

***CAREER AWARENESS AND SCHOOL
SUBJECT SELECTION OF BLACK SECONDARY
SCHOOL LEARNERS IN A RURAL AREA***

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DECLARATION

I, Matome Jack Mashipata, do hereby declare that unless otherwise indicated in the text, this dissertation is my original work.



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ABSTRACT

This study explored the career awareness of learners in grade 9 and their selection of school subjects for their subsequent years of study in the secondary school. This was based in a remote rural setting with a sample of 71 respondents made up of 34 females and 37 males. Their ages ranged from 13 to 24 years old.

Questionnaires and interviews were conducted with this group of learners. The findings indicated that some of these learners lack information on careers and are not adequately aware of what the world of work entails. It was found that, when they have to make selections of subjects for their subsequent years of study, they make choices that are not in any way related to their anticipated careers. Secondly, they are found not yet ready to think and decide about their future in the world of work indicating a lack of career maturity.

Learners were not aware of the link between their work at school and what they wish to become in future. Learners were not able to account reasonably for their selected subjects and

how they hoped to build a career path from those subjects. Of all activities in which the learners were engaged at school, much emphasis was placed on academic performance and achievements.

The significance of the findings of this study as well as its implications are discussed and recommendations are made for research and practice.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

School subjects that are followed by the learners at secondary school are very important as they have an influence on the type of careers that they may follow, or further training options open to them. Each subject offered at school has a particular career direction to which it is linked. It follows from this that students should not just take certain subjects and courses which they cannot link to the realities of the world of work, although in most cases this depends on the availability of a variety of subjects. Subject teachers should not encourage learners to take certain subjects merely on the basis of high marks, but should consider the subject's relevance to the learner's personal life and career world (Department of Labour, 1996). Education will not be a success if those children whom we are teaching do not have a realistic picture of the world beyond school, and they find it

difficult to choose a career or do not have sufficient information upon which to base their decisions.

Secondary school years are crucial in the adjustment of learners as they represent the transition from the comparatively sheltered life of primary school to the freedom and responsibility of either tertiary education or employment decisions. This kind of transition presents students with problems of an educational, vocational, social and personal nature (Maluwa-Banda, 1998). The issue of school subject selection poses particular difficulties at a time when the society is in transition and career options as well as study options are likely to change as they are already changing. In a rural area where most of the population is disadvantaged in many respects, coupled with the transition in our society, the adolescent finds himself in a difficult situation where he has to make choices amidst lots of uncertainties.

Selection of subjects should not be based on the marks obtained in the preceding class only, but what the learner considers as value of the subject to his/her future should also be taken into consideration. Subject teachers and career teachers have to educate learners in self-knowledge and wise decision-making in time, so that they can handle the major

decisions that are required by subject and course options as well as by school leaving (Hayes & Hopson,1972). Limited knowledge of the employment and opportunity structure are some of the factors that result in some learners landing into jobs that they had not thought of until at the end of schooling when the opportunity occurred. This means making information more available for learners to reflect on and think about when selecting subjects. Young people could play a role through their careers but there is no information about careers because of their remote difficult situation in which they find themselves. Lack of information about the various vocational opportunities available after secondary school learners limits learners' choices and the ultimate realization of their potential. Potential intelligence and a superficial knowledge of occupations is not enough(Chuenyane ,1990).

Learners need to have some level of awareness and information about the various careers and developments in the world of work in order to make realistic selection of subjects. It is further argued by Hayes and Hopson(1972) that the freedom to choose the kind of work one will pursue is determined by the type of society in which one lives. The school that the individual attends is located within a society, and becomes an extension of that society. The experience that the student

gains at school has an impact on his or her career life.

In a recent study by Warton and Cooney(1997),it was found that many adolescents at school do not access the information that is necessary for rational decision making .The problem of lack of information is further magnified by less time that is available in the school for guidance and counselling services due to staff shortages (De Haas, 1991).With the teaching staff constraints and lack of time for careers education, especially in the Black rural schools, subject teaching can be an invaluable platform for encouraging students to think about themselves and the problems and decisions that await them in the wider world beyond school(Hayes & Hopson , 1972).

There are several factors influencing the learners' selection of particular subjects. The learner's attitude towards both the subject and the teacher, the perceived relevance of that subject to one's anticipated career and the school curriculum itself are important factors. If the learners select their subjects without information and adequate career awareness they might find themselves facing what Hayes and Hopson(1972), call "a careers crisis". Performance in a subject's examination can lead to a crisis if the learners do not have a conceptual frame of reference with which to examine and

clarify the world of work. (Hayes & Hopson ,1972).Information is important for realistic career goals. Learners think it is very difficult in life because they find themselves not knowing what they want to be(Euvrard, 1997).

Previous research results show that the learners in middle school(grade 9) are in the early phase of their vocational planning. They need assistance in knowing where and how to explore more effectively for career purposes (Taveira et al.1998). There are still those who believe that normal intelligent learners do not need any special preparation to help them make decisions about their future lives. This kind of view is unacceptable because there are too many learners who get started in inappropriate occupational tracks from which they find it difficult to shift due to ill-information or no information at all(Schools Council, 1971). Warton and Cooney(1997) found that attitude and the availability of information play a role in learners' selections of subjects. They stress that the role of the guidance counsellor may be to increase the information for learners.

1.2 Aim of the study

In terms of rational decision-making, students need to have

the information that makes informed choices possible(Warton & Cooney, 1997). In a study by Dellar (1993) there is evidence that the determination to pursue a career goal directs the selection of a specific combination of subjects. Career awareness and interest in particular subjects are closely related.

This study proposes to investigate the level of career awareness the learners from a rural area have when they make selections for subjects of study at the senior school. What the learners know about the world of work influences the selection of school subjects. On the other hand, the selected subjects have an implication on the careers that they may want to follow in future. We can see that career guidance needs to help students think of themselves as responsible members of society who can make a contribution through some kind of work and psychologically and physically being fulfilled.

The site of study is a local secondary schools in the rural Bochum area outside Pietersburg using an intact group, and of both male and female learners who are in Standard 7(Grade 9). This particular group of learners are at a stage where they will have to select subjects that they will do from standard 8(grade 10) until they are in matric. Learners may at times

be channelled into particular career paths by the subject streams that they have selected. This study aims at exploring career information upon which the students at this stage base their selections of subjects.

1.3 Definition of terms

1.3.1 Career Awareness

A career refers to the activities and positions in vocations, occupations and jobs as well as to related activities associated with an individual's lifetime at work (Zunker, 1998). Isaacson (1977) defines a career broadly as describing an individual's lifelong work pattern, the way in which the individual expresses self and relates to society through work. Isaacson (1977) further describes a career as the sequence of occupations, jobs and positions occupied during the course of one's working life.

"Awareness" as used in this study, refers to the state of being informed, having knowledge and orientation. Such information is necessary for rational decision-making (Warton

& Cooney, 1997). Awareness is the total combination of what specific people or groups know about a specific issue. Awareness means that the individual has knowledge of the world of work, different careers and the trends in the labour market. Information about occupations which consists of facts about jobs when used in school creates awareness, encourages exploration, facilitates decision-making, enhances preparation or increase employability (Isaacson, 1977).

Awareness also relates to the individual's knowledge referred to as self-awareness. It means that the individual is aware of his/her own potential, interests, abilities, talents, needs and values. These factors have an influence career decision-making.

In sum, career awareness therefore refers to the learner's information and knowledge of careers. Decisions that the learner has to make about careers are based on that awareness.

1.3.2 Subject selection

Subjects are the units that form the course of study in a semester or a year. Schools offer various subsets or streams of subjects according to their resources and students'

demands(Warton & Cooney, 1997).Schools offer the subjects for which they have the personnel qualified to teach, and these subjects are grouped according to different streams and the most common being; the general, academic, technical, commercial and the science streams.

1.3.3 Secondary School

The researcher in this study has chosen to define this term because in most of the literature they refer to a senior school or a secondary school when referring to the years 10,11&12 of schooling. In this study, and in line with the South African context, a secondary school refers to a school which caters for learners from standards 6 to 10(grades 8 to 12).It occurs that at the secondary school students who are in standard 7(grade 9) have to make final selections of subjects that they will do from standard 8(grade 10) right up to matric when they leave school.

1.3.4 Rural area

A rural area is usually a location peripheral to an urban settlement, with a small dispersed population. It is characterised by a lack of amenities such as water,

electricity, telecommunications or if available only limited to a small sector of the community. The predominant occupation is subsistence agrarian.

The rural area is further characterised by dispersed patterns of settlements whereby school-going children have to travel long distances on foot to gain access to schools and other social services. Because of the lack of economic activity, the working generation mostly find jobs in the cities as migrant workers separated from their families.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of the literature on topics that are related to the present study, discussing the theoretical basis of this research, previous research done in this field, the current provision of career education and implications for the future.

2.2 Career education at the secondary school

The implementation of school guidance and counselling services ought to be made to meet the needs of learners. Secondary school guidance programmes operate in a preventative way in attempting to equip learners with information, skills and attitudes necessary for the challenges of adolescence (Euvrard, 1996). The world of work and life after schooling will demand skills of which some can be learnt during career guidance at

school. It is further argued that career guidance is neglected in many secondary schools in Black education by teachers and administrators because they do not see any value in it (Mtolo, 1996). When the teachers and those that are in control of the schools do not realize the value of career guidance, they also do not see the need for it to be offered at school. A report by the Schools Council Working Paper (1971) states that in many schools the amount of thought, resources and staff time devoted to the preparation of learners for school leaving is still insufficient. There are those who succumb to the temptation of narrowing their objectives to the dominant goal of scholastic excellence measured by examination success while neglecting guidance. At some of the schools in Black education, periods that are meant for guidance are used by the teachers for other examination subjects (Mtolo, 1996). This happens because teachers and administrators work only to produce a better mark or a good symbol at the end of the year, whilst neglecting to address the question of where these high marks lead to in terms of their students' future careers.

The need for career guidance in education is a serious one. It is argued that we will be cheating students if we avoid the larger environment or the world outside school (Shertzer &

Stone,1970). Learners must have an understanding if they are to lay educational plans wisely. Career counsellors must have information and knowledge of alternatives if they are to be helpful to the students(Shertzer & Stone,1970).In our teaching we cannot only look to make students pass but career education is very important to help our students in shaping their future.

Career counselling and guidance will be useful to counteract some of the previous negative effects of education, especially in disadvantaged schools(Naicker,1994). Given the history of disadvantaged education for black learners in the past, many black learners are not exposed or even oriented to their future goals. This is further emphasized by Naicker(1994) in saying that for decades black education has reinforced the low social and occupational status of the most disadvantaged sector of the population. Provision of career guidance will help those students to see themselves positively and as having a place and a role in the present and future South Africa. Students need to be prepared for the responsibilities that will fall upon them as workers, learn realistically about requirements of work, and should find an opportunity to rehearse the behaviour that will be expected of them(Schools

Council,1971). Work that a person does or will do is considered very important by the individual as it provides both physical and psychological sustenance(Isaacson,1977).

The need for guidance programmes within all schools became increasingly evident in recent past and the is greater need for this service than ever before. If secondary education is to be relevant to the needs of the students, it is essential that students be assisted in selecting careers at an earlier time(Isaacson,1977).The world is undergoing rapid changes which have an effect on the job markets and students would need to be exposed and informed about these realities. Rapid technological advances, an increasingly complex society, the new concepts of government, the need for outstanding leadership talents, a shift in standards of morality and integrity, and a condition of unusual demands upon young people, all contribute to the need for guidance programmes and services at school. With this in mind we can only come to realize the crucial need for career guidance in our present day South African schools. The economic conditions are not the same as they were in the past and the changes have not ceased to occur, thus affecting the whole career world. Students need accurate, usable information about this complex world of work

(Isaacson, 1977)

2.2.1 The secondary school learner-adolescence and career decision

Adolescence, is the stage in which the secondary school learner finds himself and is often very difficult to cope with (Hurlock, 1980). It is a stage in life of change, redefinition and adjustment and as teachers we need to remember that these adolescents need much support and guidance to help them through this tough time (Hamachek, 1990). In the process of forming an identity for himself, the adolescent is in an "identity crisis", making decisions about who he is and where he is going (Craig, 1992)

As children develop towards maturity, they have certain personal developmental goals or tasks of which the school should contribute to the accomplishment thereof (Strang & Morris, 1964). According to Hurlock, (1978) although children throughout the major part of their childhood are in a period of fantasy vocations. When they reach adolescent years their choices are more guided by what they would need to be helped

towards discovering more of their capabilities.

The secondary school learners are in such a stage that their vocational choices change as their interests change and they are capable of making many choices within a period of a year(Hurlock, 1978). As the adolescents develop they are more concerned with what they would like to do. The more they hear and talk about different lines of work, the less sure they are of what they would like to do(Hurlock, 1980).There is such a need for guidance in order for the adolescent to make appropriate choices of subjects and career paths.

2.3 Theoretical foundations of career planning

Theories of career development are conceptual systems that are designed to delineate the apparent relationships between accompanying events that lead to causes and effects(Zunker, 1990).They let us develop a frame of reference by which we can understand the factors that affect individuals involved in the process of career development (Isaacson, 1977).These theories form the shape, provide the model, establishes the pattern and

introduces the basic concepts which are instrumental in providing the foundation for research in vocational behaviour and career planning (Zunker, 1990).

Although the different theoretical approaches differ in the nature of the influential factors involved in the career decision-making process, they all emphasize the relationship between the unique traits of individuals and the characteristics of society in which development occurs, and have common implications for career education.

2.3.1 Developmental theories

For purposes of this study, the theories using a developmental approach will be discussed briefly;

2.3.1.1 Ginzberg and associates' theory (1951)

A theory of occupational choice is approached from a developmental point of view. They suggested that occupational

choice is a developmental process that involves three stages generally covering a period from six to ten years(fantasy period),right through age eleven(tentative period) and ending shortly after the age of seventeen years(realistic period). According to this theory, the adolescent is at a realistic stage of career development where choices of what he/she wants to be are made. The choices are made amidst opportunities and restraints. Possible restraints can include the family's financial incapability, parental attitudes and values as well as limitations within the school.

Criticism against this model is that it is more descriptive than explanatory, and provides no strategies for facilitating career development(Osipow,1983).

2.3.1.2 Tiedman's theory(1963)

This theory suggests that career development is a process of organizing an identification with work through the interaction of the individual's personality with society(Isaacson,1977). This theory conceptualized career development within a framework of time stage maintaining that development of a

career spans most of the individual's lifetime. It is a process of continuously differentiating one's ego identity, processing developmental tasks and resolving psycho-social crises (Zunker, 1990). Career decisions are reached through a systematic problem-solving pattern that includes seven steps of (a) exploration, (b) crystallization, (c) choice, (d) Clarification, (e) induction, (f) reaffirmation, and (g) integration.

Tiedman viewed career decision-making as a continuous process in which individuals will change their courses of career action generally by leaving a particular setting or environment. This is influenced by factors such as finance, work setting needs and aspirations.

2.3.1.3 Super's theory of vocational development (1972)

Super's theory takes a multi-sided approach and considers the self concept as the vital force that establishes a career pattern (Zunker, 1990). In his approach Super aimed to determine

how the self-concept is implemented in vocational behaviour. The vocational self concept develops through physical and mental growth and observations of work. This vocational self concept is only part of the total self concept but is regarded as the driving force that establishes a career pattern one will follow throughout his life(Zunker,1990). Super's view can be well described by looking at the following propositions that he made:

1. vocational development is an on-going, continuous, generally irreversible process.
2. vocational development is an orderly, patterned and predictable process.
3. vocational development is a dynamic process.(Isaacson,1985)

Super has drawn heavily from the life-stages theory and he identifies the following career life stages;

- a. the growth stage(0-14 years) which is characterised by a development of capacity, attitudes, and needs associated with the self concept.
- b. the exploratory stage(15-24 years) characterised by a tentative phase in which choices are narrowed and finalised
- c. the establishment stage(24-44 years) characterised by trial

and stabilization through work experience

d.the maintenance stage(45-64 years) characterised by a continual adjustment process to improve working situation

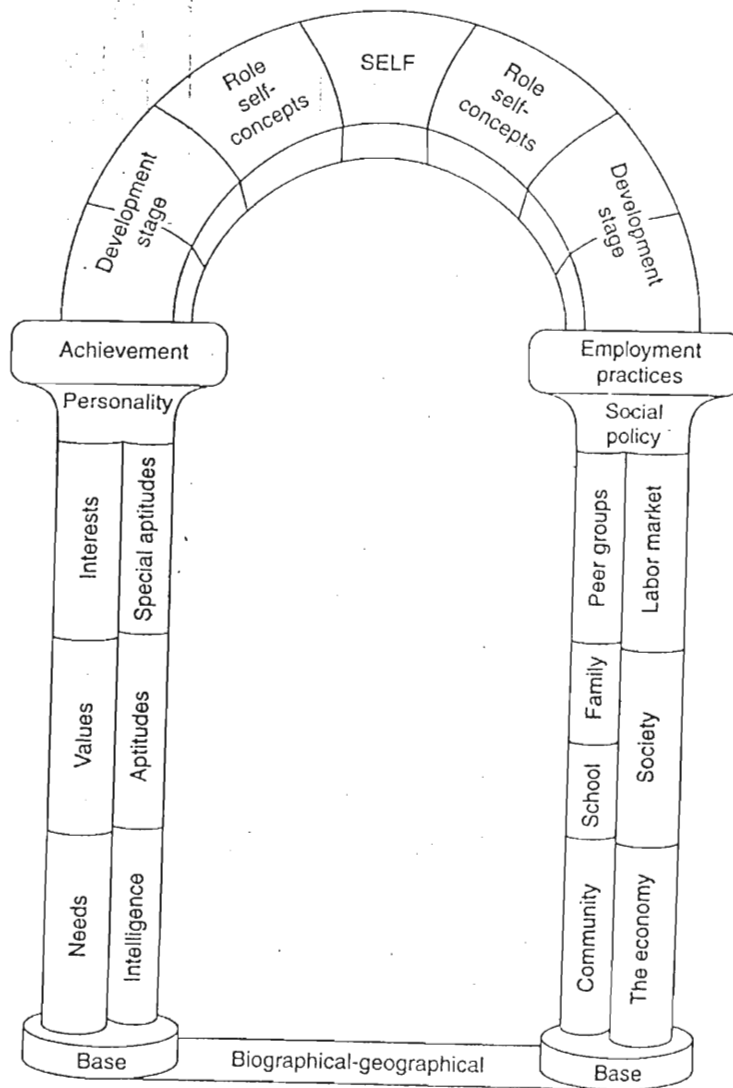
e.the decline stage(65+ years) reduced work output and eventual retirement.

Each of the five career development stages has developmental tasks that an individual has to achieve in order to reach career maturity. Career maturity represents the individual's ability to cope with developmental tasks confronting him/her. Career maturity is related to the achievement of self-awareness, knowledge of occupations and developed planning ability(Zunker,1990). The developmental tasks are identified as crystallization, specification, implementation, stabilization and consolidation.

Super views career development as consisting of an intervention between the individual's behaviour, attitudes, ambitions, values and the surrounding social factors. The interaction produces a series of compromises as the individual matches what is desired against what is reality, and attempts to identify what is attainable(Isaacso,1985).

The Archway model developed in this theory demonstrates the interaction between the individual as a total being and the environment. The model delineates the changing diversity of life roles experienced by the individual over a life span. It further clarifies how biographical, psychological and socio-economic determinants influence career development.

Figure 1 The Archway Model



In the above figure, one base stone arch supports the person and his/her psychological characteristics, while the other base support the societal aspects. The column that extends from the biographical base encompasses the person's needs, intelligence, values, aptitudes and interests. The column rising from the geographical base includes environmental influences. The arch joining the columns is made up of conceptual components including developmental stages, The self of person is the keystone.

2.3.1.4 Development of occupational aspirations(1981)

This is a model by Gottfredson in which occupational preferences emerge from the complexities that accompany physical and mental growth. A major determinant of occupational preferences is the progressive circumscription of aspirations during self concept development. He suggested that socio-economic background and intellectual level of the individual greatly influence self concept development in a dominant society. As people project into the world of work, they choose occupations that are appropriate to their social space, intellectual level and sex-typing(Zunker,1990).

According to this theory there is a factor of compromise in career decision-making which is based on generalizations formed about occupations. People may compromise their occupational choices because of the accessibility of another occupation.

2.3.2 The sociological approaches

The models used in the sociological approaches place emphasis on the inter-relationship of the psychological, economic and sociological determinants of occupational choice and development. This approach suggests that the individual characteristics that are responsible for choice are biologically determined and socially conditioned through family influences, social position and relations as well as developed social-role characteristics (Zunker, 1990). The sociological theorists paid considerable attention to the impact of the social environment on career choice with their central point being that the societal circumstances beyond the control of the individual contribute significantly to career choices. The principal task confronting the individual is the development of techniques to cope efficiently with the

environment(Vondracek et al.1986)

Within the environment which exerts an influence on the individual's career decision-making, Vondracek(1986) distinguishes between the physical and the social environments. Some of these factors are considered beyond control of the individual but do have a bearing on career choice. According to Zunker(1990),some of the basic assumptions of the sociological approach are as follows;

1.a social structure exists that imparts patterns of activities, identification with models, and aspirations among various social groups

2.career development is a continuous process

3.situational conditions also exert influences on career development patterns.

Zunker(1990),further asserts that the sociological approach continues to focus on situational variables such as technological changes in local and national economic

conditions. This is supported by the view that the overarching and ever-changing cultural, economic, and technological features of the environmental context undoubtedly influence career development (Vondracek et al. 1986). Changes in the social and economic conditions always bring changes in career development. From the writings of Vondracek et al. (1986) on the sociological approach we can gather the following ideas:

-the course of one's development is dependent to some extent on one's location in historical time.

-the individual is not a passive recipient of contextual forces, rather the impact of the context on an individual's career development is conceived as a result of the dynamic interaction between the individual and the environment.

-family background is a powerful force; the role of the parental support and other siblings has an impact on career development

2.4 The role of the school

There exists a close relationship between education in general, and schooling and counselling in particular and it is the schools which offer such vital services as counselling (Naicker, 1994). Career counselling is part of the school guidance services which are an essential ingredient of the system of education. It should be understood that career guidance or career education is part of the broader curriculum of the school and if the school does not make provision for career guidance, even though the students perform well in other examination subjects, some of them do gain entrance at university but have no information with regard to fields of study and choices to be made (De Haas et al. 1995). Vocational education is a programme available in public school settings to develop specific occupational skills for secondary school learners.

The purpose of career education programmes in schools is to provide opportunities for persons to develop occupational competencies through sequential educational instruction and training appropriate for their abilities and needs. Cobb and

Nubert(Dowdy & Evers,1996) described the following five broad goals for secondary school career education;

- (a)acquisition of personal skills and attitudes
- (b)communication and computational skills and technological literacy
- (c)employability skills
- (d)broad and specific occupational skills and knowledge, and
- (e)foundations for career planning and lifelong learning.

Downing(1968) has formulated the following as the principal aim and purpose of the school's career information service;

- (a)developing students' interests in the world of work and in the many activities used by people for earning a living.
- (b)stimulating students to give careful consideration of the many educational and vocational possibilities

open to them

(c)providing experiences and a wholesome atmosphere by which healthy attitudes of respect for all kinds of useful work are developed

(d)helping students make wise decisions in educational experiences, by which personal development may be enhanced and adequate preparation realized for future experiences.

(e)providing information about many opportunities open to young people in various colleges, universities, and technical training schools, among which choices may be made

(f)providing a continuous programme of experiences well integrated with the instructional programme, experiences which provide strength and continuity for the total educational process

(g)keeping to a minimum frustrations and indecisiveness and eliminating wasteful trial and

error approaches in decision-making

(h)improving the self-understanding of young people from which a greater appreciation for other people may emerge.

According to Zunker(1998) the National Occupational Information Co-ordinating Committee(NOICC) outlines three broad areas of career development for students in the junior and high school as follows;

1. Self-knowledge

(a)understanding the influence of a positive self concept

(b)skills to interact with others

(c)understanding the impact of growth and development

2. Educational and Occupational Exploration

(a)understanding the relationship between educational achievement and career planning

- (b) understanding the need for positive attitudes towards work and learning
- (c) skills to locate, evaluate and interpret career information
- (d) understanding how societal needs and functions influence the nature and structure of work

3. Career planning

- (a) skills to make decisions
- (b) understanding the interrelationship of life
- (c) understanding the continuous changes in male and female roles
- (d) skills in career planning

The foregoing indicate the important role that the school can play in career education by ensuring that all students achieve maximum intellectual, personal, social, career and physical development so they may successfully meet the challenges and demands that they will face as adults (Neukrug et al. 1993).

2.4.1 The Role of the Subject teacher in Career Guidance

Teachers in all subject areas need not only content training in communicating their subject matter effectively. Content knowledge alone is not always the answer for teacher competence (Rice & Smith, 1993). Subject teachers must be aware that the learners in their classrooms are in transit following their career paths and they, as subject teachers have a role to play. Subject teachers cannot claim they are competent only in their content subjects but in dealing with the student as a person they have a role to play in helping them acquire self-knowledge and career knowledge necessary for realistic decision-making (Department of Labour, 1996). As academics, subject teachers should work together to develop programmes that teach academic information and at the same time apply new knowledge to the future work environment (Schmidt, 1997)

The subject teacher has a role to play in raising career awareness in the students. This becomes important for the

teacher especially that in the black schools there have been and still are, serious constraints such as high teacher-pupil ratios and less time available for careers counselling (De Haas, 1991). The subject teacher must be there to guide the students who may need assistance in knowing where and how to explore more effectively for career purposes (Taveira et al. 1998). It has been stated that the subject teacher can integrate career guidance in his everyday lesson plans through the subject matter (Department of Labour, 1996). Gysbers and Moore pointed out that a comprehensive guidance model is not an ancillary guidance service, but rather one in which all members of the staff are involved, including administrators, members of the community, and parents (Zunker, 1998). This does not leave out the subject teacher, who can be able to realistically guide his students about the exact value of the particular subject in the world of work. It is suggested that every subject has relevance to some career areas and that teachers teach careers by giving students projects and assignments that raise awareness of the world of work (Schools Council, 1971)

The subject teacher is the most important single individual in the educational life of each student and he can work to aid

and support other specialised guidance workers. He therefore does not limit himself to the routine procedures of subject teaching, but also assumes the responsibility for improving the learning environment and for aiding each child toward full realization of his capabilities(Downing,1968). He can make use of the subject matter and his knowledge to help children gain self-knowledge. Although his major role is to teach and make children pass, a concerned, sensitive and dedicated teacher can think of teaching on the development of an adequate self-concept in individual learners(Shertzer & Stone,1970).

Emphasis on personal growth through subject teaching often results in students adopting a more positive attitude towards their school work as they perceive more clearly the relevance of academic courses to every day life and their future careers(Hayes & Hopson,1977).The more the subject teacher understands the process of vocational choice and the world of work in general, the more he can assist students and others who come to him to develop healthy attitudes toward work, and to see the broad perspective of work, to understand the vocational areas related to one's subject field, and to acquire the understanding that will lead to wise career choices (Isaacson,1977)

Now looking at the guidance teacher we refer to a teacher at the school whose primary focus is on guidance more than other subject teachers. Some schools do have the so-called standard tutors and others a full-time counsellor to do the more specialist work of the guidance teacher. These personnel at school are distinguished from the regular subject teachers in that they have undergone some kind of training in the aspects of counselling and guidance, although that training may differ. These personnel at school have to play a leading role in counselling services(Downing,1968). They are specialists and possess special skills in counselling which requires of them to take leadership roles in dealing with the children's problems(Shertzer & Stone, 1970; Downing,1968).

People who are appointed guidance teachers should be afforded more time during the school day to attend to the learners' problems and issues which could not be handled satisfactorily by the classroom teachers.

Downing, (1968) lists the following as typical functions of the guidance counsellors;

- i. assumes responsibility for guidance functions

delegated by the principal

- ii. accepts referrals for counselling and personal assistance
- iii. initiates procedures for making pupil contacts and for making counselling available
- iv. observes students in the classrooms and works with the teachers in improving classroom conditions
- v. conducts case studies and advises teachers in an effort to promote the optimum adjustment and welfare of each child
- vi. provides leadership in the development of all phases of the guidance programme
- vii. assists in planning and conducting in-service training
- viii. provides the selection and use of guidance materials

ix.gives lectures and leads discussions for community groups and stimulates interest and participation.

In line with the above functions of the guidance counsellor, we see that the counsellor possesses needed skills that could become valuable resource for staff development(Rice & Smith,1993). The counsellor can help the teacher by sharing value exercises, teaching reflective listening and other communication skills, and providing effective resource for the teacher to use in the classroom with children(Rice & Smith,1993)

2.5 The role played by other agencies outside school

There are several agencies and organizations which can be of direct help to the school's career teaching. Employers have a special responsibility to recruit, select, induct and train young employees effectively and help them lead happy and useful working lives(Schools Council,1971).These two

statements indicate that the personnel at school, the careers teacher, subject teacher and guidance teacher are not alone in providing career guidance to the learners.

The industrial sector has a role to play by realistically providing information on applicable careers and what the current needs are in terms of labour skills. Few teachers have had sufficient experience of employment fields other than their own to make informed critical observations. Too often teachers make a mistake because their judgements are the result of brief and distant glimpses that have been sifted through the inappropriate values of their own working world (Schools Council, 1971). There are many organizations, private and non-governmental which have been established to offer career information services. In many centres there are those establishments such as the career information and resource centres and schools' liaison departments in big companies which link with the schools through relevant career services.

The involvement of parents and other organizations outside school cannot be overstated. Parents play an influential role in the students' decision-making process. The employment

sector and non-governmental organizations are some of the potential employers and their career information would help students with the most appropriate and up to-date trends of the world of work. The career guidance resource centres have, as their sole responsibility the dissemination of careers information and guidance, and this puts them in the better position of researching the field of work and rendering a more comprehensive information service.

2.6 The present provision of career education in South African schools.

The provision of Guidance as a subject in the curriculum in South African schools was made in the National Policy Act of 1967. Although it was meant to be introduced then, it only started in Black schools in 1981 when General Guidance and Career Guidance were introduced as part of the school curriculum. Because of segregation then, each department's psychological services had its own system of practice (Naicker, 1994; Euvrard, 1996)

When it was introduced, general guidance and career guidance were rendered as specialised activities of the school guidance service and this was practised under the system of differentiated education (Department of Education and Training, 1993)

According to the Department of Education and Training (D.E.T.), the aims of Career guidance as part of the school guidance programme are:

a. to support and guide each pupil by means of individual and group guidance in exploring, discovering, evaluating, understanding, accepting, considering and realizing his physical, mental, social and spiritual potential, enabling him to exercise his choice of education and career/ occupation.

b. to make educational and career information available to pupils, to interpret it and to guide them towards exploring their educational and career opportunities, and to make them aware of their own potential with a view to their choice of education and career/occupation (the integration of self-knowledge

and career knowledge)

c. to identify pupils experiencing problems regarding their choice of education and career/ occupation, and to help them solve these problems.

Career guidance and counselling has not been effective in South African black schools so far, as it has experienced several problems. The guidance and counselling services have had a chequered history in South Africa and are presently in trouble (Euvrard, 1996). While the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) report states the economic constraints as reasons for the marginalization of guidance and demoralization of its practitioners, there are still other reasons such as teachers and administrators who accord it a minimal status especially as a non-examination subject, and the suspicion with which black learners viewed it as a means of government control, especially during the time at which it was introduced (Euvrard, 1996). Career guidance has also been criticized for its role in perpetrating inequalities in terms of subject choice and career opportunities among black and white learners (NEPI, 1992). Chuenyane (1990) also adds to this in saying that it is abundantly clear that guidance in black

schools has received lip service and less implementation and has not occupied a place of prominence. The fact that there was no training for teachers with regard to the implementation of guidance programmes added to the problems (Naicker, 1994).

It would seem as if career guidance is under-valued by teachers and administrators in secondary schools. People tend to focus more on the academic and intellectual aspect of education and neglect the interpersonal, emotional and social aspects of development (Mtololo, 1996). Through experience we have come to realize that guidance has suffered neglect in the majority of South African black schools despite being part of school curriculum. This, coupled with the state's under-funding of black education, has led to almost extinction of career education. The marginalization of school guidance has increased in recent years because of severe economic constraints and this has resulted in the gradual decline of the importance of this service in the estimation of administrators, teachers and even pupils (Naicker, 1994). When it gets tough financially, the immediate thing to shed off is that which does not count in the examination, and in this case it is Guidance.

The concentration of a large majority of people in the urban areas is of concern as this leads to the provision of services concentrated there and the rural inhabitants seem to be least considered. Meijers and Piggot(1995) indicate that guidance and careers services are in a real danger especially in these times of recession. Cutbacks in public spending only mean that those people who live in disadvantaged remote areas will have their lives deteriorate. The Northern Province, which is largely comprised of rural settlements, is no exception and it remains one of South Africa's under-resourced areas.

2.7 Previous research on subject choice, career exploration and decision-making

Several studies have been done in the field of career education. Meijers and Piggot(1995) conducted a study on the careers guidance and ethnic minorities in Holland and Britain. The minority group in their study have comparable conditions to those of the black people of South Africa. In their study, they found that there is an imbalance in the delivery of career guidance service to the clients. Because of the

deprivation of the minority group, many guidance workers feel ill-prepared and powerless in their dealings with them. Meijers and Piggot(1995) raised the following priorities:

-the need for more information so that specific guidance needs and barriers to progression can be identified and addressed.

-the need for the training and development of career education providers.

-the need to develop a policy on equality, identification of priorities for action, in-service training and support for the staff involved.

2.7.1 Individual characteristics and career exploration.

Taveira et al.(1998) did a study of individual characteristics and career exploration in adolescence. Their study focussed on the effects of gender, age and school grade on several career exploration dimensions making use of the career exploration

survey. The subjects of study were high school students facing an imminent career decision. The study analysed the possible effects of gender, grade and age on the career exploration attitudes and behaviour of young adolescents who are faced with the task of making a career choice. Additional research is needed to understand better the nature of career exploration and the factors that facilitate or impede it .The study does not say anything about the environmental factors and the students background knowledge.

Results of the study by Taveira et al.(1998) revealed the following:

-adolescents, even though they have a favourable perception of the labour market in their chosen career area, do not have much certainty of attaining it.

-most of the subjects reported a fairly high level of stress associated with career exploration and decision-making activities.

-the adolescents of this study have explored themselves, feel that internal and external exploration is worthwhile and have established some career preferences.

The present study recognizes that the theory and research suggest that , during middle to late adolescence, individuals tend to be in the early phase of the commitment process to a career choice and in the initial stages of career exploration. In considering the findings of Taveira et al.(1998) it must be noted that the subjects have been exposed to career education and guidance. In many respects those subjects are not fairly comparable to the South African black population especially of the rural area. The Taveira et al.(1998) study focussed more on the attitudes and behaviours of males and females in grades 9 and 12.

2.7.2 Information, subject choice and career aspirations of secondary school learners.

Two studies which are closest to the present study are those on information and choice of subjects(Warton & Cooney,1997) and one on conversations with students of Chinese background about subject choice at secondary school and career aspirations(Siann et al. 1998)

In their study, Warton and Cooney(1997) examined subject choice for grade 10 students in Australian schools. In their findings, a disturbing picture of lack of knowledge about subject choices emerged. Most of the adolescents were found to be uninformed and this had implications for their later career choices. Subject choice is too important a decision to be left unguided to the inexperienced teenager and therefore students would need to be guided and encouraged to broaden their horizons and seek information about subjects(Warton & Cooney,1997).

The results of the study conducted by Siann et al.(1998) on the reasons why secondary school students made certain choices of subjects showed the following three types of reasons;

-students chose to continue studying the subjects they liked, or they did not want to do the subjects that they did not like.

-some adolescents linked the subjects that they had chosen with the jobs or careers they saw themselves doing in the near future

-Some students made choices of subjects because they were good at the subjects or they found that the subjects were

interesting.

The studies cited above analysed the possible effects of gender, grade level and age on the career exploration attitudes and behaviours of young adolescents (Taveira et al. 1998). They focussed on the exploration of the question of what a careers guidance service would look like, if it were operating on an equality perspective. Siann et al. (1998) looked at career aspirations and subject choices of secondary school learners. The present study aims to look at the amount of information about careers the rural student has at the point that he or she makes a choice of subjects for matric, and to determine what resources are available to help these students in the process.

2.8 Educational imbalances of the past

In order to solve the problems surrounding guidance and counselling in Black schools, Naicker (1994) has suggested that ways be sought to redress the imbalance of services and resources between the privileged and underprivileged sectors

of South African society. Secondly, he suggested that training programmes be in place which equip career counsellors to meet the specific social and educational needs of the disadvantaged. Thirdly, a paradigm shift is required so that career counselling services is perceived in a different way than it is.

CHAPTER 3.

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

3.1 Introduction.

This chapter describes the methodology utilized in the study. The aim of the study, the methods, procedures, the sample and the instruments used in the research are described.

3.2 Aim of the study

It can be argued that students need some level of awareness and information about the various careers and developments in the world of work in order to make realistic selection of subjects at school. Research by Warton and Cooney(1997) showed that many adolescents at school do not have access to the information that is necessary for them to make rational decisions important for career life. A "careers crisis" can be the result if the students select their subjects without information and adequate career awareness (Hayes & Hopson, 1972).

The learners in a rural area tend to have particular problems with regard to subject selection and career planning. The rural environment is remote from the industrial activities and other major diverse economic activities and this renders the environment having limiting effects on careers information. The communication and infrastructural networks of the rural environment renders the inhabitants most of the time unaware of the developments taking place in the broader country.

The present study is an attempt to explore the career awareness the students have when they make selections for subjects of study at the secondary school. The study aim to investigate the standard seven learners' career awareness and information, looking specifically at the following:

- (a) Awareness of careers that the learners have at the time when they make selections of school subjects,
- (b) Information and guidance that the schools offer to students on careers and work,

3.3 The Methodology

3.3.1 Research setting and participants

3.3.1.1 Setting

The setting of this study is a secondary school in the rural Bochum district of the Northern Province which is about 89 kilometres north of Pietersburg (see appendices A and B). This is found within an extensive settlement with a radius of +/- 150 kilometres from the north to the south and +/- 70 kilometres from the east to the west. The schools' district office serves over 200 schools sporadically spread around the villages in the area.

Like the other rural areas in South Africa, this area does not have viable economic activities, and it represents one of the most under-developed and disadvantaged areas of this country. Many households practise subsistence farming which is not viable as it yields far less than what the people can benefit from.

3.3.1.2. Participants

Participants in this study were drawn from the standard seven (grade 9) learners of the local secondary school. These learners constituted the whole grade 9 class and therefore there was no sampling as the researcher considered them as a whole class. The standard seven learners were chosen because in the South African school system, it is at the end of standard seven that the learners who have passed have to make selections of subjects that they will want to follow until they are ready to leave school. The group comprised of 71 learners from one class. Their ages ranged from 13 years to 23 years and the school has an overall enrolment of 268 learners from grade 8 (standard 6) to grade 12 (standard 10) offering four streams of subjects.

The school chosen in this study is not in any way exceptional, but it was selected on the basis of convenience and access. It is a community school with 20 teachers, four blocks of classrooms and a laboratory building.

The school offers four subject streams, namely the technical, commercial, general and the science stream.

Different subjects are clustered according to these departments.(see table 1)

Table 1: Content Subjects streams from grade 10

General stream	Science stream	Commerce	Technical
History	Maths	Maths	Maths
Geography	Physical- Science	Accounting	Physical- Science
Biology	Biology	Business -	Technical-
Agriculture	Geography	Economics	Drawing
		Economics	Motor - Mechanic

Table 2 : Distribution of the sample according to sex

Male	37
Female	34
TOTAL	71

Table 3: Distribution of the sample according to age

Age in years	Male	Female	Total
19 and over	4	4	8
18	3	3	6
17	5	3	8
16	10	1	11
15	6	10	16
14 and under	9	14	22
Total			71

The respondents in this study were drawn on the basis of convenience sampling where an intact group from a school class of std 7 was selected. An intact group means the setting of an administratively defined group rather than as individual persons (Borg & Gall, 1989).

3.3.2. Instruments of data collection

3.3.2.1 Questionnaire

The researcher made use of a questionnaire with open-ended responses. Open-ended questions offer the research participants an opportunity to express their feelings and impressions quite spontaneously.

According to Rosnow and Rosenthal (1996); an open-ended measurement will render the following advantages;

- (i) they do not lead the participant by suggesting specific answers
- (ii) they are exploratory, allowing the researcher to find out whether the respondent has anything at all to say
- (iii) the research participant is invited to answer in his or her own language, which sometimes helps to establish a rapport.

The questionnaires were used in this study as they were not costly to develop, saved time and were easy to administer and score to a large number of respondents at the same time. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher for the purpose of this study and due consideration was taken for the level of learners in grade 9 to whom the items were directed.

The first part of the questionnaire contained information on the purpose of the study. As stated by Borg and Gall (1989), the purposes of the study must be made clear to the respondents. Thereafter instructions were provided for completing the instrument. The second part of the questionnaire comprised of a number of questions looking for open-ended responses. Against each question, a space was provided to guide the respondents where to place their answers appropriately. For example:

1. What career have you thought of for yourself?

Answer:.....

2. Why do you think it is a suitable career for you?

Answer:.....

3. Have you ever been to a career exhibition before?

YES NO

3.3.2.2 Interviews

Interviews were used in this study as a way of method triangulation. Triangulation refers to the use of more than one method of collecting data in one project of study. This is able to compensate for the limitations of each, helps demonstrate validity and opens up new perspectives about the topic under study (Mouton, 1996; Borg & Gall, 1989).

The researcher made use of interviews to go a step further by following the questions with probes designed to obtain additional clarifying information and by so doing respondents can give more facts and further opinions about events (Leedy, 1997; Yin, 1994).

Because of the level of understanding of the learners in standard 7, the interviews were semi-structured. When interviews are semi-structured, they have the advantage of being reasonably objective while formatting a more thorough understanding of the respondents' opinions and reasons behind them and provides a desirable combination of objectivity and depth as well as permitting gathering of valuable data (Borg & Gall, 1989).

Both individual and group interviews were selected to obtain more information, making use of an interview schedule developed to make it possible to obtain the data required.

During the interview, the researcher made use of the tape recorder as this provides a more accurate rendition of any interview (Yin, 1994). The recording on a tape provided for play back later, more than once which enables one to study the data more thoroughly and to reanalyse the interview. There were minimal distractions and disturbances as the researcher was able to keep the interview flowing without pausing to take notes.

Communication was undeterred.

3.3.3. Procedure

After choosing the research site, permission to conduct the research was sought from the district manager of the Department of Education's area office under which the schools are administered. A letter was also sent to the principal of the school for access to the research respondents.

The head of department responsible for guidance at the school was assigned by the principal to help the researcher in carrying out the research at school. His role was mainly to organize the logistics at the school and to ensure that the study did not disrupt the school programmes. Discussions were held with the head of department in order to enlighten him concerning the procedure and to highlight some of the requirements necessary for the study. This was done during the visits by the researcher to the schools in order to familiarize himself and to provide an overview of the researcher's goals (Borg & Gall, 1989).

3.3.3.1. Pilot study

A pilot study, in order to check the research instruments was conducted at a school within 5 kilometres distance from the research site using a sample of 30 respondents with characteristics similar to those that were used in the study. This was done for the purpose of modification and restructuring of the instruments in cases where the respondents encountered problems, and also to determine the length of time that would be required to complete the items.

3.3.3.2. Administration of the questionnaires

The researcher was available on site of study throughout and during the administration of the questionnaire at the school. Prior to completing the questionnaires , the purpose of the study was explained to participants and that their participation was voluntary. As there would be no marks allocated, there was no need to write one's name .A conducive atmosphere was created and the participants were made to feel at ease and urged to answer as honestly as possible.

Due to language problems, a number of students participating in the study often needed more clarification on some items and this was done in their mother tongue(Northern Sotho). Those who had an idea which they could not express in English were encouraged to use their mother-tongue as it was familiar to the researcher. It took an average of 30-40 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

3.3.3.3. Conducting the individual interviews

The researcher conducted the individual interviews personally to 8 respondents at the school in one day. Since it was not the first visit to the school by the researcher, the respondents were already familiar with the researcher and this facilitated the process as the respondents were free to participate. Questions were asked and in cases where the respondents found it difficult to understand, the explanations were made in their mother-tongue(Northern Sotho).

Although the respondents were quite eager to participate, the flow of the interviews were hampered as the participants sometimes struggled to put their answers

forward. Their lack of information affected the pace of the process as there were intermittent moments of silence as they pondered on their answers.

3.3.3.4. Conducting the group interviews

Eight groups, each with 8-9 members were selected for group interviews. Respondents in a group were asked questions from the schedule which they had to respond to as a group. It was explained to members of the group that they have to listen to the questions of the interview very carefully as each one of them was expected to give an input on the answers. Although there were no interruptions, the researcher had to time and again caution the participants of the time factor as some of them would take more time focussing on other issues irrelevant to the study and questions at hand.

At times participants in the group tended to rely on some individual members of the group to respond and thus resulting in other members playing a passive role. The researcher, being there on hand kept encouraging them to participate and to give opinions so that whatever is noted

as an answer should be a true reflection of the group's view.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter describes the analysis of data and the findings of this study. Data to address the research issue were collected as indicated in the previous chapter. The findings will be discussed according to the three sources of data, namely; questionnaires, individual and group interviews.

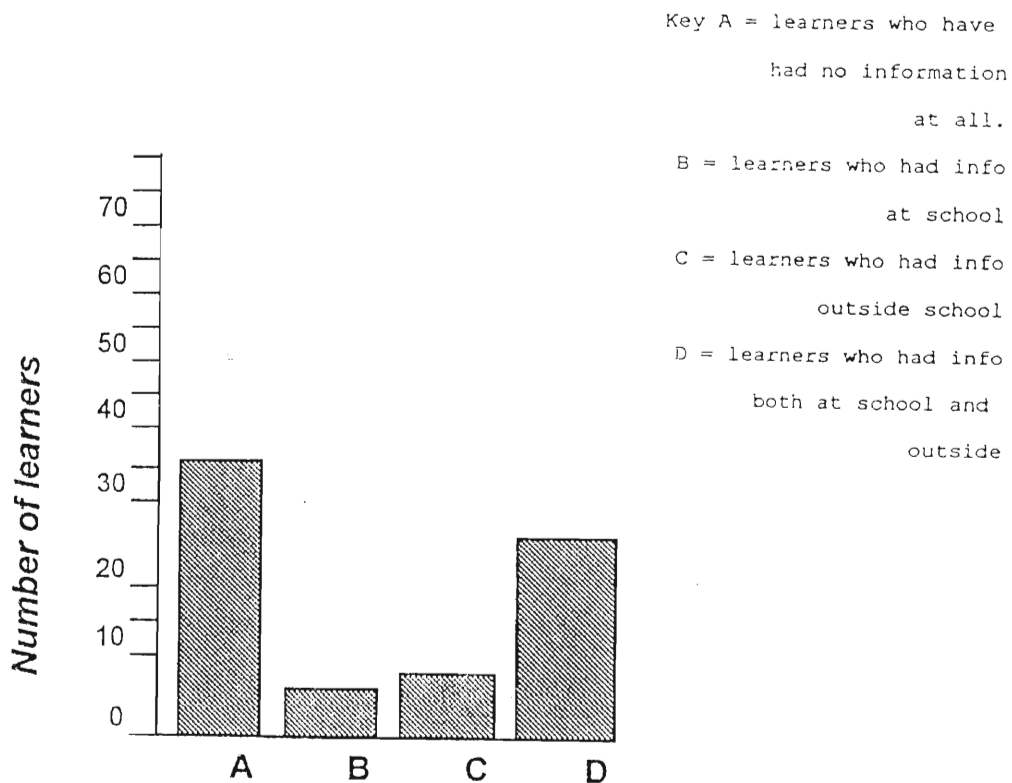
4.1 Responses to questionnaires

4.1.1 Career information for learners

From the responses, it shows that learners in grade 9 do not have sufficient information about the various careers that are open to the learners is not readily available to them at the time that various subject selections are to be made. A total of 71 participants in the study are doing grade 9(standard 7) and are on the threshold of making

subject selections for their later high school years. Of this number, 23 have attended a careers' exhibition some time outside their school, 8 have had careers' information at their present school (or previous school prior to the time of this study when they are in grade 9). 9 of them have had careers' information both at their school and at the careers' exhibition outside their school. Thus 40 (56,3%) of the participants in the study have received some information about careers while 31 (43,7%) had not attended any careers' information session anywhere.

Figure 2 Learners' access to careers' information



4.1.2 Planned careers of learners in grade 9

(standard 7)

When asked about the careers that they have thought about for themselves, learners in grade 9 showed they knew very little of the careers and job opportunities that they could possibly follow. The choices that were made by 71 participants included careers such as nursing, police, doctor, clerk, teacher, social work, pilot, traffic officer, law, engineering, mechanics, business, panel beating, banking, accounting, army, office work and credit controlling.

FIGURE 3

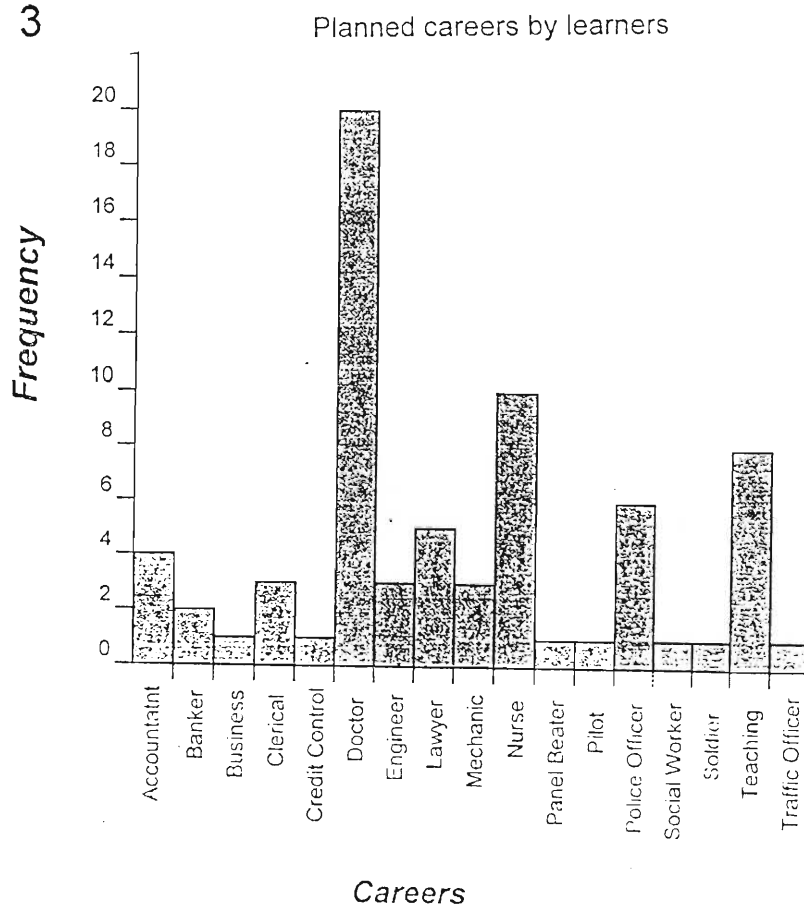


FIGURE 4.

The figure below shows the career preferences of the female learners. The females did not show any interest in six of the seventeen options identified.

Distribution of career choices by female learners

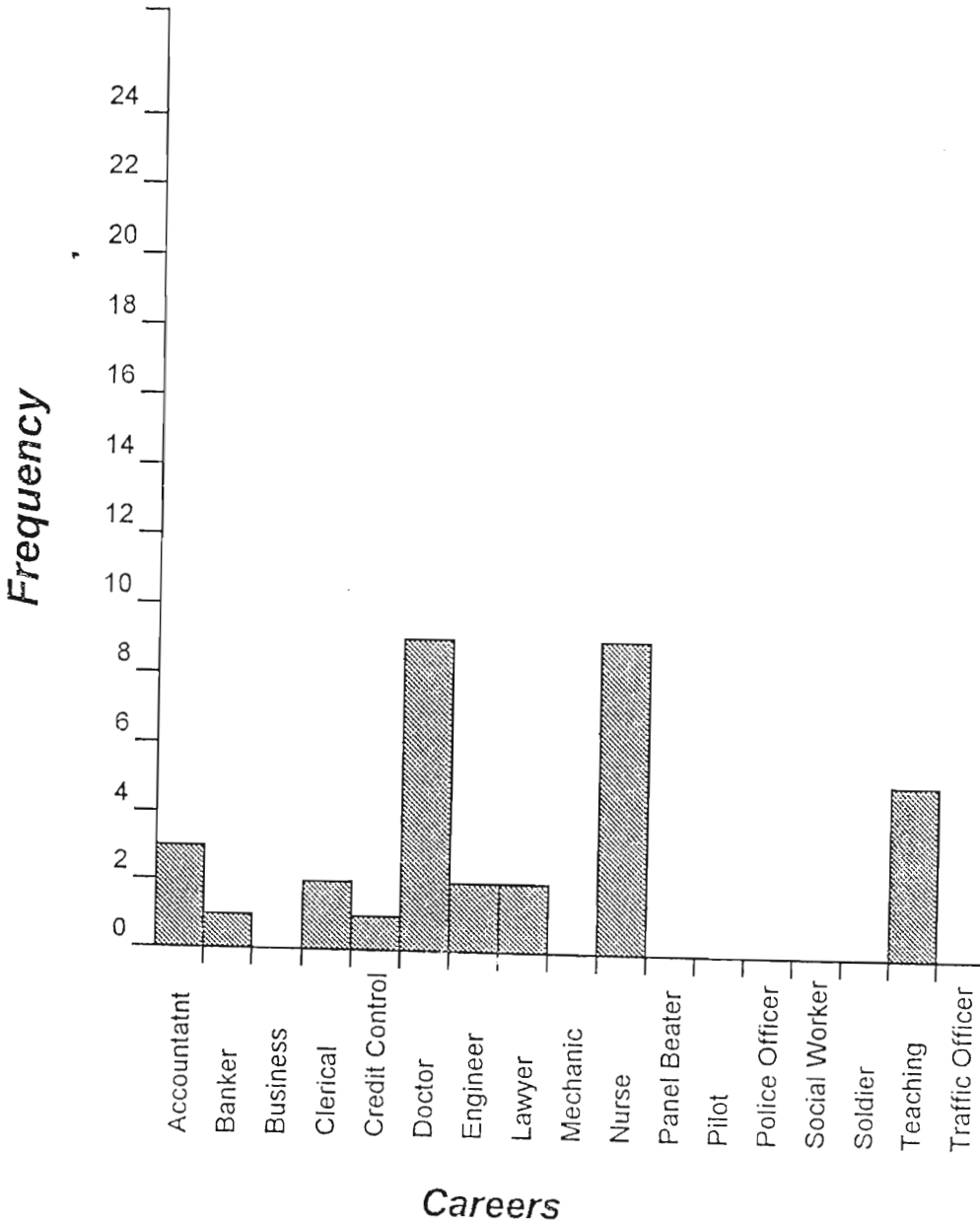
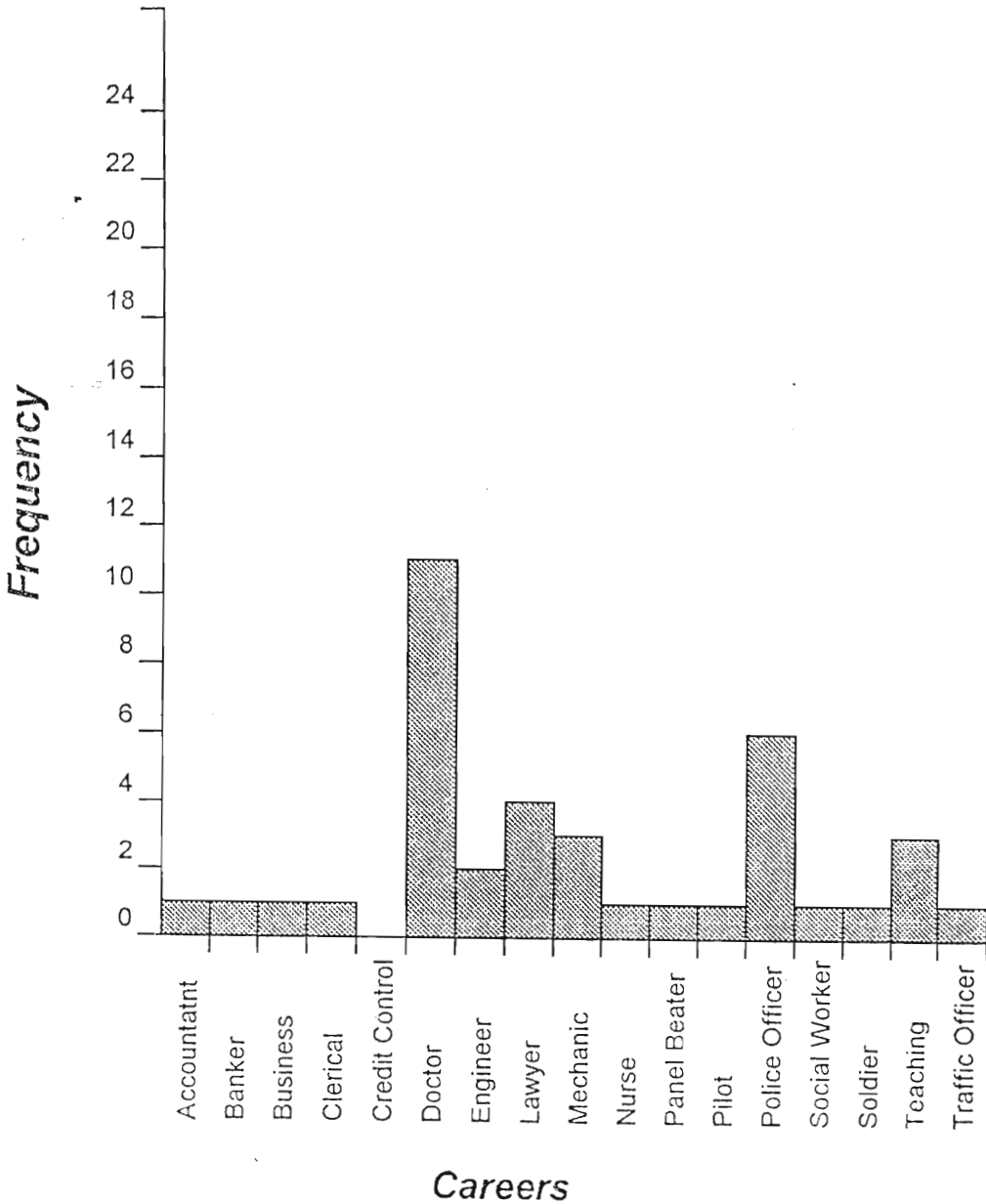


FIGURE 5

The figure below shows the male preferences of careers. Unlike their female counterparts, males were interested in all but one career.

Distribution of career choices by male learners



It seemed that most of the careers that the respondents chose are those that identify with local people in the community or close family members. Their interest in those careers was likely based on the role models, as they did not seem to have thorough knowledge of those careers. The highest chosen or anticipated career was that of medical doctor(28,2%), followed by nursing(14,1%) and teaching(11,3%).

Respondents had to give reasons for their choices of particular careers. Mostly their reasons were more related to the work situation, rather than to their own personalities, and interests. Respondents seemed not to have a clear picture of what their careers of choice entailed, because when giving reasons for choosing a certain career they would give information that is unrelated to that particular career. When asked if they knew the duties that were associated with those particular careers that they wished to follow, 18(25,4%) believed that they did not know while 53(72,6%) considered that they did know the duties associated with their careers of choice, but they could not say precisely what those duties were. They gave incorrect examples of those duties.

4.1.3 Relationship of the learners' school subjects and their anticipated careers.

It is very important that the subjects that the learners do in their school curriculum relate appropriately with their anticipated careers. It is these subjects that guide the career paths that the learners might want to follow. These subjects form the basis as most of the fields of further study require that one should have passed certain subjects with certain grades and percentages to qualify.

Of the 71 participants in this study, 10(14,8%) could not relate choices of anticipated careers with their school subjects. Some of their responses showed that respondents who are interested in the medical profession did not know that they would require to have a combination of both Mathematics and Science as well as English in order to follow that career. They believed that they could do it with Physical science or Mathematics alone. This is related to their lack of information.

Some respondents who anticipated careers as electricians mentioned that the subjects that would help in following

that career are technical drawing and motor mechanics. They did not think of Mathematics and Science as any important subjects in that field.

Some of the respondents made career plans mainly on the basis of one subject only, for example, individuals believed that because they do accounting then they could follow a career as accountants, not knowing that this would also require other subjects and that mathematics is a prerequisite thereof.

Of those who seemed to have knowledge of the relationship of their subjects with their anticipated careers, some of them are those who planned for careers in the medical and health sector, and planned to include mathematics and science in their school subject selections.

Relevance of subjects to anticipated careers

FIGURE 6

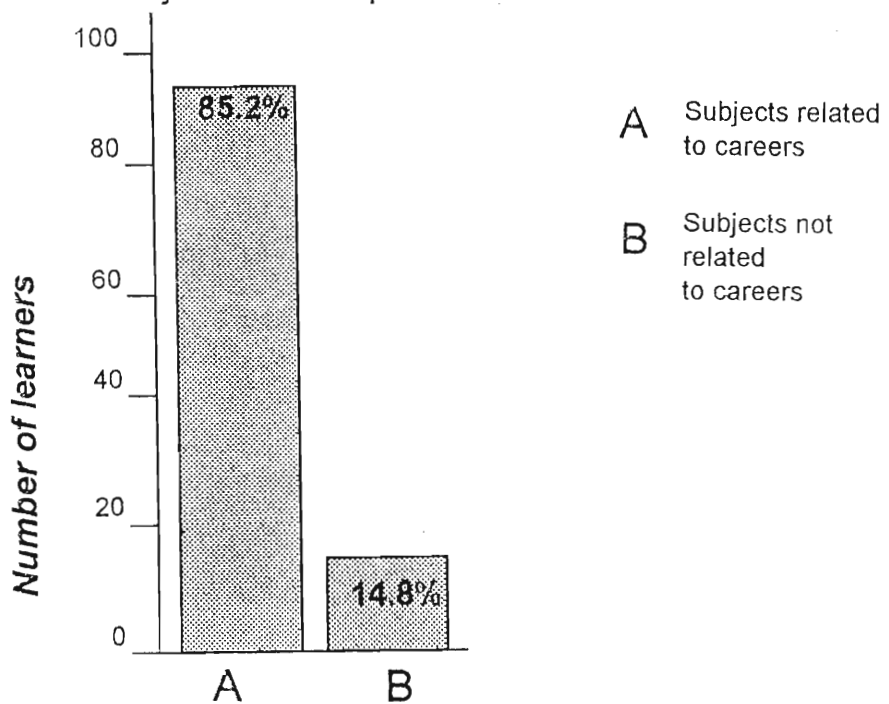
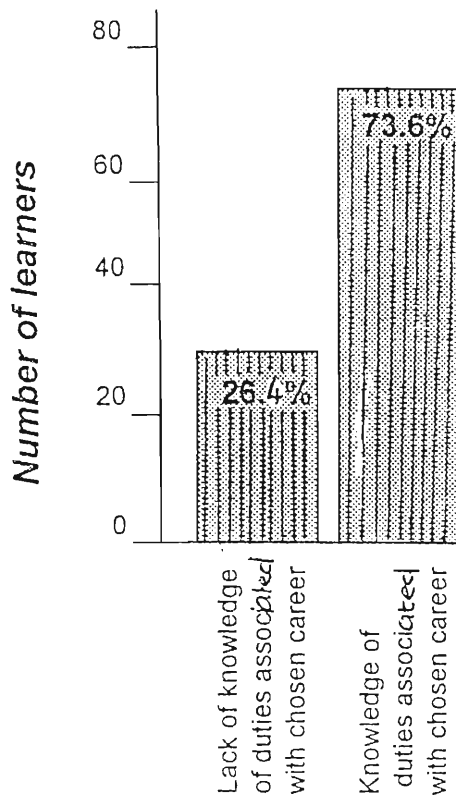


FIGURE 7

Learners knowledge of duties associated with career



4.1.3.1 Reasons for selection of particular subjects.

Typical reasons that respondents advanced for their future subjects in grade 10 right through to matric were as follows:

"I would take those subjects because they are good for me"

"I would choose that subject because I want to know it more English"

"I would take the subject because it is about money"

"I would choose the subject because it would give me the job"

"I would choose the subject because it is very important"

When looking at their reasons for selecting the subjects they want to follow, it shows that the participants did not have information sufficient for realistic subject choices. Their reasons related to different other aspects of their lives other than those factors that are important for one's career life and future work.(see table 4) Participants in grade 9(standard 7) could think of all the reasons for their choice of subjects but not much about what those subjects would do in their future and how they could make use of those subjects in the practical world beyond school. To them the whole issue involved doing, passing and going to work or tertiary level of study.

TABLE 4 Learners' reasons for choices of subjects

REASON FOR CHOICE OF SUBJECTS					NO OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGES
1. Career related reasons					32	45,1
2. Interest					9	12,7
3. Subjects are simple					8	11,3
4. Subjects are important					3	4,2
5. Helpful subjects					4	5,6
6. Gain of knowledge					3	4,2
7. Interest and career related					1	1,4
8. Uncertain					11	15,5
					N = 71	100

4.2 Responses to the individual interviews

8 individual interviews were conducted with 4 male and 4 female respondents. These respondents were drawn from the same group that participated in the questionnaire and group interviews.

4.2.1 Knowledge of post-school institutions

Respondents were asked to give as many types of post-school institutions as possible where one can study after matric. Out of 8 respondents, 2 could list up to 4 types of institutions such as technikon, university, technical and teacher training colleges. 4 respondents listed up to 3 types of institutions being university, technikon, and technical institute. 1 respondent listed two types as being a university and technikon, and 1 respondent could only list one type of institution known to him as university.

Of the 8 respondents, 3(37,5%) did not have knowledge about any technikon and could not even name one. 3 other respondents (37,5%) could give the name of 1 technikon correctly. 2(25%) mentioned more than 1 technikon but not more than 5.

1 respondent(12,5%) knew up to 8 universities and their correct locations. 3 respondents(37,5%) named up to 4 universities and their correct locations. 1 respondent(12,5%) named up to 4 universities and their correct locations. 1 respondent(12,5%) named up to 3 universities with their correct locations while 4

respondents(50%) named each up to 2 universities but could not correctly locate where they were to be found.

4.2.2 Students' knowledge of career fields and occupations.

8 respondents indicated the following as careers that they know of, either having come across, meeting people in the community and family or reading in the media;

law, medicine, dentistry, teaching, pilot, electrician, scientist, police, accountant, farming, social work, business, clergy, nursing and store supervision.

4.2.3 Linking subjects with careers

The respondents being learners in grade 9 were enrolled and had possibilities of selecting their subjects among the subjects such as the three official languages, accounting, business economics, mathematics, general science, geography, economics and technical subjects. Looking at their variety of subjects ,respondents believed that their subjects could link with the following careers;

TV presenting, accountant, business, teaching, banking, geology, law, medicine, agriculture and police.

4.3 Responses from the group interviews

As indicated in the previous chapter, eight group interviews were conducted. Some of the tasks of the interviews were similar to those that were in the questionnaire, although in the interview there was the opportunity of probing in order to provide for more information and that the respondents clarify themselves.

4.3.1 Post-school opportunities

Eight groups, each with 8-9 members were interviewed. Six of those groups could not name more than 3 types of tertiary institutions that they could possibly attend when they finish school. 3 of the groups could name only 3 types of tertiary institutions and one group named only 2 types and another group knew only a university. The last of the groups could not even name one type of institution.

Respondents were asked to make a list of universities that they knew or have heard about and to indicate the locations where those institutions could be found. All of the seven groups gave more than 4 names of universities with or without the correct location. Two of the groups could not furnish locations of these institutions and two other groups added on their lists names of institutions that do not exist either in South Africa or abroad, like "university of America", "Technical of Johannesburg" and "Technikon of Seshego". Two other groups did not know the location of the University of South Africa(Unisa) and the Medical University of South Africa(Medunsa), and they gave as locations for those institutions, Pietersburg and Johannesburg respectively.

4.3.2 Subjects and careers

Respondents were asked to think of their present subjects in grade 9 and to tell what career or job they could link with each of those subjects. Five groups were able to relate each subject that they do with a particular career or job. Two groups could only go as far as four subjects, and did not have any answer for the remaining three subjects that they were enrolled for.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this chapter is to integrate the findings of the present study as indicated in the previous chapter with the findings and theoretical background discussed in the literature review.

5.1. Overview of the findings

The rural secondary school is located in the remote areas where there is very little economic and industrial activity taking place. Learners at the schools such as these do not have access to information about what and how they have to go about preparing themselves for their future careers. This kind of situation is described by Hayes and Hopson (1970 p.3), as lacking in "extended pre-leaving preparation of learners which is necessary to help them deliberate and choose on the basis of knowledge of self and occupational information". The freedom to choose the kind of work that the individual will do is determined

by the society in which he lives (Hayes & Hopson, 1977). In primitive societies, choice is highly restricted while in developed societies the possibility of choice is much greater. Considering what the rural environment is like, we can realize that the rural secondary learners are faced with a challenging situation as they plan for their future around careers and jobs that they will be doing beyond school. The findings of this study indicates that the careers that the learners were interested in are those that are linked with their immediate environment. They seem to be related to the economic opportunities of the rural environment which has limitations and mainly focussed on primary activities.

5.1.1. Career information for learners

In some school systems, school guidance programmes are offered in an attempt to equip learners with information, skills and attitudes necessary for the challenges facing them (Euvrard, 1996). In this study it was found that 43,7% of the respondents have not been given any information or guidance on careers so that they can be able to make informed decisions of what they would like to follow. Neither have they attended any career information session anywhere. Unfortunately this is the group of learners that

are in grade 9 and are required to make selections of subjects for their grade 10 which will channel them to particular streams or study fields that determine, or impact on career possibilities open to them. The learners were not provided with information nor guidance although this is expected of their school. Mtolo(1996), explained her similar findings on the basis that, firstly, teachers focus only on what the learners will achieve academically at the end of the year and secondly, because there is lack of time and qualified personnel on the staff to offer career guidance given some of the constraints in the schools' setup.

The study found that the learners who are in grade 9 make selections of subjects while they do not have sufficient information about the requirements for specific careers and fields of further study.

Some of the learners in grade 9 know only careers that are associated with their own people, like parents, relatives, and other significant people within their communities and those who are involved with them on a regular basis through delivery of various services in the community. This is explained by Siann et al(1998), that career choices tend to be influenced by the socio-economic

location of the learners' families. Vondracek et al.(1986), agrees with the above assertion by indicating that changes in the social and economic conditions always bring changes in career development. Learners' choices in areas of social deprivation tend to be circumscribed by the knowledge available to them of possible careers and work opportunities that may be relevant to them and their own circumstances. The sociological theorists emphasize the impact of the social environment on career choice. They stress that some societal circumstances beyond the control of the individual contribute significantly to career choice. The rural background with its limitations affects the learners' career planning process in a similar way. Evidence from the literature indicates that the disadvantaged home circumstances may be related to poor vocational development(Euvrard,1996).

Although they seem to know about some of the careers, learners' knowledge is only superficial or peripheral. They seemed not to know exactly how to describe the type of work or duties associated with those careers. Without in-depth knowledge of what the world of work entails, it becomes difficult for the learners to make realistic selections of the subjects for the subsequent years of study. A study by Euvrard(1996), in the Eastern Cape

suggested that learners be taught more about careers and the process of choosing wisely what one wants to become. These students need to have an understanding of the world of work so that they can make educational plans that are sound. If careers' information is lacking, it means they do not have knowledge of alternatives that are to be helpful to them (Shertzer & Stone,1970). According to Super's theory, these learners lack career maturity which is evidenced by their limited awareness of various aspects of their preferred careers. This theory maintains that if the learners were informed and career mature, they would achieve a significant degree of self-awareness, knowledge of occupations and developed planning capability(Zunker,1990).

In terms of Super's theory of vocational developmental stages, the respondents in this study are in the growth and exploratory stages of career development and if they are not yet career mature, it means that they have not achieved the developmental tasks of crystallization and specification.

Lack of information on careers becomes evident in this study as the 71 respondents could only list 17 possible careers. Some of the careers that the respondents

preferred are those that are not even suited to their own personalities or their subject combinations. This they do, not knowing of many other possibilities that are open to them, for which their present subjects, abilities, potential and interests are suitable.

Isaacson(1971), indicates that for secondary school education to be relevant, it will be essential that students be assisted in selecting careers at an earlier time. Super(1972), goes on further to say that vocational development is an on-going, continuous, dynamic and irreversible process which goes along with the individual's life stages. Students need to be guided and encouraged to broaden their horizons and seek information about subjects(Warton & Cooney,1997)

5.1.1.1 The relationship between gender and career choice

It was found in this study that gender does have an effect when learners choose subjects and careers that they want to follow. This is particularly evident with the learners in a rural setting where the traditional male and female sex-roles differ markedly. Whilst male learners planned to

consider 16 out of the 17 careers identified in this study, female respondents did not have the intention to follow a number of careers such as the army, police, pilot, traffic officer, motor mechanics and panel beating. Surprisingly even social work was out of favour with females. All of the aforementioned careers that the female respondents excluded in their plans, except for social work are considered traditionally to be more suitable to males. Findings of this study indicated that the highest number of females planned to follow nursing, medicine and teaching. These are traditionally viewed as female roles except for medicine where we have had more male doctors than females in the past.

The difference between male and female learners' career preferences was also evidenced in a study by Siann et al.(1998) and is explained in terms of male and females' beliefs of worth based on income which is the product of a career or job that one does. The study found gender differences in career plans to be related to the differing parental expectations held for male and female children. This represents how the society views the world of work and this has implications on career guidance(Zunker,1990). Siann et al.(1998), found in another study that the female respondents were less ambitious than their male peers.

This difference may well be related to differing parental expectations held for female and male children.

Taveira et al.(1998) explain the role of gender based on career theory and research. They suggest that the scope of female career exploration, career aspirations and achievements may be circumscribed by factors such as gender-related barriers at work, female segregation, traditional sex-role socialization at home and school as well as other early learning experiences. Traditional and societal beliefs about careers and sex-roles influence individual's choices of what work they wish to do in future. High school girls tend to report less favourable career perceptions and more negative career exploration outcome expectations(Taveira et al.1998). These findings are in keeping with the theory that socio-economic background impacts on career development and that there are economic and sociological determinants to occupational choice(Vondracek et al.1981; Zunker,1990)

5.2 The relationship between school subjects and anticipated careers

According to the development of occupational aspirations theory, a major determinant of occupational preferences is the progressive circumscription of aspirations during the development of the self concept. School subjects that the learners study help to develop them intellectually. Different career fields are linked to particular subjects and have certain subject requirements for entry. In this study 14% of the respondents could not relate their planned careers with any of their present subjects or the subjects that they wished to follow in their subsequent years of study. Respondents did not know what were the requirements for certain careers and that certain subjects would need to be combined in order to satisfy some requirements.

In making a choice about a career that one would want to follow, factors such as personality, interest, ability, talents and potential play an important role and are worthy of consideration. The findings in this study showed that the respondents take subjects and plan on following careers based on reasons that are externally influenced

rather than internally motivated. Learners did not think about their personalities, their interests in the particular work environment, abilities that they have which will enhance performance and their potential to make it in their desired careers. When they were asked to give reasons for their choices, they did not indicate interest but their reasons were more on what others expect of their services.

Asked why they would take particular subjects, respondents gave reasons without being able to explain what appeal those subjects had to them, and how they specifically hoped to make use of those subjects in the career world. 15,5% of the respondents were not certain about why they planned to select the subjects they intended to do in their next grade level. They were unable to advance any reason because of lack of information. Only 45% of the respondents in this study gave reasons for choice of subjects that were relevant to careers. Strang and Morris(1964), indicated that as children develop towards maturity, they have certain personal developmental goals or tasks of which the school should contribute to the accomplishment thereof. When they are informed about the career possibilities, students can relate them to their

subjects and reason for their choices of subjects with sufficient knowledge.

5.3 Post-school institutions and opportunities

One of the aspects of career guidance involves having knowledge of "the way". This means that learners who are preparing themselves for post-school education and for "life after matric" would need to have knowledge of various fields of further training, types of institutions, where they are located and possible costs and constraints pertinent to that. Most respondents in this study could not make a list of more than four types of post-school institutions and to indicate where they are located physically.

To most of the learners in grade 9, post-school education and training opportunities seemed to be a question too remote to be addressed or thought of at their stage. Though they have to select subjects from grade 10, they did not think about what they wanted to do, where they wanted to go, and how it should be done because to them

passing the examinations is what they have been oriented to believe to be the most important thing at school.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 Implications and Indications

The present study is an attempt to make a contribution to knowledge in the field of career guidance and counselling particularly in rural black schools. The study explored the career awareness of the learners and their selection of school subjects at school. The study takes place at the crucial time when there are major curriculum changes taking place in the country as the authorities strive towards an equal education for all, and redressing the previous imbalances. The introduction of Outcomes Based Education and the implementation of Curriculum 2005 spells many changes in all aspects of education provision. This study sheds some light on the plight of the rural learners and the potential hindrances that are created by the environmental conditions.

The findings of the present study indicate that effective teaching and learning experience at school does not merely imply academic subject teaching for the purposes of a good pass rate. Education is about the preparation of learners for their future, and in order to get them well prepared, careers information, guidance and counselling should form the core of all the activities at school aimed at making learning effective.

The findings suggests that learners, as long as they do not have knowledge of careers and what is entailed in the various types of careers and occupations, are incapable of making realistic subject selections. This leads to inappropriate career paths being followed. Leaving the learners to proceed to higher classes and grades in the secondary school "unequipped" and uninformed about the realities of work and opportunities can be a contributing factor to low student morale, poor results and possible joblessness in the future. The low morale results from the learners not knowing exactly where and how they could fit in the job market. When they realise that their subject streams limit their career options, it is too late to change. This implies that a lot of work has to be done in the field of guidance, especially in the rural areas where the population is remote and less exposed. In this case

the regular subject teacher can potentially play a leading role in raising career awareness among the learners.

In this study there is an indication that it should not be taken for granted that the academic subject alone, suffice to educate the learners ,provide direction for the future and also that the learners from as early as grade 9 know what they want to be. There is the need that these learners who have to make selections of subjects must be informed, firstly, about a variety of subject offerings and how these subjects are related to one another, and secondly, how these selected subjects relate to what they want to do in later life after schooling. Learners need to be taught strategies of self-inquiry whereby they are able to discover themselves in terms of talents, personalities and other traits important for decision-making. This is seen as a challenge for the teachers, to be able to respond to the current needs of the learners in ways which provide for coping skills and learning of skills to equip them for the future(Ntshangase,1995).

In this study learners were not able to link their choice of subjects to specific careers or particular occupations. This implies that the subject teachers should make their subject presentations more practical and oriented towards

the learners themselves and their particular needs. Subject teachers can make their lessons in any subject more life-oriented and focussed on the learners' future. Examples that are used in teaching activities should be related to learner's personal life, his/her world and situation. The role of the teacher is very crucial in informing the learners about what goes on in life beyond school and the relevance and applicability of the present courses and subjects to the future goals of the learners.

The rural secondary school learners are in the remote areas amidst under-developed infrastructural systems. The learners in these areas do not readily have access to information and opportunities of their urban counterparts. The implication of this is that the authorities and those that design and plan educational and guidance programmes should be sensitive to the needs in the rural areas. Extra efforts should be exerted to create a balance between the rural and the urban school. The government should, in its reconstruction and development projects focus more on the development of the rural communities. Guidance and counselling have not been taken seriously in the majority in the majority of black schools, and this is so because other learners live in conducive environments and are able to gather information from the media, resource centres,

employment bureaux and other related institutions which are not found in the rural areas. This implies that more resources should be channelled where needed the most, towards development of career guidance services in the rural areas.

Looking at the findings of this study, the need for teacher in-service training, improvement and skills development cannot be over-emphasized. Subject teachers may not be well-equipped to render an effective guidance service to learners, but in the absence of the relevant and trained guidance counsellors, in-service training programmes can be developed for teachers to be able to apply new knowledge from the subject matter to the future work environment (Schmidt, 1997). Subject teacher need to be oriented towards preparing their learners for various career and study possibilities when they leave school.

The balance between the information that the learner obtains at school and what the world out there would demand can be struck if the learners are so guided that they are able to make plans around their future, knowing realistically what options to take in terms of subjects and the opportunities that are available. It has been argued that black learners are less career mature than

their white counterparts, a factor that is attributable to their socio-cultural background(Mtolo,1996). In order to raise the learner's career maturity, information should be made available and the school should focus on producing learners who not only do well in the examinations but are able to take decisions at the time that they leave school.

6.1.1 The role of other agencies outside school

Devine(1973) has indicated that several other agencies and organizations can be of help in teaching career guidance to learners. Since the children who graduate from the school end up in the world out there, those organizations can help by linking up with the schools through sound partnerships. The industrial sector,public sector and other parastatals can supply information and lend its personnel to schools to orientate learners and raise career awareness. As the schools are central places, they should be encouraged to develop partnerships with the outside world for whom they are preparing the future workforce. Job-shadowing and student mentoring projects can be initiated at school level.

The role of the family, ie parents and significant others cannot be over-emphasized. Hayes and Hopson(1977) have indicated that work roles are also learned from home and attitudes towards work vary according to ethnic group, socio-economic status and religion. Family members can consciously set themselves up as advisors. Children have regard for people at home and they approach them for direct advice on many issues and matters of career and vocation are also as important.

It is understood that most of the tertiary institutions have school liaison divisions and community services programmes. Given that part of the school graduates will potentially enroll at these institutions, they can as well get their potential students prepared by forming links with schools and send teams to schools that would enlighten the learners as early as junior secondary school level, on what tertiary education is all about. The kind and range of information that these institutions can offer will be of help to students' career goals(Hayes & Hopson,1977).

6.2 Limitations of the present study.

Limitations of the present study will be discussed as follows:

6.2.1 The sample

Sampling in this study was made, as indicated earlier on the basis of convenience. This poses a limitations of generalizability of the results and findings. The size of the sample represent only a small section of the population in the research area and it makes it difficult to generalize the results.

Whilst it is true that we cannot provide statistical evidence to justify generalization, but a strong case can be argued rationally that the features in this sample are repeated across the Northern Province and indeed the whole country. The lack of facilities and resources in the rural schools as well as the academic emphasis that were identified in this study, are known to be characteristic of the many of the schools in South Africa. It can be argued that it is likely that other learners elsewhere would show the same lack of career knowledge and the same

limited understanding of how school subject choice relate to career prospects.

6.2.2 Instruments of data collection

The instruments(ie. questionnaires and interviews) that were used in this study were conducted in English and this posed some difficulties for the young respondents to whom English is a second language, and at the level of grade 9 they had difficulty in understanding some of the questions and how to phrase their responses appropriately. It might be probable that the respondents gave responses or did not respond to some of the items in the way that they would do if the administration of the instruments was done in their language or if they were more fluent in English.

There respondents were over-used in this study as one individual participated in the study during the individual interview, group interview and in answering the questionnaire. This might have an effect on the results.

6.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations arise from this study;

6.3.1 As indicated in the previous section about the representativity of the sample utilised in this study, it is suggested that a replication of the study be made with a sample from a rural area other than the present study's setting. The study shed light on the guidance needs of the rural learners and perhaps more research interest in the field of guidance and counselling in the rural secondary school could be generated. A more representative sample can be utilised to yield findings that are more generalizable.

6.3.2 As there are many changes taking place in our country and particularly in the field of education, it might be useful to do research in the area of school guidance and career education. There is need to investigate the extent to which these services are provided to learners and how the learners' needs can be met.

Utilization of action research approach as a technique of curriculum development can enhance change in education.

Such an approach offers practical contributions, improve understanding by practitioners and increase the effectiveness of practice. Action research approach can help those in the forefront of educational transformation to act more effectively, skilfully and intelligently (Hopkins,1980; McKernan,1991)

6.3.3 Several studies have indicated that there is lack of guidance and counselling services in most of the black schools across the country. This study will add a dimension to the review of the services of the guidance teacher and the subject teacher with regard to career education. It might be helpful to conduct an investigation into this issue.

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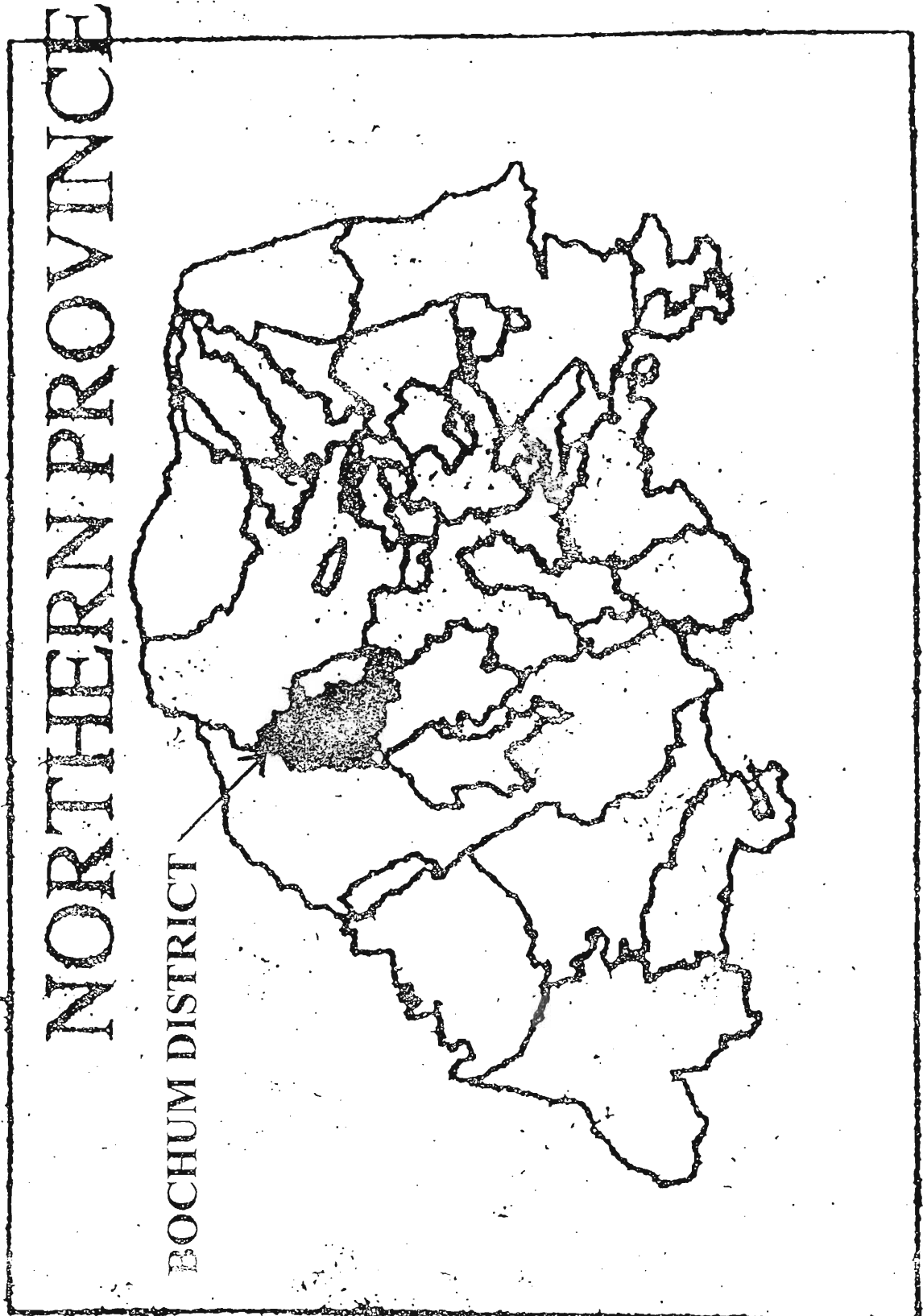
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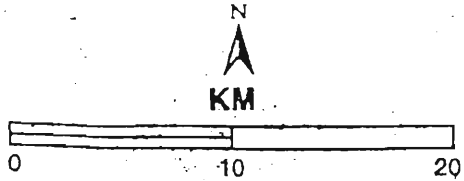
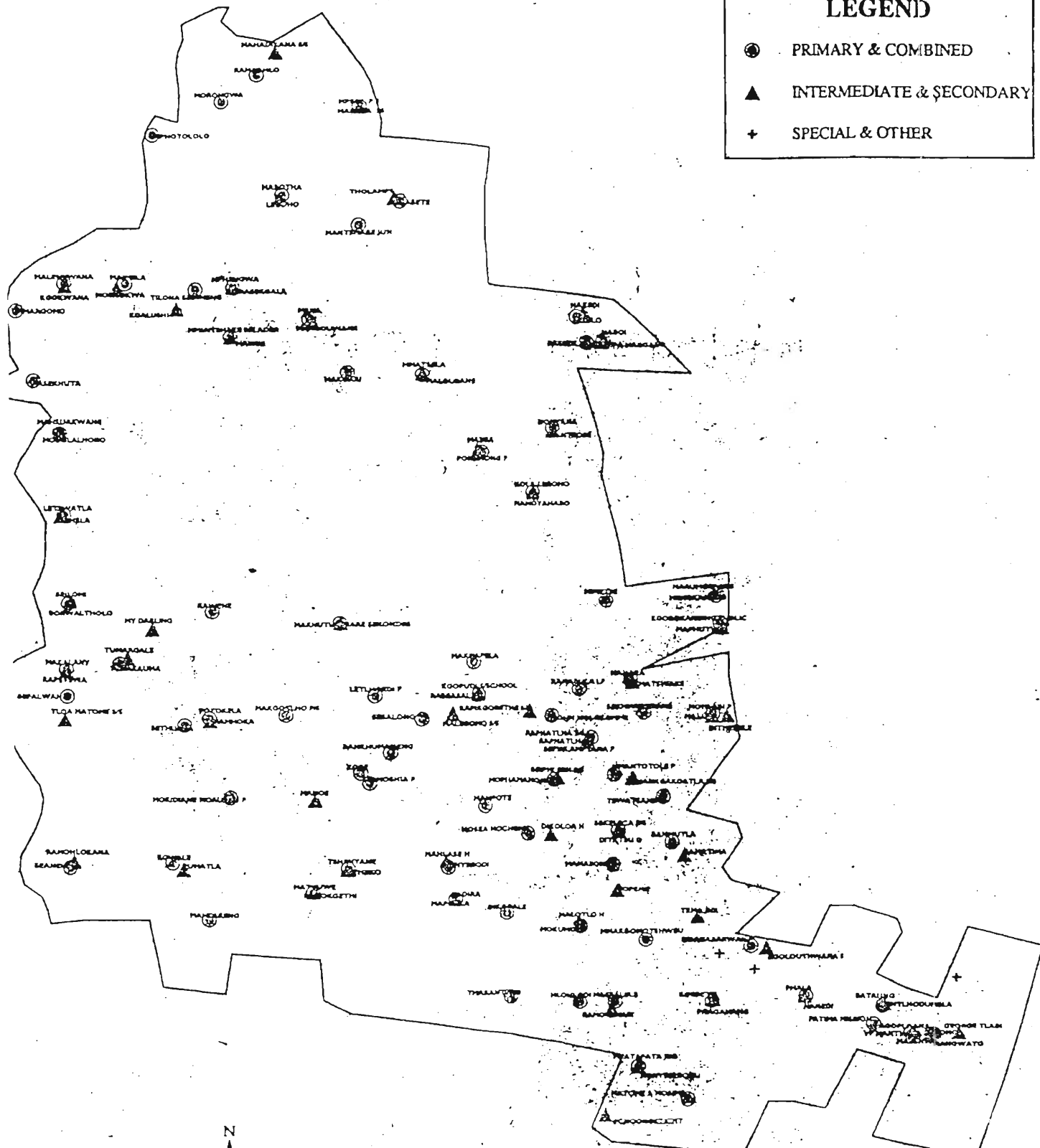


APPENDIX B

BOCHUM SCHOOLS

LEGEND

- ⊙ PRIMARY & COMBINED
- ▲ INTERMEDIATE & SECONDARY
- + SPECIAL & OTHER



APPENDIX C

BOCHUM AREA
PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES
P/BAG X5003
BOCHUM
0790

22/06/1998

THE AREA MANAGER
BOCHUM AREA
P/BAG X5003
BOCHUM
0790

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT PHALA & KGOLOUTHWANA SECONDARY SCHOOLS

I am currently studying for an **M.Ed(Psychology of Education)** with University of Natal. The title of my research project is;

"Career awareness and school subject selection of Black secondary school learners in a rural area"

I have identified Phala Secondary as a research site and Kgolouthwana for a pilot study.

Your favourable response will be highly appreciated.



MJ MASHIAPATA

APPENDIX D

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES
BOCHUM AREA
P.BAG 5003
BOCHUM
0790
1/06/98

The Principal
Phala Secondary School
BOCHUM
0790

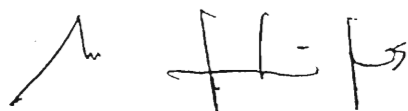
Dear sir

REQUEST TO CONDUCT A STUDY AT YOUR SCHOOL

I am currently involved in a research project investigating the subject selections and career awareness of secondary school learners.

The study is based on the Standard Seven group and I would like to use your **standard seven (7)** class for that purpose.

Your positive response will be highly appreciated



M. J. MASHIAPATA

APPENDIX E

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES
BOCHUM AREA
P.BAG 5003
BOCHUM
0790
1/06/98

The Principal
Kgolothwan Sch.
Bochum:.....
.....


Dear sir

REQUEST TO CONDUCT A STUDY AT YOUR SCHOOL

I am currently involved in a research project investigating the subject selections and career awareness of secondary school learners.

The study is based on the Standard Seven group and I would like to use your **standard seven (7)** class for that purpose.

Your positive response will be highly appreciated



M.J. MASHIAPATA

APPENDIX F

UNIVERSITY OF NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is not a test of any kind. It is merely used for research purposes. You do not have to give your name but it would be appreciated if you could answer as honestly as possible.

This information will be treated with the strictest confidentiality.

PART ONE

HOME LANGUAGE : _____

AGE IN YEARS : _____

SEX

MALE	FEMALE
------	--------

FATHER'S OCCUPATION : _____

MOTHER'S OCCUPATION : _____

PART TWO

At the end of standard 7 you will be choosing subjects for 1999. The subjects that you choose at the beginning of standard 8 mean that you will study them until you leave school in Matric. Some subjects help you to prepare for a certain career that you have in mind. Other subjects are useful for a whole lot of different careers. If you think about your own interests and abilities now, and in future, it will help you to make a better choice of subjects.

Now answer the following questions. Where applicable, your answers should be on the space provided;

1. Have you ever been to a career exhibition/attended a careers information session outside your school?

YES	NO
-----	----

 (Tick one)

2. Have you ever had a careers information session at your school?

YES	NO
-----	----

 (Tick one)

3. What career have you thought of for yourself?

ANSWER: _____

4. Why do you want to follow that career?

ANSWER: _____

5.What school subjects will help you to prepare for your anticipated career?

ANSWER: _____

6.Do you know of the duties that are associated with the career that you are thinking of?

YES	NO
-----	----

 (Tick one)

If yes, what are they?

ANSWER: _____

7.What would you think one needs to know before he/she can decide about a future career?

ANSWER: _____

8.List the subjects that you are enrolled for in standard 7;

ANSWER: _____

9. Which of the subjects do you find most interesting?

ANSWER: _____

10. Do you think that the subjects that you do at school are related to certain careers and work?

YES	NO
-----	----

 (Tick one)

11. What are the subjects that you will probably choose to do in standard 8?

ANSWER: _____

12. Why would you choose the above subjects?

ANSWER: _____

APPENDIX G

CONFIDENTIAL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Interviewer :.....

Date :.....

INTRODUCTION

My name is Jack Mashiapata(as you might remember).I am doing a study in your school to find out more about you as learners in grade 9.I would like to know more about your plans for the future,subjects that you are doing and those that you intend doing and how you prepare yourself for your future career.I would urge you to express yourself freely and honestly.The information that you give will be treated confidentially and will not in any way be used for any other purpose other than this study.

PERSONAL DETAILS:

Sex : Male Female (Researcher will tick)

Age : years.

1.You know that when you pass standard 7 you move to standard 8,and when you pass matric you move out of school but there are different institutions where you can study.Give me examples of those post-matric institutions;

..... 6.....
..... 7.....
..... 8.....
..... 9.....
..... 10.....

YES NO

10.2. What would you suggest to be added to the school's subject streams and why?

.....
.....
.....

Thank you for taking part in this interview. Best wishes in your studies.