's theories) and the situational theory.

1.5.1 PERSONALITY THEORIES

The focus of the personality theories is that the relationship between the individual's traits and the occupational environment informs the individual's decision and choice of a career. That is, personality traits, interests, needs, and aptitudes are factors from which personal information can be obtained so as to relate it to the world of work (Jacobs et al., 1991).

1.5.1.1 Trait-Factor Theory

The fundamental assumption on which this theory is based is that occupational decisions are made after the individual has weighed his aptitude, interests and other personality factors in relation to the career(s) aspired. That is, the individual engages in self analysis in accordance with the requirements of the occupations.

Parson's work in (Jacobs et al.,1991) identified underlying assumptions with regard to occupational decisions and choices as:

- ▶ Obtaining self-knowledge with regard to attitudes, abilities, interests, aptitudes, aspirations, and the person's limitations and the possible reasons for them;
- ▶ Obtaining knowledge with regard to the demands made by the different occupational fields in order to succeed in them;
- ▶ Reflecting on and integrating self-knowledge with occupational fields by the individual.

Sithole (1997) explains the above assumptions as follows:

- ▶ The individual's unique traits can be reliably and validly measured;
- ▶ Certain individual traits are recipes for success in an occupation;
- ▶ The matching of personal traits and work requirements provide greater success in an occupation.

In essence, the trait-factor theory assumes that occupational decisions and choices are based on matching individual characteristics with the world of work.

1.5.1.2 Holland's Theory

The basic assumption of this theory is that individuals can be categorised on the basis of particular personalities which can be related to specific occupational

environments. Holland identified six personality type categories which Jacobs et al. (1991), Sithole (1997) enumerate as follows:

I. Realistic Personality Type:

These people are activity-oriented rather than people-oriented individuals. Their occupational preferences are mechanical, manual, and skill-based fields. They make use of physical, scientific and motor skills.

II. Investigative Personality Type:

These people are analytical, logical, and rational thinkers who prefer to work independently to analyse and solve problems. They are intellectually stimulated by issues of a scientific nature hence most are found in the science field.

III. Artistic and Creative Personality Type:

These individuals are oriented into expressing themselves to what appeals to their emotions and creativity in relating to the environment. They are non-structural but appreciate the environment around them in their own way at their own time. They prefer careers in the Arts and Fine Arts.

IV. Social and Service Rendering Personality Type:

These are people-oriented individuals who prefer to help and care for others. They are more interactive on either a one-to-one or a group basis. They have good verbal skills. They prefer careers in the Social Sciences and Health Sciences.

V. Enterprising Personality Type:

These are management and business oriented individuals who prefer occupations where they can lead others, take risks, convince others, and manage others for the attainment of certain objectives. What is of importance to them is prestige, power, and status. They prefer occupations of a managerial, directorial and supervisory kind. Their careers are in the Economic and Management Sciences

VI. Conventional Personality Type:

These are structurally-oriented people who believe in routine and organisation in performing their work. They tend to be perfectionists because of the high degree of self control. They are masters and followers of rules and regulations. They like occupations where they can plan, organize and deal with details. Their careers are in the Mathematical Sciences, Political Sciences and Administration.

Sithole (1991) highlights other assumptions as follows:

- ▶ People search for environments that will let them exercise their skills and abilities, express their attitudes and values, and take on agreeable problems and roles;
- ▶ Behaviour is determined by an interaction between personality and an environment (p. 20).

Holland's typology implies that occupational decisions and choices are influenced by the individual's personality character. These characters are stable within the individual and will determine his or her choice of a particular career on the basis of the personality type possessed.

1.5.2 PROCESS-ORIENTED OR DEVELOPMENTAL THEORIES

The process-oriented approach to occupational choice maintains that the individual proceeds through life's developmental stages by consecutively mastering developmental tasks that will eventually inform occupational decisions and choices (Jacobs et al., 1991; Ras, 1998).

As young individuals proceed through their own individual lives, they make decisions and choices which lead to the achievement of developmental tasks which mark their ability to have reached occupational maturity.

There are numerous supporters of the process-oriented approach. To cite two examples, Ginzberg's and Super's career developmental theories (Life-cycle rainbow) are discussed.

1.5.2.1 Ginzberg's Theory

This theory is one among the first theories to explain career development as a process and not an event. Its focus is on explaining the social and psychological career developmental patterns (Sithole, 1997).

As a process, Jacobs et al. (1991) states that three stages are identifiable, viz.:

- ▶ The **fantasy stage** which ends at age 10. It is game-oriented because the child is not able to assess his or her talents and thinks that he or she can be anything he or she wants to become.

- ▶ The **tentative stage** is between ages 10 and 16. It is based on interests, abilities and values. It is at this stage that the child starts to realise his or her preferences, capabilities and worthiness of activities in relation to him or herself.

- ▶ The **realistic stage** is between ages 16 and 21. It is based on exploration, crystallization and specification. It is at this stage wherein the individual weighs career opportunities available, definitively pursues the possible career explored with alternatives available and decides and chooses the occupation.

Sharf (in Sithole, 1997) in a reformulation of these stages highlighted the stages as: "development of interests at about ages 11; development of capacities at ages 13-14; development of values at ages 15 and 16; and the transition stage at age 17 and 18" (p. 26).

In revising the theory, Ginsberg pointed out that individuals make decisions on occupational choices in an attempt to favourably merge their career preparation and goals with the realities of the work environment (Jacobs et al., 1991). Also,

occupational choices are not closed-ended since individuals change their decisions (compromise) about their choices because of certain factors in an attempt to satisfy (i.e. optimize) their needs and circumstances (Jacobs et al., 1991; Sithole, 1997). The theory recognises that choices on occupations are life long processes which are subject to review because an individual is always influenced by making decisions that will link with reality. University students fall within the age between 17 and 21 which places them under the realistic stage.

1.5.2.2 Super's Theory

Super's career development theory maintains that career development is a process not an event which encompasses much of the person's life (FAO Review, 1994). As a person grows, he or she performs different roles which are impinged upon by situational demands and personal attributes which shape and explain one's career (Salomone, 1996). In other words, the individual's career is determined and shaped by situational and personal factors. This eventually influences the decisions and choices the individual makes regarding the career to follow. Harris-Bowlsbey (in Salome, 1996) pointed out three broad perspectives from Super's theory: (a) "the development of the self-concept; (b) the life stages and the developmental tasks that make up a career; and (c) the breadth and richness of a career" (p. 170).

Super made 12 propositions with regard to career development (Salome, 1996; Belken in Jacobs et al., 1991):

- ▶ Individuals differ in abilities, interests and personality traits.
- ▶ These characteristics enable individuals to place themselves in different occupations.
- ▶ “Each of these occupations requires a characteristic pattern of abilities, interests and personality traits, with tolerances wide enough, however, to allow both some variety of occupations for each individual and some variety of individuals in each occupation” (Salome, 1996, p.171).
- ▶ Career development is generally an irreversible life long process.
- ▶ Career development is a predictable, orderly and patterned process.
- ▶ Career development is a dynamic process of compromise.
- ▶ Occupational choice and adjustment are a continuous process because career preferences, skills, environmental conditions and self-concept change with time and experience.
- ▶ Life stages or phases of growth, exploration, settlement, maintenance, and deterioration summarize the career developmental process.
- ▶ Career compromise process is one of role playing between the personal and social factors, self-concept and reality.
- ▶ Work and life satisfactions have a bearing on the person finding success for the abilities, interests, personality traits and values possessed.

- ▶ The person's development along the developmental tasks is aided and determined by the development of abilities, interests, self-concept. Coping behaviours related to these developmental tasks are of relevance to the individual's career development.
- ▶ "Career maturity involves readiness to meet career development tasks" (Salome, 1996, p. 173).

Salome (1996) highlights Super's life stages in which the developmental tasks can be placed viz.:

Stage I: Growth (Birth-14)

Substages: Fantasy, interest, capacity

Stage II: Exploration (Age 15-24)

Substages: Tentative, transition, trial

Stage III: Establishment (Age 25-44)

Substages: Trial, stabilization

Stage IV: Maintenance (Age 45-64)

Substages: None; (self fulfilment or frustration)

Stage V: Decline (Age 65 on)

Substages: Deceleration, retirement

In relation to Sithole's study (1997), this study also maintains that most students at the university are between the ages of 17 and 24 which places them in the exploration phase. Sithole (1997) explains these substages in the exploration stage as follows:

i. Tentative substage (Age 15-17)

This is a stage wherein the individual explores and considers his or her interests, needs, capabilities, values and opportunities so as to make tentative choices. The individual will fantasize about career opportunities, discuss with peers and other people, and even work during weekends. Sithole (1997) asserts that some African adolescents are not even at secondary education as expected at this level. Some are at the primary education level, hence career exploration is impeded by this since they are still at the stage of growth. Also, weekend jobs are limited to them since their environments provide limited career alternatives and prospects.

ii. Transition substage (Age 18-21)

Reality factors take prominence at this stage as the individual enrolls at tertiary institutions for certain careers or enters work. It is at this stage that the self-concept is implemented. Sithole (1997) argues that socio-economic factors play a role in hindering the expression of the self-concept since these factors influence African adolescents' career

decisions and choices. The lack therefore of adequate careers guidance services is another contributory factor in the inadequate developing of the self-concept among African students.

iii. Trial substage (Age 22-24)

This stage involves the individual trying out the choice made in the job situation. However, the lack of careers guidance services in schools makes this process difficult in that African students are not well informed of career prospects available hence most of their occupational choices are based on trial-and-error and on their role models.

In agreement with Sithole (1997), the researcher cautions that the above arguments need to be considered and adjustments made when it is to be applied to African communities. This would help towards implementing the theory with reality factors in mind.

1.5.3 SITUATIONAL OR SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES

The fundamental assumption of these theories is that not only personality traits, abilities, interests, beliefs and developmental constructs inform the person's occupational decisions and choices but other environmental factors play a role. The socio-economic and political circumstances of the individual influence his or her decisions and choices in life because these are beyond his or her control and would affect him or her. For example; cultural, community, family, sex,

race, educational and social class factors influence career development (Mtolo, 1996). The circumstances therefore provide limitations and even channel individuals towards certain career decisions and choices. Herr (1996) states that social contexts in which individuals develop are wide-ranging in their influence on individuals' career decisions and choices. Therefore, different groups with different situational settings would make decisions and choices differently.

Lent and Brown (1996) point out that the individuals' social environments expose them to a variety of activities (e.g. sports, music, mechanical tasks, etc.) which have a relevant career potential. They further state that the pursuit of a particular career is based on the influence that the individual will receive from parents, community, teachers, etc. As a result the individual develops certain expectations about future career prospects on the basis of social contexts. A further explanation on the influences of the social contexts on the individuals career choices comes from Krumboltz's social learning theory. Krumboltz's theory suggests that past and present experiences, and future expectations bring about career development (Amatea in Sithole, 1997). This implies that "chance experiences undoubtedly explain the process by which most occupational choices are made" (Herr in Sithole, 1997, p. 28). In other words, individuals' career choices and decisions are influenced by a variety of social factors (gender, family, educational, socio-economic, cultural, etc.). It is from these social factors that individuals acquire experiences that would be linked to their career decisions and choices because social factors "have been found to have a significant impact on young persons choice of occupation" (Herr & Cramer in Sagy & Lieberman, 1997, p.147).

It is on this basis that “most theories regard situational factors as chance factors in career development...”(Sithole, 1997, p. 27).

Sagy and Lieberman (1997) point out that some socio-cultural factors have a tendency of influencing occupational choices of individuals. In their investigation they highlighted that some macro-systems (gender, socio-economic and ethnic origin) and some micro-systems (family, school and peer group) are interwoven social structures which play an influential role in individuals' occupational choices. In other words, all these systems do not exert their influences individually but they all influence individuals' career developments (Sagy & Lieberman, 1997). Stead (1996) examined how social factors interacted with the individual's career development. Stead (1996) found out that the school, family background, occupational aspirations and economic background, cultural background and identity development had some major influences on the African adolescents' career development. In part, Stead's investigation reinforces Sagy and Lieberman's ideas that macro and micro systems are interconnected in their influence on the individual's career development. Sagy and Lieberman (1997) found out that gender, socio-economic status, ethnic background, family, peers, and the school were prominent social determinants of the individual's career choices.

The above arguments are pertinent to the African students' backgrounds since their lives have been mostly influenced by their socio-economic and political circumstances that prevailed before South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994. The legacy of the apartheid era had an impact on African students' career

development and careers guidance in African schools. It is evident that African students' social background played a major role in limiting them to make career decisions and choices since careers guidance services were inadequately provided for in their environments. The consideration of this theory is of significance for African communities because of their previous situational circumstances. Therefore, the consideration of this theory, in an attempt to enhance African students' career development, needs to be taken on the basis of the interactive nature of the social factors which influence their career development and aspirations. In other words, careers guidance in African schools needs to consider where African students come from in terms of their social background and what their future occupational aspirations are. This consideration may redress the past imbalances and promote African students' career development in particular.

1.6 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

This research report comprises six chapters which are planned as follows:

- ▶ **Chapter 1: Introduction.** This chapter focuses on the statement of the problem, research questions, aims, definition of terms and theoretical framework of the study.
- ▶ **Chapter 2: The Review of the Literature.** This chapter focuses on the different research literature which focuses on the issue of students' perception of careers guidance. It also looks at the relevance of the theoretical frame on the

basis of the prevailing conditions in African schools. Furthermore, the focus is also placed on gender, family and academic issues.

- ▶ **Chapter 3: The Research Design.** This chapter outlines the research approach and procedures adopted in collecting data that is relevant for this study.
- ▶ **Chapter 4: The Research Results.** This chapter outlines the manner in which data collected in chapter 3 is analysed and presented in table form.
- ▶ **Chapter 5: Discussion of the Results.** This chapter is based on the researcher's interpretation of the findings in relation to the findings of previous studies. It also provides further suggestions on the topic for consideration by other researchers.
- ▶ **Chapter 6: Implications, Recommendations, and Limitations of the Study.** This chapter provides an evaluative summation of the investigation's findings.

1.7 CONCLUSION

The foregone discussion highlights that African students in particular are not able to make informed career decisions and choices because careers guidance is inadequately provided for in their schools. Different researchers argue that inadequate careers guidance services (such as the lack of adequately trained guidance personnel) in African schools and other factors (such as socio-economic and political factors) which influence career decisions and choices are the major contributing factors in African

students' inability to make sound career decisions and choices. The sociopolitical changes and economic challenges facing South Africa necessitate the improvement of the present careers guidance services in African schools.

The impact of the present careers guidance services is challenged in this study through students' perceptions of careers guidance. The research problem therefore helped to crystallize the research questions which informed the aims of the study as focal points that directed it. Operational definitions were provided in an attempt to provide a conceptual framework of the study. The discussion of the personality, developmental and situational theories provided the theoretical framework of this study with the view that career decisions and choices are not informed by one theory but by a variety of theories which present different dimensions to career decision making and career choices. The outline of the six chapters for the research report are briefly described to provide an overview of what constitutes each chapter of the report.

CHAPTER 2

THE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The April 1994 elections brought the dawn of a new era in the history of South Africa. The demise of the apartheid era resulted in social, economic and political developments with major implications for change. The rapid transformation processes in different sectors of the country have placed new challenges on the South African society amidst imbalances of the previous apartheid era. South Africa therefore has to embrace these challenges to ensure progress and prosperity.

The national and global changes South Africa has to meet would have a profound impact on the provisions of education for African students in particular. The new ministry of education has to address political, social, economic and personal problems imposed on students during the post-apartheid era. These problems impacted on the psychological support services especially careers guidance provisions in African schools. These support services were supposed to prepare and equip African students to cope with the current demands of the national and global transformations and innovations, yet they have been found to be lacking in African schools. Their effectiveness to prepare and equip African students still remained in question to this day.

The major questions for the present South African careers guidance services are: To what extent are African students prepared for the new challenges in the job market? What developments have been effected by such services to help redress and improve the socio-economic and political disparities of the past? How adequately developed and improved are the psychological support services and resources for African students compared with those of their counterparts? How adequately prepared and equipped are African students in schools with regard to making career decisions and choices that will impact on their future lives? Larson, Butler, Wilson, Medora, and Allgood, (1994) point out that most of the literature placed emphasis on the 'What' of career decisions rather than on 'How' individuals made career decisions and the kinds of problems they encounter in the process.

It is such questions and many more which challenge the relevance and significance of the present education curriculum and the guidance support services connected to it in meeting national and global changes. The rapid socio-economic and political transformation in South Africa and the global eco-technological challenges demand the evaluation of the current careers guidance services and provisions in the present South African schools' context, particularly for the African community. It is through careers guidance that individuals are able to cope with significant and sweeping changes in the environment surrounding them. As conceptions that were based on the apartheid era are being replaced by new ideas (Stead, 1996), reconceptualisation and development of new careers guidance programmes become an absolute necessity. The decisions and choices about career opportunities available should therefore be context specific.

In other words, the needs required by the country for its growth and prosperity in terms of political, economic, and social changes have to be determined by the careers guidance provisions in preparation for the new millennium.

2.2 BACKGROUND TO CAREER TRENDS IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

Careers guidance and career development cannot be discussed without taking into account the past disparities which influenced the present situational conditions. The present socio-political and economic changes in the country have major implications for careers guidance in South Africa. Research has clearly revealed that unrealistic occupational aspirations of most African students are based on inappropriate and inadequate occupational information (Watson & Stead, 1993).

When looking back in time, it is evident that careers guidance has always been regarded as part of the broad picture of the psychological, educational, general or school guidance services dating back several decades (Jacobs et al., 1991). When the National Education Policy Act of 1967 (Act 39 of 1967, as amended in Act 73 of 1969) introduced segregated education, it was then that guidance services were provided for other racial groups but not for the African group (Jacobs et al., 1991; Naicker, 1994; Sithole, 1997). The emphasis of such services was on psychological, therapeutic, remedial, personal, educational choice, and career choice (Naicker, 1994; Stead, 1996; Sithole, 1997). Naicker (1994) further highlights that only white, coloured and Indian departments provided some form of service to its communities. It was not until 1981 upon the recommendation in the report *Guidance: Report by the Work Committee:*

1981 by the Human Sciences and Research Council (HSRC) that guidance for African students was decreed and accepted in the government White paper (Jacobs et al., 1991; Naicker, 1994; Stead, 1996; Sithole, 1997; Marais, 1998). The report highlighted that the best guidance provisions were for Indians and whites while for coloureds it was completely inadequate and for Africans it was virtually non-existent (Jacobs et al., 1991). The non-existence of careers guidance provisions for African students greatly limited their scope of career choices. Most African school leavers were channelled to careers that were designated as conventional or traditional careers. At most they pursued careers that were mostly common in their communities and accessible to them on the basis of the education they received.

Based on research studies (Naicker, 1994; de Haas, van der Merwe & Basson, 1995; Mtolo, 1996; Sithole, 1997) and the researcher's own educational and working experience, it has been observed that students tend to choose careers and institutions of study on the basis of prestige, status, popularity of the occupations in their communities and in relation to the streams they were following at high school. Usually, Science students enrolled for Pure and Natural Sciences, Medicine or Engineering (especially electrical or mechanical); Humanities (General) students enrolled for Law, Teaching, or Nursing; Commerce students enrolled for Economic Sciences, Administration, or Management at tertiary institutions. Their enrolment was, however, based on their matric results, to meet the chosen institutions' admission requirements and being able to afford the fees for tertiary study. However, most African students were not able to enrol in some tertiary institutions because they could not meet the admission requirements and as a result of financial constraints. Consequently, teaching and nursing were the most common of all careers because the admission requirements

and fees at teacher education institutions and nursing colleges were not as stringent as in universities. Mtolo (1996) confirms the popularity of teacher education institutions by stating that tuition in colleges of education tends to be cheaper than university tuition. Also, if the finances were limited or matric results were not good, teaching or nursing was the popular alternative option so as to provide job security and financial security. For instance, teachers and nurses were guaranteed employment after completing their training.

Furthermore, financial problems hindered most African matriculants from continuing with their studies. As a result most of them found employment in the then Departments of Education and Training, and Education and Culture schools as privately paid teachers (Mtolo, 1996). Nursing in particular provided financial security for the individual still in training because a remuneration package was available for student nurses. Financial security in Nursing is confirmed by Mtolo (1996) where she states that “many choose to go for nursing because of financial circumstances as student nurses receive a salary while in training” (p.54). Getting a salary while in training was seen as an opportunity and advantage by African students in particular because they came from destitute financial backgrounds. In support, Cloete (1981) revealed that teaching, nursing, and medicine were by far the most popular occupational choices for Africans. However, at university the most popular occupational choices were Accountancy, Business Administration, Law, Medicine, Nursing, Social work, and Teaching being the most popular of all occupations (Cloete, 1981). Watson and Stead (1993) found out in their study that teaching, medicine, social work, nursing, law, engineering, pharmacy, policing, management and psychology were the top ten ranked careers.

This ranking of careers showed that teaching, medicine, social work, nursing, and law are still regarded as the most important careers even after a decade of the findings in Cloete's study (1981).

A survey conducted in 1981 revealed that white South Africans were more inclined to business, science, technical fields and Africans were more inclined to social service and business organisation (Cloete, 1981). These findings are endorsed by Watson and Stead (1993) who found out that the social and educational services mostly dominate African students' career choices and practical and technical fields are least considered. Approximately 84,9% of African students aspired for professional and semi-professional occupations to 50,8% of white students who aspired for science and technical inclined occupations (Cloete, 1981). Watson and Stead (1993) reaffirm the findings of this study by revealing that "there is a narrow range of occupational preferences expressed by Black adolescents, with an emphasis on social service professions ... although only 1% were employed at such levels" (p. 2). These statistics reveal that despite their aspirations, only a handful had the opportunity of pursuing careers they aspired for.

Furthermore, Watson's and Stead's investigation (1993) found out that adolescents ranked careers in terms of Holland's classification of occupational types as social, investigative, realistic, artistic, conventional and enterprising. It is evident from these findings that the social services were held to be important by the school leavers. An African educationist in a workshop was cited as saying that "Black South Africans have been limited historically to social careers. This has created a vicious cycle as there have been limited role models available which in turn has led to occupational

foreclosure on the part of black adolescents” (Watson & Stead, 1993, p. 9). In other words the career patterns followed by generations of African students have a historical base that channelled them into careers as a consequence of the past disparities. These findings further reinforce the idea that African people are more people-oriented than activity-oriented on the basis of their traditional communal economic and socio-political culture which they emulate in their everyday lives.

Another finding was that gender had a significant influence on occupational choices when the results reflected more orientation of females to social service occupations such as nursing and males to business and technical fields (Cloete, 1981). In terms of gender, 40,4% males aspired more for professional occupations while 64,4% of females aspired for semi-professional occupations with 59,2% of females aspiring for professional occupations at the university. Watson and Stead (1993) confirmed these findings by revealing that females chose more of the social, realistic and conventional careers which were considered to be feminine and males chose investigative and enterprising careers considered to be too masculine oriented. The explanations for these findings may be that some professions such as social work, nursing, etc., were considered female-oriented occupations and seeking employment in medicine, engineering, and business were considered male-oriented occupations. It is on such a basis that significant gender differences exist in different occupations in African communities. For instance, careers such as teaching, social work, nursing, and police were mostly chosen by females and most males chose careers in medicine, engineering, and management (Watson & Stead, 1993). The results in the study by Bobo et al., (1998) showed that professional athletes and police careers were most popular with boys and teaching and nursing were most popular with girls.

Many reasons such as gender stereotypism, future family gender role obligations, career stereotypism, etc., tend to influence most of African students' career decisions and choices.

This brief account of career trends in African communities shows practically the possible impact of careers guidance knowledge and provisions in the guidance services in African schools. The problems reported by the HSRC on careers guidance in schools still epitomise the prevailing conditions in African schools. Stead (1996) confirms this point by stating that even though apartheid was gradually dying as from the 1980's only minimal improvements have been existent in the area of career development for African people with major implications for the country's socio-political and economic changes.

2.3 THE ROLE AND RELEVANCE OF CAREERS GUIDANCE IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS' CONTEXT

In this study the relevance of careers guidance in the present context of transformation in our country plays a pivotal role. It forms the basis on which students view the relevance of careers guidance services in the present and future challenges when they leave school. It is evident from the historical base and previous research studies that the lack of careers guidance provisions greatly limited the scope of the African students in schools towards career decision making.

Hickson and White, van der Merwe (in Sithole, 1997) found out that African adolescents were less career mature than their white counterparts because they lacked self knowledge and knowledge of the work environment. This is in line with Super's developmental theory which maintained that career development is the process of implementing the self-concept (Harris-Bowlsbey in Salome, 1996). Sithole (1997) further reveals that the aspirations of African adolescents were incongruent with demands of the labour and economic situation of the country which demands more technical skills. African adolescents aspired for high status occupations (medicine, law, engineering, accountancy, pharmacy) and for occupations that were common and popular in their communities, for example, they aspired to become doctors, nurses, teachers, lawyers, social workers (Sithole, 1997). The incongruence in the African students' aspirations with the present economic demands may be attributed to the fact that the lack of careers guidance provisions resulted in their occupational aspirations being influenced by environmental factors. That is, situational factors played a role in determining African students' career decisions and choices. This is supported by the situational theory which maintains that situational factors play a role in career development (Sithole, 1997).

Jacobs et al. (1991), Education Information Centre (1996), and Sithole (1997) state that it is more than just career information that helps students decide on careers to pursue. Self knowledge also influences the career paths that best suit the individual. The relevance of careers guidance should also be seen in this light because it is through knowledge and understanding of the individual's capability, interest and personality that help in guiding the individual towards a suitable career path. However, "careers guidance in most South African schools is seen mainly as a directing and controlling

process, characterised by socialisation and social control” (Burns in Naicker, 1994, p. 29) without due regard of personal qualities which identify learners who they are and what they can become. In other words learners in schools are not given the opportunity of knowing themselves and how this affects their future work prospects as these tend to determine their role in life. The personality theories are of significance in this regard because their emphasis is on the ability of students to make significant career decisions and choices that relate to their goals, interests, talents and personality (Jacobs et al., 1991). Therefore, careers guidance services in schools should look beyond just providing career information to students so as to fit the in the work environment. School careers guidance services should look into the exploration of individual’s potential as an attempt at building the self-concept. Students should therefore explore careers and make career decisions and choices which relate to self knowledge in the context of the changing South African socio-political and economic environment. In support, Jacobs et al. (1991) state that the “integration of self-knowledge and occupational knowledge with a view to making occupational decisions should occur with a view to the country’s manpower needs” (p. 177). In other words, the individual’s perception of him or herself and about the world of work is significant in assisting him or her in making a properly informed career decision and choice. It is important to note that career possibilities are restricted if one does not choose a career that suits him or her and his or her talents (Your Career, 1998).

Your Career (1998) suggests the following guiding questions regarding self-knowledge which have a bearing on the personality theories:

- ▶ What abilities do I have?
- ▶ What interests do I have?
- ▶ What personality do I have?

Stead (1996) advocates a developmental-contextual perspective as a relevant model of understanding not only the individual's career development but also the understanding of environmental changes that influence career exploration and planning. This is in line with the situational theories on career development since environmental factors influence career decisions and choices. He further states that this perspective becomes meaningful if career development could be understood on the premise of the apartheid and post apartheid era. These sentiments are echoed in the Green Paper on Further Education and Training (FET) (1998) which states that some of the most pressing demands for change arise from the legacy of apartheid and the social inequalities it generated. As a result the public school system was confronted by deep-rooted problems, provisions in certain institutions were poor, trained learners were not easily assimilated by the work environment, and the relationship between FET institutions and the labour market was lacking. It further points out that the need for change is a result of pressing social and economic conditions as the country tries to move away from the legacies and inequalities of the apartheid era. The poor quality of education and its learning programmes provided less meaningful links of the school system with industry. The present social and economic realities demand redress so that students are prepared

to meet the challenges of the changing world economy (Green Paper on FET, 1998). The developmental-contextual perspective advocates the examination of the interaction of socio-political and economic factors with career development of the individual (Stead, 1996). The proposed integrated curriculum 2005 is therefore an attempt to link students to a broad range of career opportunities that will be more relevant to the workplace and career development. In other words, the emphasis of empowering students with skills and the shift from content-driven to a programme-driven curriculum in schools is based on redressing the needs particularly of the disadvantaged communities of the South African population for better assimilation in the workplace.

The lack of careers guidance services in African schools in particular has therefore had a major impact in impeding the development and utilisation of human resources to the maximum. The impact on human resources is evident in the lack of career paths offered for both students and workers which has had devastating results for social and economic development (African National Congress, 1994). The segregated education system in the apartheid era greatly affected the development of human potential in the country therefore an education programme that will lead to this realisation is an absolute necessity. It is on this basis that the relevance of guidance services in South African schools is questioned in forums and seminars which discuss transformations of this sector of the education system (Naicker, 1994). The developmental contextual model provides a relevant and meaningful basis for the improvement and further development of careers guidance services.

Naicker (1994) sees the relevance of careers guidance as based on the relationship between the individual, school, work and society. Students are faced with making decisions and choices regarding careers they wish to pursue. Their understanding of the world of work is determined by their being well informed about their abilities, aspirations and values. Jacobs et al. (1991) and the Education Information Centre (1996) highlight that occupational planning and choices are largely determined by self-knowledge and occupational decision-making which are basically characterised by talents, intellectual capabilities, aptitude, interests, sociality, perseverance and responsibility. Ginzberg's and Super's models are of significance in this regard because career development is viewed as a process that is influenced by the development of the self and the mastery of occupational developmental tasks. Naicker (1994) therefore advocates a model that will account for these attributes because students need to "assess their own abilities, and also get an understanding of how their choices of jobs are dependent on personal and social attributes" (p. 28).

The interaction between personal and social variables influence and shape career choices. They assist an individual to clarify issues and make meaningful occupational choices that are relevant to the labour demands of the country (Education Information Centre, 1996; Naicker, 1994). The personality and situational theories play a meaningful role in this regard since they advocate the consideration of personality traits and environmental factors influencing career decisions. It is careers guidance which needs to provide individuals with the understanding of these attributes and knowledge to decide on the kind of work that relates to them. In other words, the individuals right to free choice of employment enables them to have access to career opportunities within the range of their abilities (Naicker, 1994).

The relationship between education in general, schooling and career guidance is of significance. The school is a social system in which the aims, aspirations and values of society are entrenched in the educational framework. As an integral part of the school system careers guidance also carries these societal attributes. The inclusion therefore of the aims of careers guidance within the educational aims is of significant consequence. The ability of students to make educational, occupational and personal life decisions is helped along by the understanding of personal, social, economic factors which careers guidance should aim at achieving (Naicker, 1994). In support, the Interim Core syllabus for Guidance (1995) states that as an integral part of the schooling system Guidance should focus on the holistic development of the learner and address the social, personal, academic and economic problems which are reflected in the school environment. Students will make meaningful contributions in society if careers guidance guides and assists them to make career decisions and choices during their schooling that relates to their individual differences. That is, school careers guidance needs to take into cognisance not only the students' personal attributes, but also social forces which influence their individual career decisions and choices. Naicker (1994) points out that "information obtained about the individual, stages of personal development, and about the world of work and the social environment can provide a good understanding of the interaction between the individual, social, and occupational environments" (p.31).

The envisaged curriculum which encourages links between the school, higher institutions and work will provide a base for it to broaden the range of career options for young learners, and which will be more relevant and responsive to real employment prospects and higher education opportunities (Green Paper on FET, 1998). The school

has a major contribution to make in preparing the student for future employment (Stead, 1996) and careers guidance should help students to explore the complex and specialised world of work. In servicing this process Burns (in Naicker, 1994) suggested that careers guidance in South African schools should include:

- * enabling individuals to decide who they are and the lives they wish to lead;
- * exploring not what the individual can offer her or his work, but also what work can offer to the individual in terms of his or her total personality and life style;
- * not making decisions for people, but rather using available expertise to help people to make decisions for themselves.

Gibson and Mitchell, Biehler and Snowman (in Marais, 1998) echo the above suggestions when they state that “the development of accountable and relevant guidance programmes, therefore, begins with the assessment of the needs of the target population” (p.144). In other words, careers guidance services would optimally serve their purpose if they directly address the needs and abilities of the learners in an attempt to enable them to meet the changing conditions in the country. The relevance of the career development theories to African schools is paramount since the arguments discussed clearly indicate the consideration of the different theories as a means to shaping African students’ career development. It is on this basis that a holistic approach to career development in African schools is important.

2.4 CAREERS GUIDANCE SERVICES IN AFRICAN SCHOOLS

The historical background on careers guidance showed that guidance services were only provided for African students in schools in 1981 upon the recommendation of the HSRC. The commission was a result of students' uprisings in 1976 which, however, led to menial improvement on the education of the African learner since education still remained segregated. A lot of African people were and still are unskilled as a result of continued inadequate education provisions and unequal education opportunities and employment. This impacted greatly on the socio-political and economic developments of the country because most of the African students were high school drop outs and made up a significant proportion of the unemployed (Naicker, 1994). The HSRC had recommended the retention of general school guidance and careers guidance as a relevant component for improvement in schools. However, less attention was placed to this recommendation. In support, Marais (1998) states that as a consequence of a variety of factors, guidance in African schools "came nowhere near the recommendations of the HSRC" (p. 144).

The absence of adequately trained guidance personnel, guidance classes and quality content and training form major problems for guidance services (Naicker, 1994; Stead, 1996). This consequently affected the ability of students to make informed career decisions and choices about careers they wished to pursue. The lack of career information, self knowledge and career opportunities greatly limited African students in making informed career decisions. This problem has been further exacerbated by the high drop out and low pass rates in schools. For example, in 1997 the matric pass rate hit an all time low of 47,1% with drops of between 3,7% and 16% in the provinces

(Sunday Times, 1998). The implication of these figures is that most of African students' career aspirations are shattered and that most of them join the already saturated and growing unemployment list. These figures provide little difference as to the previous statistics on the average pass rates which have always registered below 50% for African students, contrary to white students' average pass rates which have always been above 80% with 90% matric exemptions as opposed to less than 17% African students' matric exemptions (Fisher & Scott, 1993). Such conditions automatically channel students in the direction of career paths based on their matric results and they either become unemployed or join sectors where they become semi-skilled or unskilled workers with no further possibility of career improvement. Hyslop, The Central Statistical Services, and Hartshorne (in Naicker, 1994) revealed that young African school leavers in Standards 9 and 10 in the age group below 25 years make a significant proportion of 36% of the unemployed.

The high unemployment conditions in South Africa have a major impact on careers guidance in a society that is becoming more open and democratic. Careers guidance in schools faces a greater challenge of not only providing career information to students on various job prospects available. Careers guidance should also assist students on the kinds of skills they need to develop for particular jobs so as to become marketable and employable. These support mechanisms on skill development for students may help to avert joblessness to reach crisis proportions, if it has not as yet. However, such assistance to students may only be effective if guidance personnel are adequately trained to provide such a service and knowledgeable themselves about the world of work. This is because, the introduction of Guidance and the training of guidance personnel for African schools in the past was to meet the escalating educational

problems. The duties of guidance personnel mostly centred around making psychological tests in schools for matriculants in particular.

Mtolo (1996) states that the introduction of Guidance in African schools saw a number of African teachers undergoing crash courses in Guidance in an attempt to "...shift from testing a group of learners to a more direct involvement in consultation with, and brief in-service-training of teachers and heads of departments" (p. 24). This shift was aimed at teachers who could conduct intellectual assessments in their own schools and also accelerate the establishment of the delivery service for learners. The shift also aimed at empowering teachers to solve learners' psychological problems that occurred in schools. Marais (1998) states that "guidance services offered by the Department consisted mainly of visits by school psychologists to a number of schools where they administered psychometric tests" (p. 144), which did not serve the purpose of meaningfully communicating the results to learners. An example of the latter was the Panel for Identification Diagnosis and Assistance (PIDA). Its aim was to identify, diagnose and assist learners' needs and problems. The failure of the PIDA system to deliver was a result of teachers being inadequately trained.

A lack of resources to deal with learners' educational psychological problems on general education and guidance services in schools also caused its failure. Furthermore, PIDA's ill-provision in pre- and in-service training caused the teachers to be ill-equipped with knowledge and resources for dealing with learners' problems. The shortcomings of the PIDA system provide a convincing argument for the reasons why the psychological services fail to provide appropriate guidance services. Naicker (1994) reveals that careers guidance still focuses on testing, diagnosing and

emphasising qualifications more than democratic processes of building up the self-concept for future employment. It is such issues which present difficulties for students particularly those from a disadvantaged background because the foundation on which to base their decisions in terms of career choices and otherwise is lacking.

Learners are not aware of the personal and social factors that they need to consider when choosing careers and how these relate to the occupational world. Stead (1996) points out that most of the choices that African adolescents make regarding careers are based on a trial-and-error basis because they are not able to integrate self knowledge with the occupational world. Chuenyane (1983) states that the difficulty in career choices is a result of the lack of understanding of oneself which enables the individual to make more rational educational and vocational plans. Your Career (1998) observed that some students at tertiary level usually choose certain courses, in which they end up performing badly, on the basis of friendship alliances without considering their interests and abilities which eventually impact on their future employment. It should be pointed out that such situations are a reflection of what is occurring in schools and of which learners cannot be held entirely responsible for.

The legacies of the past which are coupled with inadequate careers guidance provisions resulted in such situations. Moela (1998) partially affirms the latter statement by stating that educational and social inadequacies are the cause of students making wrong career choices. It is on such a background that Hickson and White (1989) contend that “It would be a mistake to develop careers guidance programmes for blacks in exactly the same format as that for whites” (p. 78), because African students come from a disadvantaged background as a consequence of apartheid policies (Sithole, 1996). It

is on the basis of the African students' disadvantaged background that the NEPI report (in Naicker, 1994) argues that the failure in establishing guidance services in most African schools is a result of the view that Guidance was perpetuating apartheid doctrines. It can be further argued that this resistance may be a result of the education curriculum having had racial undertones to it which were intended to keep Africans as subordinates of their white counterparts. The resistance should also be seen in the light of what the curriculum advocated under the apartheid government. The Guidance curriculum in South African schools aimed at making learners to uphold the goals and values of the Christian National Education (CNE) so as to fit them "... into an ordered and ordained society"(Enslin, & Morrow in Naicker, 1994. p.30). In other words, the curriculum propagated functions of social control wherein individuals would serve their communities and also be obedient, loyal and respectful towards their employers. Individuals were therefore channelled into certain forms of labour because their education limited their ability to think for themselves and satisfy their needs in accordance to their interests.

2.5 CAREERS GUIDANCE CURRICULUM IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

The Interim Core Syllabus for Guidance (1995) highlights that the rejection and marginalisation of guidance in education departments was because of its prescriptive nature and lack of its relevance to learners' needs and experiences. That is, it failed to address diverse pertinent issues and innovations that related to the South African context. It aimed more at manipulation than enhancing self-knowledge for career decisions and choices (Naicker, 1994). Naicker (1994) states that this was in keeping

with the South African schooling system which emphasised what to think and not how to think. Learners were more passive than active in their classroom interaction. The Guidance syllabus's prescriptive nature made it too rigid and provided insufficient guidelines for careers guidance teachers who wished to provide relevant, creative and flexible programmes. The inability of students to make career decisions and choices has therefore its roots in the ideals advocated by the South African education system. Students cannot be entirely blamed for making incorrect career decisions and choices since the background from which they come played a major role in this dilemma.

The new Guidance curriculum is advocated in an attempt to meet the socio-economic and political changes since the present syllabi are "clearly disjointed, irrelevant, and inappropriate to the changing needs of a democratic society" (Interim Core Syllabus for Guidance, 1995, p. 4). This core syllabus therefore calls for the adaptation of the existing programmes into the new syllabus and the holistic approach which has a close association with careers guidance theories. The Interim Core Syllabus for Guidance (1995) places the following guiding principles for its implementation:

- * democratic values and implementation of the Guidance programme, taking into account the needs and interests of the learners as well as the community at large;
- * an assessment of the developmental needs of children and adolescents in terms of social, emotional, cognitive, and physical domains;
- * contextualising relevant issues in terms of community concerns, changes in the working environment, environmental and global issues;
- * an awareness of and respect for diversity whereby the syllabus reflects a commitment to non-discrimination, non-sexism and the bill of rights and constitution of the country;

- * affirmative action and redress whereby inequalities and imbalances at all levels are addressed;
- * access to appropriate and innovative resource material;
- * demystification of social relations of power and the promotion of active, critical and dynamic learner-based education.

These principles serve as means of establishing an integrated Guidance curriculum on which guidance programmes will be based. The Guidance curriculum advocates democratic principles with due considerations of learners' self awareness and social orientations in relation to becoming resourceful individuals. It hopes to achieve these standards through:

- * the holistic development of the learner;
- * the provision of effective guidance and counselling of the learner;
- * the development of democratic values and competencies;
- * challenging prejudices and discrimination in all fronts;
- * locating the learner within his or her social context;
- * promoting the integration and relationship among all aspects of Guidance;
- * highlighting the relevance of all aspects of Guidance to broader social, economic, and political developments;
- * promoting life skills.

These aims form the basis from which the guidance content will be established in the syllabus for Guidance in schools. The Guidance content aims at making guidance more context specific by providing flexibility and adaptability in its content so as to meet the rapidly changing conditions in the country and globally. It also aims at redressing the past disparities. In this way learners would be able to competently make their own decisions with regard to choices of careers (Interim Core Syllabus for Guidance, 1995).

A lot of students are not aware that the “choices of subjects they make and the activities they participate in at school can influence vocational choices which affect their future lives” (Chuenyane, 1983, p. 272). The areas of interest for careers guidance covered in the syllabus are: skills development, self awareness, subject choices at school, higher and further education institutions, work and unemployment, and economic and environmental education. The core syllabus provides more detail on the aspects addressed in each component.

The education curriculum of which careers guidance is an integral part still determines the manner in which people perceive the extent of the relevance of subject choices in schools in relation to jobs. However, the new Curriculum 2005 has as one of the learning areas Life Orientation which is a Life Skills oriented approach to the teaching and learning of students. It will enhance the development of life skills in order to assist learners to meet the challenges of life and the rapidly changing world. Guidance and careers guidance, which are part of this approach, are seen as helping agents towards the realization of self-empowerment, survival and growth of individuals. Bromwell et al (1996) pointed out that “guidance activities should enable learners to take responsibility for their own lives, to find out relevant information, to make decisions ...” (p. 2). It is relevant and accountable guidance programmes that will help ‘cement’ school subjects and extracurricular school experiences which prepare learners for life and living. Bromwell et al (1996) further pointed out that collective effort and the contribution of the school, the home and the community with teachers and guidance teachers assisting, are important since parents no longer feel competent to prepare their children for life and look to the school for help.

The core syllabus, however, shows that the aspect of relating technology to subjects studied in schools is reflected as a post secondary study. Technology's relevance to the school curriculum seems to be inadequately addressed. This has a major impact on career development and careers guidance in South Africa as we approach the new millennium. Stead (1996) points out that the missing link in the South African curriculum has been the lack of emphasis of subjects like technology in the school system. In affirmation, the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) (in Stead, 1996) provided statistics on the shortage of scientifically trained African personnel by reflecting on the ratio of student enrolment in the universities to student enrolment in technikons as 5:1. Less African students enrol in occupation oriented careers that are skill-based. A further explanation besides the curriculum, which is based on previous studies and the researcher's experience as a student and employee at a university, is the lack of exposure to and information on occupations with technological orientation. Sithole (1997) reveals statistics which confirm the lack of orientation to technology as that:

“Findings by Cloete (1980) on career choices - social service (69%), Business Organization (14.9%), Science (7.1%), and Outdoor (0.6%) - were confirmed in a recent South African study by Watson, Foxcroft and Horn, 1995 that Black adolescents aspire mostly for careers that fit the social (38%) and the investigative (34%) of Holland's topologies against 12%, 8%, 7%, and 2% for realistic, conventional, artistic and enterprising respectively” (p. 101).

These figures show a greater interest of African students towards the social types of occupation which is confirmed in Watson and Stead (in Stead, 1996) wherein the Social and Investigative types were considered to be more important than the Realistic type. This also confirms the findings above in Watson, Foxcroft and Horn (in Sithole, 1997) who found the social type of occupations more popular. This clearly shows the occupational choices which African students aspire to pursue. Besides the latter evidence, the problem of less orientation to technologically inclined careers is further compounded by the low enrolment and pass rate in subjects such as mathematics and physical science. Fisher and Scott (1993) revealed that in 1990 less than 27% of matric students studying mathematics and 16% of matric students studying physical science had enrolled for these subjects, and the failure rate in these subjects exceeds 75% presently. These statistics not only provide explanations on why less African students enrol for scientifically oriented occupations but it also provides information on why most African students are found to be enrolled more in the areas of Humanities than Science. Approximately 50 000 African students were enrolled in colleges of education alone and this could be attributed to a lack of other options on the basis of their matric results (Fisher & Scott, 1993).

The high status that has been accorded to universities rather than to technikons is also another factorial explanation of the SAIRR statistics. The notion in the African community has also been that if the individual was at the university, he or she was considered intelligent and had a better chance of employment as opposed to going to a technikon. The technikon was considered as a second option should admission to university not be possible. Fisher and Scott (1993) statistically support this assertion by revealing that less than 18 000 African students were enrolled in technikons and

technical colleges either because they were largely not popular or a low pass rate in mathematics and science had earned them a place in a technikon. Watson, Foxcroft, and Horn (in Sithole, 1997) found out that 75% of African students mostly preferred high status occupations as opposed to 18% for middle class occupations and 7% for skilled occupations. The high social class occupations were preferred because of the status attached to the degree than to a diploma obtained at the university than to a diploma obtained at a technikon.

The prestige associated with particular institutions and their high admission requirements reinforced these ideas of occupational preferences. Admission to university rather than to a technikon meant that an individual was an outstanding performer. Technikons previously had more relaxed admission requirements than universities. For example, some universities required a matric exemption with a 'D' aggregate at the least (which did not guarantee admission to the degree chosen). In addition, full admission lay in reaching a certain score of the admission point system in faculties such as science, engineering, medicine and commerce. If the admission score was not achieved, chances of admission were slim. Fisher and Scott (1993) point out that a large proportion of African students who have completed secondary schooling have poor subject grades and not more than 17% in the period 1986-90 obtained matric exemptions hence they did not have the opportunity to enrol at universities. These figures provide explanations as to why fewer African students qualify for entry to engineering, medicine, science, and commerce faculties (Fisher & Scott, 1993). Rutherford and Donald (1993) also state that places at universities were awarded on the basis of the selection test results and not only on matric results.

Students who were eligible to enter the university had to meet these entrance requirements.

On the other hand, technikons on average required an acceptable pass in matric without matric exemption so long as the matric pass met the technikon's admission points requirements. For example, the admission requirement at Mangosuthu Technikon in KwaZulu/Natal is generally an 'E' symbol (higher grade) in English, Maths, Science and Biology. However, other departments in faculties such as electrical and chemical engineering, and accounting require a 'C' or 'D' symbol (higher grade) in Maths and 'D' or a pass symbol in other related subjects. Furthermore, a point system in these departments is used to select students who meet entry requirements (Mangosuthu Technikon Information Guide, 1998). However, the admission requirements have now become more stringent in some technikons as a result of the influx of students and more demand for scientifically skilled personnel. The admission requirements in some institutions minimally took into consideration the disadvantaged background of African students and the high failure rate which has been plaguing African schools for decades. Equal admission criteria applied to all racial groups regardless of their background greatly limited the chances of individual African students to explore different careers. With this background, the researcher provides further explanations on the SAIRR statistics from his own experience. It is such contentious issues (the prescriptive nature and lack of relevance of the curriculum, popularity and status of institutions, stringent admission requirements in institutions as opposed to the pass rate, etc.) which have been previously stated and many more that the careers guidance curriculum needs to address in order to redress the previous imbalances.

2.6 ATTITUDES TOWARDS CAREERS GUIDANCE

The Interim Core Syllabus for Guidance (1995), Mtolo (1996), Sithole (1997), and Bhusumane (1997) pointed out that the careers guidance programmes and services have been undervalued and back benched in most African schools even though their significance has been acknowledged by all role players (politicians, educators and teachers, parents, private sectors, support services, etc.). Besides careers guidance's inadequate provision in the school curriculum and the lack of trained personnel, its undervalue is reflected by the different attitudes that education administrators, teachers and learners attach to careers guidance as an integral part of the development of the learners in schools. Some teachers in schools were selected to teach guidance with a view that any teacher can co-ordinate and teach the subject with less or no prior training. These conditions are still prevalent because most teachers have no expertise with regard to the role of the guidance teacher.

2.6.1 TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS CAREERS GUIDANCE

Mtolo (1996) highlights that most teachers see guidance teaching and periods as a waste of time when the periods can be used to teach examination subjects, allow learners to use them for self study, mark exercise books, etc. Other schools do not even have any periods allocated in the school timetable for guidance and it is taught on an informal basis. If Guidance has a slot it is taken as one of the extracurricular activities which are utilized after all subjects have been taught. As a result the guidance teacher feels marginalised and frustrated by such attitudes (Bhusumane, 1997). These attitudes are largely brought about

by Guidance's neglect and exclusion in the school curriculum because it is a non-examination subject and thus given less priority. Also, not many teachers in schools who offer this subject are adequately trained and as a result they consider it as a peripheral subject (Watson & Stead, 1993). Such situations cause difficulties and frustrations for guidance teachers with the responsibility of delivering this service to learners because of other teachers' requests for Guidance periods to finish the syllabus.

Guidance teachers are also seen as 'having it easy' because their work is viewed as only to sit in offices and talk to students and visit institutions and be custodians of career information (Mtolo, 1996; Bhusumane, 1997). It is more frustrating if the guidance teacher or any other teacher with this responsibility has a full teaching load because this means that he or she is not able to deliver the service as effectively as possible. The latter situation is common in African schools. The teacher may also find himself or herself using the period to finish the syllabus to the detriment of the careers guidance period because of the work overload. Other teachers also have the perception that learners require little help in career related matters because their subjects and academic achievements directed them to the type of careers associated with their subjects (Mtolo, 1996). This is misleading because the learner who does not perform well remains with a problem of limited or no career choices at all. Even learners who perform well also experience career problems because they lack career information and guidance in career decisions and choices. Naicker (in Mtolo, 1996) states that a whole school careers guidance policy must embrace learners of all academic ability.

The views expressed above explain why careers guidance has been inadequately provided for learners in African schools. Even though the gap for those who receive careers guidance is narrowed by its inclusion, the problem persists (Sithole,1997). Therefore, due consideration of different personal and social attributes of learners are paramount to the implementation of careers guidance programmes. The successful implementation of some careers guidance programme rests on it becoming part of the school curriculum with trained personnel and the proper development and delivery of careers guidance services (Mtolo, 1996; Bhusumane, 1997).

2.6.2 LEARNERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS CAREERS GUIDANCE

Most students see careers guidance as useful and necessary in helping them to decide on careers (Chuenyane, 1983; Mtolo,1996). It is the effectiveness of the careers guidance programmes used that are in question and which learners view as not being helpful. Learners feel the system has denied them an opportunity to help them decide on their future life prospects. Chuenyane (1983) observed that “not less than 60% expressed a need for additional help with finding jobs and careers, understanding the guidance programme, developing self-understanding, career awareness, exploration and planning, interpersonal relationships, value clarification, selection of courses and acquisition of decision-making skills in sharp contrast to the help they feel they have received” (p. 271). The concerns of students are further affirmed by the 88% of students in Mtolo (1996) who were in favour of careers guidance enforcement in schools as a means of helping them to have adequate information on careers and make the

right career choices at tertiary institutions. These findings are also supported by the previous study which showed 58% of students expressing the need for careers guidance to be incorporated in the education curriculum as they saw these as two sides of the same coin (Euvrard, 1992). They perceive that the early introduction of careers guidance would provide understanding on what subject choices in the different streams in schools entail and this would prevent them from changing streams more often in institutions in order to find a suitable career. They attribute the latter to their needs not being met and the lack of adequate background and exposure to correct school subject choices and careers guidance (Chuenyane, 1983; Mtolo, 1996). The view expressed by students shows that consistent exposure to career options as early as the school age has a significant impact on their career development and maturity. It is through time and self awareness that the individual comes to make mature career decisions by weighing his or her options and capabilities.

The dilemma students find themselves in is exacerbated by the fact that career decisions in the South African education system are made around late August of the matric year when students plan to go to technikons, colleges, or universities (Pienaar & Bester, 1996). Pienaar and Bester (1996) highlight that there are those who have decided on careers, there are those who have not decided on careers and are concerned by it, there are those who have not decided and are waiting for others to decide for them, and there are those who have not decided and are not concerned at all by their indecision (Pienaar & Bester, 1996). Consequently negative overtures towards guidance cloud their vision if the service expected is not adequately delivered and does not address their needs.

This creates confusion and frustrations for them especially when they see the significant impact that it could make in their lives.

The negative perceptions that students express are based on the fact that careers guidance lessons are perceived as irrelevant to the type of jobs available and the lessons fail to cater for them at all levels in schools. In essence, guidance lessons are then perceived as lacking usefulness because the lessons do not take into consideration the students' range of experiences. Stead (1996) echoes the concerns of students in that adequate guidance support services are lacking in schools because co-ordination between guidance personnel and the department of labour, non-government organizations, family, and industry are absent for the adequate career development of students to take place. The involvement of these structures would bring about more relevance to careers guidance teaching because constant reference to what the job market requires would be emphasized. This would provide learners with more focus and knowledge of what the requirements of the job market are. Stead (1996) warns that "if students are not exposed to various work environments, however, it will be difficult to give them a wide knowledge of occupations" (p. 273). Visits to different institutions by personnel from different sectors need to be encouraged so as to bring about relevance to the relationship between careers guidance and the work environment.

Most students indicate that family members and significant others play a major role in influencing their career decisions. Watson and Stead (in Stead, 1996), Mphele (1997) revealed that parents were highly rated as the most significant

occupational sources of career information. Hodkinson and Sparkes (1993) stated that it is not easy to provide coherent guidance programmes when many of the young people turn to their family and friends rather than to guidance personnel for advice. This is a result of the negative view learners have of careers guidance programmes. The attitudes exhibited by different education officials towards guidance also caused disappointment on the part of the learners and sparked confusion and frustration. Learners also saw guidance as not making a significant contribution in shaping their future lives. Therefore friends, relatives, role models, and neighbours are seen as influential in career decisions based on personal acquaintances (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1993; Watson & Stead, 1993; Mphele, 1997). In support, Skuy et al., de Haas (in Mtolo, 1996) found out that 70% of students indicated that parents were the mostly preferred helping agents in future careers and further education as opposed to guidance teachers.

2.7 SOME FACTORS INFLUENCING CAREER DECISIONS AND CHOICES

2.7.1 GENDER

Significant differences in career development and occupational decisions and choices linked to gender have been observed and documented (Larson, Butler, Wilson, Medora, & Allgood, 1994; Bobo, Hildreth, & Dorodoye, 1998; Tokar & Jome, 1998). Emphasis has been placed on within-sex (between females only and males only) career development than on between-sex (between males and females) career development (Fitzgerald and Betz; Moreland, Harren, Krimsky-Montague, & Tinsley, 1979 in Larson et al., 1994), yet “an understanding of

relevant gender differences in career development facilitates accurate intervention” (Bobo et al., 1998, p. 37). Larson et al. (1994) pointed out that the difference lay in that career decision making and family obligations run parallel with males while with females they are in conflict. This notion is explained in that traditionally, males were viewed as family providers and females as nurturant care givers (Sithole, 1997; Larson et al., 1994). It is on this basis that career decisions and choices of females centred more on careers that involved caring for people (e.g. nursing, social work, teaching, etc.) than on historically traditionally male oriented careers. It is on this basis that “family life, traditionally a minor factor in men’s career development, is a critical competing factor for women” (Larwood & Gutek, in Larson et al., 1994, p. 80). As a result females’ career aspirations are greatly limited hence they tend to be more undecided because they have to choose between family life and career (Sithole, 1997). A 1992 survey on what learners wanted in school guidance showed that a larger percentage of girls (68%) than boys (53%) expressed the need to be helped in careers guidance (Euvrard, 1992).

The females’ expressions may be an indication that careers guidance in schools does not clearly strike a balance between career aspirations and family life for females in particular. A more integrated approach in careers guidance teaching, in particular, on females’ career aspirations and career development in relation to their gender role functions could help in their career decisions and choices. This approach could help females to look beyond traditionally gender oriented careers since occupational equity in recent years is evident in many women who have chosen non-traditional careers.

A 1985 survey by Hughes et al. (in Bobo et al., 1998) on the “effects of self-esteem on the sex-role attitudes and career choices of children” (p.37) found out that boys with high self-esteem held more traditional notions concerning sex roles at workplaces while girls with high self-esteem chose more non-traditional careers. In other words, boys who held high opinions of themselves and were sure they met the expected social standards selected careers associated with their gender roles. On the other hand, girls who had self confidence chose careers which deviated from the expected social standards and expectations of their gender roles of femininity. The findings in Hughes et al. (in Bobo et al., 1998) may be explained by the notion that strong societal norms and gender oriented occupational prestige influenced boys’ career choices. In recent years, the influence on sex stereotyped careers seems to be lessened by parents who move away from traditionally gender oriented occupations (Bobo et al.,1998). The latter may be caused because career stereotyping is being overcome and children are becoming more exposed to varied career choices and girls, in particular, are presented with role models who have moved into careers previously reserved for males (Bobo et al., 1998).

The overcoming of career stereotyping is a statement which indicates females’ wish to move away from occupational gender discrimination to occupational equity. To reiterate, womens’ decisions to choose gender non-traditional careers and male dominated careers are seen as improving women’s status and advancement opportunities (Chusmir & Lemkau in Tokar & Jome, 1998). Despite the revelations of the study, however, a strong link of career choices to traditional careers on the basis of gender stereotypism still exists. In support of

this notion, Sithole (1997) argues that even though women are now empowered “some of the sex-role and career stereotypes may still affect career decidedness of women” (p. 100). For example; studies have found teaching and nursing, which are traditionally female-dominated occupations, to be most popular with females (Bobo et al., 1998; Tokar & Jome, 1998). Furthermore, Brannon, Hayes, O’Neil, (in Tokar & Jome, 1998) highlighted that males “who express interest in or choose non-traditional occupations may be at greater risk than their female counterparts to be unsupported, devalued, and even ridiculed for engaging in gender-inappropriate behaviour” (p. 424). The assertion to explain the findings is that certain careers tended to be sex typed even if liberal views on career aspirations are held but traditional careers tend to be selected more than non-traditional careers (Gregg & Dobson in Bobo et al., 1998). Even though a shift from this view of male-oriented and female-oriented careers is evident in the current years, however, gender orientations still determine much of the career paths to be followed.

2.7.2 PARENTS

A variety of studies have found out that parents have a significant influence on their childrens’ occupational awareness (Sithole, 1997; Bobo et al, 1998). Selkow (in Bobo et al, 1998) found out that children whose mothers were employed chose a greater number of careers and more masculine occupations which were less sex traditional if their mothers were employed in non-traditional careers. A previous study found out that girls’ career choices were influenced by their mothers and boys’ career choices were influenced by their fathers

(Malone & Shope in Bobo et al., 1998). This could explain why boys seemed more inclined to pursue male dominated traditional careers while girls selected traditionally female dominated careers despite their liberal views and interests in careers that were mostly considered to be in the male domain. Results which support this notion presented that African-American and Anglo high school students of both genders “identified with the parent of the same sex as the first key figure who influenced their occupational expectations”(Pallone, Rickard, & Huxley in Bobo et al., 1998, p. 38). However, mothers were cited to be most influential in their childrens’ occupational expectations in later studies (Pallone, Rickard,& Huxley in Bobo et al., 1998).

Mphele (1997) observed that most of her participants cited socialization as an important factor in influencing their careers because of family relationships established. It is important to highlight that most African parents are not able to provide career assistance to their children as a consequence of being illiterate or school dropouts or lacking exposure to different types of careers available. Contrary to other findings Sithole (1997) explained her finding on adolescents’ career undecidedness by saying that adolescents did not seek advice from their parents because their parents were less educated and not well informed on these issues. Consequently, parents are unable to provide advice of such a nature because they lacked the opportunity of making career choices themselves. Hence, their knowledge and advice are limited to careers that can provide financial security, social and professional status (Stead,1996). This is supported by an earlier finding that African parents’ career advice is usually restricted to the need to bring regular income and the need for social and professional status

(Matsebatlela in Watson & Stead, 1993). Cochran (in Stead, 1996) observed that the individual's career decision becomes a family affair because of the contributions it is going to make in terms of resources, finances, advice, personal support and contacts. It is therefore important to have parents involved in guidance and career guidance programmes. The latter would enhance career development of African students since parents seem to play a major role in the development of the self which eventually influences career choices.

2.8 CONCLUSION

The literature provided background on careers guidance provisions in South Africa for African schools. It is evident that careers guidance has been and probably is still inadequately provided for in African schools. The legacy of the past has had a great impact on such a service. As a result African students were unable to make informed career decisions and choices. Careers guidance's role and relevance, in relation to occupational theories, are of significance in that learners need to develop decision-making skills and career choices. A holistic approach would be able to enhance African students' career development.

The literature also revealed that careers guidance has been lacking in schools which has resulted in most learners choosing careers on a trial-and-error basis. Learners are unable to consider factors of relevance with regard to career decisions and choices. This is shown by the attitudes that teachers and learners have about the careers guidance in schools. Proper guidance services are therefore necessary to make careers guidance process effective.

Other aspects such as gender, and parental influence as influential factors of learners' career decisions and choices were discussed. Therefore, the consideration of different influential factors is important for the career development of individuals.

CHAPTER 3

THE RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to focus on how university students perceive careers guidance. This study aimed to partially replicate Mtolo's study (1996) which investigated African tertiary students' perception of career guidance. Her study aimed at determining the extent to which the role of the guidance teachers is understood and whether they were effective in teaching careers guidance to assist students with career choices. On this premise, this study aimed at investigating whether university students perceive;

- ▶ Careers guidance in schools as important.
- ▶ Careers guidance in schools to have been effective in assisting them to make career decisions and choices.
- ▶ Parental influences to have been helpful in making career decisions and choices.

This study also aimed at investigating the relationship between students' perception of careers guidance and such variables as gender, family composition and degree chosen at the university.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Polit and Hungler (1993), and Leedy (1997) explain a research design as the researcher's overall systematic plan of action for gathering data that will answer the research questions and test the research hypotheses informing the research problem. The research questions of this study crystallized the research problem as to how students at the university perceive the effectiveness of careers guidance and its programmes to have been in helping them make informed career decisions and choices. As a complete plan of action the research design involves "thinking, imagining, and thinking some more" (Leedy, 1997, p. 93) on the strategies of how to handle the research problem so as to develop accurate, objective, and interpretable information (Polit & Hungler, 1993). Since the research design is characterized by measurable information that is objective and systematically collected under controlled conditions, it has thus lent itself to quantifiable measurements.

The nature of the research problem, and the methodology adopted warranted the utilization of the non-experimental research as a type of research design for this study. Non-experimental research is based on the notion that the independent variable cannot be inherently manipulated thus making the utilisation of research questions in the study appropriate (Polit & Hungler, 1993). Leedy (1997) also indicates that non-experimental research studies a specific situation as it is and does not attempt to manipulate the variables so as to numerically and statistically present the data for generalization to a population. The questionnaires were distributed to the targeted population by the researcher's research assistants for them to complete in their own time. The decision therefore on the type of research design was informed by these

arguments and also that a research design is typified by the nature and implementation of the intervention, the type of comparison, the procedures to be followed to control variables, the manner in which data is collected and analysed, and the setting in which the study will take place (Polit & Hungler, 1993).

Even though the use of non-experimental research has been justified, however, its major weakness is based on what Polit and Hungler (1993) cite as a research dictum that the existence of a relationship between variables does not justify conclusions that could be made on the effect that one variable may have on the other variable. In other words, it fails to elicit clearly causal relationships that exist among variables because causal relationships may be retrospectively or prospectively elucidated. Therefore, the conclusive generalizations that the researcher may draw from the data collected may not be related to what he presumably perceives as the causal factor to the problem.

3.2.1 THE PURPOSE AND RATIONALE FOR THE QUANTITATIVE APPROACH

The research approach adopted in this study is the quantitative approach because the researcher sought explanations and predictions that sought to investigate the hypotheses of the present research. Cresswell (1994) defines a quantitative study as “an inquiry into a social problem based on testing theory composed of variables, measured with numbers, and analysed by statistical procedures, in order to determine whether the predictive generalizations of the theory hold true” (p. 2).

Another distinguishing characteristic of the quantitative approach which also informs its selection is that the data collected is based on what already exists and on what is measurable by means of a well-structured questionnaire that is reliable and valid to enhance generalizations (Leedy, 1997). The use of a questionnaire in this study helps to amass information on a sample that represents the population thus enhancing generalizations on a wider population in an effort to explain cause and effect issues plaguing careers guidance in African schools. It is against this background that a quantitative study was selected because the researcher wanted to develop generalizations so as to test hypotheses and provide a better explanation and prediction enhanced by valid and reliable information and instruments.

3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.3.1 *EX POST FACTO* RESEARCH

Ex post facto research was selected as a type of non-experimental quantitative research methodology in the undertaking of this study. The nature of the research problem and the research questions warranted the use of this methodological approach. Polit and Hungler (1993) point out that “the selection of an appropriate method depends in large part on the nature of the research question” (p. 18). Behr (1983) points out that *ex post facto* research investigates the present state of affairs in an attempt to search back in time for possible causal factors. Mtolo’s (1996) findings and Sithole’s (1997) literature review showed clearly that careers guidance is inadequately provided for in

African schools. As a result this impinges upon students' ability to make proper informed career decisions and choices. Their career decisions and choices are therefore influenced by the careers guidance programmes they received at school and this has a bearing on their perception of whether the programmes were effective or not.

Polit and Hungler (1993) rightly phrase the expression 'from after the fact' which literally defines *ex post facto* research as implying that the conducted research occurs after the natural occurrence of the variations in the independent variables. On this basis, the researcher thought it fitting to use the *ex post facto* methodology to investigate the problem that has already occurred. The subjects under investigation should have received careers guidance in schools because it has been provided for in the schools' curriculum. Since the researcher did not have any control over the presumed causal factor (the independent variable) as it had already occurred, it was therefore not possible to draw cause-and-effect conclusions on this basis (Behr, 1983; Polit & Hungler, 1993; Mtolo, 1996; Leedy, 1997). It was also against this background that Mtolo (1996) selected the research method to measure students' perceptions of the delivery service. Since the researcher wanted to look at the effectiveness of careers guidance, therefore the expression of the effects through quantitative measurement was important because cause-and-effect data could also be determined and analysed by means of statistical techniques (Polit & Hungler, 1993; Leedy, 1997).

Despite the advantages of the *ex post facto* research method, its most significant disadvantage is that it is susceptible to false interpretations because the subjects used by the researcher already exist in the group being studied and their preexisting differences may be reason enough to explain the observed causal factors (Polit, & Hungler, 1993). The researcher on this basis kept in mind that the sampled group was part of a larger population from which it was drawn. Therefore, the findings may be explained by the data collected or by other already existing causal factors that may not have been covered by the research instrument.

3.3.2 THE SAMPLE

A sample is defined as a selected subset of elements about which data are collected and represents the entire population (Polit & Hungler, 1993; Higgins, 1996). Leedy (1997) highlights that through a carefully selected sample “the researcher is able to see all the characteristics of the total population in the same relationship that they would be seen were the researcher, in fact, to inspect the total population” (p. 204). A sample of students drawn from each faculty of the university served the purpose of being representative of the total population of the university student community. The basic rules in selecting a sample are that it must be representative of the population and its size must be large enough to satisfy statistical procedures (Higgins, 1996). This point is endorsed by Mtolo (1996) who highlighted that her sample was not representative of the segments of the university group. Mtolo's study consisted of a small section of university students in the Science group and neglected other disciplines such as Commerce,

Humanities, Theology, Education and Law. Her focus made her sample less inclusive and less representative of the population group making up the university community in terms of gender, family composition and degree being studied. This limited her ability to generalize to a wider university community. She therefore recommended that future studies be more inclusive and representative to allow for informed conclusions to be made (Mtolo, 1996). This study was therefore more inclusive of other disciplines in the university. Behr (1983) cautions that an arbitrary decision on the sample must be avoided because a nonrepresentative sample of the population lends itself to be biased and subject to error.

The sampling procedure that was adopted in this study is probability sampling because the nature of the research design and population warrants representation of each segment of the population in the sample (Leedy, 1997). This implies that each entity that made up the larger population was selected for inclusion in the sample. The sampled population was therefore made up of the total number of registered students in all faculties of the university. The total number of students in each faculty is represented in Table 3.1. The total number of students in all faculties was 5 990 (refer to figure 3.1). It was not possible for the researcher to include all these students in the investigation because of the large number. The researcher resorted to the process of randomization which is defined by Leedy (1997) as “the selection of a sample from the whole population in such a way that the characteristics of each unit of the sample approximate the characteristics of the total population” (p. 205).

In short, this means that each element in the population had an equal, but independent chance of being selected (Polit & Hungler, 1993). Therefore, it was made possible through randomization that each student had an equal chance of being chosen. The selected elements therefore formed a random sample.

The sampling frame the researcher established was constituted by the actual list of all the faculties of the university depicting the number of students registered in each faculty from which a sample was selected (Mouton, 1996; Polit & Hungler, 1993). The sampling frame operationally defines the population by providing the basis for sampling (Mouton, 1996). The registered students in the different faculties of the university made up sub-populations or strata of the total population of the students. Hence there were Arts, Education, Commerce and Administration, Science, Law and Theology students forming the sub-populations or strata of the total population of students in the university. Mouton (1996) defines a stratum as the inclusion of one population that is a sub-population, in another. It is from this base that the sampling procedure was established.

The sampling procedure adopted for this study was the stratified random sampling so as to provide the researcher with a greater degree of representativeness. The inclusion of all students registered in different faculties provided the representativeness required by the researcher by concentrating on all segments of the institution and not only one. Students were grouped together under the stratum to which they belonged so as to select the desired sample from each stratum (Polit & Hungler, 1993). The procedure was made more complex

because the strata in the study were of unequal size in terms of the total number of students registered in each faculty. The population strata were markedly homogeneous with a resulting ratio of 3:2:1:1:1 (refer to Table 3.1) from respective sub-populations (Leedy, 1997).

According to Leedy (1997) a stratified random sample is characterized by a random selection of subjects from two or more strata or subgroups of a population independently. This is when a population is subdivided into a number of homogenous subgroups which are randomly selected in order to achieve a greater degree of representativeness. In applying stratified random sampling the researcher grouped together the number of students in each faculty and with the assistance of the research assistants, the desired number of participants in each faculty were then randomly selected (Leedy, 1997). Observing that the subgroups of the population were of unequal membership size (i.e. disproportionate sample) and would not ensure adequate representation of respondents' perceptions, the researcher resolved to make an adjustment (weighting) to the ratios by increasing the sample size by twenty "... so as to arrive at the best estimate of the overall population values" (Leedy, 1997, p.182) (see Table 3.1). In other words, the sample size was very small, consequently the researcher increased it in order to increase chances of representativeness and reliability of the data collected. Polit and Hungler (1993) state that "when it is desirable to obtain reliable information about sub-populations whose membership is relatively small, stratification provides a means of including a sufficient number of cases in the sample by over sampling for that stratum" thus sharpening "precision and representativeness of the final sample" (p. 182). The

increase in proportion by twenty in each stratum resulted in the number of elements (faculty students) to be represented in each stratified sample. The figures in the Table therefore represented the number of students to be sampled in each faculty. The investigation was made up of a total proportional stratified sample of 108 students (Table 3.1). It is important to state that the ratio of the student population in the Faculty of Theology was very little hence negligible because it did not fall within the specifications of stratified random representation. Therefore, the students in this faculty could not be part of the investigation. However, they were part of stratified random sampling because of the nature and demands of the research methodology and problem.

Table 3.1

Stratified Random Sample of Students Registered in each Faculty at the University of Zululand.

FACULTIES	Total Number of Students in each Faculty	Sample showing increased proportion
Arts	2,623	3 < 23
Education	1 634	2 < 22
Commerce & Admin.	745	1 < 21
Science	569	1 < 21
Law	411	1 < 21
Theology	08	0,008 < 0,01
TOTAL	5 990	108

3.4 DATA COLLECTION METHOD AND PROCEDURE

Basically the issues or phenomena under investigation need to be translated into measurable data because the conclusions or generalizations are based on the kind of information collected. The data that is collected is informed by what the researcher needs to know and why? (Bell, 1993). Since the nature of the research question informs the kind of data to be collected, in selecting the data collection method the researcher then took note of what characterizes data collection methods.

3.4.1 THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

3.4.1.1 Why the Questionnaire?

A questionnaire is defined as a formally structured self-report document used for gathering data from variables of interest through respondents completing it in a paper and pencil format (Polit & Hungler, 1993; Mtolo, 1996). Its composition is made up of question items to which the participant needs to read and respond in the manner required by the investigator. Leedy (1997) justifies the use of a questionnaire by stating that if a researcher wants to observe and collect data that is beyond physical reach, a questionnaire is an appropriate instrument. He further states that it is an impersonal probing instrument to which the researcher is remotely removed from sources of data collected. The researcher collected data from respondents he had no chance of knowing or even possibly meeting. The faculty and department in which the researcher works does not make it possible to meet some students of the other faculties who have not enrolled for education as a course such as Arts, Commerce and Administration, Science, Law and Theology students.

Furthermore, the basis for selecting the questionnaire in this research as a viable research instrument to use in collecting data was governed by what Mtolo (1996) and Leedy (1997) cited as questionnaire assumptions which were as follows:

- ▶ **Clarity of language.** The questionnaire had the same questions for all the respondents that were relative to what the researcher sought to investigate. That is, the respondents were able to read and understand what the questionnaire required.

- ▶ **Fulfilment of a specific research objective.** The questions asked were formulated on the basis of the aims of the study. It was from the respondents that the researcher was able to amass the information that was required to solve the research problem. Therefore, the willingness, effort, favour and time afforded by the respondents to the researcher were important in obtaining honest answers.

- ▶ **Consideration of questionnaire construction.** The researcher took note of the following factors cited by Leedy (1997) when the questionnaire was constructed:
 - i. **Courtesy.** The researcher had full knowledge that the respondents were giving the researcher their time and offering him a favour by completing the questionnaire since they were not forced to do it. The researcher used words ‘kindly’, ‘please’ and ‘thank you’ in the questionnaire as a courteous gesture to the students. These words served to acknowledge their kindness for being willing to participate in the investigation.

- ii. **Universality.** Even though the research problem was based on the respondents' opinions of careers guidance, the questions were general but specific to what they had experienced so as to elicit their views. That is, the manner in which the questions were phrased minimally presented sensitive personal issues that would have led the respondents to answer untruthfully. The use of 'you' in particular required their own specific views yet general experiences of careers guidance in their schools. Also, the biographical details ensured anonymity and sought for what would be generally relevant to the research problem. For example, the researcher did not include the participants' names, nationality, race, parents' names, area or province of residence, school's name, etc. in the study. These would not have only been irrelevant but would have violated the right of anonymity. Mtolo (1996) argues that "if highly personal questions are asked, respondents may simply refuse to answer, give what they believe to be socially desirable responses, or even worse consign the questionnaire in the nearest waste basket!" (p. 42).
- iii. **Simplicity.** The researcher made the questionnaire simple to read and answer so as to avoid taking much of the respondents' time and effort. The check-item questionnaire was preferred to the completion questionnaire because it was less time consuming and less mentally exhaustive for the respondents and the researcher. The researcher used a five-point scale measure to which the

respondents had to insert a cross (X) in the box which best qualified their opinion. The researcher hoped that this would prevent students' thinking that they were writing a long essay or assignment thus causing them to answer untruthfully and/or to be less cooperative. The researcher also wrote the aim above the questions that had a similar focus and content. This helped to focus the respondents on the essence of the questions.

- iv. ***Briefness.*** As mentioned earlier, Evans (in Mtolo, 1996) states that a long questionnaire is a daunting and a time-consuming exercise that may end up being unanswered as opposed to a short one which is attended to cheerfully and promptly. The use of the five point scale avoided delays in completing the questionnaire by the students. Furthermore, the researcher avoided wasting the time of the respondents and lack of cooperation from them by confining the questions to the aims of the study so as to focus on the nature of the research questions and the data the researcher actually wanted to acquire. The limit to the content for inclusion in the questionnaire was achieved by grouping the questions asked under each relevant aim. Deciding on the exact purpose of the study makes it possible for one to elicit the required information (Mtolo, 1996).

3.4.1.2 The Nature and Structure of the Questionnaire Constructed

The type of questionnaire constructed for this study was a structured questionnaire made up of predetermined questions which were closed-ended questions. Polit and Hungler (1993) explain a structured questionnaire as an instrument to which the respondents are “asked to respond to exactly the same questions in exactly the same order, and they are given the same set of options for their responses” (p. 202).

The construction of this questionnaire was based on the questionnaire constructed by Mtolo (1996). In reviewing the questionnaire Mtolo (1996) constructed, the researcher noted with interest that her questions elicited more of the factual content on the basis of ‘yes’ and ‘no’ responses on careers guidance than on students’ opinion of careers guidance. This was not cited as a limiting factor in the previous study. However, this researcher saw this as a limiting factor for the present study for data that was opinion oriented. The researcher therefore rephrased Mtolo’s questions so as to make them opinion oriented. In rephrasing the questions the researcher took caution not to change the context of Mtolo’s questions in an attempt to elicit almost similar data as reflected in her study. The researcher also rephrased Mtolo’s qualitative questions to quantitative questions on the basis of the findings in her study. That is, from the respondents’ answers the researcher formulated questions that were quantifiable but revealed the qualitative essence of the questions in the previous study.

Furthermore, the researcher took note of Mtolo's limitations for not including questions on parental influence on their childrens' career choices since they are considered to have great influence on their childrens' career decisions and choices (Mtolo, 1996). She therefore recommended the inclusion of this component in further research. The researcher therefore included a section of parental influence on career decisions and choices. The researcher made reference to and extracted from Sithole's study (1997) and formulated questions on parental influence that related to the context of the study.

3.4.1.3 The Type of Scale and Scoring Procedure of the Questionnaire

Polit and Hungler (1993) define a scale as "a device designed to assign a numeric score to subjects to place them on a continuum with respect to attributes being measured" (p. 208). The Likert scale is recommended because of its effectiveness in determining young peoples' opinions towards career guidance (Jacobs et al., 1991). This view helped to reinforce the researcher's idea of using the five point scale measure for the questionnaire instead of using yes or no responses as in Mtolo's research. The researcher believed that this assessment scale elicited similar results of a more perceptual nature than in the previous research which did not significantly differ with the factual data obtained in the previous research. Hence, Polit and Hungler (1993) state that the scale's purpose is to distinctly discriminate among people who hold different perceptions on specific points by having declarative items to which the respondents indicate their rating of the opinion expressed by the statement. A numerical score was allocated to each response and then the sum of scores of the

individual responses was calculated to present the respondent's opinion on the topic (Jacobs et al., 1991; Polit & Hungler, 1993). The five point Likert scale categories to each item ranged from 'almost never' to 'almost always' with scale values or scores ranging from a low score of 1 for negative responses to a high score of 5 for positive responses (Jacobs et al., 1991).

3.4.1.4 Reliability and Validity of the Instrument

Cresswell (1994) states that if an investigator in a study plans to re-use, modify or combine instruments, reliability and validity have to be reestablished or else the "... original validity and reliability may be distorted ..." (p.121). Reliability refers to the degree to which an instrument is able to measure accurately and consistently the attributes or factors for which it was designed under the same constant conditions (Bell, 1993; Polit & Hungler, 1993; Leedy, 1997). That is, it must be able to produce similar responses even if it were administered elsewhere under the same conditions (Bell, 1993). Consistency is ensured if the specifications of the measuring instrument are clearly and definitively stated (Leedy, 1997). The researcher therefore tried to establish reliability of the instrument by distinctly stating the type of instrument being used, its construction, its scale and scoring procedure. In this light it was possible to evaluate the nature of the data collected in relation to the instrument of measurement. It is important to note that the research questions that seek opinion responses may be affected by a range of reasons (e.g. a previous experience that may have frustrated or helped the individual, a view that an individual may hold about a particular issue, an opinion that the individual may

have heard from other people regarding the issue, etc.) hence affecting the reliability of the instrument (Bell, 1993).

Validity refers to the instrument's degree or effectiveness to which it measures or describes what it is supposed to measure or describe (Bell, 1993; Polit & Hungler, 1993; Leedy, 1997). That is, to what extent does the instrument elicit the desired information? Bell, (1993); Polit and Hungler, (1993); and Leedy, (1997) warn that it is not easy to establish the validity of an instrument because a reliable instrument does not necessarily ensure its validity. This implies that an instrument may elicit the same responses under similar conditions. However, the results may reflect something else and not what is thought to be measured. Therefore, what is reliable information can not be considered as an indicator of a particular attribute or factor. However, the validity of the instrument used in this study was not statistically measured and as a consequence the instrument may not have measured what it was supposed to measure.

As per Bell's suggestion (1993), the researcher requested a colleague to look at the questions for refinement and further clarity to ensure the questionnaire's reliability and validity. The questionnaire was returned with few modifications which the researcher made. The questionnaire was then further administered to five students, one from each faculty, for completion so as to determine its simplicity and clarity. These were the researcher's research assistants. They were chosen on the basis of being known to the researcher and that they would be willing to assist and that they had knowledge of what research in general entailed. Also, they represented each faculty population and it would be easy

for them to inform the researcher of what they did not understand in the questionnaire prior to distribution. They were then briefed by the researcher of the purpose of the investigation and nature of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was then taken to be clear and straight forward because the assistants reported not having any problems in understanding the questions. Bell (1993) states that “this rough-and-ready method will at least remind you of the need to achieve some degree of reliability and validity...”(p.65). The questionnaire was then administered to volunteer students in the different faculties of Arts (BA), Education (B.Paed), Science (B.Sc), Commerce (B.Comm/ B.Admin) and Law (LLB/B.Proc/B.Juris).

The researcher further used the reliability analysis scale of the SPSS computer programme to establish reliability. However, this was done after the data was collected. The SPSS programme revealed that the ‘Effectiveness’ questions turned out to be reasonably reliable while the ‘Importance’ questions were not so reliable. The reason for this was that the researcher administered the questionnaire once to the same subjects instead of twice so as to compare the results. If reliability through SPSS was run again by means of the test-retest reliability procedure to the same sample of students in order to compare the scores obtained (Polit & Hungler, 1993), the researcher would have been able to ascertain problems and modify the questions to establish reliability. The reliability analysis scale through the reliability coefficients computation procedure - a numeric index of how reliable the test is (Polit & Hungler, 1993)-, established that alpha for ‘Importance’ questions was 0.3744, alpha for ‘Effectiveness’ questions was 0.7353 and for ‘Parental’ questions was 0.6532.

The range of the reliability coefficients is from a low of .00 to a high of 1.00 and makes the instrument more reliable if it is high. At most, reliability coefficients above 0.70 are considered satisfactory, hence why the 'Importance' questions in particular were not so reliable as opposed to the 'Effectiveness' and 'Parental' questions, even though the latter were below 0.70 reliability coefficient. Other reasons such as the adaptation of Mtolo's questionnaire (1996) may have made the questions unreliable.

Bell (1993) states that it is important to note that research questions that seek opinion responses may be affected by a range of reasons hence affecting the reliability of the instrument. For instance, the change over time of many traits of interest independently of the reliability of the instrument, memory of respondents' responses to the first test, intervening experiences and haphazard responses if the questions were found to be boring in the first instance (Polit & Hungler, 1993). Another disadvantage of reliability is that a reliable instrument does not ensure its validity. That is, what is considered to be reliable information cannot be considered as an indicator of a particular attribute. These disadvantages are considerations to be made with every statistical measuring instrument.

3.4.1.5 Administration of the Questionnaire

In administering the questionnaire the assistants were requested to explain the purpose of the research and the format of the questionnaire before the participants completed it. The researcher supplied each assistant with the

number of questionnaires of the sampled faculty population or strata. In other words, Arts = 23 questionnaires, Education = 22 questionnaires, Commerce and Administration = 21 questionnaires, Science = 21 questionnaires, and Law = 21 questionnaires. In total 108 questionnaires were distributed to a proportionally stratified population. The questionnaires were only distributed by the research assistants to students who volunteered to take part in the investigation. That is, the participants were students who voluntarily participated in the study. They were supplied with the questionnaire to complete and return it after two days to the research assistant responsible for each faculty. Out of the total number of questionnaires returned, only 104 were returned to the research assistants. That is, only one questionnaire in Science and three in Law were not returned. This made a total of four unreturned questionnaires. However, the researcher used the returned questionnaires in analysing the data which is discussed in the next chapter.

3.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter concerned itself with the actual plan of action (research design) that the researcher took in amassing data required to answer the research question. The research design consisted of the purpose and justification of the selected research approach which is the quantitative research approach.

The chapter further highlighted the *ex post facto* research methodology as the one appropriate to be used in investigating the research problem. It is on the basis of the nature of the research methodology that the population parameters and sample size

were established. Because of the stratification of the population and the large sample, the researcher used proportional stratified random sampling in order to obtain data that is representative of the whole student population.

The procedures required in collecting data were outlined by the researcher so that a clearer picture of how data were collected is provided. This helped the researcher to support the selection and use of the type of instrument utilized to collect data. The researcher used the check-item questionnaire with closed ended questions which could be easily scored by means of the Likert scale. The reliability of the questionnaire was explained. Research assistants were used in the distribution of the questionnaire.

CHAPTER 4

THE RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This study aimed at investigating the perceptions of African students on careers guidance in schools in relation to gender, family composition and degree registered at the university as independent variables. This chapter reports the findings from the analysis of the data. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used in this study in order to summarize students' responses in the sample and to test for significant differences between the variables. The statistical procedures were both significant because data needed description before making generalizations about the data. The frequencies, central tendency and variations marked the techniques to be used to describe the data. Only the results that show significant differences were reported in this study. For all statistical analysis, the SPSS computer programme was used wherein the Mann-Whitney U-Wilcoxon Rank Sum W Test and the Kruskal-Wallis One-Way ANOVA test were conducted on the independent groups.

4.2 DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

In order for research questions to be answered, systematic ways or methods of looking separately at different variables in the data need to be employed so as to reveal certain trends, patterns or dynamic and potential factors that may lead to further investigation (Mouton, 1996; Polit & Hungler, 1993; Leedy, 1997). Quantitative methods require

that the data be statistically analysed on the basis of the characteristics of the kind, scale, groups', and variables' data (Leedy, 1997). Statistical procedures are advantageous because they assist the researcher to “reduce, summarize, organize, evaluate, interpret, and communicate numeric information” (Polit & Hungler, 1993, p. 272).

The scale of measurement of the data was the ordinal scale called the Likert scale with a five-point scoring. The ordinal scale of measurement was used so as to rank order subjects on the basis of their relationship to the attribute of interest (Polit & Hungler, 1993). The number of groups from which the data was collected was the proportional stratified sample. The above characteristics of the data informed the statistical data analysis procedures to be followed on the basis of their functional aspects which were descriptive and inferential statistics (Mouton, 1996; Leedy, 1997).

4.2.1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Descriptive statistics is defined as the organization and summation of the sampled data to be presented comprehensibly in the form of averages (Mouton, 1993; Polit & Hungler, 1997). They are for describing how the data from the actual sample look like and how they are related to each other in terms of an aspect of interest without testing the hypotheses' generalizations on the population parameters (Ngidi, 1995; Leedy, 1997). Polit and Hungler (1993) point out that descriptive statistics helps to show the central point (central tendency) around which the data revolve. That is, the average of all scores as per the number of subjects referred to as the mean. Its advantage is that it does

not variate or fluctuate greatly. Furthermore, it gives a total picture of the distribution obtained if the subjects' differences (variability) in the sample on the same attribute are established. Even if the average scores of the distributions may be the same however, it is important to establish the extent to which each score differs from the other hence the standard deviations provide the basis for this description (Polit & Hungler, 1993). Therefore, the mean scores and standard deviations in this study were used in order to provide descriptive results for analysis in the next chapter.

4.2.2 INFERENCE STATISTICS

Inferential statistics involves generalizing about a sampled population with an intention of making predictions and conclusions about the wider population (Polit & Hungler, 1993; Ngidi, 1995; Leedy, 1997). According to Leedy (1997) inferential statistics aims at looking into the distance and postulating what is unknown by examining the small sample that is known. In other words, we draw general conclusions about a wider population on the basis of the data obtained from the sample population. This involves the testing of the hypothesis by making estimations and predictions about a wider population and determining whether the differences observed occurred by chance factors or not (Ngidi, 1995). The Mann-Whitney U-Wilcoxon Rank Sum W Test and the Kruskal-Wallis One-Way ANOVA test were the non-parametric techniques used in this study.

The Mann-Whitney U-Wilcoxon Rank Sum W test was used because its computations are based on testing the significant differences that exist in the ranks of scores of two related independent groups, i.e. between males and females, single parents and both parent families (Polit & Hungler, 1993). Bless and Kathuria (1993) explain that “using an ordinal scale of measurement, the test compares the order or rank of the data of the two groups, with the aim of assessing whether the differences in the ranks can be explained by chance factors alone” (p. 211). They also state that the mean and standard deviations are meaningless because the test’s characteristics do not rely on properties of distribution. Furthermore, the test’s assumption is that two samples are taken to be representative of the same population from which they are drawn “if, when ranked together, their scores do not differ essentially in their ranking ...” (Bless & Kathuria, 1993, p. 212). It is on this basis that the Mann-Whitney test was considered as the appropriate statistical test for this study since only two independent groups under gender and family composition were tested.

The Kruskal-Wallis One-Way ANOVA test was used because it is an extension of the Mann-Whitney test and its computations are based on testing the significant differences that exist in the ranks of scores of three or more independent groups, i.e. Arts, Education, Commerce, Law and Science groups (Bless & Kathuria, 1993; Polit & Hungler, 1993). As with the Mann-Whitney test, it too requires the use of an ordinal scale of measurement. Bless and Kathuria (1993) state that it is used to assess whether the ranked scores of the independent groups “stem from the same population or whether the differences

between them cannot be explained by chance factors alone” (p. 219). They further state that the different independent groups are representatives of the population if they are drawn from the same population. It is on this basis that the Kruskal-Wallis test was considered as the appropriate statistical test for this study since five independent groups under degree registered were tested.

4.3 PERCEPTIONS ON THE IMPORTANCE, EFFECTIVENESS AND PARENTAL INFLUENCE REGARDING CAREERS GUIDANCE

Table 4.1 Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of the Sample's Responses to each question on the Likert scale.

QUESTION ITEMS (Q)	SAMPLE SIZE (N)	MEAN SCORES	STANDARD DEVIATIONS
Importance of Careers Guidance			
in Schools			
Q 1	104	2.37	1.27
Q 2	104	4.16	1.20
Q 3	103	4.55	0.85
Q 4	103	4.35	0.99
Q 5	103	4.14	1.00
Effectiveness of Careers Guidance			
in Schools			
Q 6	104	2.41	1.28
Q 7	104	2.37	1.49
Q 8	104	2.57	1.27
Q 9	104	3.82	1.23
Q 10	103	2.97	1.72
Q 11	103	3.17	1.49
Q 12	102	3.00	1.40
Q 13	102	3.20	1.29
Q 14	104	2.90	1.28
Q 15	104	2.97	1.56
Q 16	104	2.91	1.48
Q 17	104	3.00	1.41
Q 18	103	2.85	1.43
Q 19	103	2.36	1.43
Q 20	104	1.99	1.18
Q 21	103	2.85	1.60
Q 22	104	2.27	1.48
Q 23	102	2.67	1.53
Parental Influence on Career			
Decisions and Choices			
Q 24	104	2.86	1.54
Q 25	103	2.97	1.47
Q 26	104	2.73	1.27
Q 27	104	3.18	1.26
Q 28	104	2.51	1.37

Table 4.1 shows the mean scores and standard deviations of the whole samples' responses to each question on the Likert scale. For questions 2, 3, 4, and 5, Table 4.1 revealed that the respondents reported that guidance was usually seen as important in their schools (mean score of 4). The respondents reported that they usually found their guidance teachers helpful in career related matters and that in their schools careers guidance was usually enforced and as a result it helped them to make sound career decisions and choices. For question 1 which asked learners to respond to how they frequently had guidance lessons at school, the average response was that they sometimes had guidance lessons (mean score of 2).

When it comes to whether the respondents perceived careers guidance they received at school as having been effective in enabling them to make career decisions and choices, Table 4.1 showed that the average response was that they sometimes perceived it to be effective (mean score of 2). In questions 9, 12, 13, and 17 the mean scores were 3, indicating firstly that the respondents often saw the decisions made at high school corresponding with what they thought they were presently studying at the university. Secondly, the respondents often perceived their academic level of performance as influential in their career decisions. Thirdly, the respondents reported that they often saw their social background as influential in their career decisions as well. Lastly, the respondents reported that they often found the careers guidance they received at schools as having been helpful in making career choices.

With regard to the respondents' perception of the role of parental influence on career decisions and choices, except in question 27, the respondents reported that they sometimes perceived their parents to be influential (mean score of 2). In question 27 the respondents reported that they often talked about career opportunities with their parents (mean score of 3).

4.4 GENDER EFFECTS ON THE PERCEPTIONS OF CAREERS GUIDANCE

To investigate gender effects and family composition, the Mann-Whitney U-Wilcoxon Rank Sum W Test was used.

Table 4.2 Mean Ranks and Significant P Values on Students' Perceptions of Careers Guidance on Gender.

QUESTION (Q)	GENDER	MEAN RANKS	SAMPLES (N)	P
Q 10	Male	59.67	47	0.0071
	Female	44.52	55	
Q 28	Male	44.05	48	0.0094
	Female	58.94	55	

Table 4.2 showed the mean ranks and significant P values indicating the significant differences between male and female perception of careers guidance. The results for the rest of the questions showed no significant differences between male and female perception of careers guidance.

In their responses to question 10, the responses by male respondents were significantly different from those made by female respondents ($P = 0.0071$). More males indicated that they perceived their career decisions at high school as corresponding to what they were presently doing at the university. Fewer female respondents perceived their high school career decisions as corresponding to what they were presently doing at the university.

In question 28 which required views on parental influence on career decisions and choices, male and female responses were significantly different ($P = 0.0094$). Fewer male respondents perceived their parents as being less influential in their career decisions and choices. More female respondents perceived their parents as having been influential in their career decisions and choices.

4.5 EFFECTS OF FAMILY COMPOSITION ON THE PERCEPTIONS OF CAREERS GUIDANCE

Table 4.3 Mean Ranks and Significant P Values on Students' Perceptions of Careers Guidance for Family Composition

QUESTION (Q)	FAMILY	MEAN RANKS	SAMPLES (N)	P
Q 7	Single Parent	60.13	43	0.0233
	Both Parents	47.12	61	
Q 8	Single Parent	60.86	43	0.0132
	Both Parents	46.61	61	
Q 18	Single Parent	60.21	43	0.0157
	Both Parents	46.12	60	

Table 4.3 showed the mean ranks and significant P values for single parent and both parent for Q7, Q8 and Q 18 regarding the effectiveness of careers guidance in helping learners make decisions and choices. In all questions, except questions 7, 8, and 18, there were no significant differences between respondents from single parent families and both parent families in their perception of careers guidance.

The results for Q7 showed a significant difference of $P = 0.0233$ suggesting that children of single and both parent families differed significantly in terms of their view regarding the effectiveness to which the school helped them in deciding on a career. The results showed that students from single parent families believed they received more help at school in deciding on a career than students from both parent families.

In Q8 the results showed a significant P value of 0.0132 for students coming from single parent and both parent families. The results indicated that students from single and both parent families seemed to differ significantly in their view regarding the extent to which their teachers or guidance teachers related careers with academic streams. The results showed that more students from single parent families perceived teachers or guidance teachers as having often related careers with academic streams at school than students from both parent families. The results showed that students from single parent families may have received more help at school than in their families than those who came from both parent families in relating careers with academic streams.

The results for Q18 in Table 4.3 showed a significant P value of 0.0157, indicating that students from single and both parent families seemed to differ significantly in terms of their view regarding the information they received during the guidance periods in helping them make career choices. The results showed that more students from single parent families perceived information received during the guidance periods at school as helpful in assisting them to make career choices than students from both parent families. The results showed that students from single parent families believed they received more career information at school than in their families as compared to those who came from both parent families.

Family composition seemed to have a significant influence, in some instances, on how the effectiveness of careers guidance was perceived by students who were raised by single and both parents.

4.6 INFLUENCE OF THE DEGREE REGISTERED ON THE PERCEPTIONS OF CAREERS GUIDANCE

The Kruskal-Wallis 1-way ANOVA was conducted in order to investigate whether the perception of careers guidance received at school was influenced by the type of degree that students were reading.

Table 4.4 Mean Ranks and Significant P Values on Students' Perceptions of Careers Guidance for the Degree Registered

QUESTION	DEGREE	MEAN RANKS	SAMPLES (N)	P
Q 4	BA	32.86	22	0.016
	B.Paed	51.00	21	
	B.Sc	61.55	20	
	B.Comm/B.Admin	56.43	21	
	LLB/B.Proc/B.Juris	60.32	19	
Q 8	BA	50.37	23	0.0247
	B.Paed	41.55	21	
	B.Sc	60.35	20	
	B.Comm/B.Admin	66.29	21	
	LLB/B.Proc/B.Juris	43.68	19	
Q 9	BA	43.98	23	0.0049
	B.Paed	41.95	21	
	B.Sc	68.50	20	
	B.Comm/B.Admin	46.62	21	
	LLB/B.Proc/B.Juris	64.13	19	
Q 10	BA	32.89	23	0.0008
	B.Paed	45.17	21	
	B.Sc	58.25	20	
	B.Comm/B.Admin	62.95	20	
	LLB/B.Proc/B.Juris	64.58	19	
Q 21	BA	58.20	22	0.0017
	B.Paed	32.19	21	
	B.Sc	52.03	20	
	B.Comm/B.Admin	67.90	21	
	LLB/B.Proc/B.Juris	49.11	19	
Q 23	BA	41.18	22	0.0303
	B.Paed	44.38	21	
	B.Sc	55.58	19	
	B.Comm/B.Admin	67.02	21	
	LLB/B.Proc/B.Juris	50.08	19	
Q 24	BA	62.72	23	0.0071
	B.Paed	57.07	21	
	B.Sc	62.60	20	
	B.Comm/B.Admin	37.02	21	
	LLB/B.Proc/B.Juris	41.55	19	

Table 4.4 showed that there were no significant differences between the perceptions by students reading the five degrees, except in questions 4, 8, 9, 10, 21 and 23. The results for Q4 in Table 4. 4 showed a significant P value of 0.0016. It indicated that students in the faculties seemed to differ significantly in terms of their view regarding the help careers guidance offered to students regarding career decisions and choices. The results showed that Science (B.Sc) and Law (LLB/B.Proc/B.Juris) students mostly perceived that careers guidance would in the future be helpful in making learners make sound career decisions and choices than the Education, Arts and Commerce groups.

Table 4. 4 showed a significant P value of 0.0247 for Q8. Students in the faculties seemed to differ significantly in their view of teachers or guidance teachers concentrating on relating careers and academic streams at school. The results showed more of the Science and Commerce students than Education, Law and Arts students as believing that teachers or guidance teachers related careers to academic school streams. These results indicated that the respondents felt that teachers were able to more easily inform learners of the relationship between careers and academically specialized streams such as science and commerce.

Q9 in Table 4. 4 showed a significant P value of 0.0049 which showed significant differences of students' views in the faculties regarding the helpfulness of a constant reference to job opportunities and subject choices in career decision. The results showed that more Science (B.Sc) and Law (LLB/B.Proc/B.Juris) students perceived that a constant reference to job opportunities and subject choices at school was helpful in deciding on a career than Education, Arts and Commerce. In other words, some sectors of students felt that relating specialized subjects done at school to available job opportunities helps learners in deciding on a career.

The results for Q10 in Table 4. 4 showed a significant P value of 0.0008. It displayed significant differences between students of different faculties regarding the perceptions that their high school career decisions corresponded with what they were presently doing at the university. The results showed that most Science, Commerce and Law students felt that what they did at university matched with their high school career decisions than Arts and Education groups. The specialization of these groups suggested that it was possible for Science, Commerce and Law students to follow careers that related to what they were learning at high school as opposed to Arts and Education groups.

Table 4. 4 showed a significant P value of 0.0017 for Q21. Students in the different faculties seemed to differ significantly in their views of receiving information on courses offered at the university. The results showed that more of the Arts and Commerce students indicated having received information on courses available at tertiary institution. These results indicated that more Arts and Commerce students could have received information about career courses at the university than Science, Law and Education students.

The results for Q23 in Table 4. 4 showed a significant P value of 0.0303 which displayed significant differences between students of different faculties. The students in the different faculties perceived that the information they received on careers did assist them in making career choices. The results showed that it was mostly Commerce students who felt that they found the information on careers helpful in their career choices than Education, Science, Law and Arts groups. The specialization of this group seemed to have made it possible for these Commerce students to utilize career information to decide on career choices that related to their area of specialisation.

Q24 in Table 4. 4 showed a significant P value of 0.0071 which showed significant differences of students' views in the different faculties regarding the importance of parental involvement in career decisions and choices. The results showed that more Arts and Science students perceived parental involvement as important in career decisions and choices than the Education, Law and Commerce groups.

Table 4.5 Mean Ranks and P-Value Showing Effectiveness by Degree Registered

SUBSCALE	DEGREE	MEAN RANKS	SAMPLES (N)	P
Effectiveness (Q6-23)	BA	40.33	21	0.0271
	B.Paed	38.64	21	
	B.Sc	57.81	18	
	B.Comm/B.Admin	62.00	17	
	LLB/B.Proc/B.Juris	44.83	18	

Degree registered at the university is perceived as relating significantly to the effectiveness of careers guidance to career decisions and choices. This was confirmed by Table 4.5 which showed a significant P value of 0.0271. The results showed that more Commerce and Science students perceived careers guidance to have been effective in helping them make career decisions and choices than Arts, Education and Law students.

4.7 CONCLUSION

Chapter 4 presented results of the data collected in chapter 3 in an attempt to show the relationship between the variables with the perception of students with regard to careers guidance. The results revealed that most students perceived careers guidance to be important. However, it was perceived as having been ineffective in helping them

make career decisions and choices. Furthermore, parents were perceived by most students as not having been influential in their childrens' career decisions and choices. Significant differences were revealed as existing between variables such as gender, family composition and the degree registered at the university in relation to perceptions of some aspects of careers guidance by students.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims at giving a detailed analysis and interpretation of the results presented in chapter four. The aims of the study established in chapter one were based on determining whether students perceive:

- ▶ Careers guidance as important in schools.
- ▶ Careers guidance to be effective in assisting them to make career decisions and choices.
- ▶ Parental influences to be helpful in their career decisions and choices.

The discussion of the results in this chapter focused on those results that revealed significant differences between the variables investigated. The aims of the study were tested on the basis of gender, family composition and the degree registered.

5.2 OVERVIEW OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF CAREER GUIDANCE

Aim 1: Importance of Careers Guidance in Schools

The results of this study displayed that students generally perceived careers guidance to be important. The homogeneous responses (mean score of 4) of the students indicated that they held similar views with regard to careers guidance being important

in schools. Most of the students indicated that they usually perceived careers guidance, careers guidance periods and guidance teachers as helpful in career related matters, and in career decision making and choices. These results are consistent with the findings in the study by Mtolo (1996) which showed that 62% of the students received careers guidance in schools even though they viewed it as inadequate. 72% of the students rated guidance teachers second to their friends as important sources of information and in career related matters; 88% of the students felt that the enforcement of careers guidance in schools would provide information for learners and help them make career decisions and choices, while 20 out of 53 respondents perceived careers guidance periods to be helpful. These results are further confirmed in the study by Euvrand (1992) which found that 58% of the learners expressed the need for careers guidance in schools.

The explanations that could be advanced for the findings in this study could be attributed to the notion that students saw careers guidance as a necessary need in schools so as to help them make sound career decisions and choices. Also, their receiving careers guidance would help learners understand career related issues since they considered guidance teachers helpful in career related matters. The students believe that the enforcement of careers guidance and careers guidance periods in schools would ensure that they acquired information about different careers and that they would be able to decide on and choose careers that are appropriate. The Euvrand (1992) study established a number of categories that confirm the expression of students' need for careers guidance in deciding and choosing careers. The categories were based on students wanting knowledge on the different types of careers and their nature, how they can make best choices on careers for themselves, and the educational qualifications required for each career. Ginzberg's developmental theory states that at the realistic stage a person explores and weighs career opportunities available so as to

base occupational decisions and choices on what is obtaining in reality (Jacobs et al., 1991). The theory also states that as a life long process, occupational decisions and choices are based on career compromise because certain factors influence individuals in an attempt to satisfy their needs on the basis of the alternatives available to them. Therefore, the students' expressions for the need of careers guidance is the crystallization of the need for them to explore and merge their career aspirations and preparations with the realities of the occupational world. Chuenyane (1983) in an earlier study showed that not less than 60% of the students expressed the need for help in "finding jobs and careers, understanding the guidance programme, developing self-understanding, career awareness, exploration and planning, selection of courses and acquisition of decision making skills ..." (p. 271). This assertion is supported by Watson and Stead (1993) who found out that 91% of the students indicated that a career resource centre was needed to provide occupational information which was ranked the most important source of information in their study.

Aim 2: Effectiveness of Careers Guidance in Enabling Learners to Make Career Decisions and Choices.

The results on the effectiveness of careers guidance in schools were found to be reasonably reliable. The findings showed that students perceived careers guidance as having been ineffective in helping them make career decisions and choices. The homogeneity of most of the students' responses (mean score of 2) indicated that they held similar views with regard to careers guidance having been minimally effective in helping them with career decisions and choices. These results are consistent with the findings in the study by Mtolo (1996). She found out that out of the 62% who received careers guidance, 38% of the students felt that careers guidance was inadequate and the

schools did not give them enough help with career choices and 94% changed their secondary school career choices (Mtolo, 1996). A recent study by Marais (1998) found out that only Indian, white and coloured groups felt that the core syllabus for guidance met their needs and it was not favourably considered by some African adolescents. This meant that the core syllabus might not have been viewed by African students as relevant to their needs and aspirations. This view is confirmed by the fact that the present guidance curriculum and school guidance programmes were perceived as not being sensitive and relevant to the South African context and needs of the students (Interim Core Syllabus, 1995; Marais, 1998).

The deductions that could be made from the findings may be that the low ranking (mean scores of 2) suggest that careers guidance services in African schools may not have been adequately helpful in exposing students to career information, decision making and choices. The latter statement suggests that African students' schools may have lacked adequate career information and materials about different careers and courses offered at tertiary institutions. The ineffectiveness therefore of careers guidance in career decisions and choices should be viewed to be the result of many African students making career decisions and choices on the basis of trial-and-error because they lacked occupational information and knowledge of what would suit them best (Watson & Stead, 1993). The Trait-Factor theory assumes that occupational decisions and choices succeed if an individual reflects on and integrates self-knowledge with the demands of different occupational fields (Jacobs et al., 1991; Sithole, 1997). In other words, occupational decisions and choices may be reinforced when individuals weigh their personal traits and other personality factors in relation to their career aspirations and occupational demands. This statement is supported by Sithole (1997) from her findings that "it is not enough to give pupils career information in order for them to be

able to make career decisions, but it is even more important to help them understand their goals, interests, personality and talents” (p. 94). Sithole’s findings (1997) are reinforced by Holland’s theory which assumes that personality characteristics influence a person’s choice of career because individuals’ personalities can be related to particular occupational environments.

Further deductions that may be drawn on the basis of the findings of this study are that teachers or guidance teachers were perceived to have minimally related school subjects with careers. The latter may have affected students’ ability to make career choices that related to their school subjects, consequently affecting students’ present university career choices which are viewed as not corresponding with what they did at school. An explanation that could be advanced on the latter statement is that most African schools lack well-trained guidance personnel with adequate information and knowledge of career opportunities available to students. The latter notion may be supported by the findings in this study that students indicated that they sometimes had guidance lessons in schools and also the view that the enforcement of careers guidance in schools would be helpful in their career decisions and choices. The expressions of these students’ sentiments could be a result of the lack of well-trained guidance personnel in schools with adequate information and knowledge of careers which mostly impedes students from understanding and knowing about career related issues. Much research (Watson & Stead, 1993; Naicker, 1994; Mtolo, 1996; Stead, 1996; Sithole, 1997) has pointed out that African students’ ability to make career decisions and choices is hindered by the lack of adequately trained guidance teachers. Mtolo (1996) asserts that teachers feel inadequately prepared to teach careers guidance. Furthermore, careers guidance periods were often used by both teachers and students for other subjects and other purposes. The latter is consistent with Mtolo’s finding (1996) that teachers and students used guidance periods to teach exam subjects and for self-study purposes.

Guidance, especially careers guidance, is viewed as a peripheral extracurricular subject which wastes time and is not an examination subject. As a result teachers and students tend to concentrate on what is examination oriented and/or its periods are considered to be free periods at school. The socio-economic and academic conditions which lead African students to change their career choices, and academic school subjects not being well related to job opportunities also play a role in them being ineffectively helped to make sound career decisions and choices.

Aim 3: Parental Influence on Career Decisions and Choices

The findings on parental influence on career decisions and choices showed that most students perceived their parents as having little influence in their career decisions and choices. The homogeneity of the students' responses (mean scores of 2) indicated that they perceived their parents as having less influence in helping them make career decisions and choices. Students' low ranked responses (mean scores of 2) on parental influence indicated that students felt that parental involvement was not that important in career decisions and choices. These responses also indicated that students perceived their parents as less informed about careers and they minimally influenced their childrens' career decisions and choices. These results are consistent with Mtolo's findings (1996) wherein parents were ranked the lowest sources of information for career advice by their children. This implies that students rely on themselves to make career decisions regarding their career intentions eventhough the sociological theories propose that the family, particularly the parent, plays a key role in career development and occupational choices. A further contradiction to the findings, yet in support of the sociological theories is revealed in O'dell's study in Sagy and Lieberman (1997). O'dell's study revealed that "the influence of the family on the attitudes toward career choice was found to be significant among Soviet youngsters ..." (Sagy & Lieberman,

1997, p.150) with some findings showing a "... more positive and supportive role of the parents" (Lippman & Ponton in Sagy & Lieberman, 1997, p.150). This result is also confirmed by the findings by Watson and Stead (in Stead, 1996) who found out that parents were ranked the highest sources of career and/or occupational information.

The reasons for the students' perceptions on parental influence may be brought about because most African parents have a limited educational background and are not well informed about different careers such that they would not be able to give their children advice on different careers. Students would therefore see them as not being helpful in career related matters because of their limitations. The latter is supported by the statement that "African adolescents in South Africa, do not, anyway, seek opinions of their parents in deciding about their future careers" because of their parents' lower standard of education (Sithole, 1997, p. 92). Stead (1996) in his study also pointed out that African adolescents' parents seem not to be able to provide career assistance to their children because of their difficulty in moving beyond the status of unskilled or semiskilled worker and the limitations placed by apartheid on their educational and career development. Another reason may be that traditionally, the relationship between the parent and the child was restricted to respect for adults and doing as you were told. Discussions in the home on varied issues were not common; only formalities were the order of the day. Mtolo (1996) supports this argument by stating that African students' relations with parents were largely dominated by respect for authority, obedience and formality which makes it difficult for them to approach parents on issues of importance.

A contradiction to the previous statements is that this present study found out that some students' responses (mean score of 3) indicated that they often talked about careers with their parents. That is, they may have sought their parents' views even though this

may not have been on a larger scale. The students may have informed their parents of what their intentions were and sought their opinions or it may have been an information dissemination exercise of what they were going to pursue as their careers without any contribution from their parents. However, the limited education background of most African parents cannot be dismissed even if their children talk about careers with them. It can therefore be said that when some parents give advice to their children it is based on the socio-economic status, professional status and job security of the career. Some parents also decide and choose what would be the best career for their children for the financial welfare of the family. Other parents' decisions and choices of careers for their children are based on the popularity of the careers in the community. A study by Mphele (1997) found out that some of the participants in the study were influenced by their parents to pursue certain careers on the basis of their parents' careers, financial and status implications of those careers. In support, Matsebatlela (in Stead, 1996) stated that if parents gave career advice to their children, it was generally limited to the need to provide a regular income and the need for social and professional status.

5.3 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENDER AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF CAREERS GUIDANCE

Previous studies have found out that there is significant difference between career development for males and females (Larson, Butler, Wilson, Medora, & Allgood, 1994; Bobo, Hidreth, & Dorodoye, 1998; Tokar & Jome, 1998). Tokar and Jome (1998) point out that research studies have suggested that women and men approached career decisions differently. The results of the present study also found that significant differences existed between male and female groups. The findings revealed that more males (mean ranks of 59.67) than females (mean ranks of 44.52) showed that their high school career decisions corresponded with their present career pursuits at the

university. This implies that some of the female students seem not to have been decided on or assisted at high school with careers since most of them felt that their high school career decisions conflicted with what they were doing presently. The findings in this study are consistent with the results by Sithole (1997) who found out in her study that girls were less career decided than boys. She also found that males' career identity was significantly different from that of the females since career identity was the determinant of 'choosers' (more career decided) and 'non-choosers' (less career decided). Sithole's argument is supported by Euvrand (1992) who noted that 68% of the girls than 53% of the boys in his study wanted help with careers guidance.

Numerous reasons for the findings such as gender and career stereotyping, gender segregation, job reservation and family socialization are possible explanations of the findings. These reasons have their base on the socio-cultural beliefs regarding gender differences and roles which influenced career decisions and choices. For instance, certain subjects and jobs were reserved for males and were traditionally considered by the socio-cultural conventions to be more physically and mentally demanding for females to pursue. Females were considered to fit more in the languages and biological streams while males dominated the mathematical, physical and economic sciences. These socio-cultural conventions narrowed the scope of the female group to explore different careers, consequently making them less career decided and giving them a narrow career direction. Sithole (1997) and Larson et al., (1994) were cited as having pointed out that the limitations on females' career aspirations made them more career undecided because their family obligations and careers were in conflict. As a result females' perceived gender role as nurturant care givers influenced their career orientation to careers in the human and social sciences. Mtolo (1996) indirectly points out females' career orientation by highlighting that her study concentrated on the

science group greatly as a result it limited the chances of more females being part of the study since females are mostly concentrated in the humanities than in the sciences. On the other hand, males tend to be more career decided because the traditional social conventions of careers for males and females made it easier for them to decide on careers. In agreement, Tokar and Jome (1998) point out that “two factors that consistently have been theorized to influence men’s decision to pursue careers of various levels of male domination, either directly or indirectly, the traditionality of career choice are adherence to culturally prescribed gender roles and vocational interests” (p. 424). That is, male and female dominated careers restrictively influenced the decisions by men and women on career decisions and choices.

Cloete (1981) and Mphole (1997) cited gender stereotyping as influential on career decisions and choices. This is further supported by Stroeher (in Bobo et al., 1998) who reported that females in particular “... sex-typed certain careers ...” by choosing careers considered being traditionally gender oriented (p.38). An earlier study conducted by Cloete (1981) also found out that gender had a significant influence on occupational expectations wherein males were found to dominate more of the business (24.6%), technical (14.5%) and general cultural fields (39.1%) while females dominated the social service (12.7%), science (43.3%) and general cultural fields (29.5%). He explains that the higher frequency in the general cultural fields for males is a result of the increased popularity of law. And, the higher frequency in science for females is a result of nursing being categorized under science in this study. Tokar and Jome (1998) cite scholars as having found that “women historically have tended to select from a range of traditionally female-dominated occupations” (p. 424), such as nursing and teaching. As a result, gender stereotyping led to the perception that careers in the social streams were more appropriate for females hence their concentration on careers

such as teaching, nursing, social work, secretarial and administrative careers. Men were usually discouraged from choosing female dominated careers because they were perceived as low in status and salary, and if they did choose them they were subject to ridicule and considered to display “gender inappropriate behaviour” (Tokar & Jome, 1998, p. 424). Cloete (1981) and Mphele (1997) found that males favoured law, technical, business, engineering, agriculture, medicine, and teaching occupations while females favoured nursing, social work, teaching, food and nutrition/home economics. Watson and Stead (1993) in their study also established significant gender differences wherein teaching, social work, nursing and police careers were most popular with females, while medicine, engineering, and management were most popular with males. Bobo, et al. (1998) found that African American boys listed athletics, police, and medicine as the most popular careers, and African American girls listed teaching, nursing, and medicine as most popular.

Notable from the two previous studies (Watson & Stead, 1993; Bobo, et al., 1998) is that the police career was popular with African South African female adolescents as opposed to the African American girls. This popularity of the police career with African South African female adolescents suggests a shift from what was traditionally a male dominated career to a more inclusive career. This suggests that some careers may be overcoming some of the career stereotyping since some African adolescent females chose the policing career which was previously male dominated. However, as seen from the Watson and Stead (1993) study females are still inclined to choose mostly careers that are perceived to be traditionally female gender oriented.

Another factor is the socialization of African males at a young age to find work so as to take care of the future family. Larson et al. (1994) point out that the main difference in the structure of men's and women's career development is the isolated decision presented to men of family and career running parallel (family financial provider), as opposed to the dichotomous decision presented to women of family and career in conflict (nurturant care giver) with each other (Sithole, 1997; Larson et al., 1994). They assert that this dichotomy is supported by the notion that females anticipate the need to modify their career goals in order to meet their family obligations. Mabena (in Sithole, 1997) suggested that the socialization factor in careers makes females choose between family life and a career which makes them more undecided than males who are socialized as breadwinners at an early stage.

The results of this study also showed that more females than males believed that their parents were influential in their career decisions and choices. In other words, females highlight that their parents may have been helpful in advising them about careers to pursue. These results are consistent with the study by Watson and Stead (1993) who found out that 39% of students had spoken to their fathers and 56% of students had spoken to their mothers about careers. In support of these findings Bobo et al. (1998) found out that females were influenced by their mothers and boys by their fathers. They further cite findings from a study by Pallone, Rickard, and Hurley that students of both genders identified with the parent of the same sex as the first key figure who influenced their occupational expectations (Bobo et al., 1998). Even though in this study parental gender as a factor was not investigated, it may, however, be postulated that males might tend to choose careers that closely resemble their fathers and females would choose similar careers as their mothers. This has been one of the influential factors in African communities wherein children tend to choose careers they closely link with those pursued by their parents. Bobo et al. (1998) further state that other research

studies have revealed that parents have influence on their childrens' occupational awareness and aspirations. However, gender orientation was not revealed in this regard. The former statement is supported by Stead (1996) whose results showed that parents were considered as a significant source of occupational information for children. The latter finding may be attributed to most parents seeing the need for females to be more oriented to careers for their livelihood and welfare in the present changes and challenges in the country. The demand for equity in careers and gender desegregation has brought about opportunities for females in careers that were traditionally dominated by males. Sithole (1997) however, argues that while the perceptions on socialization are changing with the "empowerment of women, some of the sex-role and career stereotypes may still affect career decidedness of women and girls" (p.100). Even though males still hold higher occupational expectations, females are now beginning to venture into previously male dominated careers. The latter also suggests that the venturing of females into fewer traditional careers causes them to seek more advice from their parents to ensure that their choices are within the acceptable conduct of social gender expectations.

On the basis of the researcher's African background and experience, it may also be concluded that the reliance of most African students on their mothers than on their fathers may be explained by the fact that mothers are more approachable than fathers on most issues for discussion in the family. Traditionally, protocol in the African community was that fathers least talked to children as a result the mother was the one who approached the father on issues for discussion on the behalf of the children. Even though such formalities are no longer pronounced, they still influence the relations between parents and children, with the result that they impact on career decisions and choices.

5.4 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY COMPOSITION AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF CAREER GUIDANCE

The results on the relationship between family composition and students' perceptions on careers guidance showed that significant differences existed. The findings showed that students from single parent families perceived that careers guidance services in their schools were helpful in career decisions, relating careers with academic streams and providing information. This implies that students from single and both parent families perceive the effectiveness of careers guidance differently. The school was perceived to have a greater impact than the family by students from single than both parent families. The latter group may be perceived as having received more help from the family than at school. Sithole's findings (1997) show that students from families with more bonding were more career decided than undecided.

Reasons for the findings may be attributed to the notion that some students from single parent families (disengaged families) perceive their families as inadequately assisting them with career decisions and choices. Hence, they seem to rely more on the school than on their families for career assistance. Students' perceptions may be caused by their experience of some insecurities in their families, thus causing them to perceive their families as inadequate sources of career information. Sithole (1997) revealed that adolescents from disengaged families experience a lower degree of family cohesion because of family members' low commitment to the family. As a result they are undecided and make independent decisions about their future unlike students from both parent families who are more decided (Sithole, 1997). It may therefore be because of their family background that students from single parent families preferred the school for career assistance. On the other hand, the secure background of students from both parent families (enmeshed) makes family cohesion stronger because they are close and

committed to one another (Sithole, 1997). As a result they are perceived as relying more on their families than the school for career assistance. Therefore, the nature of the family from which an individual comes from seems to influence his or her reliance on the family for assistance in career decisions and choices.

The communal nature of the African community also needs to be considered in this regard because some single parent families may experience high family cohesion on the basis of the traditional family relations and interdependency. Sithole (1997) points out that “African adolescents experience the closeness in their families - as functional than as dysfunctional, possibly because of the community orientation of the African student and the collectivistic nature of the traditional African community”(p.91). That is, African people have extended families which creates a strong communal bond among them. As a result some students may either be raised by their sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles, grandmothers or grandfathers, etc. without their fathers or mothers. Hence, their decisions to a certain extent, may be influenced by other significant others of the extended family or they may depend on other outside significant others when making decisions (Stead, 1996). Mphele’s study (1997) showed that some students indicated that they pursued certain careers because of the influence of their relatives. Even though some students in single parent families may have disengaged family backgrounds but their career decisions and choices may be influenced by their families. However, both the school and the family may play a significant role in helping students from single parent families in crystallising their career decisions and choices.

5.5 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DEGREE REGISTERED AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF CAREER GUIDANCE

The results on the relationship between the degree registered and students' perceptions on careers guidance showed that significant differences existed in some areas. The findings in this study showed that students from the Science, Law and Commerce faculties perceived careers guidance as helpful in enabling learners to make career decisions and choices. The perception may be a result of the fact that Commerce, Law and Science disciplines are more specialized and occupational in orientation as from high school. It is therefore possible to easily orient Commerce, Law and Science students to different career choices within their areas of specialization. Students also indicated that teachers related careers and jobs with academic school subjects. They also indicated that their school subjects related to their present careers at the university, found the information they received helpful, and they considered the involvement of parents important. Education and Arts students showed low scores except in Q21 and Q24 where Arts showed high mean scores.

Arts students indicated that they did receive information about the courses available at tertiary institutions and that parental involvement was important in career decisions and choices. This high score for Arts students may be attributed to the previous popularity and status of the Bachelor of Arts degree, the overemphasis of the Arts, and the career prospects that have been established under this discipline. The researcher's tertiary background and experience also reinforces the latter statement in that the Arts discipline is usually the largest and with the highest number of students, and with diversified career opportunities in most tertiary institutions. Lickindorf (1993) states that the popularity of the Arts is a result of students perceiving better employment opportunities and less stiff entrance requirements than in the sciences. Watson and

Stead (1993) found out that African adolescents' career aspirations were more inclined to the social and educational fields than in the practical and technical fields. As a result most of the students tended to choose careers in the humanities. Watson and Stead (1993) also showed that the top ten ranked careers were teaching, medicine, social work, nursing, law, engineering, pharmacy, police profession, management, psychology. The findings in this study tally with the previous in that it showed that commerce, science, and law students were likely to choose careers in medicine, teaching, law, engineering and management. Pouris found out that South African universities overemphasized education, law, management, social sciences, arts and humanities to the "detriment of engineering, mathematics and computing" (in Lickindorf, 1993, p.83).

5.6 CONCLUSION

The findings of this study have revealed that students generally perceive careers guidance services as being significant in their career decisions and choices. Other studies have shown consistency with these findings wherein learners expressed a need to have careers guidance in schools. Careers guidance would provide them with career information and occupational opportunities thus helping them explore and merge their career aspirations with the occupational world. Despite the expression of the significance of careers guidance, students also expressed that careers guidance in schools was not effective in helping them make sound career decisions and choices. The possible conclusions being that students did not get adequate exposure to a variety of career information, career opportunities, and courses offered in different tertiary institutions. Some were even pursuing courses which were not related to their school subjects. Hence, the conclusion that most African students make career decisions and

choices on a trial and error basis without due consideration of self-knowledge and what they are capable of doing best. Furthermore, the inadequacy of well trained guidance personnel may also be impeding students' ability to make well informed career decisions and choices. Earlier studies have also indicated that trained guidance personnel were lacking in African schools thus affecting the ability of the students to make informed career decisions and choices. Students also felt that their parents were not influential in their career decisions and choices because of their limited educational background which hinders them from giving their children career advice. If career advice were given it would probably have been based on the socio-economic background, professional status and job security.

Significant differences between males and females showed that females seemed more career undecided than males. The possible conclusions drawn on this revelation are that females' career undecidedness may be attributed to socio-cultural conventions, gender and career stereotypism, and family socialization. Studies showed that females tended to seek more career assistance because of certain careers being traditionally considered gender orientated. Students from single parent families and both parent families were found to be significantly different. Consequently, students from single parent families perceived the school as having provided career assistance than the family. The reliance of these students on the school may be a result of their possible insecure family backgrounds. On the other hand, students from both parent families seemed to rely on their families than the school for career decisions and choices. Also, students enrolled in Commerce, Science and Law indicated that their career choices related to what they were doing at university. This may be attributed to the fact that these areas are specialized at high school level such that it becomes easier to link certain careers with these fields. Therefore, the conclusions in this chapter attempt to indicate that numerous factors influence career decisions and choices of students.

However, the conclusions drawn on the findings require further research because of their hypothetical nature and perceived significance in careers guidance and career development.

CHAPTER 6

IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This study has indicated that the impact of careers guidance services in African schools is in question in providing assistance to students in making career decisions and choices. The indication by most students that careers guidance was not effective in helping them make informed career decisions and choices showed that guidance services is probably still inadequate. This has serious ramifications for careers guidance provisions and programmes, and their incorporation into the school guidance curriculum, particularly Curriculum 2005.

6.2 THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The conclusions that can be drawn on the basis of the findings on students' perception of careers guidance are:

- a. Students viewed careers guidance to be important for learners in schools so as to help them to make informed career decisions and choices. They perceived it to be important that careers guidance be enforced in schools so as to ensure that learners attained a better exposure to different careers and occupational opportunities. This study therefore poses a challenge on the school management or administration to ensure 'subject equity'. For example, an adequate number

of periods for careers guidance, as for other subjects, is made available in school timetables and that these are not used for any other purposes or school subjects. Marais (1998) reinforces the latter recommendation in that the “allocated guidance periods should be optimally used as the perception exists that these periods are not always used for Guidance purposes” (p. 148). This researcher believes that careers guidance is an integral part of the whole schooling process. It brings about a holistic awareness of life’s expectations, challenges and realities in the individual who is in transit to development, growth and survival. It is therefore important that careers guidance enjoys a high priority in the school curriculum so as to ensure that learners successfully adjust within the occupational opportunity structures available to them (Naicker, 1994; Marais, 1998). Careers guidance programmes should be in a position to assist learners to develop career decision-making skills. Curriculum 2005 advocates a skills-based approach to teaching and learning wherein life-skills programmes with a careers guidance component are designed in order to equip and empower learners in career decision making. Such national challenges place pressure on careers guidance in schools to direct learners appropriately on the basis of the dictates of the present and future economic, political and social realities.

- b. The study indicated that some students perceived careers guidance services in schools to have been inadequately effective in assisting them make sound career decisions and choices. Students’ perceptions were that teachers fairly related careers with academic streams, career information was inadequate, and their university careers did not correspond with what they did at high school. These findings may be an indication that teachers or guidance teachers might be either inadequately trained or unavailable for careers guidance teaching. Teachers’ functioning may have been limited by the lack of adequate resources to conduct

effective careers guidance programmes in schools and/or even the lack of knowledge about different careers. It is therefore important to empower guidance teachers, in particular teachers of other subjects, so as to meet the backlog in providing adequate careers guidance services in African schools. Naicker (1994), Marais (1998) indicate that there is a need for specialized training for diplomas and degrees in Guidance, and employment of adequately trained Guidance personnel so as to deal with the number of learners in schools who need specialized help because of their disadvantaged background. Stead (1996) also suggests training in multicultural counselling techniques in an attempt to assist African students in their career choice process. He states that multicultural counselling would help in understanding and addressing concerns of individuals from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds.

In essence, training should provide a means wherein career development theories are applied in context with barriers that African students face in their career decision making processes, since these play a major factor in career development of African students. Stead (1996) states that “most theories do not adequately consider numerous barriers faced by ... South African Black adolescents when deciding on a career” (p. 74). Therefore, due consideration of such concerns would assist learners to enrol in institutions with confidence because they would have received adequate information about careers and make informed decisions and choices. The ability of the learners to make career decisions would enable them to choose occupations that best suit them and are relevant to the demands of the work environment and global challenges. Learners would then be able to make choices that are based on their potential in relation to the demands of the job market thus shaping their careers .

c. Another conclusion that may be drawn is that parental influence was perceived by some students to be of little significance to career decisions and choices. Research studies (Watson & Stead, 1993; Stead, 1996; Sithole, 1997) have highlighted that some African parents, because of their limited educational background, are believed to be not well informed about different careers and occupation opportunities such that they give limited advice to their children. Therefore, parents' limitations on providing career advice may have influenced students' perceptions on parental involvement. However, an interesting finding in this study is that some students talked to their parents about careers. However, this could have been information or advice sought on the student's part or to inform the parent of what he or she intends to pursue as a career. It is also possible that these students' parents are educated hence making it possible for students to obtain advice from them. Despite parents' limitations to give career advice it is, however, important to note that some students perceived their parents' involvement as important in career decisions and choices. The latter statement concurs with other studies by Watson and Stead, (1993), Sithole, (1997), Bobo et al., (1998) which have indicated that parents have a significant influence on their childrens' career choices. It is important that parents be understood as wanting to help their children. However, they are limited by the aforementioned factors.

The empowerment of parents and getting them involved in their childrens' education is paramount. Stead (1996) points out that it is essential that parents are involved in programmes that will promote career development of African students because if not, students may be indifferent toward or reject these programmes thus making them fail. The careers guidance services should therefore use various channels of communication such as churches, civil

organisations, school governing bodies, and other community organisations to empower parents. Mtolo (1996) points out that parental involvement will "... help so that the education of the children becomes a joint venture between the school and the parents and the community at large" (p. 99). Even though parental involvement is important, as Mtolo (1996) cautions, parents need not be overly involved in career choices of their children because instead of advising or suggesting they may end up deciding and choose careers for their children with the notion that they know what is best for them. In other words, parents must understand that their function is more advisory and suggestive than instructive of career choices. Parents must also know and learn that it is the childrens' prerogative to decide and choose the careers they wish to pursue.

- d. The indication by the results of the present study that may be drawn on gender effects could be that males seemed to be more career decided than females. It emerged from this study that most males' present career choices corresponded with their high school careers as opposed to some females. This may have been caused by gender stereotyping and socialization because even though women's empowerment is advocated, gender stereotypism may still influence some career decisions. Besides, most males are found in science and commerce, and that makes it easier for them to pursue different careers. Most working and community environments place pressure on males to succeed and neglect the equal potential women possess as opposed to males.

It is therefore important for careers guidance to instil confidence in women and assure them of their potential and the equal work opportunities they now share with males. The guarantee by law of the rights of women and the establishment of the Gender commission to fight for their rights is a move toward gender

equity. It is this state of affairs that needs to be instilled in female learners for developing their self-concepts and, motivating and empowering them. Therefore, the demand for gender equity and women empowerment in work environments has created opportunities for females in careers that were traditionally dominated by males. Another interesting finding was that more females than males were influenced by their parents. This may be brought about because females have tight family ties therefore the close connection with the family influences their anticipated future functions in their own family. The latter further supports the need to involve parents in the career development of African students. The supportive role that parents play in helping to shape students' future cannot be overemphasized.

- e. It can also be deduced that Commerce, Science and Law students perceived guidance to have been effective because their streams are specialized and career linked. This makes it easier for them to select a variety of career choices that were linked to their high school choices. In addition to this, most of the career information and programmes focus on these streams and disregard the other areas. Teachers may also have played a role in advocating science or commerce oriented careers because science, technology and commerce are greatly emphasized by government, commerce and industry. The emphasis on the latter careers creates a perception that only individuals in science and commerce have job security and survival. As a result individuals in the Human and Social Sciences see their future as bleak and lacking in work opportunities. It emerged from this study that Education and Arts students saw help in career choices as being ineffective. The latter perception may be caused by the observation that career options in Education and Arts fields are limited and mostly restricted to teaching, social and administrative careers.

Despite the large number of African students in these fields, the uncertainty about their future is a major factor for learners to decide on which careers to pursue. The lack of information on other careers related to Education and Arts in general also contributes to guidance being perceived as ineffective. It is therefore important that students in the Human and Social Sciences be exposed to marketable careers that are directly and indirectly linked to the field so as to ensure broad decisions and choices. Careers guidance programmes should therefore be structured in such a way that they address and adapt to the changes in government policies, political and economic realities of the world in an attempt to meet the needs of the students. Marais (1998) suggests that “Guidance programmes should be seen by Guidance teachers as a ‘menu’ from which they should select appropriate themes to meet the needs of the adolescents in their schools” (p. 148). For instance, literature and careers guidance programmes should help in the revision of the notion that employment opportunities do not only exist in the formal sector. Entrepreneurship should be encouraged so that people realize that employment opportunities also exist in the informal sector. The latter would lead students to realize that a variety of job opportunities are available in self employment and this would lead to further job creation.

6.3 THE LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The considerations of the results of this study need to be viewed with the following factors in mind:

6.3.1 CAREERS GUIDANCE PROGRAMMES.

- a. The study did not take into consideration the kinds of careers guidance programmes the students received in different schools. This would have helped to find out which programmes have a better probability of success. It would also have helped to look at few schools to determine the kinds of effective careers guidance programmes available. The latter would have helped to ascertain the kinds of careers guidance programmes that were helpful and those that were not helpful. This comparison would also have provided information of what causes different programmes to work and others not.

- b. The questions of the study were based on the assumption that careers guidance was offered in some schools. However, the questions neglected accomodating the schools in which careers guidance was not offered. Looking into whether careers guidance was offered in the school or not would have helped in ascertaining the kinds of barriers to career development of learners in those schools. As a result the manner in which careers guidance is perceived differs with those to whom careers guidance was offered and to those to whom it was not offered.

6.3.2 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

- a. A considerable number of tests on the same sets of data were conducted thus increasing the probability of significant differences by chance alone. The number of tests conducted therefore reduced the sample size. This brought about the possibility that the significant differences obtained may not have been significant at all but only occurred by chance.
- b. The degree levels involved were five faculties which caused the expected frequencies to be high. Yet not more than 20% in each cell needed to be obtained for reliable significant differences. Therefore, the degree levels needed to be combined so as ensure that the expected frequencies were relatively low. This also further reduced the number of participants since the levels were too many.

6.3.3 THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The researcher only used five research assistants to test the questionnaire for clarity and simplicity of the questions before distribution instead of a pilot study. This did not distinctly ensure the reliability of the questions in the questionnaire. This limited the anticipation of the problems that were revealed by the SPSS reliability analysis computer programme. It revealed that the 'Importance' questions were not so reliable. A test-retest reliability procedure would have been useful to compare the two sets of scores that would have been obtained from the same group of students. It was also observed in the questionnaire, that some questions (e.g. questions 4, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 23, 24 & 26) seemed to

be repetitive and unclear and thus not eliciting the data satisfactorily. Eventhough it is important to have repetitive questions in order to assess internal stability (reliability of the responses) of the questionnaire, however caution has to be taken that the repetitive nature of the questions is kept to a minimum.

Another shortcoming of the questionnaire was that the validity of the instrument used in this study was not statistically measured. This ended up not ensuring the validity of the questionnaire. As a result the questionnaire may have not measured what it was meant to measure. That is , the perceptions of students. Eventhough the researcher tried to justify the use of the quantitative method, however the close ended questionnaire may not have satisfactorily elicited the data required on students' perceptions. A more qualitative open-ended questionnaire through content analysis would probably have tested the research questions satisfactorily since the nature of the study lends itself more to qualitative design than quantitative design.

It is therefore important that these limitations are taken into account when a study of a similar nature is to be conducted.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The researcher makes the following recommendations for further research in careers guidance:

- a. Further research on how African learners perceive careers guidance is still an absolute necessity since literature is limited in this area. This would contribute towards understanding the effectiveness of careers guidance services in terms of achieving what they were designed to achieve. The literature should provoke

and provide working solutions that would alleviate the plight of learners not being able to make informed career decisions and choices. Contextual and conceptual frameworks of careers guidance in African schools is of significance to the literature in order to redress the past disparities. This would provide aspects for inclusion in the Core Guidance Curriculum and the design of effective careers guidance programmes.

- b. Research should also look into comparing schools that have effective careers guidance programmes with those that have ineffective careers guidance programmes. This would distinctly create a possibility wherein teachers may share ideas on what works and what does not work, and even the strategies of making careers guidance programmes successful. Careers guidance programmes should be context specific by providing learners with effective programmes that have future relevance. It is important that the perceptions sought on careers guidance provisions should have relevance to what is occurring and experienced in schools in relation to the world of work.

- c. It is important that research looks into the relationship between gender and parental influence. The findings in this study presented interesting results wherein students, in particular males, perceived their parents as not being influential nor their involvement necessary. It is important that their negative views be analysed for better understanding of such results. Yet, females indicated their career guidance decisions and choices having been influenced by their parents. These contradictory views are of consequence towards setting up effective careers guidance programmes with parents playing a role. The views of students from single and both parent families are significant for future research to provide a better understanding of the obtained results. Different family backgrounds influence perceptions on career development because of differing needs of individuals in different families. It is therefore important for research to look at how Guidance programmes could become sensitive and relevant to the needs of different individual families and the communities from which they come.
- d. The researcher also recommends that future researchers should not conduct a considerable number of tests on the same sets of data in the questionnaire because this could make the results to be significant by chance alone. Also, the degree levels in the questionnaire should be combined and be less in number so as to avoid making the expected frequencies high. The reliability of the questionnaire should also be considered to ensure reliable results.

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CAREERS GUIDANCE SERVICES

The following recommendations are made by the researcher for consideration in guidance services and schools:

- a. Guidance teachers should be helped to implement careers guidance programmes that are related to the changing socio-economic and political conditions. The department of education should conduct careers guidance needs assessment so as to provide appropriate auxiliary services that would be of assistance to the learner. The guidance curriculum should address areas of contextual significance in order to meet the challenges of our rapidly changing country.
- b. The inadequate availability of guidance personnel should be addressed in order to meet with the demands of the changing world. Careers guidance in teacher education institutions should be compulsory for all trainee teachers. This would help them to acquire skills and knowledge on issues pertaining to guidance. These teachers would have knowledge on a variety of career guidance issues that would be helpful to learners in relating what they learn and the working environment for which they are prepared.
- c. Guidance, particularly careers guidance should be accorded an equal status as the other examination subjects. This would make it more credible and have it included as one of the major subjects in schools. As a result guidance periods would be honoured and the necessary commitment be demanded in its teaching. In this regard, the researcher recommends that Marais' recommendation (1998) that " a comprehensive syllabus for guidance should be available to indicate precisely to guidance teachers what can be dealt with in classrooms and how this

should be approached”(p. 148). Furthermore, subject teachers should be provided with details on the role they can play in assisting with career decisions and choices. The latter could be helpful in areas and schools without careers guidance.

- d. Careers guidance material and information should be distributed in schools for learners to acquire information about a variety of career opportunities and knowledge about the world of work. It is crucial that a link between careers guidance services and the occupational world is established so as to help learners make informed career decisions and choices. The latter would also prepare learners to meet the challenges of the new millennium. As suggested by Stead (1996) the researcher also recommends that “education authorities could provide an important service in coordinating the efforts of school guidance personnel, the Department of Labour, nongovernmental organizations, the family, and industry in promoting the career development ...” of African students (p. 273). It is through the latter’s integrated efforts that improvement in career development of African students could result in a decrease in a number of students making sound career decisions and choices.

6.6 CONCLUSION

The importance of careers guidance in schools cannot be overemphasized because it serves as a continuum in preparing students to face life’s challenges and realities. It is indeed why the researcher believes that the incorporation of the Life Skills Approach, of which careers guidance is an intricate part of Curriculum 2005, would try to address the plight students face in all sectors of life, be they social, political, emotional, psychological, spiritual, intellectual or economical. However, the extent to which its

effectiveness is going to address the needs of students and their growth and survival in this dynamic and rapidly changing world still remains a mystery. The implementation strategies/ approaches have not been clearly outlined, particularly in areas of career decision-making and career choices.

Indications are that little has been done to reconceptualise and transform the school guidance curriculum nor what learners perceive to be important for incorporation in the school guidance programme. This would still have serious implications and impact in assisting young students to make sound career decisions and choices in preparation for tertiary institutions or any other occupational sector. This prevailing situation would not attempt to allay students' fears of possible unemployment when they leave tertiary institutions. Therefore, any further delay in addressing careers guidance in African schools, in particular, would probably have adverse repercussions on young students on the road to self-discovery and self empowerment in the pursuit of what life has to offer.

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ANNEXURE

A. BIOGRAPHICAL AND SCHOLASTIC DETAILS

Instruction: Kindly place a cross (X) over the appropriate box that would qualify the description of the above requested details.

Gender:

Male	Female
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Family Composition:

Single Parent	Both Parents
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Degree registered for :

BA	B.Paed	B.Sc.	B.Com/B.Admin	LLB/B.Proc./BJuris
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B. QUESTIONNAIRE

Please read the following statements carefully and put a cross (X) on the number that rates the level of your view of careers guidance.

- 1 = Never
- 2 = Sometimes
- 3 = Often
- 4 = Usually
- 5 = Always

Aim 1: Importance of Careers Guidance in Schools.

1. I frequently had guidance lessons at school.

1	2	3	4	5
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2. A school guidance teacher is helpful in career related matters.

1	2	3	4	5
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3. Career guidance should be enforced in schools.

1	2	3	4	5
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4. Careers guidance would help learners make sound career decisions and choices.

1	2	3	4	5
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5. A careers guidance period would be helpful to learners.

1	2	3	4	5
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Aim 2 : Effectiveness of Career Guidance in enabling learners to make career decisions and choices.

6. I received career assistance at secondary school level.

1	2	3	4	5
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7. My school gave me enough help in deciding on a career.

1	2	3	4	5
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8. Teachers or guidance teachers often concentrated in relating careers and academic streams at school.

1	2	3	4	5
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9. A constant reference to job opportunities and subject choices is helpful in deciding on a career.

1	2	3	4	5
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10. The career decisions I made at high school correspond with what I am presently doing at university.

1	2	3	4	5
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11. A change in career decision is largely influenced by economic factors (Financial constraints, Salaries, etc.).

1	2	3	4	5
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12. A change in career decision is largely influenced by Academic factors (School subjects, Poor performance, etc.).

1	2	3	4	5
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13. A change in career decision is largely influenced by social factors (Parental influence/Friends, Societal background, etc.).

1	2	3	4	5
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14. Teachers either than guidance teachers often concentrated on science and/or commerce oriented occupations than on other humanities related occupations.

1	2	3	4	5
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15. A change in my career decision was influenced by socio-economic and academic factors.

1	2	3	4	5
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16. Guidance periods were used by other teachers for other exam subjects.

1	2	3	4	5
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17. Learners did use guidance periods for self-study of exam subjects.

1	2	3	4	5
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18. Information acquired during guidance periods was helpful in making career choices.

1	2	3	4	5
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19. Career materials or information were available at school.

1	2	3	4	5
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20. My school or I frequently visited career guidance or counselling centres.

1	2	3	4	5
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21. I did receive information about the courses available at tertiary institutions.

1	2	3	4	5
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22. My school did get an opportunity to make a visit to a tertiary institution.

1	2	3	4	5
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23. The information I received was helpful in assisting me to choose a career.

1	2	3	4	5
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Aim 3 : Parental Influence on Career Decisions and Choices

24. I do consider parental involvement in career decision and choices important.

1	2	3	4	5
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25. My parents are well informed about different career opportunities.

1	2	3	4	5
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26. Parents should influence career decisions and choices of their children to a certain extent.

1	2	3	4	5
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27. I talked about career opportunities with my parents at home.

1	2	3	4	5
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28. My parents did influence my career decision and choice.

1	2	3	4	5
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THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY