A voice-centered relational analysis of the career development narratives of six Black African professionals in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

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CONTENT PAGE

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DHET   : Department of Higher Education and Training

ST   : Systems Theory

VCRM : Voice-Centred Relational Method

<u>DECLARATION</u>

I, <u>Amanda Pamella Swana</u>, hereby declare that this study titled *A voice-centered relational analysis of the career development narratives of six Black professionals in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa,* is of my own work and I am the sole author. All sources used have been acknowledged through complete referencing.

The thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

The Thesis does not contain text, graphics or tablets copied and pasted from the Internet, unless specifically acknowledged, and the source details are indicated in the thesis either through intext citations or on the reference page.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

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I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my father, God who has and will always be my source of strength. I am strengthened by your words that read: "Those who trust in you will find new strength, they will soar high on wings like eagles, they will run and not be weary, and they will walk and not faint"

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ABSTRACT

Career Psychology and career education is not a new concept in the South African context, it is evident dating back as far as 1943. Literature shows that career guidance was first introduced in White schools and later into the Black African schools, with various political and legislative constraints which resulted from the apartheid governance. Centuries later, the country is still faced with the challenge of addressing the inequalities which resulted from the apartheid governance and the education structures of the time, one of the main inequalities which are relevant for this study is access to career education and career guidance that informs career decisions.

Career psychology is traditionally informed by western career theories, these career theories do not adequately account for contextual factors which influence one's career development. As a result of this critique, there rose the call for indigenous career theories relevant to a multicultural context. This study was undertaken as an attempt to explore the contextual factors which influenced the career development of six Black Africans in KwaZulu-Natal. It further aimed to explore whether these contextual factors were enablers or constraints on the career development of the six South African Black professionals.

This qualitative study was informed by the theories of social constructionism and social constructivism. Career narratives were collected and transcripts were analysed using the voice-centered relational method, which provided a structure of four readings as a guideline for analysis. The findings of this study provided an explorative view of the contextual factors which influenced career development. Through the four readings, two overarching themes emerged mainly a career narrative beyond the self and Complex career narratives . Within these overarching themes lies various contextual factors such as family expectations, cultural dynamics, historical and political structures, lack of career guidance, unplanned happenstance, financial limitations and religion. The study also further supported the call for indigenous career theories that address challenges faced in the South African context. The study concluded by providing recommendations for research, theory and practice. In addition, the study encouraged researchers to further explore the concept of social justice in understanding career development in South Africa.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins by introducing the study. The chapter follows with an overview of career psychology and its development in the South African context. The rationale and significance of the study is presented. The chapter concludes with an outline of the key research questions that informed the study.

The researcher seeks to emphasize that while the current study uses the concept of 'race' and the associated terms of Black and White to reflect on racial disparities in the area of career research historically and currently, it is acknowledged that "these are socially constructed labels associated with apartheid-era population classification that served particular political purposes. The use of these terms and constructs in no way implies the acceptance of the racist assumptions on which these labels are based" (Bowman, Duncan, Stevens, & Mdikana, 2007, p. 181).

1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The South African historical path of the apartheid philosophy has resulted in wide gaps and inequalities amongst the population; specifically based on racial lines. Stead and Watson (2006) argue that one of the many inequalities created by the apartheid system was that of unequal access to education and access into the labor market. Consequently, this led to a lack of literature that gave attention to the career development experiences of Black South Africans. The country has moved into the post-apartheid era and yet still faces the challenge of trying to bridge the gaps created in the education system and the challenge of trying to improve the standard of living for all. One of the many ways in which an individual's standard of living can be improved is through access to education and adequate career guidance, this in turn, will avail the individual with adequate career choices and career decision-making skills.

It is noted that for the purposes of this research, the researcher has adopted the BEE Act's definition of Black People:

"black people" *means African, Coloured or Indian persons who are natural persons"*

Therefore, when the researcher makes mention of 'Black Schools', she is referring to previously disadvantaged schools.

Studies have been conducted exploring career development amongst the Black population in South Africa (Frizelle, 2002; Fabiano, 2010; Gerjsendopher, 2008). These studies have explored the various concepts of career development and the role of career guidance in the South African context. Further these researchers have noted the importance of narrating one's career development experiences not only to add to the career development literature, but to also highlight the need for contextually relevant career theories. Career research needs to be improved in the South African context, simply because the issues faced by the South African population and the labor market are unique to the South African multicultural context (Crossland, 2006., Stead & Watson, 2006). The various challenges faced by the country led to the urgent need for the development of relevant career theories that take into consideration contextual factors as influences on one's career development.

As mentioned earlier there are researchers who have explored the career development of Black South Africans. Gerjorsendopher (2008) looked at the experiences of career development amongst South African adolescents and other research have explored the experiences of Black South African women (Fabiano, 2010; & Frizelle, 2002). There is, however, not enough research exploring Black South African experiences. There has been a consistent call for more contextually relevant career research in the South African context (Stead & Watson, 2006; Watson, 2009, 2010). The current study seeks to add to the body of knowledge around career development that acknowledges the role of context and further explores the experiences of Black South Africans.

This study made use of a qualitative data collection method, namely the use of in-depth narrative interviews. The interviews explored the participants' career narratives. Saunders and Lewis (2012) argue that qualitative research aims to understand the experiences and attitudes of the participants. Further, it enables the researcher to make use of an exploratory approach focused on language rather than quantification.

The study used a voice-centered relational method of analysis (Maunther & Doucet, 1998) in order to explore and understand the experiences of the six Black African professionals. Schreuder and Coetzee (2012) argued that South Africa is an understudied population and new knowledge and

insights are required on the career experiences of the population, especially the Black African population. Thus it is important to explore the experiences of Black Africans' career development in South Africa in order to add to the body of career development literature, and to further improve career guidance and career education practices in a multicultural South African context.

1.2 CAREER PSYCHOLOGY IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

Stead and Watson (2006) argue that the primary purpose of career psychology is to inform career guidance and assist individuals with their career development needs. Hence career psychology serves the purpose of guiding one's career development. Stead and Watson (2006) further argue that career theories provide parameters within which we can understand career behaviors and career choice.

The origins of career psychology in South African draws from two main sources: mainstream psychology and vocational psychology. Both these fields were developed in Western contexts and adopted by the South African context. Stead and Watson (2006) highlighted in their work how politics, economics and social conditions have influenced the practice of career psychology and career development in South Africa (Stead & Watson, 2006). These are factors that have been and continue to be overlooked in much research on careers and career development.

The context in which a theory arises is thus important in determining its central tenets. For example, the positivist social science paradigm arose during the period of modernity (Beyer, Du Preez & Eskell-Blokland, 2007). Modernity attempted to explain the world in rational, empirical and objective terms (Beyer et al, 2007). Career Psychologists adopted the positivist paradigm and used it to understand career development; hence understanding career development through objective and value free data. According to Stead (2004) positivism is a paradigm that states that there is one reality that can be understood; therefore creating the notion that all career development processes can be understood as one linear process and that career choice is an external reality that exists for all.

According to Watson and Stead (2002) the traditional approaches that dominate the field of career psychology focus on Western ideologies; namely individualism, objectivity and positivist views.

Watson and Stead (2002) further argue that these traditional approaches minimize context and maximize intra-individual factors. Therefore the individual is perceived as a closed system and the individual's career choice is not influenced by external factors. Several authors like Mkhize and Frizelle (2000), Stead and Watson (2006) and Patton and McMahon (2006) have argued that the traditional career theories ignore the dynamic interaction between the socio-historical, political and economic factors in the individual's life. According to Watson (2009) contextual factors have received insufficient attention in relation to their role as influencers of career development. Mainstream psychology argued that science is value free and objective; hence career psychologists were informed by the positivist paradigm and had no obligation to take into account the subjective and contextual factors that influenced their patients and clients.

In 2006 Stead and Watson argued that career guidance in South Africa had not been accessible to the majority of the population and access to career guidance in Black African schools and educational institutions continues to be limited. The Department of Higher Education (2012) is vocal about the urgent need to prioritize career education for all levels from lower grades to tertiary level, with the aim of trying to improve the standard of living for all individuals. Watts (as cited in Watson, 2009) recommends that schools should implement life orientation programmes where career guidance can be addressed and also expose children to the reality of the work environment because there is still a large gap between the skills needed in the labor market and the skills available. Watson (2009) argues, however, that career guidance in South Africa is based on the trait and factor approach and has side-lined the existence of external influences in career development that are relevant to the South African context. These theories emphasize western concepts like self-concept and career maturity (Stead & Watson, 2006) and this has directed career education and led to individuals developing career interest at a later stage like when they are about to complete matric. Watson (2009) argues that in the South African context western career theories are no longer adequate especially where career meaning differs for all. Despite the many advances there are still a large number of people who don't benefit from the education system (Department of Higher Education, 2012). Careers have evolved but many people still fall victim to the predictive theories that suppress any external influences on career development. Schreuder and Coetzee (2012) argued that the changing nature of work and careers in a multicultural context has made some career development theories less relevant. Therefore, this further supports the need for more relevant theories that are culturally sensitive.

Moreover, South Africa has a high unemployment rate and this is due to the lack of access to education and career guidance for individuals from high school level up to tertiary (Department of Higher Education, 2012). The challenges existing in the career development and career guidance services require the use of approaches that take into consideration the contextual influences that exist.

1.3 RATIONALE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

According to the Department of Higher Education (2015) there is limited literature on career development in South Africa, and an over reliance on international research. There continues to be limited research in the South African context that is contextually sensitive. The literature discussed in this chapter illustrates that there is a need for indigenized career development theories and services in the South African context. Several authors (Crossland, 2006; Fabiano, 2010; Frizelle, 2002) have done research around career development amongst the Black population and their studies have responded to the call for indigenized research that seeks to consider the contextual factors that influence career development, however, there is a need for more of this research.

The purpose for conducting this study is to provide an analysis and explorative understanding of contextual factors that influence career development within South Africa. The present study aims to add to this body of research and specifically focuses on exploring the meaning that people attribute to career and to explore and understand the various contextual factors that influence the career development of a sample of professionals from KwaZulu-Natal. Awareness of these contextual factors can assist in developing theory in the South African context that will be highly appropriate for the South African context. According to the Department of Education (2012) there is a need to develop a career development policy framework that will guide the career development sector; hence, the present study seeks to add to a body of research that is informed by career theories that recognize the role of contextual and interpersonal factors in the career development process.

1.4 KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions informed the study:

- What career developmental paths have the participants followed?
- What contextual factors (for example, gender, culture, socio-economic, political) and interpersonal factors (for example family, role models) influence the participant's career development.
- Do the participants perceive the contextual and interpersonal factors as enhancing or constraining in their career development?
- In what way have these contextual factors enabled their career development?
- In what way have these contextual factors limited their career development?

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To identify the participants career development paths
- To determine the contextual factors that influenced the participant's career development
- To explore how these contextual factors were perceived by the participants, as either enabling or constraining

1.6 OUTLINE OF THE DISSERTATION

Chapter one presents the introduction by providing a background of the study and defining concepts relevant to the study in the hope of providing an in-depth understanding of the relevance of the study. The chapter concludes with an outline of the key research questions and research objectives that informed the study. Chapter two critically reviews and discusses the literature that exists about career development; further highlighting the gaps in literature and used as a justification for the study. Chapter three presents the research methodology for the study; and discusses the sampling method, data collection and analysis methods used. Chapter four presents the data through a discussion of the interviews and interpretation of the data, emphasizing the theoretical framework. Chapter five offers the recommendations for further research and the call for indigenized approaches. Moreover, the chapter concludes the study and discusses limitations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the literature relevant to the current study. The chapter begins with a concept analysis providing definitions for career, career development, the concept of social justice and career research in South Africa. The chapter also provides a critical discussion of the traditional approaches used in career psychology, namely Super's Theory and Holland's Person-Environment Fit. The chapter discusses the need for indigenized career theories and highlights the relevance of these approaches in the South African context. Alternative theoretical approaches are then discussed and compared. The chapter will then discuss the theoretical framework that will inform the current study. Lastly, the chapter summarizes some of the contextual factors that influence career development that have been identified in the limited literature in this area.

2.1 CONCEPT ANALYSIS

2.1.1 CAREER AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

According to Patton and McMahon (2014) the definitions of career have been brought under criticism as they restrict the definition of a career to a professional work life. Patton and McMahon (2014) argue that career development is continuous, non-linear, and encompasses a stream of career related events subject to either personal agency or contextual influences. It involves one's whole life and not just one's professional occupation. The above definition acknowledges that career development is not linear, it may involve forward and backward engagements (taking decisions and changing the decision). Further, the definition makes provision for the existence of contextual influences and the interaction that exists between the individual, the organization and society throughout their life.

Watts (2014) defines career development as a "lifelong progression in learning and work", through this definition learning recognizes educational training and also informal learning experiences. Further by incorporating work in the definition, one recognizes not only employment but also informal work when it comes to understanding what is meant by the term 'career' (Watts, 2014).

2.1.2 SOCIAL JUSTICE

The present study seeks to explore the contextual factors that influence career development and how these factors influence the career development, thus the understanding of the concept of social justice is relevant in relation to career development. According to Young (as cited in Arthur, Collins, & McMahon, et al, 2009) the attempt to live in a just society involves eliminating the constraints of oppression and ensuring that all people from all groups, develop their full potential.

Social Justice can be understood as "actions that are directed toward increasing equal access for all members of a particular society or nation" (Arthur, Collins, & Marshall et al., 2013, p.138). In summary it is action that seeks to eradicate inequalities.

Arthur, Collins, and Marshall, et al (2013) argue that the concept of social justice has been evident dating back to the work of Parson, where he advocated for women and poor people to be employed and thus improve their lives. Further it is noted that recently the focus on social justice in the field of career psychology pays attention to the ways in which resources are distributed and how various contexts (social, economic, and political) impact on one's career development.

Stead and Watson (2006) outline the purpose of education during the apartheid governance, arguing that education was previously structured to function as a mechanism to control career development in order to serve the legislative and political agendas of the apartheid government. These agendas placed the White population in superiority thus creating racial segregation amongst the White and the Black African population. This then led to unequal distribution of resources guided by racial segregation.

Watson (2010) argues that the concept of social justice in South Africa can be understood by looking at the various inequalities that exist in South Africa. Decades later and post-apartheid, however, these inequalities are still evident within our society. According to the Department of Higher Education and Training (2015) some of South Africa's major challenges include the high unemployment rate, inequality, poverty, and access to education thus prioritizing career development and career guidance services is significant in order to improve and expose people to career information at an early stage in their lives. According to STATS South Africa the current unemployment rate is 27.7% thus indicating an increase in comparison to the previous year.

According to the Department of Higher Education and Training (2013) there are noted developments in relation to the education system and the world of work, however, there is still strong challenges that exist in the South African context such as the lack of access to resources and quality education. The disadvantaged population find themselves struggling to fit in a system that was developed for the privileged White population. Moreover, the paper asserts that there is an urgent need for expansion in the higher education and training systems.

The Department of Education (2013) through the White Paper asserts that it is through education that individuals are promised a route out of poverty, thus social justice is dependent on equal access to quality education. Arthur, et al (2013) maintains that the focus of social justice is conceptual and more is required to avail resources that account for the challenges and implement social justice interventions. Thus this research study aimed to further explore the contextual influences that impacts on one's career development, in the hope of contributing towards addressing the issues of social injustice in relation to access to career guidance and services.

2.2 TRADITIONAL CAREER THEORIES

The two theories that will be discussed are Super's theory and Holland's person-environment fit theory (as cited in Stead and Watson, 2006). Both of these theories are rooted in the trait and factor approach. Savickas (as cited in Watson & McMahon, 2008) argues that the trait and factor approach was born from the positivists' paradigm. Moreover the positivist paradigm has been preferred due to its objective, value-free, and unbiased appeal to research, and because its focus is on predictability and generalization (Neuman, 2006). The trait and factor approach mainly looks at the characteristics of the individual and matches that with the environment; assuming that if one holds certain characteristics they will automatically adapt and be productive in a particular environment. Stead and Watson (2006) argue that both of these theories still dominate the career field and have been used as reference to explain an individual's career development with the assumption that they exist independently from their environment and that behaviour of an individual originates from within.

2.2.1 SUPER'S THEORY

Super (as cited in Stead & Watson, 1999) recommends that an individual's career decision making is dependent on the concept of the self and career maturity through a sequence of life roles played out by a person during the course of a lifetime. Super defines self-concept as "a picture of the self in some role, situation or position" (as cited in Stead & Watson, 2006, p. 70) and argues that when an individual is aware of their perceived abilities they therefore act independently to choose a career. Super (as cited in Frizelle, 2002) recommends that self-concept leads to self-actualization and the growth of self-concept allows the individual to learn who they are and paint a more vivid picture of what their abilities are. From this perspective individuals enter into the workplace when they perceive themselves as the right candidates for certain employment, regardless of other external factors. According to Stead and Watson (2006) super's self-concept theory doesn't critically acknowledge cultural factors, but rather argues that career maturity develops through life stages; each stage has specific tasks and when an individual is able to master them they show readiness to move on to the next developmental stage. Stead and Watson (2006) argue that through these developmental stages Super proposes that career development is a lifelong process; incorporating the self and environmental factors.

Although Super's theory incorporates environmental factors, there are some criticisms raised concerning Super's theory. The South African context is a dynamic context with complex environmental influences with regard to career development. According to Stead and Watson (2006) Super's theory has the assumption that as long as an individual completes tasks of a particular developmental stage they portray career maturity. Career maturity has been identified as a state of readiness which is reached by an individual; this implies that career maturity is fixed rather than relational and interdependent. The theory ignores the confrontation of external factors within these developmental stages; external factors which may enhance or restrict career development. The theory further implies that career development is a linear process and that all individuals follow the same career path. The individual may be faced with a large pool of careers to choose from, but they are faced with cultural variables, family expectations and social needs. Frizelle (2002) argues that Super's assumption about a linear career process is inappropriate in the South African context. Furthermore the literature in chapter one illustrates the dynamic interaction between variables; hence, supporting that the career development process is not smooth and linear.

Kim and Berry (1993, as cited in Stead & Watson, 2006) argue that the theory acknowledges that self-concept develops through many variables and an individual has many self-concepts, but fails to be critical of these variables; hence undermining the impact of social context on career development. Stead and Watson (2006) argue that the theory also lacks the ability to allow for the individual to freely construct meaning in these life stages. Application of career story telling needs to be further explored from a South African perspective where factors like race, gender, culture and social class are taken into consideration (Stead & Watson, 2006). According to Watson and Stead (2002) the application of Super's theory in the South African context has been questioned due to the predominant research focus in South Africa on White, middle class participants. Thus, this leaves out the greater population of Black people in South Africa.

2.2.2 HOLLAND'S THEORY

Holland (as cited in Stead & Watson, 2006, p. 52) argues that people strive to be in environments that will demand and appreciate their personality traits. Holland's theory assumes that people can be categorized into six personality types and for every personality there is a matching occupational environment (R,I,A,S,E,C) which is the abbreviations for realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and, conventional. An individual portrays a three letter code (e.g. RAE or ISC). The first letter of the code is a person's primary interest type, which would likely play a major role in career choice and satisfaction. The second and third letters are secondary interest themes, and they would likely play a lesser, but still significant role in the career choice process (Stead & Watson, 2006).

Holland's theory is one of the major career theories that have emerged; playing an enormous role in assisting organizations to recruit employees and individuals when choosing a career, but with regard to its use in the South African context criticisms are made. Stead and Watson (2006) argue that Holland's theory identifies the individual's intrapersonal characteristic (personality) as the primary influence on career development and largely ignores the dynamic environment in which the individual lives. For example, consider how organizations use assessments to see whether an individual will potentially adapt to that environment and be able to be productive. Foxcroft and Roodt (2005) argue that assessments only evaluate the individual's immediate thought and internal

variables like personality and interests; side-lining the possibility of apparent external influences that affect an individual's way of thought and understanding of certain work concepts and career meaning.

Several authors such a Nel (as cited in Frizelle, 2002) and Patton and McMahon, (2006) criticize Holland's ideal fixed environment and proposes that environments are dynamic and ever changing. The South African context can't be separated from its historical and cultural context, policies and laws as individuals' behaviour originate from these contexts. Frizelle (2002) further argues that the conceptualization of a fixed environment is problematic in the South African context and that personality traits are not the only influences on career development, there are wider contextual factors. Duffy and Dik (2009) highlight that there are external influences in career development that are beyond the self; namely family expectations, life circumstances, social service motivation and spiritual needs. Watson (2009) argues that the majority of South Africans are victims of brutal, unfair practices rooted in the apartheid system so career choice does not stem from personality but rather is contextualized. Frizelle (2002) further argues that in the history of South Africa many individuals were forced into certain kinds of employment regardless of personality. The South African context reflects a collectivist culture where family and community is important (Watson, 2009); hence these factors influence career choice. The characteristics of a collectivist community include 'togetherness', positivity and harmony amongst the people. Stead and Watson (2006) acknowledge that Holland is aware of external influences on career development, but views them as negative influences. Frizelle (2002) argues that Holland's theory fails to be critical of how external factors can enhance career development in a positive way.

According to Stead and Watson (2006) the trait and factor approach is useful from a theoretical point of view because it developed many of the constructs used in career development today. It is not to say that the traditional theories that have dominated the career field should be dismissed; rather it is argued that researchers should try to further develop theories that emphasize the importance of culture and wider external factors that can influence an individual's career decision-making. Watson and Stead (2002) argue that the currently used western theories were developed in a White middle-class population, but standardized for a multicultural context; thus this deems the western career theories highly inappropriate for a context dominated by such a diverse and multicultural population. Career meaning in a multicultural context will be dynamic and different

for every individual, it is created through experience and we all go through different experiences assigning different meaning and relevance to them (Bujold, 2004). There is, therefore, the need for indigenized career theories, which will now be discussed.

2.3 THE NEED FOR INDIGENIZED CAREER THEORIES

Stead and Watson (2006) define indigenous psychology as "knowledge that is generated in a country or a culture, and that have developed therein, as opposed to those that are imported" (p.182). One of the many criticisms of traditional career theories is their relevance in the South African context. Allwood and Berry (2006) argue that the attempt to import or adapt western theories has given rise to concerns about their local relevance. Further many authors (Kim and Berry, 1993; Stead and Watson, 2006) have argued that traditional career theories are dominated by western constructs and assumptions which tend to ignore the existence of external influences in career development. Existing career theories are not universal; rather they are based on western assumptions and values such as individualism and decontextualized knowledge (Allwood & Berry, 2006).

These traditional career theories were informed by the positivist paradigm. According to Allwood and Berry (2006) positivism supports the notion of universal laws and the assumption that subjective aspects such as one's context can be eliminated or controlled. Moreover, positivism is characterized by objective and value free research which argues that the participant can be understood in isolation from their context. Critics argued that this assumption was not reliable for the multicultural context; especially due to the dynamic and various variables that influence career choice.

Allwood and Berry (2006) argue that the main objective of indigenized psychologies is to develop theories that are not imposed by other psychologies; in other words, theories that take into consideration one's cultural influences and theories that are developed by the people and for the people. In doing so it will deem the theories highly relevant for that particular context and highly useful as well. Stead and Watson (2006) encourage the use of indigenous approaches to career research and career psychology, arguing that this will lead to more context rich information and focus on the participant's experiences. Moreover, the researcher is not imposing international

terms and phenomena's on the participants, instead they allow the participants to own and share their experiences and assign meanings to their phenomena. Allwood and Berry (2006) further argue that an indigenous approach will allow researchers to explore the participant's contextual aspects. People perceive and experience phenomena differently; thus perception occurs in context and meaning is assigned according to language and symbols developed in their own cultures. Mkhize, et al. (as cited in Frizelle, 2002) states that indigenous psychologies take into consideration all the values of the African cultures; values that hold true to the spirit of 'ubuntu' and collectivism. The indigenized approaches don't disregard the use of quantitative methods in career research; however it argues that qualitative methods in career research will allow the focus to be on the participant and their subjective experiences. Further, qualitative methods in career research are useful in interviews especially in the South African context where 'story telling' has been and continues to be one of the most popular ways of gathering information from people.

According to Stead and Watson (2006) literature indicates that the western origins which exist in career psychology render largely irrelevant issues faced by multicultural contexts such as South Africa. Moreover, the call for indigenization highlights the importance of language, arguing that language differences can pose a problem between western practitioners and African clients.

McMahon (2014) states that career counsellors and researchers should be encouraged to develop and makes use of theories, models and techniques originating in Africa. McMahon (2014) further develops the statement by arguing that it is not enough that one generates knowledge by merely using information from South African samples, but one should also develop theories and constructs relevant to the South African context. It is to be noted that the call for indigenized career theories does not call for favor over the Westernized career theories, however, it seeks to call for approaches that address the psychological needs of the population and is relevant to the context.

2.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The emerging approaches don't undermine the major role that the traditional theories have played in shaping career development in South Africa, but rather these approaches introduce a perspective that allows for the integration of the internal and external factors that influence career development. Sandelowski (2007, p. 35) further argues that "there is no one reality out there to be measured; objects and events are understood differently by different people, and those perceptions are the reality – or rather realities that social science research should focus on". Central to this notion is the concept of holism, which suggests that an individual's behaviour can only be understood in relation to their context. Since positivists are too preoccupied with searching for universally applicable laws, this distracts them from learning what people know and how they understand their lives (McMahon et al, 2003). This section will critically discuss two career theories, namely social constructionism and systems theory, furthermore the section will also use past research in order to illustrate the relevance of these theories in the South African context. According to Young and Popaduik (2012) both social constructionism and social constructivism (which informs systems theory) are concerned with career as a constructed reality rather than a reality that exists independently of its context. Thus both approaches move away from viewing the world objectively towards viewing meaning as subjective and constructed within particular contexts.

2.4.1 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM

According to Burr and Dick (2017) social constructionism emerged within the movement of postmodernism; postmodernism rejected the idea that there is one truth. Burr and Dick (2017) further argue that social constructionism was one of the many alternative epistemologies that focused on language and social construction of meaning. As a result social constructionism emphasized subjectivity, multiple truths and context. According to Burr and Dik (2017) social constructionism asserts that knowledge is historically and culturally specific. The meanings and understanding of a phenomenon is embedded in one's context. Career development can be understood as a process that is experienced and understood in relation to the individuals' construction of meaning. Social constructionism is critical of the assumptions and views of

traditional science. Burr and Dick (2017) argue that social constructionism is in contrast to positivism, which assumes that there is one truth and emphasizes objectivity. On the other hand, social constructionism accepts that there are multiple truths and meaning is subjective. This means that people use language to construct meaning and there is an unlimited number of descriptions and explanations of the world.

2.4.1.1 CONCEPT OF SELF

According to Stead and Watson (2006) the concept of self in mainstream career theories is informed by western values; which address individualistic beliefs. Further assuming that the individual is an objective closed system and can be understood in isolation from the social context. Cohen, et al. (2004) argue that the social constructionists have criticized the traditional concept of self; arguing that it eliminates the existence of the influence of the social context and its role in influencing career development. Self is constructed through language and engages a relational, continuous interaction between the individual and the context (Patton & McMahon, 2006).

2.4.1.2 LANGUAGE

According to Cohen, et al. (2004) language lies at the core of construction and meaning. It is through language that people construct and find meaning. Cohen, et al. (2004) further argues that language is able to create and reflect realities; hence in order to understand the career narratives, we must consider how people talk about their careers. This present study seeks to understand what career means to the individuals and it is through language that construction and meanings will reflect reality; the context of the participants also plays a vital role.

Burr (cited in McIlveen & Schultheiss, 2012) argues that knowledge and meanings is a product of history and culture. How people describe their career development will be influenced by their historical and cultural context. Therefore, researchers who are informed by the social constructionist approach need to be aware of the socially constructed meanings that are expressed by the participants. According to Schultheiss and Wallace (2012) social constructionism emphasizes the need to consider history and origins of taken for granted assumptions. Things are not as they seem and one should always be context sensitive when trying to understand meaning.

Burr (as cited in Cohen, et al, 2004) argues that knowledge is constructed by social processes and that through daily living we construct and reconstruct knowledge by accepting certain truths and rejecting others. We can't be separated from our historical context. Social constructionism emphasizes the role that language plays in constructing meaning and knowledge. According to McIlveen and Schultheiss (2012) it is through language that ideologies are constructed and it is the same ideologies that influence the way in which we view the world.

2.4.1.3 NARRATIVES

Burr and Dick (2017) argues that social constructionism encourages new ways of inquiry and interpretation as opposed to traditional science. Constructionists encourage theorists to challenge the traditional definitions that are embedded in career development and move away from solely focusing on definitions informed by Westernized Eurocentric experiences (Cohen, et al, 2004; Young and Collin, 2004). By doing this as researchers we allow participants to express and describe their career development according to their own realities. According to Young and Popaduik (2012) the narrative perspective on career development emerged from the constructivist approaches; however because of its focus on language it also lends itself to social constructionism epistemology. Bujold (2004) defines narrative as a process in which one makes meaning of experiences through self-construction and self-awareness.

The narrative approach has become useful in the South African context because it allows individuals to freely tell their stories and rewrite their lives through a process of construction and reconstruction. According to Bujold (2004) the theory of narrative assumes that human lives are texts that the researcher must interpret; but this cannot be done objectively and in isolation from the participant. It is the individual who tells the story and adds meaning to their story, and as the story is told more concepts and constructs are either added or removed from the story.

The narrative approach according to Collin (2006) allows for voices and situations to be recognized and clarifies the actions of interacting people. The use of narrative in the South African context is beneficial for both the individual who is faced with career choice, the practitioner responsible for career guidance and the fact that it allows for a more holistic view of career (Stead, 2004). For example, language in our country can serve as a limitation in career development but

through story telling the individual feels free to honestly express themselves and to use words and meanings according to individual truth. Savickas et al (2009) wrote about narratives arguing that narratives involve an on-going construction of career and reality through daily experiences.

According to Stead (2004) social constructionism originates from various approaches; such as structuralism and hermeneutics. These approaches hold common assumptions about ways of inquiry and both these approaches encourage that the individuals' career development be understood in relation to their context.

2.4.2 SYSTEMS THEORY

According to Young and Popaduik (2012) the systems theory is informed by the social constructivist approach. Young and Popaduik (2012) argue that the epistemology of the constructivist is that knowledge is constructed by people, that is, it does not reflect an actual reality independent of those who have constructed it. This approach encourages researchers to understand the individual within their social context. McMahon (2011) argues that as individuals we don't live in isolation rather, we exist as part of an influential social system.

Patton and McMahon (2006) argue that the systems theory examines systems of influence including the individual, social and environment. Therefore one's career development will be influenced by all three systems and when trying to understand career development in the South African context, researchers should take into consideration the contextual variables. According to Arthur and McMahon (2005, as cited in Young & Popaduik, 2012) systems theory holds the assumption that social reality and knowledge is constructed between the individual and the dynamic interaction of the systems that influence them. Hence, emphasizing that career development is influenced by the intrapersonal, interpersonal and contextual factors. McMahon and Watson (2009) argue that the systems are open systems and they are subject to influence. For instance a change in the social system will bring about a change in the individual systems, as is, if a change occurs in the individual this will bring about a change in the social system. Career development according to the systems theory is a non-linear process as the individual interacts with the environment. The theory holds the components of content and process. McMahon and Patton 2006) state that in the content component there is the individual system (gender, beliefs,

self-concept and age) and the context system (family, social support and wider macro environmental factors) in which the individual lives. The process component is the interaction between the individual and the context. Arthur and McMahon (2005) argue that the individual is viewed within their context and that when trying to understand career meaning we should not isolate the individual from environmental influences. The systems theory also looks at the internal and external variables that influence career development in the individual and context system and argues that these systems are open systems and they influence each other.

Arthur and McMahon (2005) argue the systems theory also gives the individual the opportunity to ascribe positive or negative connotations to the influences in their career development. This way the participant and the researcher will be able to explore the factors that enable or limit the participant's career development. Watson (2009) argues that career development is influenced by the past, present and future. Stead and Watson (2006) express the past disenfranchisement from the apartheid system and lack of access to resources like education and its relative laws, the present laws circulating in organizations that claim to promote gender equality but still don't accommodate gender socialization (existence of few women being appointed in management positions) and future influences like the women's goals and plans outside the organization (family commitment and society expectations). Moreover, the systems theory allows individuals to explore the past, present and future factors that may have influenced their career path or that might influence their career development. Arthur and McMahon (2005) argue that the systems theory is useful because the individual as a system goes through a dynamic process of interaction with the environment and it makes apparent the overlooked external factors that play a role in the systems interaction process. The systems theory is relevant to the South African context because it addresses issues such as gender, race and class. It also provides the participants an opportunity to tell their own stories.

2.5 CONTEXTUAL INFLUENCES ON CAREER DEVELOPMENT

This section will highlight some of the contextual factors that emerged from research that explores career development and literature that discusses career development. Stead (2004) argues that the use of positivism in career psychology has led to the marginalization of cultural factors as a possible influence on career development.

2.5.1 THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Stead (2004) argues that there are many definitions of the concept culture; however common to most definitions is the fact that culture is a system of shared meanings and experiences. According to Levin (as cited in Stead, 2004, p. 392) culture can be defined as "shared organization of ideas that includes the intellectual, moral, and aesthetic standards prevalent in a community". These shared ideas are embedded in one's experiences with the social context thus influencing an individual's decision making. Stead (2004) further argues that culture is not a static phenomenon but it is adjusted to increasing contact with people from other cultures. Our experiences with other cultures allow us as people to create, re-define meanings therefore the way we understand career development will be influenced by those shared experiences. Culture is one of the many variables that exist in the social environment that can influence one's career choice; however there is scarce research in this area. Stead (2004) argues that the lack of culture literature in psychology can be overcome by encouraging theorists to develop culturally sensitive theories and for researchers to use diverse samples in their research. This way literature will address culture as a possible influence in one's decision-making. Stead (2004) further acknowledges although theorists and psychology literature touches on cultural issues; it, however, fails to demonstrate how culture plays a role in career choice and career decision-making.

2.5.2 THE ROLE OF FAMILY IN CAREER DEVELOPMENT

According to Duffy and Dik (2009) a significant factor that may influence an individual's career development is family expectations and needs. Family is able to directly or indirectly influence an individual's interest and values in the working environment. An individual seeks an environment that will enhance and be aligned to his her values. The role of family in decision making is vital for many communities. There is a proverb in African communities 'umuntu ungumuntu ngabantu' this means that an individual is not solely dependent on himself and thus he is reliant on other members of his community or members of his family to survive and exist as a human being. The individual exists and develops through the interaction and experiences with other people. This creates the importance of family as an influence in one's life. In a multicultural context the concept family has been redefined to include diverse forms of families and not focused on the western dominant nuclear family structure. In a multicultural context family can be easily used interchangeably with community. The IsiXhosa African Proverbs stating that "Umntu ngumntu ngabantu- I am because you are" and "Umntwana ukhuliswa ilali- a child is raised by the entire village" has been widely used in the African communities, stressing the importance of acknowledging the family and community as influences on one's decision making (Mkhize, 20004).

Duffy and Dik (2009) further argue that family expectations and needs affect the individual at all stages; from the youngest stage such as an adolescent seeking a job to the older stages of a seasoned worker seeking new employment ventures. The kind of job and the geographical location as to where one chooses to work is indirectly influenced by the individual's family expectations. These expectations can be direct and indirect; verbalized or practiced behavior. For instance the direct influence is indicated or expressed in the case where an adolescent requests advice form his parents as to what studies he should pursue; the parents advice is embedded in their expectation of the adolescent and the family's needs.

According to Duffy and Dik (2009) research shows that individuals who are born from collectivist cultures are usually directly influenced by their parents. For instance the parent may require the son/daughter to take over a family business. The expectation is highly influenced and related to

the family needs; thus one may argue that family expectations are developed through family needs. Duffy and Dik (2009) further note that family does not serve solely as a negative influence; however family can be perceived as a positive influence in an individual's career choice by providing financial and emotional support. There is a faint line that distinguishes whether an external factor is a motivator or constraint and that line is created by the individual's circumstances. The Human Science Research Council (as cited in Nasta, 2007) highlighted that the influence of unrealistic career expectations by parents can make realistic career choices for children difficult. Children are faced with the challenge of being obedient to their parents at the cost of not following their desired career paths. For example, in one circumstance a father's expressed wishes for his son to take over the family business may be viewed as a constraint due to the family needs being enforced in the son's career choice; however on the other hand, one may argue that due to the high unemployment rate in South Africa working in a family business as opposed to job hunting for months is ideal. In both circumstances external factors serves as an influence in career choice and play a role in one's career development.

2.5.3 POLITICAL INFLUENCES ON CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Career Development within the South African context cannot be understood in isolation of the historical political context and the transition from the apartheid government system to a democratic government. Frizelle (2002) notes the impact of political factors on career development, arguing that the political policies of the apartheid system played a role in some of the challenges that exist in one's career development, challenges such as lack of career guidance services and skills shortage. Frizelle (2002) further argues that laws which existed at the time limited the career choices of the Black African population and created enormous economic oppression, as a result limiting the job opportunities availed to the population. Mkhize and Frizelle (2000) argue that the majority of the Black population enter into social occupations due to the strong sense of community embedded in their contextual realities. In this present day, this is evident in the skills shortage in Science and Mathematics professions, the challenges faced by the Information Technology, Engineering sector (DHET, 2013).

Stead and Watson (2006) argue that career guidance has not been accessible to the majority of the population, this is marked by the evident inequalities that were embedded in the apartheid systems. This perspective is further extended by Watson (2009) who is critical of the negative impact of the apartheid system and the role of career psychologists who practiced during the apartheid system, providing interventions and frameworks that White population. The above mentioned inequalities continue to be a present realities, as there continues to be lack of trained career practitioners, lack of career guidance within the rural areas, high levels of unemployment and high poverty amongst the majority of the population and a challenge in the implementation of the current framework provided by government (DHET, 2013).

According to Stead and Watson (2006) career education and career theories need to place more emphasis on the challenges experienced in the 21st century, arguing that the career theories and the assessments are largely influenced by Western values. Furthermore the career education programmes developed within the South African context are informed by a limited sample population, mainly middle class, thus not providing the realities of the majority of the population (Stead & Watson, 2006). There is an urgent need to develop inclusive career development frameworks that respond to the present realities and challenges. Thus far, career literature is critical of the appropriateness and relevancy of mainstream career theories in a multicultural context, arguing that there is a need for indigenized career theories that take into consideration culture and other external factors (Watson, 2009).

2.5.4 THE ROLE OF SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGION IN CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The concepts spirituality and religion are sometimes used interchangeably; however these are two separate concepts. According to Scheile (as cited in Fabiano, 2010, p. 28) the concept of spirituality refers to a relationship with God, while religion is a set of practices informed by a particular human belief system. One seeks to have a relationship with God and the other is actual practices performed in order to implement a belief.

According to Duffy and Dik (2009) many individuals choose a particular career simply because they believe it is a 'calling'. Fox (2003, as cited in Fabiano 2010, p. 28) argues that vocation can

be understood as a 'calling' in Christian faith. One may choose a career path solely on the belief that it is a calling and they have been predestined to pursue that path. Research on spirituality and religion as influence on career development is limited; however this does not dismiss its role as a possible influence on career choice.

2.6 CONCLUSION

The above review has highlighted the benefits of using integrative approaches for understanding career development in the South African context. It reviewed two traditional theories that hold the assumption that career development is a linear process which can be understood through person-environment fit and have used tests on White middle-class male participants. These test results were problematically generalized to all people. The integrative approaches (constructivism, narrative and systems) extended on the traditional theories (like the trait and factor) by accepting certain concepts like 'self-concept', 'career choice' and 'career maturity' but remain distinct by acknowledging the influential impact that external influences have on an individual's career development. According to Young and Collin (2004) both social constructivism and social constructionism are terms used interchangeably; however it should be noted that although they share similarities, they do differ. Constructivism focuses on meaning making and construction of realities through individual, cognitive processes while the latter argues that worlds are constructed through social practices and interaction (Young & Collin; 2004). Theorist and writers like McMahon and Patton (1997), Mkhize and Frizelle (2000), Stead and Watson (2002) bring to life the importance of meaning in career development by accepting that as individuals we iteratively construct meaning through daily experiences and social interactions.

Research has shown that traditional theories on their own are no longer relevant in the South African career field because of the lack of contextual awareness as an influence on career development. Watson (2009) further adds that there is a need for career development theories that acknowledge external influences. The chapter also provides a discussion of career psychology in the South African context and outlines the contextual factors that influence career development. The above literature review highlights the need for further research based on the narrative and systems paradigms in explaining and understanding career development in the South African context.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter presents the research methodology used in the current study and further provides justification for the design of the study. Moreover, the chapter provides a description of the sampling methods used, the data collection and data analysis techniques, and provides a rationale for its use. The section will be followed by a brief discussion on credibility and transferability. Lastly, a discussion of ethical considerations will be presented.

3.2 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

Both qualitative and quantitative research designs are based on different assumptions and different paradigms. According to Neuman (2011) quantitative research designs are based on positivist approaches; on the other hand, qualitative research designs are based on interpretivist approaches. This study made use of a qualitative research design that is informed by two theories namely social constructivism and social constructionism. Qualitative methodology supports the theoretical framework and the argument made about viewing an individual within their context. One of the objectives of the study was to receive an in-depth career narrative, one that acknowledges both internal and external factors that might have influenced career development, thus the use of a qualitative methodology is both relevant and appropriate.

McMahon et al. (2003) is critical about the importance of indigenization of career theories and the development of contextually sensitive research in South Africa and further argues that the qualitative methodology should play a crucial role in our diverse society, as this will function to eliminate cultural biases. Stead and Watson (2006) argue that career research and career meaning is dominated by quantitative methodology which stems from the positivist paradigm. There is a belief that there is a reality that exists apart from our perception of it, that it can be understood through observation and allows for the development of general laws (Neuman, 2011). According to McMahon et al. (2003) the positivist paradigm places emphasis on objectivity and the relationship of cause and effect, with the assumption that the individual is independent of the

existing environment. Neuman (2011) further warns that the biggest criticisms of the positivist paradigm is the ignorance of contextual factors and the creation of a power dynamic.

McMahon et al. (2003) argue that individuals define career according to their own meaning and context. Qualitative career research supports both the social constructivism and social constructionism perspective which argues that meaning is constructed through interaction with the social context. The social constructionist and the social constructivist theories are separate but not oppositional theories and both are relevant to career development in South Africa. Both theories evaluate the individual within its context and both acknowledge that an individual's career choice is influenced by various systems in the social world. McMahon et al. (2003) argue that according to the systems theory all the systems are interrelated and that when changes occurs in one then change will occur in the other. Moreover, Cohen et al. (2004) argue that social constructionism views an individual within their context and understands that meaning is created through interaction with the social world. Both social constructionism and systems theory call for the use of qualitative designs to understand behaviour. McMahon et al. (2003) argues that qualitative research explores external factors that influence career development.

According to Fabiano (2010) qualitative research methods are also appropriate when little is known about the phenomenon. Unlike quantitative methodology, qualitative methodology allows the researcher to further explore and probe if the participants at first don't give insight and in-depth information about a topic. The use of qualitative methodology in career research also allows for the researcher to understand the individual within their context and how the context influences career choice. Taking into consideration the rationale and objectives of the study, the above research design aims to assist the researcher in exploring the career narratives of the six Black South African participants.

3.3 SAMPLING

Purposive sampling was used for the current study. Neuman (2011) argues that purposive sampling is a nonprobability technique through which participants are selected because of some desirable characteristic, that is, the sample meets specific criteria. Stead and Watson (2006) argue that career development in South Africa is highly influenced by Western theories that use White male

participants and overlooks career meaning for the non-western population. The literature presented in the previous chapter highlights the dominant use of White population as samples in South African career research; therefore this study decided to work with a Black African sample. The aim of the study was to explore the contextual factors that influenced the participant's career development lived experiences. The researcher found six Black African professionals who are aged 30 years and older. This age group was decided on because this would ensure the participants had a career narrative they could reflect on and all the participants experienced the apartheid government in one way or another. The researcher acknowledges that the participants were from different backgrounds, however, there was an expectation of common experiences within the socio-political context. For the purpose of this study, 'professional' refers to individuals who have obtained a recognized degree/diploma and are currently employed.

Table 1: Demographic Information

Pseudo Name	Male/Female	Work Experience	Industry
Ned	Female	5- 10 years	Education
Cynthia	Female	10- 15 years	Health
Anonymous 1	Male	15-20 years	Engineering
Anonymous 2	Female	10-15 years	Education
Thulile	Female	10-15 years	Administration
Sandile	Male	10-15 years	Retail

3.4 DATA COLLECTION

The researcher wishes to acknowledge that the data collection for the present study was undertaken by making use of narrative interviews as a data collection method, the narratives that informed the study were collected by three separate interviewers, who then later shared the six career narratives (each interviewer completed two in-depth interviews). It should be noted that throughout the data analysis and discussion, the researcher will make mention of the different interviewers, however the researcher worked independently to analyze data and provide recommendations.

The interview technique called the 'river of life' was used in order to guide the narrative interview. According to Neuman (2011) narratives provide the participant with an opportunity to provide

information through a story, reflecting their perceptions and their experiences. The theoretical framework of the study hold common assumptions about ways of inquiry and encourage that the individuals' career development be understood in relation to their context. Moreover, the discussion below provides a justification and the appropriateness of the river of life as an interview technique.

The following section will briefly discuss the 'river of life' interview technique and how it integrates with narrative interviews.

3.4.1 THE RIVER OF LIFE AND NARRATIVE INTERVIEWS

An interview technique called the 'River of Life' was used in the current study in order to assist the interviewer to conduct the narrative interviews with the participants. The river of life exercise, developed with my supervisor, assists in identifying events, people and things that have positively or negatively influenced the participants' career development. Participants were requested to draw a river that represented their career path. The start of the river represented their earliest recollection of when they started to think about their career and the end of the river represented where they are currently on their career path. They were asked to draw certain objects and symbols in the river of life. For example, rocks in the river resembled the challenges and obstacles (for example, finances, family pressure) they have faced during their career journey and the bridges symbolised the assistance one had received during their career journey (this can be in the form of social support from family, friends or include any other structure and resource that has contributed positively to their career development). Further, participants were requested to document significant career moments on the drawing. Each participant's river of life picture was then used to interview the participant. During the interview the participant was asked to describe the picture and to answer questions about their career narrative.

Bujold (2004) argue that narratives allow the individual to give meaning to their lives. Watson (2009) further argues that narratives (story telling) have been a part of the South African context for many years. It is a way that people can talk about the social, cultural and historical influences that have affected their career development. The narrative interview technique relates to the theoretical framework and further supports the call for career theories that take into consideration

external factors. Both the data collection technique and tool (river of life) complement each other because it allowed the interviewer to ask question according to the participant's river of life picture; thus making it relevant to that particular individual and their context. A qualitative technique such as an in-depth narrative also allowed the interviewer to ask probing questions which assisted the interviewee in collecting rich, detailed information.

3.5 INTERVIEW GUIDE

An interview guide was developed (see Appendices) and was used to assist the interviewer in conducting an in-depth interview. The interview guide includes a list of questions that were explored during the interview. The interview guide consists of open-ended questions and probing questions that were used to explore the contextual and interpersonal factors that the participants may not have realised had, had an influence on their career development. Babbie and Mouton (2004) argue that probes are a useful way to help participants give more detailed answers without biasing later answers. The river of life exercise was used as the starting point for the interview and the questions were integrated into the interview whilst the participant narrated their career path. Fabiano (2010) argues that participants tend to drift away and raise a variety of issues; therefore the interview guide was used as a guideline to keep the interview focused.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

The study used the Voice-Centred Relational Method (VCRM) developed by Brown and Gilligan (1992). The voice-centred relational method adopts the relational ontology. Mauthner and Doucet (1998) argue that the relational ontology holds the assumption that the individual is understood in their social context. The voice-centred relational method was relevant for this study because it allowed for an analysis of the issues foregrounded by the theoretical frameworks (systems theory and social constructionist perspective) which both highlight the importance of relationships and understanding individuals in relation to their context. According to Young and Collin (2004) the relationship between an individual and their context is dynamic and interactive; thus an individual

influences their context and in turn, the individual is influenced by their context. The method highlighted that people are not viewed in isolation from their context encouraged an approach inclusive of the interviewee's context. The method of analysis involved four readings of each interview transcript.

Reading one

Maunther and Doucet (1998) argue that reading one is an attempt to know the participant. It requires the researcher to read the text for an overall plot and to identify the main themes, events, metaphors and contradictions in the story. In this reading the researcher focuses on the overall career story that the participant tells, and uses this story to identify events and contradictions. Brown (1994, as cited in Ribbens & Edwards, 1998) argues that the issue of reflexivity allows the researcher to minimize bias towards participants. Researchers should be able to locate their social and emotional responses to the interview participant. Researchers should self-reflect and consider their own interest, biases and limitations. In other words the researcher should try putting themselves in the participant's shoes to understand how they are responding emotionally and intellectually. It is important that the researcher tries to understand the story from the participant's perspective before continuing with the rest of the readings. This will allow the researcher to be nonbiased when making interpretations about the overall career story.

Reading two

According to Maunther and Doucet (1998) reading two requires the researcher to be aware when the sense of self emerges within the text where the participant has used personal pronouns like 'I', 'we' or 'you'. This helps the interviewer to discover how the participant presents him/herself; how the participant places herself in the social context (agency and social location). This reading helps the researcher to recognise the participant's position in their career path and how and when they feel confident enough to reference themselves or whether they use others as references.

Reading three

Maunther and Doucet (1998) argue that reading three requires the researcher to identify the participant's interpersonal relationships; who influenced the participant's decision making. This reading is linked to reading two where others and other influences are made apparent in the participant's career development. This explores the thought and actions around the participant's career development in relation to others.

Reading four

Maunther and Doucet (1998) argue that reading four, places the individual within their social context to see whether they recognise the social, cultural factors that have limited or enabled their decision making. This reading helps investigate whether the participants recognised the external influences that play a role in their own career development. Theses external influences differ for participants because each career path interacts with their environment, external factors could include things like family, gender, age, socio-economic status and even cultural factors. All four readings suit the theoretical framework presented in the literature review and meets the requirements of the theories presented, social constructionism and social constructivism.

3.7 CREDIBILITY

According to Fabiano (2010) terms such as validity and reliability are associated with quantitative research whilst concepts such as credibility and transferability are associated with qualitative research. This study has adopted a qualitative approach and thus it is more appropriate focus the research on credibility, dependability rather than reliability and transferability as opposed to validity.

According to Patton (as cited in Golafshani, 2003) the qualitative researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomena of interest. Qualitative research approaches phenomena in its natural context and seeks to understand it without statistical and quantification procedures. Fabiano (2010) refers to credibility as the findings of the study making sense. These findings must reflect and be

trusted by both the participants and the readers. It is noted that the researcher had to ensure credibility of information through the following ways:

a) The researcher critically engaged with her own prejudices and biases according to her own belief systems. By identifying these prejudices one is able to be instinctive and not allow one's own prejudices to penetrate into the participants narratives.

b) Detailed data was collected and the researcher further probed in order to gain clarity and meanings from the narrators.

c) The transcripts were read over a long periods of time and repeated readings of the transcripts were required in order to be familiar with the data.

Although the information reflected in this research study is trustworthy; the researcher does note that it is not to be treated as final conclusions of the phenomena and leaves room for further research regarding this phenomena. These are not final reflections of the phenomena; however the researcher is confident to state that these findings are able to contribute to data available concerning career development in South Africa.

3.8 DEPENDABILITY

Miles and Hubberman (as cited in Fabiano, 2010) define dependability as consistency over time and across researchers. It involves a thorough examination of the procedures and assessing whether they were applied consistently across the study. To ensure dependability in this research study all participants were availed an opportunity to narrate their career development paths and the researcher probed for all significant and mentioned events. The researcher has completed an internship programme for the National Research Foundation as a research assistant thus she is able to conduct interviews and critically engage with data through thorough analysis. Moreover the role of peer supervision and supervisor advice was enacted in order to ensure that the researcher was actively engaging with the data and gaining insight from external sources regarding the topic discussed in the study. Peer supervision allows the researcher to thoroughly engage with the phenomena being discussed and gain greater insight.

3.9 TRANSFEREABILITY

According to social constructionists phenomena is understood and becomes reality to those that experience them, thus meanings differ across contexts. Transferability can be defined as the extent to which the findings can be transferred to other settings and other people (Fabiano, 2010). Qualitative research does not seek to make broad claims; instead qualitative research invites the reader to make significant connections between elements of a study and provides insight of a phenomenon according to the participant's narratives. Thus this study provides the reader with detailed insight to a phenomenon.

3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

3.10.1 INFORMED WRITTEN CONSENT AND TRANSPARENCY

The Researcher obtained ethical clearance for the study, thus was fully aware of the ethical considerations when conducting research and interviewing individuals. When interviewing and assessing individuals it is important to remember that no matter what is being assessed, one is first and foremost dealing with another human being and that person has rights. To ensure that each participant was informed; the interviewer explained to the participant the purpose, and objective of the study in a written letter as a request to participate in the study, indicating that the study was a partial fulfilment of the researcher's educational qualification, which is a Masters Degree at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Each of the participants was asked to sign an informed consent form which outlined the purpose, objectives of the study, and how the data will be stored. The participants were also informed about their rights, at any time, to withdraw from the research if they wished to do so and that there would be no consequences if they decided to withdraw.

The interviewer requested the participant's permission to use a tape recorder and told that if they felt uncomfortable then other methods could be explored and used. However, all six participants were comfortable with the interviewer using a tape recorder.

3.10.2 CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality and anonymity was ensured through various methods. Firstly, each of the participants was given the option of using a pseudo name. Some of the participants requested pseudo names; however the others were comfortable with using their original names. Secondly, the participants were ensured that all data will only be used for research purposes and will be stored in a safe place at the University of Kwazulu-Natal.

The study posed no harm (physical and psychological) to the participants. However; it should be noted that the researcher was aware of the possibility that the narrative interview might bring up sensitive topics and lead to emotional responses, and was prepared to make appropriate referrals if this was to happen. This did not happen during this research process.

3.11 SUMMARY

The theoretical literature was critically discussed in order to outline the various shortfalls of the traditional theories in a multicultural context and to further emphasize the call for more indigenized career theories. These integrative approaches informed the methodology of this study and referral to these theories is constantly noted throughout the methodology discussion. The qualitative approach was adopted for this study in order to gain in-depth insight to career development in South Africa and allow for participants to narrate and express own meanings that are associated to career development. A detailed description of the data collection and analysis method was given; this provided the researcher with a guideline on how to collectively view the data and engage with the data. The ethical considerations were discussed and all stated provisions were noted such as the option for participants to discontinue with the researcher if they requested to and the need to refer a participant in the case where a participant may have needed psychological assistance.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The transcripts were analysed through the voice- centred relational method, this method involves four readings of the interview transcripts. These four readings are discussed as well as the themes that emerged through the four readings. Extracts from the participants narratives will be presented as data to support the identification of the various themes.

The different readings that inform the data analysis are presented as sequential in Chapter Three, however the researcher notes that in practice, they are not sequential as the analysis process was iterative. In reality the researcher's analysis moved across the readings, for instance the researcher, on several occasions returned to reading one after working on the other three readings. Although the original analysis process involves four different readings as described in the methodology section, it became apparent while writing the analysis section up that it would be repetitive to separate reading one (reading for the plot) and reading three (reading for interpersonal influences) from one another. It was, therefore, decided to discuss the analysis of both of these reading here, in one place, and in this way to essentially collapse reading one and three into one combined reading, which now stands as reading one. As a result reading three becomes reading four.

The Table below provides a summary of the participants, with the aim of assisting the reader to fully understand the analysis of the career narratives and the context.

Table 2: Pseudo Names and Profile of Participants

Pseudo Name	Brief Profile
Ned	Ned is a 39 year old female, she is not married and she has no children. She is currently completing her Social Work Degree whilst working full time as an Administrator. She was raised by a single mother, due to her parents ending their marriage and separating.
Cynthia	A married mother of two, she identifies herself as a hard working individual who has over the years had to prove her competence in the workplace. She

	values her culture and she expressed this value throughout her career narrative, as she placed much emphasis on her identity as a wife and as a mother.
Anonymous 1	A 47 year old female, married with children who is currently employed as a maths lecturer at a higher educational institute. Anonymous initially wanted to pursue a career in Optometry, however due to various factors inclusive of financial limitations, she pursued a career in Academia.
Anonymous 2	A 57 year old male, who is married with 4 children. He is a professional electrical engineer, who initially wanted to pursue a profession in teaching. The political laws of the apartheid system placed limitations and it was only later in his career that an opportunity presented itself to pursue a career in Engineering.
Thulile	A 37 year old mother of two, she is currently employed as an Office Administrator. She perceives herself as one who loves children thus her first career choice was teaching. The career choice was short lived as she fell pregnant in Matric and was faced with the immediate pressure to seek alternative employment, in order to provide for her children.
Sandile	A 40 year old male, who is currently employed as a Manager at a retail store. Sandile expressed strong interests in Engineering however life circumstance (falling ill) impacted on his career narrative and he dropped out of the Engineering Learnership Programme.

4.2 READING ONE: READER RESPONSE, READING FOR THE PLOT AND INTERPERSONAL INFLUENCES

According to Mauthner and Doucet (1998) reading one comprises of two elements; namely reader response and reading for the plot. Reading one allows the researcher to read for the overall plot and story by identifying the main events that have influenced the participant's career development and further allows the researcher to place herself in relation to the participant's narratives.

4.2.1 READER RESPONSE

Brown (1994, as cited in Mauthner and Doucet, 1998) argues that the reader response allows the researcher to consider her relationship to the data. In this study the researcher considered her own biases, prejudices and limitations by reflecting on her own historical, socio-cultural contexts; as well as tracking her own feelings in response to what she heard in the interviews. By doing this the researcher was able to assess how these factors may affect her interpretation of the participant's career narratives and the way in which she wrote about the participants.

The researcher tried to articulate how she was socially and emotionally located in relation to the participants. According to Mauthner and Doucet (1998) reflexivity allows the researcher to understand their own responses, it is defined as "reflecting upon and understanding our own personal, political and intellectual autobiographies as researchers and making explicit where we are located in relation to our research participants" (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998, p. 121).

I am an educated Black African female who is currently employed. Upon pursuing this research topic, I too had to reflect on my own subject position may impact on the study of career development amongst African professionals in South Africa. Reading one allowed me as the researcher to reflect and analyse my own assumptions, thoughts around career development for both White and Black individuals within a South African context.

This process also availed me the platform to step out of my 'educated' and 'free self', as I perceive myself to be, and take a walk into the lives of many previously disadvantaged lives through their career narratives. I had to explore my own assumptions about the process of being birthed at a time where the political dynamics were discriminatory to the Black population and I had to be cognisant of the context in which these career narratives were developed and emerged. Moreover, I had to also acknowledge that because I was born at a time where the South African political context was not as violent and abrupt as the apartheid era; this meant that I had to be cautious not to dismiss the significance of the participants' political realities whilst growing up.

The negative stereotypes that articulate amongst South African communities regarding uneducated African families arose during the data collection where a participant was aware of the stigma

associated with being raised by uneducated parents. I too became aware of the stereotypes which lived in my mental space and tried to screen them in order to truly respect the vulnerability of all the participants and to acknowledge the career path each participant took; whether it was by direct choice or influenced by contextual factors. As a researcher it is important to note that I was raised in a time where the apartheid government was no longer in political dominance and there were many more opportunities availed to the Black African population. The reflexive process allowed me to appreciate the participant's career narratives and the strength expressed through a difficult political era.

An important reader response that should be noted and should be reflected on is the fact that during the interviews whilst conversing with the participant's I kept noticing that my questions were based on an assumption that each participant had dominant control over their career decision-making. Reflection with myself as a researcher allowed me to be cognisant of this assumption and note continuously that contextual factors can directly influence one's career development.

4.2.2 READING FOR THE PLOT AND INTERPERSONAL INFLUENCES

Mauthner and Doucet (1998) identified the second element of reading one as reading for the overall plot told by the participant. This reading identifies the main themes and events that dominate in one's career narrative and the factors that may have played a role in influencing the participant's career development. A critical review of the narratives allowed the researcher to identify the main themes that emerged from the career narratives. The main overarching theme that emerged is referred to as 'Beyond the self' which illustrates that career development is influenced by a number of factors beyond the self.

As mentioned above, for the purposes of the write up I have combined reading one and reading three into one combined reading. Maunther and Doucet (1998) argue that reading three requires the researcher to identify the participant's interpersonal relationships; who influenced the participant's decision making. This reading is also linked to reading two where the significant role of other people are made apparent in the participant's career development.

Young and Collin (2004) argue that knowledge is the product of our social practices and institutions, or of the interactions and negotiations between relevant social groups. The writers further note that all claims of knowledge and realities are founded within communities of meaning; pointing to the specific location of that construction whether it be cultural or historical. Burr (2005) argues that our identities and realities are shaped in relation to our interactions with others. Reading for the contextual and interpersonal influences allows the researcher to acknowledge that all participants are open systems who are influenced by their environment and social context. Their realities are created through continuous engagement with the environment and the interpersonal relationships they experience in their lives. This reading challenges the positivist paradigm that holds the assumption that there is one reality for all and career development exists as a linear and fixed process for all. The reading encourages the researcher to understand the participants within their social context; through focusing on the contextual factors and interpersonal relationships indicated in the narratives.

Reading for contextual factors and relationships enabled the researcher to comprehend at which specific points in the participant's career development they identified with their careers and what their careers meant for them as individuals in terms of gender expectations, relationships with the family and with the community. In the career narratives the female participants expressed a strong need to note the relationship with the family and the need to answer the call of motherhood. In the same breathe the male participants also indicated a strong need to prove their 'manhood' by finding a job and being financially independent; thus affirming their manhood.

The following sub-themes that are embedded in the overarching theme are family expectation, planned and unplanned happenstance, family support, gender expectations, financial limitations, lack of career guidance, religion. These will be discussed through the use of extracts from the career narratives and supported by literature relevant to these factors.

4.2.2.1 BEYOND THE SELF

The above theme is informed by the work of Duffy and Dik (2009), arguing that although individuals have been viewed as absolute agents of their career development, it is evident that life experiences affect life choices. According to Duffy and Dik (2009) the concept of volition is

understood as the ability to have freedom in life choices, thus 'work volition' is the individual's ability to freely make career choices throughout their career development. This study proves that the career choices of the individuals was highly influenced by factors beyond the self, external contextual factors such as family expectations, political structures and socio-economic, which are perceived as either constraining or enabling an individual's career choices.

4.2.2.1.1 FAMILY EXPECTATION

Duffy and Dik (2009) argue that family expectations are viewed as an external influence on career development, however it imposes on the individual's internal values and beliefs. The career narratives indicated the influences of family at various stages in the participants lives, from the onset of the ' first career choice', when the participant first thought about a career and even later in their lives. The career narratives constructed the family influence as a positive influence and the participants expressed a sense of desire to adhere to the family expectations. Further, it is argued that family can play a supportive role in one's career choice, by providing guidance and means of support beyond a foundation of internal values and beliefs. Five out of the six participants expressed the existence of expectations from family as influencing their career development. This theme expressed two types of influences from family expectations; firstly, the call for elderly siblings to make career choices in order to assist as bread winners at home and, secondly, for females to respond to the call for motherhood as opposed to focusing on their careers.

The majority of the participants followed certain career paths in order to be able to provide for their family; including providing of financial assistance to their parents and siblings.

Cynthia, a nurse expressed that her career enabled her to provide financial assistance to her father and enabled her to provide medical aid for her siblings.

Amanda: What do you think you career meant for your family?

Cynthia: It was good for my family; I was able to help out my father with money and also care for my siblings when they were ill. My mother was very happy that I was helping my father…

In the following interaction during the interview Thulile, an office administrator expressed that her career means 'bread on the table' for her family.

Nontsikelelo: *So what does your career mean to you?*

Thulile: *It's just something to keep me busy and to be able to provide for my family.*

Notsikelelo: *What does your career mean to your family?*

Thulile: *Its bread for my family.*

In both of the extracts above it is clear that there is an expectation that the participants' careers will provide for the financial needs of their families.

The words '*my mother was very happy*' from Cynthia's quote indicates that she had a desire to please her mother. As the eldest sibling, helping her family financially pleased her mother, this suggests that providing for her family through her career was an expectation of her mother.

Thulile believed that her career meant '*bread on the table*', this meant that as an individual she identified her career as a means to provide the basic necessities at home. When asked what her career means to her family, rather than what it means to herself, she responds that that is '*bread for her family*', clearly indicating that apart from keeping herself busy there is an accepted expectation that her career will provide for her family.

In most African families the eldest child is faced with the responsibility of providing for their siblings and helping his/her parents. For many families it is a norm to assist one's siblings and this expectation does not have to be negotiated or verbally agreed on, but is rather expected as an accepted practice. The above factor of family expectation was mentioned in the literature by Duffy and Dik (2009), who highlight that there are external influences in career development that are beyond the self; namely family expectations, life circumstances, social service motivation and spiritual needs. The need to meet up to family expectations becomes a pressure that one cannot simply ignore, hence the career decision making process can be largely influenced by family.

4.2.2.1.2 GENDER EXPECTATIONS

Two participants indicated the need to respond to the biological expectation to bear children. This traditional expectation regarding motherhood is dominantly associated with leaving the place of work or any other priorities to focus on caring for the children.

In the South African context prior to 1994, most females were still marginalised by being restricted in the workplace. There were certain roles or jobs that were identified as 'women's work' and thus reserved for them; such as cleaning and catering, nursing, which were perceived as feminine roles. The majority of working women faced much criticism regarding choosing work over their responsibility to bear and care for children.

The following extract illustrates how gendered expectations can influence one of the participant's career development.

Thokoza: Do you think you getting married, having kids and starting a family was a barrier or an obstacle in your career development or not?

Anonymous 2: Definitely. Once you have a family, it affects your studies; because now you need to look after kids. You need to look after your husband, there are family commitments and there is also stress at work. So studying is an extra baby, the only thing that you can sacrifice is to pursue your study further.

Thokoza: Would you elaborate on that, what do you mean?

*Anonymous 2: It's a **stumbling block** that you cannot do anything about it because you need at the end of the day to have our families. That is why I think these days, males are better educated than females; you find that if you are looking at professionals, most young males have masters or doctorate degrees as compared to female. So to be a female, and pursue your study further is difficult. It's better to do your study early and focus in family life later.*

The above extract highlights the powerful way gender can influence career development. Anonymous 2 using the term *stumbling block* to describe the way in which gendered expectations can constrain a woman's career development. She is clear that there is an expectation that women

are responsible for the well-being of a family and highlights the importance of studying earlier as a female in order to achieve the same level of professionalism as males.

Research has been conducted to explore the gender dynamics which influence career development and the challenges women face in relation to career choice (Frizelle, 2000, Stead & Watson, 2006). According to Stead and Watson (2006) the career development of women continues to be dissimilar to that of the men, arguing that although career development literature includes the experiences faced by women the literature is still dominated by male experiences.

Cynthia like some working women at the time, was faced with the conflicting pressures of progressing as a Black African female in the workplace and the need to conceive and raise her children. Cynthia noted that her husband expressed the expectation for her to take time away from work in order to raise children; when she returned to work her position was filled by someone else. It is worth noting that since then the laws regarding maternity leave have been revised and amended with the aim to protect both the employer and the employee.

Cynthia had recently married and was also progressing well in her career; however the call for motherhood arose through her discussions with her spouse. There was an expectation from her husband that she should take time away from work and focus on caring for the children. In addition the extract below indicates that there was a similar expectation from her parents, as she states that '*her father always told her to put her man's needs first*'.

Amanda: *What did your career mean to your new immediate family (husband)?*

Cynthia: *Well…mmmmmm (sighs)... my husband loved me but he believed that a women should be at home raising the children. Luckily for me we spent the first few years of our marriage trying to have children. In the 3ʳᵈ year of our marriage; I conceived and that meant a huge change for my husband and I. He asked me to take leave and care for the baby and our home; of cause at first I was a bit reluctant but my father always told me it is important for a woman to put her man's needs first. So I left work on a temporary basis and became a temp housewife.*

Amanda: *So you put your career life on hold; in order to care for your family?*

Cynthia: *Yes (emphasis), I actually enjoyed it because I got to spend time with my son and I didn't miss any important moments.. (she laughs)..aaah I remember his first few steps, no job or money*

could ever make up for that moment. My husband was very supportive financially and he took care of both our needs.

Amanda: So when did you go back to work?

Cynthia: I went back after 1 year; I got back and someone else had filled my position. I didn't mind starting off anywhere as long as I was working and earning an income. My husband and I were managing financially, I mean we were not millionaires but we paid our bills.

The above extracts indicate how gendered expectations and family needs can play an important role in one's career development. Gendered expectations, especially those around motherhood, are given much thought throughout the career development process. Cynthia clearly states that the expectation to stay at home to raise the children is not her own expectation, but rather her husband's expectation. She states that she was *'reluctant'* to do this, but is further swayed by her father's gendered belief that you put the needs of man first. Although she expressed the joy in raising her first born; she returned to work and someone had filled her position and as a result had to be happy with finding other work, just as long as it provided her with an income. In this way her role as mother supersedes any particular career path she might have had in mind. A particular career path is no longer important.

During the apartheid era career choices were highly associated with race and gender (Fabiano, 2010); evidently gender inequality has placed enormous pressure on most working women. They have to take time off in order to raise their new born babies and still be expected to play catch up when they return to work. Gender dynamics in the workplace are still evident in the current working environment. The above extracts express the challenges faced by many working women; further these findings are supported by various studies related to gender and career development (Frizelle, 2002; Fabiano, 2010).

The other component of gender dynamics that was indicated through the career narratives was the need for men to affirm one's manhood through their careers and create a sense of independence as a male figure in their family. Sandile indicates the importance of his identity as a male and what defines his manhood. In his career narrative he states that:

Extract from Sandile

Sandile: *Well…. In my culture, as a male I need to be a provider and be independent, and not depend on my family as that is unmanly in my culture, I have the responsibility of providing for my family. I had to follow my father's footsteps.*

Amanda: *Your father's footsteps…….*

Sandile: *Yes, my father did not finish school because he had to take care of his parents and siblings as he was the only male in the house.*

Amanda: *I see family plays a huge role in your life*

Sandile: *Yes it does, I am what I am because of my family, sometimes you need to sacrifice a lot to make sure that your family is comfortable, so … yes it does mean a lot to me.*

The need to provide for the family was highly associated with protecting his identity, to negotiate and confirm his manhood within the family. He prioritises taking care of the family.

4.2.2.1.3 RELIGION

It is worth noting that the researcher has included this factor even though it was not a pervasive theme, as it was indicated by only one participant. It is, however, included as a way of encouraging other researchers to further research the influence religion and spirituality has on career development within a South African context.

Ned, an Academic Administrator at a university who is currently completing her Social Work degree explains why she chose to study Social Work. Throughout Ned's career narrative she expressed various factors that influenced her career development at specific points in her life; she later indicated the belief that her choice to choose a career that is focused on assisting and caring for people was a religious calling.

Extract from Ned

Amanda*: You mentioned that you feel as though you are called to be a social worker, care to elaborate?*

Ned*: I guess that's where I would call it because I am Christian and my values stand. The certain things I wouldn't do and certain careers I wouldn't pursue simply because I am Christian. One of my spiritual gifts is a 'gift of help', it is who I am. I discovered my spiritual gift way before I even considered Social work so it is aligned with my gift.*

Ned's career decision-making was highly influenced by her religion; she identifies career choice as a vocational calling and she believes that her career choice is aligned with her spiritual belief system. Many individuals associate religion with career development; as in all religions, Christians also believe that you pursue a career that you have been predestined to pursue, thus saying that one's life is predetermined by God and such a belief system will inform career decision-making (Duffy & Dik, 2009). Ned believes that her desire to want to help people is related to her religious belief system.

4.2.2.1.4 PLANNED AND UNPLANNED EVENTS

Mitchell, et al (1999) argue unplanned events can become opportunities; chance and uncertainty can be perceived in a positive light. The narratives indicate that majority of the participants took on career paths that they had not planned to take; happenstance played a major role in the participants career development.

Mitchell, et al (1999) further note that chance factors are those elements that contribute to one's career choice that have no predictable relationship to it, these authors provided these examples: economic situations, unexpected personal events and unexpected information. The majority of the participant's identified economic situations as the cause for choosing certain career paths. All of the participants make mention of an unplanned event in their career narrative that influences their career decision.

Sandile, whilst completing his leanership programme, fell ill and could not continue with the programme. In a matter of a few months his employment status changed from being actively employed to being unemployed. After a few years he recovered, but had to pursue a different career choice.

Extract from Sandile

Notsikelelo: Why couldn't you finish your learnership?

Sandile: I think …. I was on my 18th month into the learnership programme when I felt ill. I could no longer work. I later found out that I had Aids. I remember that I stayed at home for a full year and could not provide for my family…

Thulile, fell pregnant in matric and found herself with the pressure of providing for her children and also seeking employment. An unexpected life event like an unplanned pregnancy led Thulile to explore and engage with any viable career option, in order to care for her children. The pressures of caring for her children became an instant reality and thus she became a teacher.

Extract from Thulile

Thulile : I wanted to be a teacher because I love kids and the benefits that come with being a teacher. I wanted to be a teacher because I would have more time to raise my kids . I fell pregnant while I was still finishing my matric , so I thought teaching would give me more time to take care of my kids unlike other occupations where you work from 8-5.

The concept of unplanned happenstance is becoming more evident in current career literature where more and more career researchers are acknowledging the process of one indirectly learning from an unplanned event and turning it into a positive experience (Krumboltz, 2009). In this research project there were participants who showed the existence of chance playing a positive role in their career development. This finding challenges the traditional theories that hold the assumption that career development is a linear process, is predictable and fixed for all individuals.

4.2.2.1.5 LACK OF CAREER GUIDANCE

Naicker (1994) argues that career guidance in the Black African community was introduced at a later stage as opposed to other racial groups; even when it was introduced the teachers were not adequately trained to provide such a service to the students. Four of the participants expressed a lack of career guidance; stating that the lack of career guidance denied Black students the opportunity of exploring careers and making informed career decisions. They all attended historically all Black schools, which battled with poor education, a low number of qualified teachers and limited access to resources.

Extract from Thulile

Nontsikelelo: Did you have any career guidance at school?

Thulile: No we did not have any career guidance at school, my family and friends assisted me in choosing which occupation to get into.

Extracts from Ned

Amanda: At your High School were you offered any career guidance before completing matric?

Ned: (She laughs and then sighs)..Aaah I wish, they didn't offer any career guidance, and teachers only taught their subjects and that was it. If you wanted to find out about a career you would ask your parents.

After I completed matric I decided to go to UKZN Westville campus to apply for Pharmacy; however the closing date had passed. I think at that time in my life there was a lack of career guidance from family and even the universities at which I was applying in, when I went to Westville (UKZN) I was told that I can take the choice of BSc without being told how this was going to assist me in pursuing my interest in Pharmacy so I declined that option...

The above extracts illustrate the historical lack of career guidance at schools and, as a result, the need to rely on friends and family. Thulile states that the only career guidance she received was from family and friends, who were educated under the same conditions and informed by the same

curriculum. In such a context career guidance from family and friends is limited as it is only based on the family's own experiences and does not provide alternative career choices. The narratives indicated that the parents encourage the children to pursue any career that would enable the child to be of financial assistance to the family, as opposed to pursuing career's they were passionate about.

Watts (as cited in Stead, 2006) argued that the apartheid laws restricted career guidance for the Black population, as career counselling would suppose choice. The educational laws enforced in the apartheid era limited career choice, as the curriculum availed limited career choices and was used as a tool to serve the minority. The above findings show the lasting impact of apartheid legislation on career development.

4.2.2.1.6 FINANCIAL LIMITATIONS

Many of the participants expressed and emphasised that financial limitations was one of the major influences on their career development. The majority of the participants were situated in families where there was one bread winner; thus placing enormous pressure on the participants to find employment and provide for their families. These financial limitations led to many alternative career opportunities; some had to find employment that did not require post matric studies and this move was also highly influenced by larger political structures.

Like most of the participants, Sandile's dream of pursuing his post-matric studies was quickly shattered by the reality of a lack of financial resources.

Extract from Sandile

Nontsikelelo: I see from your drawing that you experienced challenges along the way, please tell me more about those challenges

Sandile: Right after passing matric, my major challenge was money. My father could no longer finance my studies, he said I was now a grown man and should start financing myself. His only responsible at the time was financing my sisters and looking after my mother. As a man I had to start making big decisions for myself as it was the only manly thing to do.

Sandile was faced with the pressure of finding employment after passing matric. This pressure is evident in most Black African disadvantaged communities; where the eldest has to seek employment in order to bring an income home. In most African communities one's manhood is illustrated by what he contributes at home and how hard he works at improving the families' lives.

The extract below is taken from Cynthia's career narrative; she expressed how she had to change career paths due to financial constraints.

Extract from Cynthia

Amanda: If I may ask you to elaborate on that career interest.

Cynthia: I knew that doctors heal people and I wanted to change people's lives; however that career interest changed because after I completed matric my parents sat me down and told me that I needed to go find a job; that way I would be able to help out my family.

Amanda: At the time who was the bread winner?

Cynthia: It was my father; he worked at the mines and he came home month end to buy food for us. I am the eldest child from a family of 5 girls so I was under pressure to help out my father. After I completed my matric I started looking for a job; any job that was going to pay me. I got a temp job at the hardware store near our location; I worked Monday to Friday and sometimes weekends. I worked for 2 years then my boss told me that I was an honest worker and he wanted to give me a proper full time job. I worked there for 5 years and tried to save up for technikon.

Amanda: So while working at the hardware store you were saving up for post matric studies?

Cynthia: Yes (emphasis); I also wanted to study just like other people and so I tried to save up.

The socio-economic inequalities that were birthed through the Apartheid system are still evident in many previously disadvantaged communities; this creates a challenge for students to continue with post matric studies. Both Sandile and Cynthia were forced to find employment due to the financial limitations that were present at home, the above extracts illustrate how most individuals who come from previously disadvantaged backgrounds are unable to continue studying straight after matric and are led to find alternative career choices due to lack of finances. The career narratives of Sandile and Cynthia indicate that career decision making was not guided or informed

by personal preference and fit between personality and environment (Holland, 1996); rather it was informed by the underlying issues and pressures at home. For most participants, the need to find employment was not directed by preference, but it was directed by the need to provide financial assistance at home, which is influenced by a wider economic system.

4.3 READING TWO: READING FOR THE VOICE OF 'I' AND 'WE'

The first overarching theme 'Beyond the self' is drawn out by both reading one and reading two, as reading two is focused on the participant's experiences. According to Mauthner and Doucet (1998) reading two focuses on the way in which the participant experiences, feels and speaks about herself. These authors further state that reading two requires the researcher to be aware when the sense of self emerges within the text where the participant has used personal pronouns like 'I', 'we' or 'you'. This helps the interviewer to discover how the participant presents him/herself; how the participant places herself in the social context (agency and social location). This reading helps the researcher to recognise the participant's position in their career path and how and when they feel confident enough to reference themselves or whether they use others as references; it is an attempt to hear the voice of the participants.

As mentioned earlier the narratives used in this research project were from a group of six Black South African professionals who developed their careers within the apartheid political era. With this being said the majority of the participants indicated difficulty in expressing their sense of agency.

Ned's career narrative begins with constant use of the personal pronoun where she makes much reference to her first thoughts about choosing a career. The narrative begins with Ned making reference to herself as the dominant influence in her career decision making at an early age; however as the narrative continues, she identifies other factors that may have influenced her career choice.

The majority of Ned's career narrative is dominated by "I" indicating a strong sense of agency. In the different significant moments in her career path, she positions herself as one who is fully aware

of her role in each experience and shows agency in following through the different career decisions. There is a noted sense of agency in Ned's voice; a very strong sense of agency, as she takes much responsibility for her career choices. On the other hand, although she has not used the personal pronouns "we" and "us" much, there is a shared responsibility between herself and her family (indicated by reference to "they") for most of her significant career decisions. She does not clearly indicate the extent to which she perceives her family to play a role; however throughout the narrative she makes much reference to her mother, her family members and their experiences and how these experiences influenced the career decisions she made.

Extract from Ned

*Ned: The first time **I** thought about a career was when **I** was 15 years old; **I** was in high school (Oxford Secondary in Verulum). At the time and **I** wanted to be a nurse or a radiographer. **My** **parents** did not approve of my choice for nursing because **my aunt** was a nurse and she always said how overworked and underpaid she was; therefore **my parents** said nursing was a definite No-No. The choice of radiography became too far-fetched for my parents;* I *think because it was not such a popular profession and the fact that they earned too little, and so **my parents** thought it would be difficult to pursue. So at that age **my parents** influenced a lot of my career/ choice of study decisions because **they** were going to pay for my studies and **they** were very strict especially my mom.*

Ned's parent's disapproval to pursue a career in nursing was related to and informed by her aunt's experiences in the field of nursing, how she was 'overworked' and 'under paid'. According to McMahon (2011) systems theory argues that as individuals we are open systems whose realities are informed by our interactions with the environment; we are influenced by the environment, which in this case is interpersonal factors, and vice, versa. Our realities are developed and confirmed by our continuous interaction with the others; hence Ned's perception and reality about the field of nursing and a career in nursing was informed by her aunt's experience and her interactions with the working environment as a nurse.

It is clear that Ned recognises the role of external factors on her career narrative; she emphasises the role of her immediate and extended family and the failing of the educational system, which

lacked career guidance. For instance the researcher asked Ned if she had received any career guidance in her career path, she responded by saying *"aaah **I** wish, **they** didn't offer any career guidance, teachers only taught their subjects and that was it…"*The words 'I wish' expressed a deep sense of disappointment in the schooling system and the educators for not providing adequate and informative career guidance at schooling level

Another career narrative that is noted in order to discuss reading two is Cynthia's career narrative. When Cynthia is asked to describe herself, she describes herself as a *"confident self-driven individual"*, she acknowledges her personal strength and this is also indicated in the way in which she responds with a strong and certain voice.

Cynthia perceives herself as a strong individual; however like most of the participants there are various factors that influenced her career decision making process. Cynthia's narrative expresses two voices; one which is strong and proud to have achieved what she has thus far and in this sense taking agency for her career narrative, and the other voice indicates a recognition of the need to assist the family financially and how this influenced her career development. In the beginning of the career narrative, she notes significant negotiations between herself and her parentsabout which career to pursue.

The extract below illustrate a strong sense of agency, on the one hand, and responsibility, on the other hand, to provide financially as the eldest sibling. This expectation was common amongst the participants and is initially introduced by the participants as a personal desire to assist either the parents or the siblings; however as most of the narratives progress, the participants indicate much more clearly that it is not so much a personal desire, but rather it is an expectation placed on them by the family. In the extracts below the use of the pronoun 'I' is predominantly followed immediately by reference to significant others. In this way, 'I' is always significantly tied up with the needs of 'others'.

Extract from Anonymous 2

Anonymous 2: …*I had to consider the financial implications because **I wasn't the only one** at home (I am 1 out of 7 children), **I had my siblings** who were also studying…*

Extract from Cynthia

Cynthia:I am the eldest from a family of five girls so *I was under pressure to help out my father*. *After I completed matric, I started looking for a job- any job that was going to pay me.*

In the following extract the use of 'I' by Sandile illustrates a strong need to fend for himself financially. However, this need is again mediated by the influence of family. In this case Sandile is expected to take responsibility for himself because of a cultural and gendered expectation that meant that his father, at the time, had to prioritise the needs of his sisters and mother. In this way his taking financial responsibility for himself means that his father can fulfil his responsibility to finance his sisters and mothers.

Extract from Sandile

Sandile: *Right after passing matric, my major challenge was money. My father could no longer finance my studies. He said **I** was a grown man and **I** should start financing myself. **His responsibility at that time was financing my sisters and looking after my mother**. As a man, I had to start making big decisions for myself as it was the only manly thing to do.*

The expectation to assist the family is a collective negotiation or discussion in most of the participant's career narratives, highlighting a collective negotiation to provide for family. There is a proverb in African communities 'umuntu ungumuntu ngabantu', which means that an individual is not solely dependent on themselves and thus they are reliant on other members of their community or members of their family to survive and exist as a human being. The individual exists and develops through the interaction and experiences with other people. This creates the importance of family as an influence in one's life. In a multicultural context the concept family has been redefined to include diverse forms of families and not focused on the western dominant nuclear family structure. In a multicultural context family be easily used interchangeably with community; however it is important to note that an individual exists within a nuclear family and this family is extended to the greater social context inclusive of the entire community. Thus emphasizing that one is influenced by his context and in turn he/she influences the context.

The following extract was taken from the beginning of Cynthia's narrative, it illustrates the shared responsibility in her own career decision making. It indicates more than mere consultation between parent and daughter regarding her career development. The extract illustrates a strong sense of shared responsibility for career decisions. Cynthia does not say that she put aside her dream to be a doctor when she found a job, but rather states that '*we all put that aside'*, highlighting a highly interpersonal negotiation around her career.

Extract from Cynthia

Amanda: What did your parents think about you wanting to be a doctor?

Cynthia: My father was very happy but my mother wanted to be a nurse instead; she said that doctors are men and a good job for women in that field would be nursing. **What they thought** did matter but **we all put that aside** when **I** found a job.

The above extracts support and acknowledge the development and integration of the concept 'cosmic unity' in the study of African Psychology. According to Mkhize (2004) cosmic unity can be understood as the idea that all things are connected, open systems (one influencing the other). Systems theory argues that individuals create and find meaning through their experiences, within their contexts. With this being said, the extracts indicate an awareness that career decisions were influenced by various contextual factors. The call for indigenisation acknowledges the need to include contextual factors as influences in decision making. Mkhize (2004) further states that a community is not merely a collection of people living in one area, on the contrary it goes beyond that, it is a collection of people who "mutually recognise the obligation to be responsive to one another's needs" (Mkhize, 2004, pg 46).

4.4 READING THREE: INDIVIDUAL WITHIN THE CULTURAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

This was originally reading four as described in the methodology section. However, as explained above, for the purposes of writing up the results I combined reading one and reading three into one reading, which is now reading one. As a result, reading four is now reading three. Maunther and Doucet (1998) argue that that this reading places the individual within their social context to see

whether they recognise the social and cultural factors that have limited or enabled their decision making. This reading helps investigate whether the participants recognised the external influences that play a role in their own career development. Theses external influences differ for participants because each career path interacts with their specific (although sometimes shared) environments., e.

Mauthner and Doucet (1998) state that this reading is an attempt to identify factors which are usually embedded within the participants' cognisance, but which they are usually unaware of. More specifically, they are usually unaware of the effects these factors have on their decision making processes. For the purposes of this dissertation the researcher sought to identify these factors and focus on whether the participants identified them as enabling or constraining factors in their career narratives. Due to the limited space and time, I have paid attention to two contexts that emerged dominantly in the majority of the career narratives in relation to this reading; namely the community and social context, and the political context . These contexts and structures shaped the participant's daily experiences and their career development. The role of the community was perceived as an enabling factor and as an opportunity for the participants to identify with their career by 'giving back' to the community. On the other hand, the political structure were perceived as constraining as the ideologies that were presented as 'truths' highly influenced the participants socially, economically and politically, restricting the participant's ability to make informed career decisions and limited access to resources.

Semenya and Mokwena (2012) state that culture refers to the way in which societies understand meaning and values. Further arguing that culture is created in social and political contexts. According to Semenya and Mokwena (2012) there is a growing development within literature around the concept of African Cosmology, as it refers to the way in which the African population understand the world. As stated in chapter two, the aim of the study is to explore the contextual factors which influence career development of six African professionals. The chapter argued that traditional career theories were developed within the western context and informed by the way in which the White population understood the world. It is worth noting that African Cosmology does not claim to be superior over western ideologies, however, the concept calls for the need to understand behaviour and meaning holistically within the social context.

4.4.1 THE INDIVIDUAL EXISTING WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

The discussion in the previous reading indicates the underlying influence of culture that existed in the narratives. All the career narratives expressed culture and community as an influence on the decision either directly or indirectly. The South African context reflects a collectivist culture where family and community is important (Watson, 2009); hence these factors influence career choice. The characteristics of a collectivist community include 'togetherness', positivity and harmony amongst people.

Frizelle (2002) noted that many Black South Africans follow a lifestyle that emphasizes cooperation. There is a strong relationship that exists between the individual and the community in which they exist and engage in. There is a proverb in African communities 'umuntu ungumuntu ngabantu' this means that an individual is not solely dependent on themselves and thus they are reliant on other members of their community or members of their family to survive and exist as a human being. According to Hook (2004) a sense of community exists if people recognize the obligation to be responsive to the needs of other. The individual exists and develops through their interaction and experiences with other people. In a collectivist community there is a 'moral' voice that exists; this moral voice emphasizes the importance of giving back to the community, empowering those that live amongst you. The majority of the participants expressed what their careers meant for their communities, how they identified with their career and the interaction experienced with their communities because of their careers.

Anonymous 2, a lecturer, expressed how her career has contributed to her community. She is able to assistant students within her community by providing mathematics tuition to students who come from poor homes and can't afford extra tuition fees.

Extract from Anonymous 2

Amanda: What do you think your career means to your community?

Anonymous 2: It means a lot. It means a lot because they will benefit and they are benefiting from my knowledge of mathematics. I am at the present moment helping some students, especially from

rural areas with mathematics…I'm helping students from my family who struggle with mathematics, they always come and some questions.

4.4.2 CULTURAL DYNAMICS

The role of culture in career development was present throughout the narratives further interlinking culture and family influence. This is clear in the following extract by Sandile.

Nontsikelelo: What do you mean when you say it was the only manly thing to do?

Sandile: Well, In my culture, as a male I need to be a provider and be independent, and not depend on my family as that is unmanly in my culture, I have the responsibility of providing for my family. I had to follow my father's footsteps.

Nontsikelelo: Your father's footsteps, please elaborate.

Sandile: Yes, my father did not finish school because he had to take care of his parents and his siblings, as he was the only male in the house.

Nontsikelelo: I see that family and culture played a huge role in your life. How did it influence your career perspective?

Sandile: Yeah my family and culture mean a lot to me. I am where I am because of my family and culture. My culture and family has influenced my career perspective in that whenever I chose a career path I first had to consult with my family first. Even when I chose subjects in high school I first had to get approval from them.

Nontsikelelo: you have never challenged them in any way?

Sandile: No, I cant. You see you can't disagree with your family's decisions. They always know what's best for you; it is also bad luck to challenge your family's decisions in my culture, it's a sign of disrespect.

Sandile's narrative identifies culture as an important influencer for decision making in general; further playing a role in motivating the participant to obtain a job in order to provide for his family.

He states that it is '*unmanly*' to be financially dependent on family, holding the belief that it is the man's responsibility to provide for his family. This extract highlights the role of culture, which has gendered expectations embedded in it, on career development. Sandile highlights the role of family is in his culture and the importance of consulting with them about his career aspirations. He also, however, highlights that within his culture there are certain gendered expectations that influence his decisions. According to Semenya and Mokwena (2012) collectivism values a person's belongingness and participation in his or her cultural context. Sandile emphasizes the importance of identifying his culture and even more so, the sense of belonging within his cultural context.

4.4.3 HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL STRUCTURES

The researcher identified that most of the participants expressed much detail regarding the role of political structures on their career development and other areas of their lives. Three out of the six participants made mention of the discriminative laws during the apartheid era, stating that it was because of legislation such as job reservation and bantu education, that many of them could not get adequate academic points or even pursue certain professions.

Anonymous 1 recalls the various professions which were not accessible to Black Africans due to Apartheid; he explains how this influenced his career development. His narrative illustrates how political structures can influence career development.

Thokoza: Was there anything significant happening around the time you started thinking about a career choice (being a teacher or electrician), what significant thing was happening, for example, politically. Was something like politics a factor?

Anonymous 1: Yes, yes, there was, The very important one was… Blacks were not allowed to be electricians or artisans. By the time goes, the laws were becoming not what they were before.

Thokoza: mmmh

Anonymous 1: I found out that this was now my chance because these jobs were only for White, Indians, coloureds, not Blacks-not Africans.

Thokoza: mmh

Anonymous 1: So I decided, no let me go for it, the company changed the law as well. That everyone is allowed to be what he wants to be.

Thokoza: And are there any other challenges or obstacles that you faced during your career development? You've mentioned Gender, you've mentioned the context of Apartheid and the laws, was there anything else or are those the major ones?

Anonymous 1: *No other challenges except the funds and this so called apartheid*

The past disenfranchisement from the apartheid system and lack of access to resources like education all had an impact on the career development of Black South Africans. The lack of adequate education and access to resources led many Black Africans to seek other ways of improving their schooling experiences. Anonymous 1 noted that at some point he had to attend evening classes in order to increase his employability; he wanted to receive a better education. It was only later in his life (post-apartheid) that Black Africans received access to opportunities such as learnerships and other career choices.

Sandile's narrative further illustrates the role Apartheid played in his career development. The legislation which supported the ideology of apartheid addressed the needs of the minority whilst marginalized the majority of the population. For instance the Bantu Education Act is noted as one of the most offensive laws of the time, as this law restricted the career choices for the Black African population. Sandile, when asked about the political context and events that occurred whilst pursuing a career, boldly expressed that the legislation exercised during the time discriminated and limited his career choices.

Nontsikelelo: Okay, and politically, what was happening at the time?

Sandile: During the time, there was apartheid. Our education was so limited in a way that even if we wanted to progress academically we couldn't because of the laws of the time. It didn't just

affect school but also job opportunities for Blacks, hence that's why my father decided to create his own income.

The above extracts also highlight the influence of political ideologies on one's career development. The apartheid ideology was able to empower the minority of the population; while discriminating against and marginalizing the majority of the population. Watson (2009) argues that the majority of South Africans continue to victims of brutal, unfair practices rooted in the apartheid system. The Bantu Education Act of 1953 was one of many legislative tools used to further marginalized the Black African population through unequal access to adequate resources within the education system. The Act was used as a tool to restrict Black Africans from entering into particular career fields.

The apartheid system led to inequality and these inequalities are still evident in most Black African communities; the current laws seek to redress the past but inequality is still a major challenge. Many of the Black South Africans were forced to pursue careers based on a trial and error circumstance; seek employment and take whichever job was available to them. If an opportunity was availed they took it regardless of whether it was an opportunity they wished to pursue.

Anonymous 1 recalls the various professions which were not accessible to Black Africans due to Apartheid; he explains how this influenced his career development. The lack of adequate education and access to resources led many Black Africans to seek other ways of improving their schooling experiences. Anonymous 1 noted that at some point he had to attend evening classes in order to increase his employability; he wanted to receive a better education. It was only later in his life (post-apartheid) that Black Africans received access to opportunities such as learnerships and other career choices.

Extract from Anonymous 1

Anonymous 1*: So I decided, no let me go for it. The company changed the law as well saying that everyone is allowed to be what he wants to be*

Amanda: And are there any other challenges or obstacles that you faced during your career development? I recall you mentioned Gender, you've mentioned the context of Apartheid and the law, was there anything else? Or are those the major ones?

Anonymous 1: No other challenges except the funds and this so called apartheid.

Amanda: And how did you family feel about you wanting to go to school after matric?

Anonymous 1: My mother (shaking his head), because my father was on pension. My mother wasn't working so the problem was funds. That's where the problem lies. I won't blame so much on apartheid because those hatred laws were becoming weaker and weaker, so it was a blessing for me. I found out that that's when I should go for it because of the funds after leaving school...I therefore didn't go for teaching, teaching was my first choice.

The above illustration points out two main themes that were present in the majority of the career narratives; namely the burden placed by apartheid laws and the overlapping effects it had on the participant's economic and social contexts. Anonymous 1 acknowledges that the financial limitations existed; however, he expresses that he does place much cause on the apartheid laws. He refers to the apartheid laws as 'hatred' laws, that were becoming weaker. Although he undermines the role the laws played because he acknowledges that they fell away with time, his voice hardens and the tone becomes strong as he makes reference to the 'hatred' laws of apartheid. This illustrates what Mauther and Doucet (1998) argue when they state that people are often 'unaware' of the extent to which social and contextual factors are influencing their lives. Anonymous does recognize the role of Apartheid earlier in the interview, however, when discussing the lack of funds he sees this as more important and does not link these economic struggles to the ongoing influence of the apartheid system, although his hardened voice and tone reveals a less conscious awareness of its legacy in his life.

The education system during Apartheid oppressed Black African populations; the resource allocation in many Black schools was minimal and the quality of education was low. The extracts below illustrate how the lack of access to adequate education impacted on career development. Most participants indicated in their narratives that the low quality education they received during Apartheid played a role on their matric results and whether they continued to study. Sandile highlighted that his poor results were due to the lack of adequate education.

Extract from Sandile

Sandile*: After matriculating, I wanted to register for a diploma in Mechanical Engineering but I didn't have the required amount of points for the course. I had low points.*

Amanda*: Is there anything that affected your low points?*

Sandile*: You see…uhmm, that time when I was schooling; we did not have adequate schooling. Our education was very poor.*

Amanda*: Poor in what way?*

Sandile*: We did not have enough resources, we had less teachers and an overabundance of learners. Some teachers were underqualified. I was even surprised that I passed matric with that quality of schooling.*

Sandile*: During the time, there was apartheid. Our education was so limited in a way that even if we wanted to progress academically we couldn't because of the laws of the time. It didn't just affect school but also job opportunities for Blacks… hence that's why my father decided to create his own income.*

The above extract makes mention of the 'poor education' that the participant received and he believes that this had a strong influence in his career development. The lack of resources and under staffed schools, created an injustice for the Black African students and their career development. Sandile expresses that his chances of ever progressing and achieving excellent academic results were limited, he mentions that he was 'surprised that he passed matric'. This powerfully illustrates the poor education that many Black South African children received during Apartheid

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The research study aimed to explore the career narratives of six Black African Professionals within KwaZulu Natal, by identifying the contextual factors which influenced the career narratives of these participants. Moreover, the study aimed to add to the body of knowledge of career psychology and provide contributions to the current literature on the call for an indigenous psychology.

The study used a qualitative approach to explore the career narratives of six Black African professionals. A qualitative approach has proven vital for researchers who wish to explore concepts and themes- as the qualitative approach allows for depth and detailed data collection and data analysis. The professionals were selected using purposive sampling and data was collected through narrative interviews and analyzed using the voice-centrered relational method. As mentioned in the previous chapters, the data analysis tool consists of four iterative readings that identify various aspects of the career narratives. Both the data collection and data analysis tool allowed the researcher to understand the career narratives within their context and further allowed the participants to share their own meaning of their career narratives.

5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The research findings identified two overarching themes. The first overarching theme was 'career narrative beyond the self', is a theme identified by Duffy and Dik (2009) who argue that there is a wide spectrum of external factors that influence career development.

It must be stressed that within this overarching theme various contextual factors that were identified, such as family expectations, cultural dynamics, historical and political structures, lack of career guidance, unplanned happenstance, financial limitations and religion. These factors were identified as either enabling or constraining career development and, as either positive or negative influences on career decision making. Chapter two of this study reviewed Holland's person-environment fit theory and noted its inadequate relevance in a multicultural context. According to Mkhize (2005) the career counselor's task is to no longer encourage person-environment fit rather

he/she should, jointly with the client, develop ways to escape marginalization. Maree (2013) further argues that person-environment fit was appropriate in a work context that offered a stable career path and long-term employment. The trait and factor theory has become inadequate in a dynamic multicultural context; where ones interpersonal relationships and context influence career development and decision-making. Maree (2013) also indicated that career decision-making are not always the outcome of aligning personality with the organization; rather they are often the urgent need to find employment and whether the organization matched the individual's personality was not a priority. In a country where the unemployment rate is high; one ought to acknowledge that person-environment fit is not an option for the majority of the population. The findings of this study has highlighted the prominent role that economic factors play in the career development and career decisions of individuals.

South Africa is a multicultural country where the majority of the population focuses and believes in African culture; a culture which places great emphasis on the importance of the other and addressing the needs of the group at large, as opposed to the needs of the individual. Career counseling in South Africa is still highly driven by addressing individual needs and not the needs of the group (Frizelle 2002; Maree 2013). Whilst there is a shift from traditional career theories in the counseling practice towards new approaches; there is still a need to further encourage the use of culturally relevant approaches in career counseling. The findings of this study highlight that deeply held cultural beliefs inform career development. For example, this study has illustrated that career development is a primarily relational process, informed by significant others in the participants lives. In addition, culture informs many gendered expectations that have influenced many of the participants decisions around their career development.

5.3 CAREER RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

Literature provides insight into the development of career psychology within the South African context, arguing that career psychology has been informed by western traditional career theories and addresses concepts and themes of the western population, a White population. According to Stead and Watson (2006) traditional career theories isolate the contextual factors that influence career development, further holding the assumption that the career narrative is a fixed and linear

path. This study aimed to highlight the need for social constructionism and systems theories, as these theories allow inform research on careers and allows the researcher to take into consideration both the external and internal factors that influence careers. Moreover, the social constructionism and social theories acknowledge the individual as an open system and cannot be understood in isolation of their social context.

According to Mkhize (2004) indigenous psychology can be understood as the cultural views and assumptions, which socially influence one's psychological experiences and meanings. It is the study of human behavior within one's cultural context. This study aimed to further raise the call for indigenous psychology and a call for more research that takes into consideration the cultural context. The findings of this study provided some insight into the relevancy of culture when understanding one's identity and their understanding of a career. This study aimed to further the call for indigenous psychologies which seeks to address the role contextual factors play in career development. The discussion of results for this study indicated that there is still a need for a more holistic and context based career theory which will be suitable for both the individual and the group. The researcher acknowledges that there has been a change in career research; a shift from dominating quantitative methods of research towards qualitative methods. More and more researchers are introducing integrative approaches such as social constructionism and qualitative methods mainly hermeneutic and narrative approaches (Frizelle, 2002; Mkhize & Frizelle, 2000). The results of this study further indicate and support the need for integrative approaches.

Stead and Watson (2006) argue that in the South African context, there is a debate that career theory and practice is dominated by western, individualized approaches. Career research has been informed by the positivist paradigm and predominantly quantitative in nature. The debate of qualitative versus quantitative methods in psychology research has continued over the years; both methods are useful, but there is a need to use qualitative methods for research in order to allow in depth and detailed data gathering and data analysis. The present study has illustrated that the narrative and storied approach allows for detailed data gathering and data analysis; providing the researcher with insight into socio-economic, cultural and political factors which influence career development in a multicultural context. The present study also calls for a culturally relevant career theory which is informed by social constructionism and systems theory; making it appropriate for the South African context.

5.4 THE NEED FOR HOLISTIC AND CRITICAL CAREER GUIDANCE SERVICES

The present study indicated that the career development of many of the participants was also influenced by the lack of career guidance during the Apartheid era. A few participants expressed that while they may have received some career guidance this was, however, either from uneducated parents or educators who were not trained to provide such a service; thus leading to a misinformed career choices. Career counseling at school level was historically made available for the advantaged racial groups; undermining the major challenges faced by the majority of the population.

The Department of Higher Education and Training has developed frameworks in order to address the inequalities raised from the Apartheid era; inequalities such as access to education and advanced resources (DHET, 2013). These frameworks have been informed and made relevant to the South African context; however there is an urgent need for implementation, monitoring and feedback for these career development frameworks. The career narratives indicated a lack of career coordination and lack of flow of information from school level to tertiary level. There is, therefore, a need for coordination and flow of career information from school level to tertiary level, further addressing the needs of the individual in the workplace.

The Department of Higher Education and Training (2015) proposes that there is a need to formalize the skills, knowledge and qualifications of career development practitioners. Arguably, there is no formal registered qualification for career development practitioners in South Africa, this then raises the concern of quality in the existing career development and career guidance services.

5.5 THE ROLE OF CAREER PSYCHOLOGY IN ADDRESSING SOCIAL INJUSTICE

Watson (2010) argues that the field of psychology ought to include concerns of social justice within its spectrum, as career counsellors are placed in a position to assist individuals in developing skills. According to a study done by Arthur, et al. (2013) career practitioners need to be able to show understanding of the concept of social injustice and need to be able to identify these injustices, however there is a need to further explore and engage in the dialogue of the role of

career psychologists and career practitioners in addressing the social injustices, in order to promote theory development and encouraged informed social justice action.

The literature presented in this study highlighted the current social challenges faced in South Africa, such as the high unemployment rate, lack of access to quality career guidance, economic stresses, and poverty. The career narratives in the study further indicated the existence of these social challenges and how it influenced the participants' career development. According to the DHET (2013) access to quality education is one of the prioritized objectives within the department and this will ensure social justice, through ensuring that individuals make informed career decisions.

5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As stated in Chapter three the findings of this study cannot be generalized as they do not apply to the wider population; however, the findings of the study will provide insight into the area of career development in South Africa. The researcher acknowledges that the study explored the career narratives of a small sample and that a larger sample would have been preferred, however, the study has aimed for transferability and seeks to add to an existing body of knowledge.

The researcher also acknowledges that a limitation to study is evident in the data collection, as there was three different researchers who collected the data, which meant that although each of the interviewers approached the interviews from a similar perspective informed by common literature and a common research design, each of them would have had a different interviewing style which would have affected what kind of data was collected. In addition, interviewing each participant and transcribing all of the interviews would have helped with immersing oneself in the data and aiding with the analysis process. The researcher feels that they overcame this limitation through the process of re-reading the narrative transcripts, but acknowledges that it would have been more advantageous to have interviewed each participant directly.

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