

**Career Development Narratives and Experiences of  
post-matriculants in a disadvantaged community:  
A study of Douglas in the Northern Cape**

By

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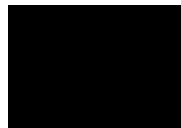
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Supervisor

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I give thanks and praise to God from whom all blessings flow. Spirit consistently reminding me of why I do what I do. I am nothing without my Source.

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## **DEDICATIONS**

I dedicate this thesis to my father, Daniel Tsolo ‘Ouman’ Hoorn, who left his home at the age of 18 to establish and create a better life for himself outside Douglas. Even though he physically uprooted himself, he never ceased to come and plough back into the community of Douglas.

Over the years he would bring hope to many families by giving spiritual support. Later, he would accumulate goods, tools and equipment, bring it to the people of Douglas that will enable them to create a sustainable livelihood for themselves and their families.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Post-matriculants in disadvantaged communities such as Douglas encounter a number of career challenges. The transition to the democratic dispensation in 1994, coupled with the rapid changes in the information domain that are characteristic of post-industrial life, complicate the career development trajectories of black youth in the rural areas in particular. Legally, South Africa has moved from an apartheid to a democratic system. Although this democratic system is approximately 27 years old, the legacy of apartheid runs deep and more so in rural settings. The career development stories and experiences of black rural youth in provinces such as the Northern Cape have not been told, leading to their marginalisation. It is against this background that the current study explored the career development narratives and experiences of post-matriculants in the Douglas community in the Northern Cape. Using a qualitative, narrative approach, the researcher elicited career development stories from 23 participants in Douglas using semi-structured interviews.

The study revealed that the career development narratives and experiences extracted are those filled with a mixture of a few positive experiences but mainly those of frustration, stagnation, and loss of hope resulting from the uncontrollable external environmental conditions in Douglas. Key pillars like family, teachers, some people in the community, as well as non-governmental organisations, played a critical role in enabling post-matriculants to choose and pursue careers amidst constant frustration with social, environmental, and socio-economic factors that posed serious obstacles. Another key factor that the study showed was that gender did not have any influence on the career choices of the post-matriculants. The perceptions around career choices and gender were being challenged partly by the urge to affirm equality and the constant reminder of the poverty-stricken conditions prevalent in the households. However, the constraints experienced by the post-matriculants outweighed the enablers' needed for consistent career development. In addition, the study concluded that while the systems of influence like individual, society and environmental-societal are critical in shaping individual career pathways, individuals are pushed by a strong sense of self-concept, and self-efficacy propelled by constant resilience to emerge with successful careers even amid existing deeply entrenched structural systems designed to disadvantage black people. Lastly, the study concluded that the development of self as individuals is not done in the absence of the community or society. The study revealed a lot of attachment to society that was expressed in the future plans of Douglas' post-matriculants should they succeed in their career pursuits. Therefore, the importance of stakeholder roles and integration within the planned strategies towards the effectiveness of career development processes and approaches would alter the

career development narratives and experiences of post-matriculants and would enable them to have successful career pathways and growth.

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## **List of Abbreviations and Acronyms**

4IR	Fourth Industrial Revolution
AE	Agricultural Enterprise
APS	Admission Point Score
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CHET	Centre for Higher Education Transformation
DAAG	Douglas Aids Action Group
DWEG	Douglas Women Empowerment Group
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
MSCI	My Systems of Career Influences
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
OBE	Outcomes-Based Education
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SCCT	Social Cognitive Career Theory
SONA	State of the Nation Address
SPU	Sol Plaatje University
STF	Systems Theory Framework
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the study

With the advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), the internet of things, artificial intelligence, high technology, and globalisation, the vast majority of people, particularly the youth, experience ever-growing challenges with regard to career choices, career paths, and meaningful career development needed to fit in with the fast-changing environment. The South African context poses even further challenges on the suitability to harness the western post-industrial era while still grappling with challenges such as poverty, unemployment, the prevalence of life-threatening diseases, broken family structures, coupled with over-reliance on agricultural production and mining as sources of revenue for most local economies.

With this in mind, understanding career development then sets a tone of various meanings attached to the definitions of career development concerning the fast-changing realities in the world of work. Career development is therefore defined as an ongoing process by which individuals progress through a series of stages, each of which is characterised by a relatively unique set of issues, themes, or tasks (Schreuder & Theron, 2002, p. 88; Greenhaus et al., 2010). Hoekstra (2011, p. 1) describes career development as the interactive progression on internal career identity formation, and growth of external career significance. Career development is also defined as the process of consciously establishing one's learning, skills, knowledge, competencies, and acquisition of helpful attitudes to function optimally in a job or career within formal and informal opportunities, thus enabling one to earn a living. It is a process that also becomes a critical foundation of what one would then monitor and steer forward as part of career management at an individual level, sometimes including the supporting role of employment organisations. Moreover, such awakening enhances realisations that the process is also bounded to one's family, community, and societal establishment, for the benefit of self, one's family, community, and society (Gama-Chawana, 2017, p. 33). Career development is therefore summed up as self-realisation through lifelong learning processes, behavioural attitudes, skills, knowledge, and competencies that enhance sustainable livelihoods of self, family, and the community.

In South Africa, the apartheid era created racial segregation among black Africans (Stats SA Community Survey, 2016). Moreover, black African people were exposed to limited career options, such as policing, nursing, teaching, and most menial jobs as well as serving white people (Mkhize, 2005, p. 94). Legislations were imposed to cement and sustain white supremacy on the one hand, and escalate the discrimination, exploitation, and deprivation of the black majority on the other. Amongst several legislations enforced by law under the apartheid government in 1948, was the Group Areas Act of 1950, which forbade non-white people to work or run businesses in any white area unless they had permits. Passbooks were issued to those who had lawful jobs in white areas. Spouses and children were forced to remain behind in areas set aside for non-whites. Blacks and coloureds were obliged to carry their passbooks at all times; failure to do so would lead to immediate arrest and instant trials. In addition, the Bantu Education Act, which was established in 1953, downgraded the quality and level of education for black people, hence the concept of 'Bantu Education' (Ndimande, 2013, p. 22). As a result, black African schools, especially in the rural communities, were under resourced, with minimal school guidance and limited exposure to various careers. This was unlike in white schools where career guidance and counselling facilities were well-resourced and formed part of the curriculum, enabling a smooth transition between universities and the workplace (Nicholas et al., 2006).

By implication, apartheid regimes divided South Africa into two diametrically opposed segments with contrasting natures, levels, and paces of development, hence the concept 'separate development' (Ndimande, 2013, p. 22). Eighty seven percent of the land were cordoned off in affluent white areas which held industrial and commercial centres as well as mining houses and fertile land (Mhlauli, Salani, Mokotedi, 2015). The other segment consisted of the impoverished and over-crowded land reserves or the homelands, constituting thirteen percent of the land. Homelands, as well as black areas, rarely enjoyed plumbing, electricity, or tarred roads. The apartheid law disempowered and disadvantaged blacks by robbing them of any conceivable opportunities to grow and develop in socio-economic terms (Mhlauli, Salani, Mokotedi, 2015).

In post-apartheid South Africa, many disparities of the apartheid legacy remain unaddressed and these are aggravated in the rural communities as compared to urban areas (Ndimande, 2013, p.21). The majority of rural communities and settlement areas, especially those in which black Africans live, often do not have access to basic needs such as running water, electricity, infrastructure, and proper housing. There is a lack of basic income and an over-reliance on state grants, access to health facilities, and other basic community resources. According to Ndimande (2013, p. 22), the aftermath of the apartheid era created serious inequality concerns, especially

among black Africans. It also entrenched poverty, unemployment, landlessness, dual economies of whites and non-whites concerning the types of business infrastructure, and industrialisation as opposed to small businesses, small-medium enterprises or spaza shops in both formal and informal economies, among others.

However, regarding the education system, career opportunities, career choices, and decisions, the aftermath of apartheid left an entrenched, fragmented, unequal, and undemocratic education and training system, together with restricted and unequal access to all levels of the educational system (Ndimande, 2013, p. 21). This led to many difficulties in the black population, amongst which were a lack of preschool education, a high dropout rate amongst many of the youth, and large numbers of illiterate, semi-literate and uneducated people, particularly women. According to the Reconstruction and Development Programme, the apartheid educational system destroyed the culture of learning in large sections of communities. In the worst-affected areas this led to a virtual breakdown of schooling and conditions of anarchy between students, teachers, principals, and the education authorities, resulting in the destruction, distortion or neglect of the human potential of South Africa, with devastating consequences for social and economic development.

Therefore, while there is a plight of South African post-matriculants in general, acute challenges exist particularly in rural or small towns. As Atkinson (2014, p. 16) articulates, 'Bantustan citizenship' areas were near enough to white-owned industrial and commercial areas to supply their labour. Much of this disparity has been directed to the South African schooling system that has transitioned from various curriculum approaches, namely, the Outcomes Based Education (OBE) approach in 1997 and later the National Curriculum Statement in 2002 and finally the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) to account for learner diversity in the classroom (Department of Basic Education, 2011). The CAPS approach, which was introduced in 2012 (DOE, 2010), gives teachers detailed guidelines of what to teach and assess on a grade-by-grade and subject-by-subject basis.

According to Ramjit (2015, p. 58) and Jacobs and Makahudze (2012, p. 574), individuals from rural areas have little or inadequate exposure to various career opportunities. While Life Orientation is the best subject to explore various career opportunities, its value and relevance is constantly questioned. Ramjit (2015, p. 2) further argues that Life Orientation in schools, and even worse still in disadvantaged communities, is not implemented correctly, if not ignored altogether in favour of content subjects that count towards the matric score. In the current study, the researcher explored career development narratives and experiences of post-matriculants regarding their career decisions in a rural setting with little or no resources.

## 1.2 Research Problem

Poor career aspirations, choices, and career decisions affect many post-matriculants in South Africa. Many youths in rural or small towns are affected by poor career decisions that result from various environmental factors, including household setting, poverty, inadequate support systems in schools, churches, inexperienced Life Orientation and subject knowledge teachers, peer influence, high unemployment, high dropout rates in schools, high drug abuse and high teenage pregnancies, among others (Bhorat, 2007; Olamide & Olawaiye, 2013, p. 33).

The Northern Cape Province is geographically the largest in South Africa, having a landmass of 373, 239 sq. km and covering approximately one-third of the country's surface area (Siyancuma IDP, 2020/21). According to Stats SA Community Survey (2016), increases were observed in the level of education amongst the youth 20 years and older. The data shows a significant increase of 16.8% in 2011 to 20.4% in 2016 for matric, an increase of 5.4% in 2011 to 8.9% in 2016 for higher education and a decrease of 16.7% in 2011 to 9.7% in 2016 for no schooling (Siyancuma IDP, 2020/21). While the data points to a gradual improvement in the level of education, poverty, inequality, and high unemployment, among others, are not unique to the Northern Cape Province.

Research conducted on career development and career decision-making in South Africa generally leads to dual disparities of unequal exposure. Opportunities, career information, and relevant support systems differ for the youth in rural communities as opposed to those in urban settings. Disparities are further stretched along racial lines between black African youth in comparison to white youth (Nicholas et al., 2006). Several of the research studies conducted on career development, career decision-making, and career choices point to the need for career guidance and strong support systems. These systems are built through family, schools, and friends which are instrumental in building self-efficacy and resilience through Afrocentric narratives (Albien & Naidoo, 2016). Other studies emphasise, amongst others, the risk factors inherent in the systemic and social influences on community structures and issues of identity construction (Mosavel et al., 2015; McMahon & Watson, 2013, p. 277).

In addition, career choices, career guidance, and counselling, especially in rural communities, are constrained by socio-economic factors, cultural factors, self-efficacy, gender, religion, family, and politics. These factors are important for an inclusive comprehensive career needs assessment design and adapting career guidance interactions (Mzobe, 2014). According to

McMahon and Watson (2013, p. 277), career development narratives have the potential to construct identity. Hoffman (2007) points out that youth living in low socio-economic status are unlikely to engage in individual career development programmes, but rather prefer group counselling. This further points to not only the importance of career guidance and counselling in influencing proper career choices, but also the utilisation of comprehensive, and inclusive methodologies and approaches to accommodate various constraints and challenges that post-matriculants in rural communities are faced with. Through the narrative approach, I sought to capture the youth's career needs, lived experiences, challenges, understanding, and perceptions of their career choices and opportunities. The narrative approach enabled me to listen attentively to the voices of the youth of Douglas, while paying attention to their unique social and cultural circumstances and social and economic positioning.

### **1.3 Rationale for the study**

The current study specifically explored career development narratives and post-matriculant experiences in the rural community of Douglas, in the Northern Cape Province. The entrenched challenges of poverty, inequality, high unemployment, drug abuse, inadequate support from stakeholders including schools, families, church affiliations, local political affiliations, and social groups, are a deterrent to proper career choices for sustainable livelihoods. The current study argues that such socio-economic, socio-cultural contextual factors within the rural communities influence the development and the career choices pursued. Through the career development narratives and post-matriculant experiences, the research argues that an in-depth understanding of the environmental factors influences the most appropriate approaches to career development programmes and career decision choices among post-matriculants in rural communities. In addition, the lack of research exploring the career development narratives of disadvantaged post-matriculants forms the basis of this research problem being addressed (Maree, 2010, p. 353; Seabi et al., 2010).

The research uses the systems theory framework (STF) as a conceptual guide for exploring the career narratives and factors impacting the career development of disadvantaged post-matriculants of Douglas. An in-depth qualitative analysis of participants' perceptions was undertaken using the My System of Career Influences (MSCI). It was envisaged that insight could be gained into the content and process influences in respondents' career ideation construction (Usinger & Smith, 2010, p. 580).

It is against this backdrop that this study sought to explore the career development narratives and experiences of post-matriculants from a disadvantaged community. In South Africa, disadvantaged communities' educational and career planning are characterised by under-development, marginalisation, and under-resourcing. Although the post-apartheid discrimination and inequities are being addressed, the socio-political changes have highlighted the connection between contextual factors and the career development of the youth. This dynamic has often led to a trial-and-error career choice (Akhurst & Mkhize, 2006, p. 139; Stead & Watson, 1998, p. 289).

Additional contextual factors such as unemployment, HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, and low literacy impact career decisions of post-matriculants (Stead & Watson, 2006, p. 206). Furthermore, the change of curriculum in high school also contributes to the challenges post-matriculants are experiencing concerning career pathing. These contextual factors could have negatively impacted these individuals' motivation towards and perspectives of their future careers. The high number of disadvantaged youths in South Africa either not in school or unemployed requires an assessment of career difficulties they face. Thus, the range of influences involved in career development in a disadvantaged context, such as that of Douglas, needs to be studied to facilitate effective school-to-work planning and changeover (Koen, Klehe & van Vianen, 2012, p. 395).

Akhurst and Mkhize (1999, p. 163) note that various studies in South Africa have emphasised the need for young people to enjoy career education. According to Grubb (2002), career guidance is becoming increasingly important. The selection of an appropriate occupation is valuable not only for individual purposes, as a means of increasing satisfaction at work, earnings, and stability of employment, but also for the social goals of efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness. Improved career guidance is also necessary for individuals to make rational choices within expanded alternatives in the field of work. This seems to be especially relevant to the post-apartheid situation in South Africa since previously disadvantaged individuals and groups now have expanded career choices, for which they are not adequately prepared. Furthermore, disadvantaged adolescents' career development is made more challenging through a lack of career information, unrealistic or distorted career aspirations, various environmental constraints, and career-related barriers (Maree & Beck, 2004, p. 80). While critical career choices may have already been affected by perceptions of barriers, research has shown that youth from lower socio-economic backgrounds have previously been empowered through narrative approaches. This approach creates a platform for youth to develop realistic job-related goals and positive self-image (Alexander et al., 2010; Janeiro, 2009, p. 170; Skorikov, 2007, p. 237). It is however imperative to get to the root cause of how

the post matriculants of Douglas navigate through their realities while making sense of their career choices. Landany et al. (1997) suggest that the evaluation of self-knowledge, occupational ideas, and constraining contextual influences in career decision-making is necessary.

Furthermore, Schutz (1967, as cited in Fabiano, 2010) has noted that most of the knowledge he acquired about life events did not come from his own experiences, but was handed down to him by his friends, parents, teachers, and their teachers. Fabiano (2010) is of the view that this statement highlights the importance of sharing knowledge regarding life events. It is evident there is a disconnect with career aspirations, social context, and the constant change in the world of work. Furthermore, the world is moving towards the 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution and the concern is how will a community such as Douglas get to that level in the absence of information, ambition, and sound leadership that is required to take their development forward. As much as there is a dream, support structures need to be put in place in order for those dreams to materialise.

#### **1.4 Research aims and objectives**

The primary aim of the research was to explore career development narratives and post-matriculant experiences in Douglas. The study sought to understand the environmental context that act as barriers to the realisation of well-informed career choices and decisions that advance successful career pathways and pursuits which would enhance sustainable livelihoods within the rural settings. The objectives of the study were:

1. To determine what the career development narratives are of post-matriculants in Douglas.
2. To determine how gendered cultural scripts (schemata) influence the career narratives, experiences, and choices of post-matriculants in Douglas.
3. To determine the factors that enable and constrain the career development narratives of these post-matriculants.
4. To determine the systemic factors that influence the career development experiences of post-matriculants in the Douglas community in the Northern Cape, as assessed by the tool, My System of Career Influences (MSCI).
5. To determine the individual (self) and communal (self-in-community) concerns and tensions experienced by post-matriculants in Douglas.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

To operationalise the research objectives, the following research questions were generated as a guiding tool in the study:

1. What are the career development narratives and experiences of post-matriculants in Douglas?
2. How do gendered cultural scripts (schemata) influence the career development narratives, experiences and choices of the post-matriculants in Douglas?
3. What factors enable and constrain the career development narratives of these post-matriculants?
4. How do systemic factors, as assessed by means of the My System of Career Influences (MSCI), influence the career development experiences of the post-matriculants of Douglas?
5. What is the individual (self) and communal (self-in-community) concerns and tensions experienced by post-matriculants in Douglas?

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

Disadvantaged post-matriculants' main challenges in career development have been attributed to inadequate self-awareness and a shortage of available career information (Ebersöhn & Mbestse, 2003, p. 323). Stead and Nqweni (2006, p. 137) argue that a variety of career choices are compromised due to limited exposure to career education services, inadequate learnership of internships as well as insufficient knowledge regarding institutions of higher learning. For example, the Northern Cape Province, which is the biggest province in South Africa in terms of land mass, had its first tertiary institution built post-apartheid. Prior to this establishment, the province had Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges.

The Sol Plaatje University (SPU) opened its doors of higher learning in the year 2013. SPU has four schools, namely the School of Economic and Management Sciences, School of Natural Applied Sciences, School of Humanities, and School of Education. The university is still in its growing stage and there is room for expansion that will speak to the need of the province and its

populace. The establishment of SPU notwithstanding, there is a need for youth to leave the community and get learning outside. The calibre of young people that hails from disadvantaged communities might experience the challenge of having to leave what is known to them versus learning to leave because of the career they want to pursue.

Watkinson and Hersi (2014, p. 44) are of the view that to enable career development in students, school counsellors need to identify and understand both the sociocultural and contextual factors that influence career choice amongst the learners. Furthermore, career development is not an isolated process. According to Super (1957), by the time an individual is ready to make the change from secondary school to work or college, several different choices have already been made. In other words, a person's career development starts as soon as they become aware of their surroundings, how they find themselves through life, finally reaching a point in life where they can look back and see what has influenced their decision to become who they are today. Super (1957) contends that career planning is an ongoing process and not a single choice. His theory postulates that an individual will choose an occupation that allows him or her to function in a particular role that is consistent with their self-concept. Gama-Chawana (2017, p. 33), however, argues that career development is rooted in an individual's context, that is the family, community, and societal establishments. Furthermore, while Super's theory is justifiable, to a certain degree, in the Douglas community, the absence of information, inadequate resources, and lack of exposure to different types of career fields, all leave the young people with no options but to follow whatever career paths are available and the narrative becomes compromised due to the community's limitations.

The plight of South African post-matriculants, in general, is a challenge. The bulk of this predicament can be directed to the South African schooling system where they implemented the Outcomes Based-Education (OBE) approach in the late 1990s and this approach was not beneficial to the South African population. Later Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) was introduced to account for learner diversity in the classroom (Department of Basic Education, 2011). The CAPS approach was introduced in 2012 (DBE, 2010). CAPS gives teachers detailed guidelines of what to teach and assess on a grade-by-grade and subject-by-subject basis. According to Ramjit (2015, p. 2), the teaching system of CAPS promotes that the subject, Life Orientation, be compulsory in the South African schooling system. She further states that the presentation of the Life Orientation subject is not done appropriately, and it is found that educators who teach the subject is not adequately trained. This, she argues, is visible in underprivileged communities where a variation of career development options is inaccessible (Ramjit, 2015, p. 2).

In another example, it is not unusual to find that learners have a Bachelor's pass with pure mathematics at Levels 2 or 3. The National Senior Certificate pass qualifies them to study at a tertiary institution, however, the admission requirements for most if not all the programmes require a pass in pure mathematics at higher levels (Level 4 and above). Automatically, the learner will not meet the admission criteria due to the low mathematics mark. Learners are then encouraged to apply for a re-write to improve their marks. However, when it comes to the re-write or supplementary examinations, the Department of Education gives preference to learners who did not pass their matric on the first attempt. These learners get an opportunity to obtain a pass at a level of a Higher Certificate, Diploma, or Bachelors. Thus, the learners with a Bachelor's pass, and a less than adequate performance in pure mathematics, do not have an alternative but to choose a programme that is not in alignment with their interests.

In addition, some families do not have the financial capacity to allow young people to study further, nor can they afford for them to be at home. Post-matriculants end up doing any kind of work to help the household. Furthermore, some young people aim to study to become medical practitioners; however, one finds that the combination of their school subjects does not enable them to follow their preferred career path. In addition, some schools, especially in the disadvantaged communities, do not have pure mathematics as part of their subject combinations; they only have Mathematics Literacy. The learners' career choices are thus limited by the subject choices offered by their schools.

Moreover, the world is moving to the fourth industrial revolution era, traditional types of career choices are becoming obsolete, and the gap between the advantaged and disadvantaged is widening at a fast pace. The already marginalised by access to information and services Douglas community will be further disadvantaged. In the State of the Province address in 2019, Dr. Zamani Saul, Premier of the Northern Cape, shared his vision on how he would bring about change in the province. He postulated that his vision was to dismantle comfort zones and status quo bias. He remarked that comfort zones and status quo bias would not breed innovation and a seamless service delivery that would assist in crafting a modern, growing, and successful province. He further acknowledged that a modern, growing, and successful province would be at the cutting edge of the fourth industrial revolution, prioritising education, training, and retraining of youth. In addition, the Premier mentioned that the current state of broadband was not meeting the needs of the province and that broadband is the critical enabler and means for telecommunications and internet access. The province was preparing to be included in the fourth industrial revolution through fast, reliable, and affordable access to information and knowledge, he said.

There is indeed an element of hope that stems out of the Premier's vision, however, there is also a concern as to which districts or municipalities will be first in line have broadband installed. The library situated in the town centre of Douglas does have Wi-Fi, however, the password to the Wi-Fi is being managed by a person sitting in Kimberley. This person visits Douglas every second week. When the person is at the library he activates the Wi-Fi for the time he is there and when he leaves, he disconnects the Wi-Fi (Library official, personal communication, September, 2018). These are the realities that exist in Douglas - further marginalisation, and less access to information and knowledge to help with research on various career types.

The underlying assumption guiding career practices is that an individual has choices to make. However, in the South African context, these choices were historically constrained and prescribed by broader socio-political and economic factors (Ntombela, 2022, p 535). This is illustrated in the current context of careers in South Africa which indicates discrepancies between blacks and whites, particularly with the youth and an example of this can be seen by patterns of careers being skewed more favourably towards the historically advantaged. (Ramjit, 2015, p. 2). Business Tech (2015) has illustrated how black Africans in South Africa have the lowest skilled people and the least amount of skilled people across all race groups in the country.

Marock (as cited in Ramjit , 2015) further argues that the lack of appropriate career guidance in disadvantaged communities amongst others is attributed to severe unemployment. There are therefore too many complexities standing in the face of the youth. These complexities include the lack of information and exposure to different career fields as well as the social context of the youth. In addition, barriers exist, such as limited financial resources and insufficient career planning support (Akhurst & Mkhize, 2006, p. 139; Seabi et al., 2010). Furthermore, the socio-economic state of a community such as Douglas does affect the post-matriculants' career development. A call, therefore, is made for unique career techniques that apply to specific locations, times, and spaces, such as that of Douglas, to address subjective and personal meanings ascribed to career choices and development (Maree,2010, p. 353).

Although critical career decisions may have already been affected by perceptions of barriers, research has shown that youth from lower socio-economic backgrounds have previously been empowered through narrative approaches to develop realistic occupational aspirations and positive self-concepts (Alexander et al., 2010; Janeiro, 2009, p. 170; Skorikov, 2007, p. 8). Clarification is needed for the career choices and realities that disadvantaged youth, such as the post-matriculants in Douglas, face in navigating career paths. Therefore, a narrative approach

was utilised to identify the career development needs and barriers inherent in these post-matriculants' career stories (McMahon et al., 2008; McMahon & Watson, 2008, p. 280).

Research is therefore needed to examine the complex interplay of contextual influences in under-researched groups, such as Douglas' post-matriculants (McMahon et al., 2008). Furthermore, Chinyamurindi (2016) argues that "in South Africa, previously disadvantaged groups have been omitted from empirical studies, and little is known about their career development processes" (p. 391). Post-matriculants' parents still have the post-apartheid status of unskilled or semi-skilled workers (Stead, 1996, p. 270). As a result, limited financial resources and insufficient career planning support are experienced (Akhurst & Mkhize, 2006, p. 139; Seabi et al., 2010). Understanding can be gained into the local facilitative and risk factors that shape on-going chapters in post-matriculants' career development (Maree et al., 2006).

As part of the systems theory framework (STF), a narrative approach was utilised to identify career needs and barriers inherent in these post-matriculants' career stories (McMahon et al., 2008; McMahon & Watson, 2008, p. 281). The STF framework minimises the traditional gap between research and practice and involves respondents in a research process beneficial to them (McMahon et al., 2008). The present research could contribute to the development of tailor-made career interventions that enable disadvantaged post-matriculants to recognise a realistic range of opportunities. Thus, predicted future career outcomes could be brought about within socio-political and economic climates (Stead, 1996, p. 270; Stead & Watson, 2006, p. 181). The quest, therefore, is to narrow the gap between career theory and practice and elevate the relationship that exists between cultural influences and individual, environmental and societal levels which remain insufficiently explained (Gama-Chawana, 2017, p. 5).

This view is accurately captured in that "it is not enough to speak about the crises without seeking to explain and dissect its causes" (Mandaza, 2016, p. 18). The only way to dissect the crises is to go beyond the scientific paradigms that inform most career theories to date and get into understanding the individual's career development process. Again, this can be elicited through creating a space where their lived experiences can be shared.

## **1.7 Operational concepts**

The following core concepts framed the scope of the study. It is imperative therefore to define these concepts to gain a better insight.

### **1.7.1 Career**

A career can be defined as a lifelong job that people chose or aspired to perform in a specific field (Super & Bohn, 1970, as cited in Hoorn, 2014). Career carries an overtone of urban, higher-economic status occupational activities related to high incomes and opportunities for potential realisation (Joshi & Bakshi, 2019, p. 3).

### **1.7.2 Career development**

Career Development is “the ongoing process by which individuals progress through a series of stages, each of which is characterized by a relatively unique set of issues, themes or tasks” (Schreuder & Theron, 2002, p. 105). Career development has been described by Hoyt (1977) as an evolving process, ranging over almost the full life span, through which persons develop their capacity for and engage in work as part of their overall lifestyle.

Hoekstra (2010) describes career development as the interactive progression on internal career identity formation and the growth of external career significance. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) (2015) conceptualised the construct as a “lifelong guidance for learning and work and is linked to policy agendas relating to lifelong learning, workforce development, and social inclusion” (p. 72).

Gama-Chawana (2017) in her research discovered an interchange in the use of the concept ‘management’ to describe career development amongst various authors. According to Gama-Chawana (2017), career development relates to “the process of consciously establishing one’s learning(s), skills, knowledge, competencies, and acquiring helpful attitudes for one to function optimally in a job or career within formal and informal opportunities, thus enabling one to earn a living. It is a process that also becomes a critical foundation of what one would then monitor and steer-forward as part of career management at an individual level, sometimes including the

supportive role of employing organisations. Moreover, such awakening enhances realisations that the process is also bounded to one's family, community, and societal establishments for the benefit of self, one's family, community, and society" (p. 33) The concept of career development as expressed by Gama-Chawana (2017, p. 34) is embedded in a South African context that denotes the value orientation of ubuntu. This concept speaks of the interconnectedness of self and others for the greater good of humanity as well as the communal representation within career development.

## **1.8 Overview of the Chapters**

This thesis consists of six chapters. The first chapter presents the introduction and background of the study, the research problem, the rationale for the study, research aims and objectives, research questions, the significance of the study, operational terms, and overview of the thesis. Chapter 2 reviews work (case studies and research) and looks at empirical evidence that shows the complexities that exist in disadvantaged communities concerning career development. In this regard, empirical evidence is presented that depicts what is meant by career development narratives and experiences of post-matriculants from a disadvantaged community. In Chapter 3, various theories are discussed that justify and underpin the construction of career development narratives. This chapter lays the foundation for the qualitative analysis that follows. Chapter 4 describes the research methodology of the study. The qualitative design is discussed as well as the utilisation of content analysis. The qualitative instrument informed by the STF, and the MSC1 is examined. Demographic details of the sample are presented, and reflexive comments conclude the chapter. Data analysis, findings, and discussion are presented in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 concludes the research and outlines the recommendations based on the findings. Challenges encountered during the research are shared. The summary of the thesis, the contribution made by the results, recommendations, and suggestions for future research in the marginalised population group are also dealt with in Chapter 6.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Career development has been researched by scholars in different disciplines such as psychology, education and economics. The chapter provides a review of career development literature and support studies relevant from both international and South African perspectives. The chapter, therefore, reviews studies on career development, career guidance, and career choices, the different methodologies applied in the various contextual environments, especially in the disadvantaged communities with common socio-economic, cultural, and political complexities and constraints. The primary aim is to explore career development narratives, post-matriculant experiences, and the dynamics influencing their career choices with rural communities. The findings for the different research studies provide grounds justifying how much terrain has been covered conceptually and the gaps in the literature relating to rural communities in the Northern Cape.

#### **2.2 Historical perspective of career development**

The overall comprehension of career and career development has faced a significant shift in meaning and understanding because of the ever-changing world of work over the centuries (Patton & McMahon, 2006, p. 153; Watson & Kuit, 2007, p. 73). During the pre-modern era between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries which culminated in the industrial revolution, careers were understood as a vocation or work based on gender and individual ability (Watson & Kuit, 2007, p. 73). The modern era between the 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> century saw another transition of meaning as vocational or work based on an individual's abilities and sense of self (Watson & Kuit, 2007, p. 73). According to Sampson (2009, p. 91), the modern era not only gave rise to scientific methods of vocational decision-making that focused on measuring individuals' abilities as separate from context, but also career assessment and career tests that gave rise to trait and factor approaches to vocations (Watson & Kuit, 2007, p. 73).

As Watson and Kuit (2007, p. 74) note, the modern era brought into effect concepts such as job stability and job security. During the modern era, careers were regarded as permanent and career choice was a once off lifetime event. Rapid changes in the world of work, however,

rendered the career models arising from the modern era inadequate, as the world was making the transition to the post-industrial/modern period (i.e. late 20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> century). The postmodern era marked a radical shift from the industrialised era to the technological era (Watson & Kuit, 2007, p. 74). An individual's suitability for the job and the process of job decision-making became realities in the postmodern era. According to Patton and McMahon (2006, p. 153), the postmodern era has manifested relationships between individual choices of career paths that were in alignment with the demand within the environmental contexts and therefore career decision-making. This cemented a gradual shift of careers from being permanent to temporary employment. Thus, calls for continuous relevance at work through skills' improvement and training have become important in the workplace (Mkhize, 2005, p. 93).

### **2.3 Historical perspective of career development in South Africa**

In South Africa, as Watson et al. (2014) rightly assert, the political regime of apartheid and its ideologies created separate development that had a profound effect on career development. The apartheid era created racial segregation among black African (Stats SA Community Survey, 2016) people as opposed to whites. Black African people were exposed to limited career options, policing, nursing, teaching, and most menial jobs as well as serving white people (Mkhize, 2005, p. 93). The real root cause of career development challenges and needs within contextual situations of disadvantaged communities can be traced back to South Africa's unstable political history. The apartheid regime asserted oppressive control over blacks by forcing them to migrate to rural settings (Dass-Brailsford, 2005, p. 574). This type of regime had very negative repercussions on black people, their education, culture, and career development. The emergence of career psychology reflects a given socio-political transition from a racially defined system that entrenched political and social privilege and hegemony of the minority white population to the role of career psychology as a gatekeeper for regulating the job/labour market to serve the political and social ends during apartheid (Naidoo et al., 2019).

Legislations were introduced to uplift and sustain white supremacy while institutionalising discrimination, exploitation, and deprivation of the black majority on the other hand. Noteworthy, one of the legislations enforced by law was the Group Areas Act (1950) which forbade non-white people from working or running businesses in any white area unless they had permits (Mhlauli, Salani & Mokotedi, 2015 & Ndimande, 2013). In addition, the Bantu Education Act, which was established in 1953, downgraded the quality and level of education for black people, thus limiting them to only certain types of knowledge. Furthermore, psychological assessments were only adapted in the Afrikaans language to disenable black

Africans from performing well and thereby deeming them inadequate for certain careers and jobs (Foxcroft et al., 2005). Therefore, many disadvantaged people, especially in the rural and peri-urban communities, remain oppressed and are not able to exercise the choice of their ideal careers.

In support of Bantu Education, H.F. Verwoerd at the senate in 1954 (as cited in Gerber & Newman, 1980, p. 62) stated:

Bantu must be guided to serve his own community in all respects. There is no place for him in European community above the level of certain forms of labour. Within his community, however, all doors are open. For that reason, it is of no avail for him to receive training which has as its aim absorption there. Up until now, he has been subjected to a school system, which drew him away from his own community and practically misleads him by showing him the green pastures of the European, but still did not allow him to graze there. This attitude is not only uneconomical, because money is spent on education, which has no specific aim, but it is even dishonest to continue with it. The effect on the Bantu Community we find in the much-discussed frustration of educated Natives who can find no employment, which is acceptable to them. It is abundantly clear that unplanned education creates many problems, disrupts communal life of the Europeans.

Ndimande (2013) argues that Bantu Education weakened the influence of the school towards career prospects. It was believed that educating black people would mislead them into thinking they were like Europeans. Consequently, schools in disadvantaged communities experienced inadequate funding and that culminated in insufficient resources, overcrowded classrooms, and a significant shortage of qualified teachers (Bonner & Segal, 1998, p. 162). Contrary to the entrenched systems enshrined in Bantu Education, Frank Parsons is cited for spearheading the career guidance movement which sought to bring an end to exploitation of workers, and the provision of guidance to assist school leavers find suitable jobs (Sharf, 2013, p. 3).

Similarly, the development of career psychology and various influences point to the major period of change in the history of South Africa. To begin with, between the period 1760 – 1840, the Industrial Revolution had been imported into South Africa with the arrival of European immigrants with various technological innovations and mechanisms that altered the nature of work from farms to factories and mines (Naidoo et al., 2017). Secondly, as cited in Coovadia et al. (2009), the European colonisation of Southern Africa had a role in changing the social, economic and political fabric of the indigenous people. The discovery of diamonds and rich

gold deposits in 1868 resulted in the introduction of excavation technology but also the need for labour specialisation. Lastly, the aftermath of the Anglo Boer war (1899 – 1902) left many white Afrikaner communities devastated and impoverished and caused an exodus of whites from rural settlements (Naidoo et al., 2017).

The emergence of the National Party to power in 1948 reinforced the apartheid system that denied black people citizenship in South Africa, forcing many to remote areas designated as Bantustans. Here poverty conditions and unemployment were prevalent and created a migrant worker system that allowed able bodied adults to carry passes permitting them to work in the urban areas (Naidoo et al., 2017). As Biko (1996, p. 27) rightly stated:

Born shortly before 1948, I have lived all my conscious life in the framework of institutionalised separate development. My friendships, my love, my education, my thinking and every other facet of my life have been carved and shaped within the context of separated development.

According to Naidoo et al. (2017), the notion of career with the historical context was a privileged prerogative for the enfranchised white population and labour by the black people was conceptualised more in terms of its instrumentality for the economy of the country or the direct service in their own segregated communities. It equally meant trading labour to attain a livelihood. Similarly, at white universities the permit system was used to block career opportunities, (Coovardia et al, 2009). Harrison (as cited in Naidoo et al., 2017) recounts that of the 190 applications in 1960 from prospective Black students to enroll at historically white universities, only four were approved and, further still, qualified black professionals were not employed in positions where they might have to supervise or engage with white patients or clients.

## **2.4 Current perspectives of career development on various global platforms**

### **2.4.1 International perspective on career development**

On the international scene, career intervention programmes have not been effective in the schools. According to Watts (2005, p. 66), young people in different countries drop out of formal education and training with little or no skills to survive within the workplace. Some of the challenges encountered by these learners, especially in the South African schooling environment, include lack of proper academic preparation, failure to adjust to dialectical methods of learning, cultural diversity, alcohol and drug abuse and psychological trauma (Botha

et al., 2005). Researchers remark that the decision-makers realise the real career needs in life are in accordance with the developed values and attitudes. The world of work is rapidly changing, societal and economic shifts such as globalisation, offshoring and the recent unemployment crisis indicate how unstable and unpredictable the world of work has become. It is not uncommon for people nowadays to go through several career transitions throughout their lifespan. Such unpredictability and rapid change make career planning difficult and may increase the likelihood that chance events will affect people's career development (Rice, 2014, p. 445).

Four factors influence the school leaver's decision in choosing a career path, that is, educational factors (in the family: the style of education; at school: recommendations of teachers and career counsellors), information factors (open days, exhibitions, the mass media), economic factors (study fees, career prospects), other factors (geographical location, ratings, personal skills and demography) (Eidimtas & Juceviciene, 2014, p. 3988). Learners are confronted with a great amount of career and life decisions at early age and yet have inadequate opportunities to explore different career fields. In the typical high school environment, students are expected to choose and follow a programme of study that will prepare them to exit high school with the skills necessary to continue their education and to enter the workforce. Career and technical education learners are often required to choose specific occupational areas even though many do not continue the same career emphasis upon completing high school.

Kosine and Lewis (2008, p. 231) state that learners are offered few opportunities to engage in career exploration and are given little useful information concerning post-secondary options. The result is that career development is often a by-product of the educational curriculum, with a 'figure it out as you go along' mentality prevalent among educators and learners regarding career exploration. Finally, there appears to be a lack of persistence between high school and post-high school work-related activities. One of the probable reasons for this lack of persistence is that the role of career development for learners has been largely ignored and that most emphasis has been placed on skills preparation. Kosine and Lewis (2008, p. 231) further state that although skill preparation is essential in preparing students for the world of work, career exploration is needed to aid learners in effectively directing their efforts.

Joshi and Bakshi (2019) suggested that career-related challenges are magnified in the context of poverty/disadvantage as characterised in rural India. There are differences in career development in developed versus developing countries. Developing countries are characterised by greater degrees of heterogeneity and inequitable differences such as those across regions, communities, privilege status, urban/rural residence. Therefore, notions of career and career-

related challenges are expected to differ within and across contexts (Joshi & Bakshi, 2019, p. 16). Helwig (as cited in Guindon & Richmond, 2005) has revealed that career aspirations and expectations changed over time and parents had a major influence on children's aspirations until grade ten. The study further augments the role of teacher influences on learner career development.

In addition, in a comparative study conducted between Thai and Australian learners, it was found that cultural interpretations influenced career decision-making, gender, and family obligations (Ghuangpeng, 2011, p. 5). Furthermore, in a book authored by Homel et al. (2019), it was argued that there is a need to focus on disadvantaged communities. Homel et al. (2019) are of the view that there has been a deteriorating learning outcome on children and youth in Australia and developed countries at the end of the twentieth century. The health and well-being of the children and youth are worse than in the 1950s and 1960s. They argue that most damage was done in the 1970s and 1980s (Homel et al., 2019). Added to the trend is the intensified gradient effect of the socio-economic status and outcomes such as literacy or life expectancy. Other trends highlight an increase in family risk factors such as parental conflict, separation, and neglect; changes in adolescent transitions, for example, increased isolation of young people from adults as a result of stronger youth culture; and cultural shifts, for example, breakdown in frameworks providing values, purpose, and a sense of belonging (Homel et al., 2019).

In a study conducted by Vinson and Homel (as cited in Vinson et al., 2015), they demonstrated a correlation of social and health, and crime problems in a small number of urban areas, but the same is undoubtedly true in country regions, particularly in Aboriginal communities. Such persistence and marked concentrations of crime and disadvantage in specific localities suggest that whatever preventative initiatives are developed at a whole population level, there is a special need for combined solutions in the most disadvantaged communities.

In research conducted in North America to assess the ninth-grade learners' need to know regarding college and career planning, the results have suggested that there is inconsistency with regard to plans and accurate information about college costs and availability. Most of the learners were concerned about the finances (Gibbons et al., 2006). In South Africa, similar models of western ideas of career guidance within the local context were unsuccessful due to the learner's lack of access to adequate education (Stead & Watson, 2006, p. 182).

Ahmed et al. (2017) are of the view that 'interest' is the most dominant factor influencing career choices. They claim that interest is linked to your personality type. Mismatch of the personality and lack of interest can be dangerous and could have disastrous results in terms of

dissatisfaction, demotivation, and lack of productivity, leading to increased dropouts and career failure. Furthermore, studies conducted in Lahore, Pakistan showed that parents had the most significant influence on the learners' career, followed by peers, gender, the print media, finances, and interest (Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017, p. 187).

In addition, barriers have also been identified as significant role players in higher education. The African American and Hispanic/Latino learners presented a combination of barriers which included needing to help support family, economic hardships, not wanting to leave friends, parents with lower levels of education and getting married (Denhere, 2013, p. 42). Furthermore, in Australia, a study have identified several issues that restrict the rural students' plan to pursue post school studies. These typically centre on social and emotional issues associated with moving away from established networks, limited access to information about courses in the tertiary sector, financial difficulties and academic difficulties. (Denhere, 2013, p. 46). There seems to be an agreement between international researchers that social class, financial resources, affordability, and future employability influence career choices.

#### **2.4.2 African perspectives on career development**

Research conducted on the African continent indicates that career choices are affected by the environment, opportunity, and personality. Olamide and Olawaiye (2013, p. 33) and Omari (2014, p. 2), postulate that where you grow up and the context of your environment has a significant effect on your career choice. The example given by Olamide and Olawaiye (2013, p. 33) illustrates a person growing up on an island. What they know is invested in what they have been exposed to, for example, water, mountains, and forests or trees, thus a career path will be followed in this area unless the person decides to leave the island. Furthermore, parents' educational background plays a significant role and does influence learners' views to pursue further education.

Another issue that affects post-matriculants is personality. Personality plays an important role in choosing the right career. Some careers demand that you have a personality to match the qualities of the occupation. For example, if you want to be a salesperson, you need to be outgoing. Researchers further argue that a learner should have a self-motivated personality type in order to investigate career possibilities from early on in their lives rather than a procrastinating personality type that waits until they are compelled to decide. "It is important for you to have a good understanding of yourself, your personality, if you make intelligent career plans" (Splaver, 2000, p. 12).

Furthermore, an opportunity may influence how learners perceive their future in terms of a reasonable probability of a future in a particular career field. The issue of poverty has played an important determining role in the opportunities available to all. The income level of secondary school families may also affect the learner's career choice. In a study conducted in Kenya, Edwards and Quinter (2011, p. 81) observed that learners in secondary school lack information regarding career choices and occupational opportunities. They have also found that although learners think about their career paths while in secondary school, once they have completed their schooling, they pursue a different occupation. Kerka (as cited in Edwards & Quinter, 2011) postulates that career choice is steered by many factors which include personality, interest, self-concept, cultural identity, globalisation, socialisation, role model, social support, and available resources such as information and finances.

Bandura (as cited in Edwards & Quinter, 2011) states that each person undertaking the process of career choices is influenced by various factors including the context in which they live, their personal aptitudes, social contacts, and educational attainment. In a study conducted by Oyamo and Amoth (as cited in Edwards and Quinter, 2011), learners in rural areas in Kenya tend to seek help and guidance from their parents who play a more significant role than teachers do with regards to career choices. The study further suggests that in Kenya, from the fourth year of secondary school, every year learners make their career choices before sitting for their final Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination.

In addition, the results of this final examination determine who joins university since admissions into various careers are determined by grades obtained from the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education. Learners get a list of career options they can choose from. Once the final examination is completed and the Minister of Education releases the results, the learners are directed to sign up for the career of their choice. The study further indicates that when students graduate from the universities, some of them enter occupations that are different from the ones they have chosen and trained for. The study highlighted that there are learners in the Kisumu municipality in Kenya who are graduates of education and other programmes that are not working in careers they had chosen before joining the university.

Furthermore, a study conducted in Uganda with a Youth Farmers Club found that career interest in science and related careers received high interest. Mukembo et al. (2014) contend that intrinsic factors are the main influencers of career choice, for example, academic performance, personal interest and to gain life skills. Attracting and retaining youth in the agricultural sector remains a global challenge. More especially, developing countries such as Uganda are faced with the challenge of ensuring food security for their growing populations amidst a decline in

youth engagement in agriculture. Although the employment opportunities available in the sector continue to increase for graduates in agriculture, in many countries, too few youths have embraced food production as a career field.

Mukembo et al.'s (2014) study showed that three factors influenced the career interest/aspirations of the club members. These interests or aspirations were perceptions of their ability to succeed in a given career, followed by personal goals and their desire or love for a career. The study further reported that their childhood experiences, training outside of school, peers/friends, teachers, perceptions of prestige or social status associated with the career, and participation in co-curricular activities have less influence on their career. These findings imply that the club members are more influenced by intrinsic factors regarding their career aspirations, which supports Bandura's theory of self-efficacy.

### **2.4.3 South African perspective on career development**

The formation of one's future orientation is pursued within a contextual process and therefore the concept of future orientation supports the idea that youth development should be understood contextually (Posti-Ahokas & Palojoki, 2014, p. 665). According to tradingeconomics.com, 35% of the South African population is rural. This can affect the concern with and depiction of rurality. There may also be differences to do with the histories of regions, for example, whether rurality is affected predominantly by colonialism, apartheid, and neo-liberalism (South Africa or Namibia) or a combination of colonialism and neo-liberalism (Canada or Australia).

Roberts and Green (2013, p. 765) argue that the concept of rural or rurality is at some point a demographic, geographic, and cultural one. From an empirical perspective, it is defined as having sparsely populated areas and ontologically as 'a category and a set of experiences' (Moreland et al., 2003). It is also spatial, geographical, and contextual (Green & Reid, 2014, p. 15). Furthermore, it is argued that ethnicity, race, and class intersect with rurality in important ways such that one cannot research an issue of rurality without considering contextual, historical, and socio-economic trends.

Policy makers in the South African government are faced with the challenge of addressing the needs of disadvantaged communities within a state policy of a single education system (Admundson et al., 2014). Apartheid played a major role in the education system as it marginalised people in terms of race and language. The system was funded and resourced which favoured white people while disadvantaging black people. It has become a critical exercise to correct the imbalances. Even the education system has a major impact on the career

development of disadvantaged post-matriculants. There was the belief that there is a logical and predictable sequence to events and achievements and people just needed guidance to find the right 'track'. This linear scenario no longer seems viable. There have been dramatic changes at the social, economic, political, and cultural levels that have undermined many of the traditions and assumptions underlying career development (Admundson et al., 2014).

Gama-Chawana (2017, p. 4) argues that our career education is still failing to empower individuals with career management knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies within a broadly failing education system. Furthermore, career development has been influenced and shaped by the dynamic social, political, and economic forces that were at play during the period of transition and the dynamism of the twentieth century. The literature on career development in South Africa seems to suggest a move from Eurocentric career development ideology to a contextual-based African career development approach. The westernised models and ideologies appear contextually irrelevant within the South African milieu (Gama-Chawana, 2017, p. 92).

Global discourses around the value of school education for defining successful youth transitions have led to increasing proportions of young people in developing countries pursuing post-primary education. Based on actor-centred research on Indian youth, Morrow (2012, p. 86) argues that many of the norms supporting the international transition debate fail to match the realities of young people's everyday lives. In support of Morrow's views, Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory resonates with most communities, including the Douglas community in the Northern Cape. Maslow's theory argues that progression through various levels is dependent on the mastery of lower levels, that is, self-fulfilment as a result of physiological needs (water, food, warmth and rest), your safety needs (security and safety), belongingness and love needs (intimate relationships and friends), and esteem needs (prestige and feeling of accomplishment).

In a study conducted by Gordon (1997, p. 5) of the Northern Cape Province and Free State regions, it is stated that education is in a parlous state in many communities in South Africa. Attention is drawn to the state of rural areas, on both commercial farms and in the former homelands where most learners are disadvantaged. Gordon (1997, p. 6) further states that some schools on commercial farms may have less than 20 learners and multi-grade classes. Other farms in the former Bantustans are extremely overcrowded with classes of more than 50 learners, which is not uncommon. Learners are often far older than their urban counterparts because schools may be far from their homes, preventing young children from attending. In some cases, education is disrupted because children have to work on farms (Gordon, 1997, p. 6).

Gordon (1997, p. 6) further notes that the political economy influences rural education. She argues that schooling for the education of the children of farmworkers is a direct expression of the labour dispensation for farmworkers. It arose out of a situation where workers were explicitly excluded from basic conditions of employment, and the work was primarily unskilled. Skilled workers were seen as a threat to the establishment, which was organised along feudal lines. Because a significant proportion of farmworkers were women and children, farm schools were designed to ensure the stability of the labour force. Schools were a 'carrot' to prevent children from seeking education elsewhere and leaving the farms. The farm school was therefore an integral part of the labour system.

The 1953 Bantu Education Act created the category of state-aided schools to accommodate children of farmworkers. In 1990 there were approximately 5 800 schools (27% of all department of education and training schools) on farms providing mostly primary school education to 520 000 (7%) learners (DET, as cited in Gordon, 1997). This figure has decreased significantly in the last five years as a result of the decrease in the number of farmworkers in South Africa. Furthermore, policies regulating education in rural areas, especially on commercial farms and community schools, were dependent on property owners' willingness to provide education for the children of their workers. Studies show that farm owners had entitlement rights on the operationalisation of schools and also determined and controlled admission of learners and the educational levels of schools. Gordon (1997) further highlights the disregard for and dismissal of departmental teacher appointees which resulted in very poor and worst resourced schools in the country.

Community schools, on the other hand, were the dominant type in the former homelands and comprised 30% of the schools and 38% of learners (DET, as cited in Gordon, 1997). Built and maintained by communities, often with no subsidy from the state, most schools were wretched and had difficulty in attracting experienced teachers. The study further highlights the role of traditional leaders and their influence in the governance of rural community schools including the decision-making, allocation of land, the collection of community funds for building school infrastructure, and mostly direct involvement sustained the schools' suppression by the apartheid state.

According to Pillay (1995), the rationale underpinning funding policies for education in rural areas was based on the political ideologies of the time. Pillay (1995) postulates that, firstly, the homeland governments lacked any real power in the decision-making processes around budgeting. Second, decisions about spending or addressing backlogs were made in isolation from the needs of communities. Third, there was little incentive for the homeland governments

to be accountable for their spending decisions. Fourth, the financing requirements for the farm schools were dependent largely on motivation by the farmers themselves and neglected community needs and demography of the area. The consequences of this policy for rural education have been a lower allocated proportion of the budget, substantially lower per capita expenditure, higher teacher-pupil ratios, and school buildings which remained in an appalling state of neglect. The poor state of many of the schools in rural areas raises concerns that many schools lack infrastructure.

A further argument, presented by Denhere (2013, p. 42), suggests that the democratic government of South Africa inherited a higher education system that discriminated by race, ethnicity, class, and geography. He argues that before 1994 African citizens, which is the largest demographic group in the country, had the smallest participation rate in higher education notwithstanding that the demand was very high. The high demand for tertiary education is plausible given that there is a strong belief that education is a 'social good', hence its desirability.

Denhere (2013, p. 42) claims that despite the concerted efforts by the government to reconfigure the education system so that equal educational opportunities are created and distributed to all, resistant barriers to date make accessibility to higher education elusive for some disadvantaged groups, particularly the rural youths. Research shows that higher education remains elitist, with many students who complete higher education coming from economically privileged segments of society. Anything is considered a barrier if it impedes the path to a college degree (Roberts, 1999). Denhere (2013, p. 42) further suggests that barriers to higher education are multifaceted. These barriers manifest themselves in different ways and only become obvious when a learning breakdown occurs when learners 'drop-out' of the system or when the excluded become visible.

Recent research has confirmed that lack of information can be an impeding barrier to higher education access; for example, the rural youths lack the 'road maps' necessary to access colleges. Their networks do not give them adequate information about good affordable colleges along with the financial aid for which they are eligible. In South Africa, matriculants are usually unable to access higher education due to poverty, poor education, lack of information, distance from urban centres or educational hubs, and historical apartheid discrimination (Wangenge-Ouma, 2012, p. 831).

Some researchers have revealed that black matriculants from poor communities are unable to access higher education because of poverty, in particular, lack of financial resources, lack of

information, poor education, weak support, and motivational background. Denhere (2013) is of the view that barriers that hinder matriculants from participating in higher education vary from context to context. It is therefore important to ascertain what rural matriculants perceive as barriers to higher education access. Denhere's (2013, p. 45) study identified the following common barriers which made higher education inaccessible: affordability, lack of information, lack of family support, and discouragement from peers.

It would further appear that the community has cynical gendered perceptions of higher education. There is no equity in access to higher education in South Africa. The rural matriculants encounter inter alia financial and lack of information barriers. Denhere (2013, p. 46) further highlights that there is a need to employ psychologists in rural high schools to assist learners with career options, information on tertiary entry requirements, and funding. In addition, a career-needs assessment conducted at a private black school in Johannesburg revealed that associated cognitive processes regarding career decision-making interventions were noted. The results suggested that short-term interventions were insufficient in addressing career problems and to positively influence the cognitive processes (Matlwa, 2003). The response to these identified career challenges initiated the development of the Life Orientation programme offered over a period of 12 school years (Prinsloo, 2007, p. 155).

## **2.5 Perceptions of post-matriculants on transition into tertiary education**

According to Goldberger (as cited in Maila & Ross, 2018) there was a 30% disparity between low-income and high-income students in terms of preparation, enrolment and persistence in post-school educational programmes. Pietarinen et al. (2010) has pointed to the high levels of stress and anxiety resulting from the transition from secondary school to tertiary education. As Lapan et al.(as cited in Maila & Ross, 2018) rightly assert, it is critical to provide career development support and guidance to learners as they endeavour to negotiate a career-related transition. Maila and Ross (2018, p. 1) point to the lack of research on career that seems to be prevalent on career guidance for disadvantaged rural students and the factors that impede or facilitate access and success in post-secondary education. In the South African context there is a great emphasis on education as a route out of poverty for individuals and a way of promoting equality of opportunity. The reality, however, in the South African higher education sector is the lingering legacy of apartheid that perpetuates unequal educational access manifested in the high cost of university education (Washington & Salmon, 2014) and recently the fees must fall campaigns and an over-reliance on NSFAS for both college and university access.

Some studies cited in Maila and Ross (2018), mainly Jones et al. (2008) and Rohleder et al., (2008) point to the realities of disadvantaged school leavers from rural and township communities. These communities are characterised by poverty; under-resourced, dysfunctional schools; poor education; lack of information; and unqualified teachers, which paints a grey picture as compared to schools in urban areas. In addition, several factors are singled out as hindrances to access tertiary institutions. These include financial constraints and the subsequent pressure on the family budget to maintain university studies, attitudes towards education, inadequate career guidance, as well as the failure of university marketing departments to run successful awareness campaigns targeted at rural schools, therefore affecting career choices, creating anxiety and poor career decisions due to a lack of information.

In a study conducted by Dey et al. (2011) to investigate the role of family members in career development, it was concluded that teachers and friends play an important role in the process of career development and career decision-making. However, the study also revealed that poverty, poor health, family health and cultural norms are significant in career development and career aspirations (Dey et al., 2011). In addition, Irvin et al. (2012) contends that poverty, cultural practices like early marriages, and financial support for family and friends have an impact on career development and aspirations, especially among the youth in the rural communities. Poverty within the family and community and family income were the main factors influencing career decision-making in the students. The study revealed that students tend to choose career paths that present the opportunity for employment (Shumba & Naong, 2012, p. 169).

Mhlongo and O'Neill (2013, p. 953) found that family and community-based factors have a significant influence on career development and career decision-making especially among youth in previously disadvantaged backgrounds. Many of the participants in the study from poverty-stricken families and communities had increasing pressure to make career choices that would immediately benefit their families and even the youth back in their communities.

## **2.6 Lived experiences in disadvantaged communities**

The impact of being disadvantaged has a bearing on several things, that is, access to information, financial challenges, self-esteem, and scarce skills, to name a few. Disadvantaged contexts place restrictions on adolescents' career development by affecting negatively on their self-efficacy beliefs. Studies have shown that youth from disadvantaged contexts successes are slower within the sphere of career development as opposed to their peers from affluent communities. There is a consistent limitation in career development and choices for adolescents

(Seabi et al., 2010). Most South African adolescents from low socio-economic backgrounds often have limited opportunities to associate positive meaning with the value of work because of restricted exposure to positive role models in their community contexts. This is compounded by the small number of professionals in their contexts, rendering their socialisation within their chosen professions very difficult.

Furthermore, the impact of a pandemic, like Covid 19, which hit South Africa in the year 2020, worsens the reality of disadvantaged adolescents. The pandemic is increasingly widening existing inequality gaps between adolescents from poor rural and wealthy urban areas. It can be noted that the impact of Covid 19 will have lasting effects as the education system needs to adjust to accommodate learners and students to get them on track and to align them to the economic requirements. Once again, access to information is becoming the basic need, yet it is one of the fundamentals that lack in disadvantaged communities. The pandemic has further highlighted an increase in unemployment as many people lost their jobs. In an already struggling community and the limitations of finances, information and overall progression to make a success of young people's lives, the future is becoming more and more blurred. Disadvantaged communities are in most instances in survival mode and a pandemic of this magnitude is not serving the current situation. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) envisaged that the education of an African child would be the most affected in the post-Covid 19 era due to the economic and technological backwardness of most African countries (UNESCO, 2020). Young people are always severely impacted by economic collapses, but this time the pandemic is causing economic interruption at an extraordinary speed and scale and young people are unreasonably affected. Amid the catastrophe, young people are grappling with their own personal challenges.

## **2.7 The self and career development**

Jena and Nayak (2020) is of the view that the concept of personhood or the self is central to career development theories developed during the modern and postmodern era. Authors such as Nwoye (2017) and Mkhize and Frizelle (2000, p. 1) have employed the concept of personhood based on the Afrocentric and social constructionism perspectives. They argue that personhood is not intrinsic, but exists in relation to others. From a psychological perspective, James (as cited in Hermans, 1996) was the first one to make a distinction between the terms 'I' and 'Me' as the two main components of self. The 'I', referring to the self-as-knower, constantly organises and interprets experience in a merely subjective manner. On the other hand, 'Me' refers to the self-as-known and includes everything in the environment that one possesses

(Hermans, 2004). Hermans et al. (1993) have expanded the narrative framework employed to the concept of 'I' and 'Me' by referring to the work of Bakhtin (1929/1973). The relevance of his work to narrative is the concept of multiple voices developed in his novel. Similarly, the key aspect of Mkhize and Frizelle's (2000, p. 1) hermeneutic and dialogical approaches is the work of Bakhtin (1981). The central concept of his work is the independent and mutually opposing viewpoints within a single person (Hermans, 1996, p. 1).

According to Bakhtin (1929/ 1973), the characters in the novel are "ideologically authoritative and independent" (p. 3). Each character is viewed as the author of his or her own ideological perspective (Hermans, 1996). From the dialogical perspective, development is viewed through the process of dialogue. Mkhize and Frizelle (2000, p. 7) suggest that development takes place as the individual interacts and internalises social and cultural voices. "These voices, which may be composed of utterances by parents and grandparents, including collective group understandings as reflected in cultural and religious prescriptions, are preserved in the psyche, where they engage in a dialogue with each other" (Mkhize & Frizelle, 2000, p. 7). Bakhtin (1929/1973) argues that the dialogue is characterised by multiple voices that take turns to speak and listen. The one speaking is viewed as the dominant voice, while the listening voice is temporarily less dominant.

This same principle has been applied to career development narratives whereby a narrator can speak through different voices and positions (Hermans, 2001, p. 243; Mkhize & Frizelle, 2000, p. 7). "This process of producing unique utterances, whereas at the same time the speaker is speaking in social languages, involves a specific kind of multivoiceness that Bakhtin terms ventriloquation" (Hermans & Kempen, 1993, p. 77). Ventriloquation is a process whereby individuals speak not only in their voices, but also internalise and express the views or perspectives of the dominant others in their speeches. From the Afrocentric perspective, self is viewed as collective. Cooley (1902/1922, as cited in Onorato & Turner, 2001) argues that group self or "'we' is simply an 'I' which includes other persons. One identifies himself [herself] with a group and speaks of the common will, opinion, service, or like in terms of 'we' and 'us'" (p. 149). Similarly, Sedikides and Brewer (2001) suggest that "collective self is achieved by inclusion in large social groups and contrasting the group to which one belongs, the in-group, with relevant out-groups" (p. 1).

## **2.8 Career uncertainty and indecision**

Hughes et al. (2013) argue that the majority of matriculants are faced with uncertainty and indecision. There are various challenges such as lack of firm support structures in the communities, financial problems, lack of competent career advisors in the local schools, and a general lack of willingness to seek advice. While career-related issues affect individuals, leading to uncertainty and lack of clarity, the emphasis is on the need for career guidance counselling as a remedy for creating awareness and widening of career choices.

Donahue (as cited in Mubiana, 2010) stresses that career decision making involves six tools which include engagement in making a knowledgeable choice; understanding of self and available options; identifying, expanding and narrowing a list of possible options; the decision on study plan or occupation; acting on or implementation; and, lastly, reflections on decisions made and good choices.

## **2.9 Barriers to career decision-making**

Various studies on perceived career barriers and career decision-making, especially among youth in disadvantaged communities, point to enormous challenges influenced by socio-economic, socio-cultural, political, and other environmental contextual factors. Pulliam et al. (2017) studied the relationship between perceived career barriers and career decision self-efficacy on initial career choice among low-income students. The study reiterated the significance of cognitive and contextual factors influencing career decisions, including the perception of career barriers, levels of self-efficacy, and cultural characteristics as highlighted by the social cognitive career theory.

Studies conducted on the most influencing factors that youth consider in their career choices on the global scale, noted that the intrinsic factors included personal characteristics like skills, competencies, and abilities, while the extrinsic factors included a desire for benefits, financial reward, social recognition and job security (Agarwala, 2008, p. 362; Tao et al, 2018). Vocational interests were valued by the Swiss students, and, from an extrinsic perspective, the Burkina Faso students considered job accessibility as important (Atitsogbe et al., 2018). In a study conducted among Chinese high school students, their career choices were influenced by the individually motivated achievement that was grounded on career development and, at a

more interpersonal level, the study pointed out the influence of teachers followed by peers and less of parents (Chueng & Arnold, 2014, p. 732).

In other studies, the intrinsic factors included higher self-efficacy, outcomes expectations, and interests related to family support, while the interpersonal factors highlighted strong family support and strong adherence to cultural values (Kim et al., 2016; Hui & Lent, 2018, p. 98; Tao et al., 2018). According to Sawitri and Creed (2017, p. 530), the intrinsic factors that were influential to career choices were strongly attached to higher career congruence with parents, leading to career confidence and self-efficacy. On an interpersonal level, this reflected a tendency to conform to parents and give up their own career goals and aspirations because of value inequality.

Studies show that work-related goals of underprivileged students are poorly matched with the labour market trends which add to unemployment problems and in turn pose a colossal problem for career development in South Africa (OECD, 2017; O'Reilly, 2015; Dimian, 2011; Stead & Watson, 1998, p. 289). The primary reason that has been attributed to a poor career pursuing behaviour (especially within underprivileged groups) is the lack of access to pertinent information on careers and the labour market (Watson et al., 1995).

Because of a lack of access to information, underprivileged students tend to participate less in career exploration and may sometimes have impractical goals. Ndimande (2015, p. 28) claims that apartheid policies contributed to the general lack of resources and information as education and policies were planned to keep a racially, politically, socially, and economically separated structure. Regarding career decision-making process among learners, it was revealed that certain barriers identified as interests, values, and abilities - which are earmarked as personal elements in career decision making - have an effect on or influence certain career choices (Abdullah, Hussin, Shonubi, Ghazali & Abu Talib, 2018; Ozlen & Arnaut, 2013; Lent et al., 2007). The existence of such barriers necessitates the need for support practices to expose students to career exploration activities that would enhance clarity in their interests, values, and abilities. Hoffmann et al. (2005) identify financial concerns, negative social family influences, role conflicts, personal adjustment difficulties and limitations as impediments to learner career choices and as a result affect career decision-making processes.

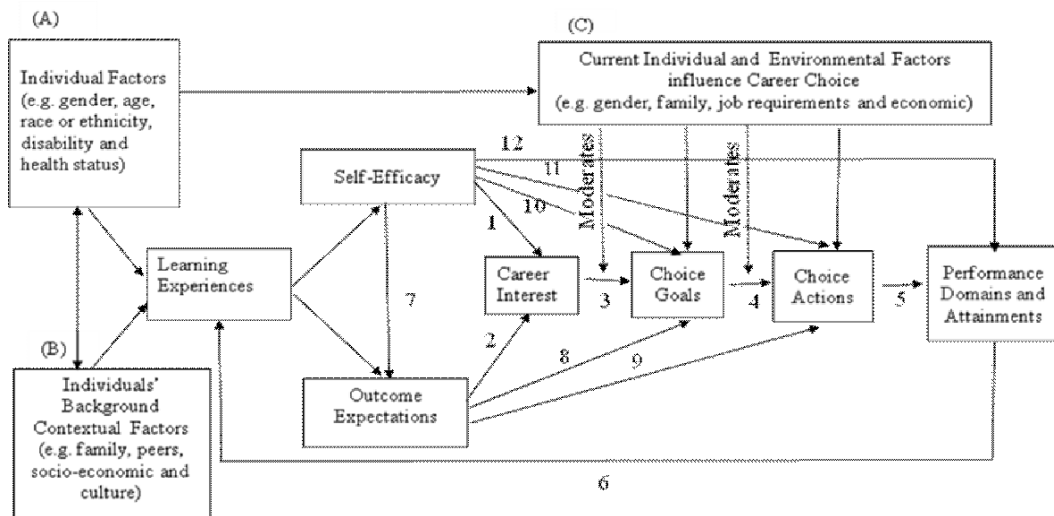
Furthermore, factors influencing career decision-making are identified as family influence, passion, capacity, self-efficacy, apparent difficulty, values, sense of belonging, gender and race (Buschor-Berweger et al., 2014; Rainey et al., 2019). Gelatt (as cited in Abe & Chikoko, 2020) suggests a career decision-making model that shows the process of decision-making as an

outgoing activity that changes dynamically with the acquisition of additional information. Niles et al. (as cited in Abe & Chikoko, 2020) propose that adolescents are pre-emptive catalysts of the socio-cultural domain and that they dynamically integrate knowledge and texts from others to ultimately develop a repository of decision-making.

Lent et al. (1994) developed a model of career choice to conceptualise the process of individuals' career decision-making and factors influencing their choices. The figure below illustrates how individuals would develop their career interest through the interaction of their learning experiences, self-efficacy, and outcome expectation and subsequently would influence their career interests and choices.

Figure 1

*Model of Career choice through individual, contextual and experimental factors*



(Ghuangpeng, 2011, p. 32 [Adapted from Lent et al., 1994])

Lent et al.'s (1994) socio cognitive career theory was acknowledged for the manner in which it demonstrates the integration of psychological and sociological theories with better understanding of individuals' career decision-making as well as several factors associated with individuals' career decision-making and choices. Various studies have been conducted around factors that influence career choices - reasons like interest, employment opportunities, career prospects after graduation (Maringe, 2006, p. 466); likelihood of entry into university and the

chances it would provide positive employment opportunities (Moniarou-Papaconstantinou et al., 2010); and the relationship between gender and students' decision to pursue a particular career (Schwarz et al., 2009).

## **2.10 Gender and career development**

Macharia (2011) is of the view that gender is used to differentiate between males and females; it suggests several characteristics that go with gender as defined by society. Through various social interactions, men and women are generally created to be different in behaviour, attitude, and emotions. This also has an impact on career choices. Gender roles manifest during adolescence when boys and girls think about the career they wish to pursue. Traditionally, the woman's role is to be the homemaker and the man's role is to provide for the family. However, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, this social obligation has somewhat shifted in many households. Women share in the financial provision of the family and men partake in childcare and other traditionally feminine aspects of household chores. Furthermore, women are moving towards careers that were previously dominated by men, which indicate a shift from gender segregation (Shafina, 2020; Dicke, Safavian & Eccles, 2019; Metemri, 2018).

In South Africa, the adult population is dominated by women with a 52% representation, 41% of this total are considered the active working inhabitants (StatsSA, 2011). Even though there is not a major difference between male and female entrepreneurs in South Africa, many South African women entrepreneurs' function within personal services, crafts, retail sectors and hawking. These sectors require little usage of technology. (Maas & Herrington, 2006). These findings suggest that women are still viewed in their traditional roles with activities that are well matched with their domestic and reproductive roles. Also, gender specific division of labour still exist in South Africa (Mahadea, 2001, p. 189). In terms of career development and career choices between genders, Donald Super, a contemporary career development theorist, explores in more detail the career development of women and recognises homemaking as an important issue for women (Poh et al., 2013). Furthermore, women as opposed to men, experience more intricacies in their career choices having to balance their work and family roles.

In addition, the findings from a study conducted by Seabi (2012, p. 765) reveal that there is no significant difference between boys and girls concerning the process of career decision-making. This suggests that gender does not affect the process boys and girls go through when they select a career. Obiuni (2008, p. 236) supports the fact that gender is not a significant factor in career

decision-making. Gender is no longer a barrier to the choice of occupation. The demystification of gender emancipation could be the result of global transformation in women's rights and affirmative action in South Africa, especially in the labour market where both genders can contest for and dominate the same jobs. Cramer (2000, p. 42) notes that, unlike in the past, women are actively encouraged to consider, follow and occupy stereotypically female as well as stereotypically male paths of career development (Dicke, Safavian & Eccles, 2019; Metemri, 2018).

In terms of career maturity, Patton's (as cited in Van Reenen, 2010) research findings demonstrate that females, across age and national context, have higher scores on career maturity measures than males. Nevertheless, a study conducted by Fouad (as cited in Van Reenen, 2010), found that females scored higher on only some career maturity subscales. The results of Themba et al.'s (2012) study appear to substantiate the research finding that men and women differ significantly regarding their career maturity. Furthermore, Luzzo (as cited in Van Reenen, 2010) study confirmed that career maturity increases with age. Moreover, Themba et al.'s (2012) study confirms the educational level appears to influence the maturity level of the female and male participants significantly. Their findings further revealed that the female participants who have a degree or diploma level qualification are significantly better at mastering the career development tasks associated with their life stage than their male counterparts, and also better than the males with only matric or post-matric level qualification. This therefore suggests that further educational studies have contributed positively to increasing the female participants' career maturity and their ability to make effective career-related decisions (Themba et al., 2012).

Prideaux and Creed (2001) also revealed an intricate pattern of gender variances, which led these authors to conclude that "boys may benefit from increased attention to career knowledge and girls from attention to the appropriateness of career planning" (p.4). Additionally, the male participants in the study by Themba et al. (2012) who had a matric and post-matric level qualification seemed significantly stronger than the females with regard to career information. Research in this regard has proved that traditionally men tend to be more advantaged in terms of career orientation than women (Sullivan & Crocitto, as cited in Themba et al., 2012). Research by Spencer (as cited in Themba et al. 2012) suggest that women tend to halt their career decision-making because of severe role confusion, which rooted from gender labelling early in their career development. Schreuder and Coetzee (2011) is of the view that women tend to delay their career goals due to family responsibilities and their developmental patterns tend to be more personalised.

There are still dissimilarities that persist in how men and women experience their career development. Even though there is equity in the educational system and within employment opportunities, the role of gender in career development remains a challenge. In a study conducted by Kagoda (2017, p. 1) in Uganda, it was found that female teachers are not comfortable with their current qualifications as well as the treatment from male counterparts. This is especially true with regard to the confinement of traditional cultures, especially in the rural environment where women are perceived as second- or third-class citizens, not on an equal footing with male teachers, for instance.

Furthermore, in Tanzania, unemployment is largely an urban phenomenon, particularly affecting youth and young adults. The labour force survey conducted in Tanzania in 2006 showed an unemployment rate in Dar es Salaam of 34.9% and 21.2% for women and men, respectively, who had secondary level education or above, which suggests there are major difficulties getting employed within the city even for educated women. Statistics further revealed that 1.9% of Tanzanian women were employed in government or parastatal organisations, and 4.8% were employed in the private sector, while the great majority were involved in agricultural activities or the informal sector (Posti-Ahokas & Palojoki, 2014, p. 664).

In terms of economic participation, males get easy access to employment. A study conducted in Limpopo, South Africa, confirmed that males do not have a challenge with employment, however, females do. The study observed that females are victims of higher unemployment than men (Kyei & Gyekye, 2011, p. 54). Another aspect to consider, as alluded to by Welsh (as cited in Mukembo et al., 2014), is that although career aspirations of women are not fundamentally different from men, the choice of a career for women is vastly more complex because of the socialisation process they experience. Apantaku (as cited in Mukembo et al., 2014) supports similar findings that females indicate a strong preference for careers in medicine and little preference for a career in catering or in armed/police forces.

Although globally the role of women in society is changing at a phenomenal rate (Geldenhuis & De Lange, 2007), little can be said or even shown about disadvantaged communities. Contextual factors impede career development and successes of women from a disadvantaged background. One of the female participants in Chinyamurindi's (2016) study highlighted the contextual challenges that influence her career development and framing of career success due to her perception of the role of women in society:

I am from rural Cofimvaba and you can see people in my community are not supportive to the career development of women. This can be due to thinking that our role as

women is just to have children, stay in the kitchen, and fend for the children. To an extent because of this prevailing attitude, girls like me will never be anything and that is as limiting (p.7).

In addition, there are personal challenges about the need for a balance between duties as a mother and wife and a career woman. Chinyamurindi's (2016, p. 8) study further suggests that continuous reference was made by women to the privileged position of men ahead of women and the preferential treatment they receive in society. The ideas of feminine and masculine, and how they influence career choices for individuals are not specific to South Africa only (Myeza, 2015). Frizelle (2002) has described how

this dualistic myth is integral to informal ideas of career development in many cultures where women's biological role as bearer and nurturer of children is said to tie her to earth activities, while men, as bearers of culture, as seen to be involved in the creation of symbols and artifacts (p.32).

In most communities it was found that different views exist around the issue of further education. An observation made by Denhere (2013) highlight that parents would encourage their daughters to marry and benefit from the bride price rather than encouraging them to pursue further education. The same study shows that parents are generally overprotective of their daughters and are very reluctant to send them to the city (Denhere,2013, p. 46).

Asuquo and Inaja (as cited in Chinyamurindi, 2016) highlights the shortcoming of traditional career theories in the omission of the needs of groups such as women, with a focus more on elite white men and matching them to jobs. Chinyamurindi (2016, p. 8) further states that in understanding the career development process of groups such as women, the empirical focus should move away from the matching of careers to determining the factors that may retain and sustain individual career development in a demanding context. In addition, Posti-Ahokas and Palojoki's (2014, p. 664) study revealed that females want to study to develop themselves, to advance in life, and to help others.

## **2.11 Factors that enable and constrain career development**

Education as a socio-economic construct is argued to be the solution to the alleviation of poverty in disadvantaged communities. Equality of opportunity and access to quality education is hindered by a shortage of resources and the prolonged legacy of apartheid. Maila and Ross (2018, p. 1) suggest that although education is perceived to be important, linguistic constraints, under-resourced schools, and a lack of career guidance appear to obstruct matriculants of the

disadvantaged rural community of Siyabuswa, Mpumalanga's ambitions to successfully move from secondary to tertiary education. Additional factors include parental expectations and academic support, while impeding factors include peer pressure, lack of funding, and the inability to apply themselves to their studies. Myeza (2015) postulates that there are contextual factors that influence career development. In his research he explored career narratives of six black South African social workers and highlighted that lack of career counselling, taking a gap year after matric, finances, limited career options, political strikes, and racial discrimination were the major constraints during their process of career development.

Furthermore, Ramjit (2015) is of the view that implementation of an in-depth national and assessment curriculum is not being implemented successfully at the school level. The Life Orientation subject which assists with learners' development and well-being at school, more especially the aspect of careers, is not suitably applied. She further states that career development cannot be deemed as a static process but a highly dynamic and impressionable progression through life. Career interventions are needed and the landscape needs to change in terms of the origins of career practices. By engaging and collaborating with South Africans, the doctrines of the postmodern approach will be fruitful in terms of career guidance and counselling.

Denhere (2013, p. 44) wrote an article on barriers that made higher education inaccessible in which he identified major common constraints. His study highlighted that lack of family support unaffordability, discouragement from peers and lack of information caused barriers. Prideaux and Creed (2001, p. 3) maintain that there is a growing case for career maturity to include factors such as adaptation, planning and exploration in addition to culture and time-specific contexts. Additionally, youth have a need for assistance to discover options to the traditional classroom setting, as many individuals find success in non-school training programmes. Continuous learning is a reality and an essential component in a successful career. Counsellors play a critical role in helping young people realise their dreams and pursue the type of learning that works best for their circumstances. Hence, appropriate career guidance may have a significant impact on the career maturity of students (Eriksson, Hogdin and Isaksson, 2018).

Research has revealed that most students do not always look for information about job and career choices and options before they make their decisions. Therefore, students should be encouraged from a young age to participate in career information searching activities to enable them to make informed career decisions. For instance, psychology requires one to have a long-term view of the profession because of its distinctive career path. Stead and Watson (as cited in

Hoorn, 2014) argue that research in South Africa shows that school leavers often have inadequate career knowledge and that this problem influences effective career decision-making. As stated by Watson et al. (as cited in Albien, 2013), young black people have insufficient career knowledge because most of their information is derived from hearsay. This can be attributed to the lack of career guidance that is available in formal educational systems (Stead & Watson, 1998, p. 290).

## **2.12 Career maturity and career development**

Career maturity is linked to career development (Hoorn, 2013). Studies maintain that there is a growing case for career maturity to include cultural and time-specific contexts and to have other factors, such as planning, exploration, and adaptation, considered (Akosah- Twumasi. Emeto, Lindsay, Tsey and Malau-Aduli, 2018). Additionally, young people require assistance to explore alternatives to the traditional classroom setting, as many individuals find success in non-school training programmes. Continual learning is a reality and a critical element in a successful career. Counsellors play an important role in helping young individuals realise and pursue the type of learning that works best for their circumstances. Hence, adequate career guidance may have a great impact on the career maturity of students (Hoorn, 2013).

There are many restrictions in the current literature (Hoorn, 2013). There is a lack of research work that has focused on secondary school samples (Powell & Luzzo, 1998, p. 145) and even fewer have examined the career maturity of adolescents. The way adolescent schooling is planned or fashioned in western society emphasises the critical importance of career decision-making during the secondary school years. Knowing more about adolescents' career maturity and readiness for career planning can assist the government, policy makers, and especially curriculum developers, to plan and measure the effect programmes designed to enhance career development.

Furthermore, ethnicity differences in career maturity have also been reported, such that youth from major ethnic groups display higher career maturity than do peers from minor ethnic groups (Nauta & Kahn, as cited in Van Reenen, 2010). According to Van Reenen (2010), there may appear to be some inconsistency in results; it can, however, generally be stated that gender, age, and ethnicity differences exist in varying degrees concerning career maturity which has an impact on career development.

Career maturity is purported to account for individual differences in the readiness to make career choices, being able to plan in time, and the eventual transition into the world of work. Vondracek and Reitzle's (2011, p. 6) study on the viability of career maturity theory argues that career maturity, with its focus on the individual and its ties to stage models and notions of age appropriateness, gives insufficient attention to contexts of time and culture. The study concluded that there are limitations on the construct of career maturity in showing how individual differences and contextual factors contribute to the school to work transition in contrasting environments.

Schreuder and Coetzee (2011) maintain that career maturity is an important aspect of an individual's career development and decision-making, job and career satisfaction, and retention in the contemporary world of work. According to Patton and McMahon (2006, p. 153), individuals are regarded as career mature or ready to make appropriate career choices when they have engaged in carefully planned exploration and have appropriate occupational knowledge, self-knowledge, and decision-making knowledge. Dybwad (2008, p. 135) argues that career mature individuals are better adjusted to their career, whereas maladjusted career choices are generally neither congruent with their field of interest or level of aptitude.

## **2.13 Systems of influence that have bearing on career development**

### **2.13.1 Individual Systems of influence**

Existing literature on career development in South Africa depicts black youth now as having access to enormous career opportunities, unlike the past experienced by their parents. According to Albien and Naidoo (2017, p. 1), South African adolescents negotiate the development of their own career identities and adapting to post-apartheid social changes. There is limited career development that is contributed through the Life Orientation curriculum. This curriculum is constrained by competing teaching responsibilities and limited curriculum allocated to career outcomes, to which township schools are no exception. Limited self-awareness, access to career information, and the world of work requirements are cited as major challenges to the career development of adolescents in disadvantaged contexts (Stead & Nqweni as cited in Albien & Naidoo, 2017).

For Lent et al. (1994) and Blanco (as cited in Akosah-Twumasi et al., 2018), career development behaviours are affected by social-cognitive processes that include self-efficacy

beliefs, outcome expectations and career goals and intentions. These constantly interact with variables such as ethnicity, gender, culture, socio-economic status, and social support as well as any perceived obstacles that shape a person's educational and career trajectories. Self-efficacy expectations relate to a person's belief concerning their ability to successfully perform a given task or behaviour and are perceived to be major mediators of behaviour and behaviour change. Low self-efficacy expectations could therefore lead to avoidance of those behaviours, while strong self-efficacy could lead to tackling those behaviours (Reddan, 2015, p. 291). Leong and Barak (as cited in Reddan, 2015) suggest that nearly all individuals have some behavioural areas where they lack confidence in their abilities.

In addition, career beliefs can be described as positive or negative thoughts that are held by individuals about themselves, their careers, or the career development process. Self-efficacy beliefs and beliefs about the world of work can affect an individual's career aspirations and actions, often with career decision-making processes (Albien & Naidoo, 2017, p. 1).

### **2.13.2 Society System of influence**

Exploring the societal influence on career development, Berry (2017) alludes to the concept of 'upward mobility' which occurs in decision-making. The upward mobility can be explained in two perspectives, namely contest mobility and sponsored mobility. Contest mobility is the individual achieving success through their own abilities whilst in competition with others. On the other hand, sponsored mobility is the socialisation with people in power that would enable success through their help. These perspectives on decision-making have an impact on the individual's action and societal pressure as well as being noticed by people in power. Skills, knowledge, experiences, and stable individual differences such as personalities are key in sponsored mobility. Society has an impact on career development as it forces young people to tap into their capabilities. Berry (2017) postulates that young people's career development is balanced between individual capability and social structures.

#### ***2.13.2.1 Family influence***

Disadvantaged communities are very family oriented (Amoateng, Rama & Richter, 2004). Children grow up in a specific value system and worldview. As a result, career development cannot be described in the absence of the role the family plays (Fabiano, 2010). Various definitions exist for the concept of family. Family, according to Reber and Reber (as cited in Fabiano, 2010), refers to a group of people with close social or personal ties, not necessarily

sharing a blood relationship. Most African families are constituted of both male and female members with each having a specific role to play in the development of children. The family of origin influences career development (Betz and Fitzgerald (as cited in Fabiano, 2010). The role of the family is to provide support, give guidance, and provide accountability and inspiration. In addition, education, persistence, personal support, and feedback is emphasised. Studies conducted in the United Kingdom, America, and Mexico suggest that parents play an influential role and have an impact on the career development of their children (Bhalalusesa, 1998; Fisher & Padmawidjaja as cited in Fabiano, 2010).

According to Bollu-Steve and Sannie (2013, p. 90), a child's worldview is shaped by the constitutionality of the family to include parents, siblings, and relatives. Thus, various factors such as the marital relationship of the parents, socio-economic status, and occupational status of the parents have an effect. In fact, parents, siblings, and family relatives form the first point of contact. Several studies show parental involvement in career choices of high school students in South Africa (Fatoki, 2014, p. 668; Mutekwe et al., 2011), in Kenya (Aguado et al., 2015) and in America (Bates, 2015, p. 67) among others. The evidence further shows that families are key pillars of support and a lot of consultation and career planning, career decision-making, and student performance of adolescents is done in consultation with family (Edwards & Quinter, 2011, p. 81; Bollu-Steve & Sannie, 2013, p. 90).

In other studies, parent careers play important roles in influencing children's career choices, as Bakshi et al. (2012) showed in India, for instance. According to Clutter (2010), children who are healthier independent from their families during adolescence and adulthood are more confident in making career choices than those still dependent on family. Aslam et al. (2012) argue that through entrepreneurship in practice among Pakistan parents, children are directly or indirectly influenced into positive attitudes towards family businesses. Studies conducted in Nigeria by Pfungst (2015) in Australia, and Abiola (2014, p. 224) concluded that highly educated parents more resourced financially and in academics are in better position to support their children than poorer parents. Canadian parents with higher levels of education are more able to offer assistance on children's educational matters and career planning (Domene et al., 2006). Career choices of children are influenced by parents; a study on Indian parents augments this fact (Bakshi et al., 2012). On the contrary, Obiyo and Eze's (2015, p. 18) study on Nigerian parents disputes the fact that parental education influences their children's career choices.

Further still, the status of the relationship, particularly the quality of the relationship between the parents and their children, has a great significance on their preferences for their future careers (Kumar, 2016, p. 23). Similarly, Clutter (2010), augments the quality of relationships as

a reason for more confidence based on informed advice strongly influenced by parents. In a study by Aslam et al (2012) conducted among Pakistan parents confirm that children become entrepreneurs because of the influence from the family background that actively practises entrepreneurship. Such positive attitudes from these families are instrumental in the children's willingness to venture into family businesses as well as personal businesses (Aslam et al., 2012). Other studies investigated parents' values and whether such values are a strong influence on children's career choices. A study in Hong Kong confirmed that parents' values enhance interests in certain careers right from childhood. The results point to the role of parents' values in the shaping of the worldviews and perceptions that eventually influence the child's future career choices (Spires, 2017).

Similar studies further highlighted to the role of the mother as instrumental in the influence of career choices. Such studies point out the reality of various households managed by single mothers and, in some instances, households living with the absence of fathers due to work or abscondment from their fatherly duties and responsibilities to their children, or death (Ching & Keith, 2011, p. 1; Duffy & Dik, 2009, p. 29; Hashim & Embong, 2015, p. 252). While various studies confirm the role of parents, other studies refute this conclusion of parents as strong influencers of children's career choices. Such conclusions seem to have a strong bearing on contextualised socio-economic, environmental, and political frameworks. Studies conducted in South Africa and Nigeria in both rural and urban areas support such findings. For instance, Mashinge and Oduntan (2011, p. 21) study in South Africa found that families do not influence career choices and parents' values are not significant predictors of career plans, aspirations, or even vocational expectations. Instead, these studies confirmed the children's desire to fulfil career versus pleasing the family. The interference of families concerning certain career decisions would have a negative influence on the career choices at later stages (Oloasebikan & Olusakin, 2014, p. 44; Egunjobi et al., 2013; Mashinge & Oduntan, 2011, p. 21; Dodge & Welderufael, 2014).

### ***2.13.2.2 Cultural Influence***

Modernist western culture is focusses on the person, the individual. Individualism points out the person as an individual, while ignoring the extent to which everyone is inseparably part of a social world (Galvin, 1997). This modern western culture is in direct conflict to the concept of Ubuntu which is the core of the traditional African collectivist worldview (Tutu, 1999, 2004). Ubuntu refers to interrelation and completeness and highlights that individuals cannot exist in isolation, separate of their social relationships (Tutu, 2004). Instead, individuals form part of the social whole and fulfil an important function in the healthy functioning of the whole (Mogoro,

1998). The group, family, community, tribe, nation, and the universe all define the individual by the complex dynamic interrelationships that the individual establishes and maintains. In line with this, narrative therapists such as White and Epston (1990) and Freedman and Combs (1996) recognise the connectedness between an individual and the community. They are therefore attentive to the social dimension and to the ways in which the community's narratives interweave with the individual's life (Galvin, 1997).

#### ***2.13.2.3 Institutional and School influence***

Career guidance is articulated as a very essential component of career development and integrated into the various institutional curricula such as schools, colleges, and universities. According to Baloch and Shah (2014, p. 536), high schools enable the transition into higher institutions and therefore have a critical role in assisting students to decide on which careers to pursue. Career guidance teaching in schools therefore enables the right selection of study pathways that articulate into various careers based on the student's strength and potential (Dodge & Welderufael, 2014). In addition, Korrir and Wafula (2012, p. 83) argue that there is a correlation between the influence of the school and a student's career choice. A study conducted on hospitality careers at Moi University concluded that most students' interest in hospitality developed in high school (Rop & Kwoba, 2015, p. 20)

Social cognitive career theory posits that the acquisition of self-efficacy is the result of belief in one's capability to succeed. School career exploration and career decision-making activities broaden awareness of their interests, abilities, and career opportunities (Hansen, 2006). Kimiti and Mwova (2012, p. 357), in a study on Kenyan school career guidance, concluded that positivity influence career decision-making, understanding of careers, and career-related information about students' career choices. In other studies, various conclusions point to the importance of school career guidance, and the critical role of teachers and career guidance teachers as career counsellors in influencing student attitudes (Lazarus & Chinwe, 2011; Mghweno et al., 2014 & Gati et al., 2010).

#### ***2.13.2.4 Peer Influence***

Peer relationships play a critical role in influencing fellow peers in career choices. A young person will be more susceptible to be influenced by close friends than from occasional ones because close friends are seen as being more trustworthy (Mtemeri, 2020, p. 120). On one hand, adolescents are most likely to follow each other's impressive educational decisions and, on the

other hand, are deterred from ambitious decisions when encircled by successful peers. In a study on two functions of peer influence on upper-secondary education application behaviour, Rosenqvist (2017) found that adolescents are more likely to conform to their in-group peers. The study further suggests that the point of reference varies with the method mediating relational influence together with traits of both peers and egos.

Shumba and Naong (2012, p. 169) attest to the importance of the role of peer relationships and the manner in which it influences students in various ways through peer-to-peer counselling, peer interactions, and advice, especially with the expectation that peers would more or less be the same age, and share experiences, feelings, thinking, and concerns. Part of the social cognitive theory distinguishes social variables such as peers as influential in learner career choices. There is a notion that adolescents often rely on the credible and achieved characteristics of peers as indicators of similarity, status and even reciprocity.

Furthermore, there is an assumption that peers who are like each other in gender or race are also similar in values and attitudes. Gender and race may be considered when drawing conclusions about status position of their peers in the social network of the classroom. Another element when peers' background and academic experiences are like those of the adolescent, there is an expectation of even greater potential for influence. The decision to pursue post-school studies is usually made during secondary school (Eidimtas & Juceviciene, 2014, p. 3984)

Studies on the influence of peer advice on career choices reiterate the central role of peer advice through interactions of students with their friends who are likely to consider such career advice (Faiter & Faiter, 2013, p. 10; Shumba & Naong, 2012, p. 170). While career guidance and mentorship from teachers is mostly offered in schools, colleges and universities, peer to peer advice, and peer mentorship is an additional strength when making the right career choices, stimulating peer to peer encouragement which eventually brings about greater success. This supports the social cognitive theory (Obwoye & Kibor, 2016, p. 2016). Student peer groups are the single most potent source of influence regarding career choice. Adolescents use peer mediums as a platform to validate their choices on career decisions (Hashim & Embong, 2015, p. 252).

In addition, Obiunu (2008, p. 237), in his study of the effects of reciprocal peer tutoring on the enhancement of the career decision-making process among secondary school adolescents, found that reciprocal peer tutoring is an effective intervention strategy and peer tutoring should be introduced into the school system because of the benefits it holds for learners. One of the advantages of peer support is that it offers non-judgemental acceptance, care and support, and it

provides opportunities to give and receive from others, and it also creates a non- competitive environment. A further advantage is that this interaction encourages and creates the opportunity for peers to influence the development of attitudes and behaviours in ways that are positive. If peer interaction can influence behaviour change, then this will most likely enhance career decision-making amongst adolescents. Peer interaction can be psychologically rewarding if well managed and designed towards specific goals.

Peer group pressure is beneficial if it conveys proper career information but harmful if it provides incorrect information about certain careers which may lead other adolescents to take certain careers. Alternatively, when adolescents join high school, they already have a career in mind which they want to pursue, however their choices might change due to their interaction with their peers who give them comprehensive career information. The studies mentioned above are consistent which revealed that career behaviours are likely to be modified by peers.

### **2.13.3 Environment-Societal systems of Influence**

#### ***2.13.3.1 Impact of political factors on career development***

President Cyril Ramaphosa in the State of the Nation address on 20 June 2019 stated, “The persistent legacy of apartheid has left our country with extreme structural problems – both economic and social” (SONA, 2019). Although we are 24 years into democracy, one cannot ignore the fact that the apartheid system had and still has an influence on career development, especially people from disadvantaged backgrounds and communities. The best example of how the political agenda influenced career development is how, before the 1990s, the white community provided samples for career development research (Stead & Watson, as cited in Fabiano, 2010). There was a misrepresentation of the career interest of black people as compared to the white researchers.

Nzimande (as cited in Fabiano, 2010) has highlighted in his study that career researchers would write about black people stating that they do not think about their careers, and thus are incapable of strategically thinking about further planning for the education of their children. It was understood that black people were only interested in putting their children through school but had no plans beyond school. There were policies which made it impossible for black people to plan their careers since both the quality of education they had received as well as the opportunities available to them were constrained by separatist policies. The career development

of black South Africans has largely been impacted by the racist ideology that was pervasive during the apartheid era (Fabiano, 2010).

## **2.14 Career Counselling**

The career and guidance services structure, according to Cloete et al. (as cited in Naidoo et al., 2017) points to the introduction of the first formal career guidance service that was hosted under the auspices of the National Institute of Career Guidance. This eventually became the National Bureau for Educational and Social Research in 1953 and later the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) in 1968 and was exclusively for whites. Eventually, the Department of Labour introduced career guidance services for the public at its regional offices and provided an annual publication called “My Career”, which hosted information relevant for school leavers and job seekers Cloete et al. (as cited in Naidoo et al., 2017). Several associations were then established as professional bodies namely Society for Student Counselling in Southern Africa as providers or proponents of counselling and career guidance and development services (South African Qualification Authority, 2012).

The practice of career counselling has taken various forms over time. There are tangible benefits associated with the provision of guidance services. Super (1957, as cited in Maree & Beck, 2004) defines counselling as:

a process of helping a person to develop and accept an integrated and adequate picture of him or herself and his or her role in the world of work, to test this concept against reality and to convert it into a reality with satisfaction to him or herself and benefit to society (p. 80).

Career counselling is important for individuals as they cope with their career transitions and their personal development at the same time (Maree, 2009, p. 80). West (2012) asserts that career counselling can no longer be seen as a method where adolescents are helped to make career decisions for life; instead, they are urged to participate with and produce their life stories. Watts (2009) argues that the quality of career information and services should be improved, as it is an essential element to the career guidance system. Cognisance should be given to where individuals find themselves. People are concerned about economic survival and substance. The approach to career counselling should be reframed in the context of developing countries (Watts, 2009).

Historically, South Africa has many disparities, in particular the quality and accessibility of career guidance. Advantaged groups were provided with career guidance while disadvantaged

groups received uneven or no access to guidance during apartheid and even post-apartheid. The fragmented availability of these services may influence the need for career guidance from racial groups and impact on their objectives, the chances they take and the challenges they experience. Maree (2009, p. 80) postulates that schools in higher socio-economic areas benefit more from career guidance than learners in disadvantaged schools with minimal access to career guidance information. Furthermore, it has been found that schools in higher socio-economic areas offered learners a more varied selection of careers linked to market demands, while schools in lower socio-economic areas aligned career choices with gender and stereotypical careers such as teaching and nursing (Maree, 2009. p. 81).

The apartheid regime implemented policies that not only restricted black people to certain residential areas but also barred them from working various sectors of the labour market (Buthelezi et al., 2009). In addition, schools in the disadvantaged black communities were significantly underfunded compared to historically white schools, resulting in overcrowded, ill-resourced classrooms and a significant shortage of qualified teachers (Buthelezi et al., 2009). It is not surprising therefore, that career guidance and counselling were inadequate in these previously disadvantaged communities. Buthelezi et al. (as cited in Naidoo et al., 2019) indicated that career guidance and counselling services were generally unavailable to the disadvantaged majority and further impacted career development and prospects of black students, especially those in disadvantaged communities. Further, career decision-making was a problem, and would be made worse by the inadequate knowledge and skill on the part of educators who teach Life Orientation at high school. This lack of knowledge and skill disadvantage learners when they try to make sound career decisions.

The benefits of career guidance and counselling, as experienced by North Americans, is that greater academic achievement has been obtained, there is a reduction in the dropout rate, lower absenteeism, reduction in student alienation, reduction in exposure to bullying and harassment, reduced incidences of smoking and drinking, more positive school climate, greater satisfaction with school, and greater student participation in school programmes, Students report their school experiences as more relevant and better at preparing them for the future and students indicate that the equality of their education is better. Career counselling creates a platform for adolescents to speak about their employment concerns, which is accompanied by concerns dealing with pressure to achieve academically, family issues, and worries about developing their concept of self. These concerns are situations that are not addressed in academic subjects and are ideally suited for guidance and counselling interventions. Finally, to become more effective in addressing the career-life planning needs of youth, it is important that policy makers and practitioners understand some basic principles of career development, which include multi-

potentiality, career self-concept, planned happenstance, career education and career life planning for girls and women (Hiebert et al., 2010).

## **2.15 Role of non-governmental organisations**

According to Naidoo et al. (2017) and augmented by Flederman (2011, p. 111) and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) (2012), the Soweto uprising of 1976 of students protesting against Bantu education has been earmarked as the outburst of South Africa's crisis into the international scene as a target for developmental funding for educational and developmental programmes in black communities. The 1970s saw the emergence of more non-governmental agencies in the provision of educational and vocational guidance to the communities and support to teachers including the National Association of Career Guidance NGOs in the 1991 which was the South African Vocational Guidance and Education Association, the Career and Information Centre in Athlone, Careers Resources Centre in Pietermaritzburg, and the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Education Development

Following the National Development Plan 2030, the NGOs in South Africa are viewed as legitimate and responsible partners, which alongside other role players including the government, business and development partners, are collectively tasked with advancing the country's shared developmental goals of eliminating poverty and reducing inequality by 2030. It recognises that education is the bedrock of sustainable development and the key to equalising meaningful enjoyment of the full suite of constitutionally protected rights including improvement of the quality of education (Volmink & van der Elst, 2017). In addition, the NDP 2030, chapter nine on Improving education, training, and innovation dictates that all South Africans have access to education training of the highest quality, leading to significantly improved learning outcomes (Volmink & van der Elst, 2017).

The NGOs therefore act broadly on the matters that include serving as critics and watchdogs of policy and its implementation and holding government accountable. NGOs are also social partners, assisting the government in the delivery of its objectives by supplementing capacity in training, development and support. Research and development NGOs work in areas of innovation and programme design and testing new ideas and new ways of doing things. Service providers assist government in the delivery of its programmes. Humanitarian NGOs provide material or logistical assistance for humanitarian purposes in order to save lives, alleviate

suffering and maintain human dignity. Lastly, there are NGOs that enable social entrepreneurs to operate with legitimacy (Volmink & van der Elst, 2017). From the onset, non-governmental organisations are seen to be strategic social partners in the articulation and achievement of various needs that are social-cultural, economically, politically, and environmentally related especially in the previously disadvantaged areas as they historically suffer from the after-effects of the ruthless apartheid regime.

## **2.16 Role models in disadvantaged communities**

Role models have become an important presence over the past decades. Research has shown that visibility of a role model can have a significant impression on confidence and success. Joubert and Slabbert (2017, p. 180) are of the view that disadvantaged youth have a crisis of confidence, which at times is caused by the lack of something as opposed to their peers. Role models have been typically defined as adults whom youth look up to or desire to be like (Hurd & Zimmerman, 2011, p. 2390). They are traditionally looked up to as adolescents form their identities. Furthermore, Hurd and Zimmerman (2011, p. 2390) suggest that the most important character of the role model is to model attitudes, values, and behaviour. A study conducted by Madhavan and Crowell (2014, p. 716) postulates that youth in rural South Africa construct role models and connect them to their life aspirations. The choice of role models reflects a balancing strategy to reconcile individual and group identity development.

Apart from the lack of educational resources, disadvantaged communities offer limited positive role modelling. In a study conducted by Chen et al. (2013), it was found that role modelling may predict a more positive outcome among low socio-economic status youth. A role model could be a teacher, family member or a celebrity on television. Positive role models can enhance social capital in adolescents, and can strengthen positive academic outcomes (Berry, 2017; Hurd & Zimmerman, 2011, p. 2390). Role models are a powerful dynamic that can strengthen the effectiveness of intervention programmes that can change the lives of disadvantaged young people (Joubert & Slabbert, 2017, p. 180; Madhavan & Crowell, 2014, p. 716). Researchers like Mills (2009) and Mishkin et al. (2016) have agreed in their studies that female role models have more influence than male role models. It can be further noted that the shift from male role models to female role models could be because of the emphasis in both academic and social circles on gender equality.

## **2.17 Studies on methodological approaches and career development**

The current study is located in the postmodern era that presents a fast-changing environment in the world of work but more importantly raises new perceptions of career development, career decision making, and career choices that embrace dependency on the need and demand for a certain range of skills and hence the need to remain relevant. Based on the above, this section focuses on various methodological approaches utilised in different studies on career development and sets the ground for the justification of a theoretical approach to the investigation into the career development narratives and post-matriculant experiences within previously disadvantaged communities.

In a quantitative study using social cognitive career theory on influential factors in academic and career self-efficacy attachment, supports, and career barriers, the results reflected those individuals who were more securely attached, perceived greater levels of social support and fewer career barriers and subsequently had higher levels of academic and career decision self-efficacy beliefs and scholastic competence (Wright et al., 2015). In addition, non-traditional college women who perceived fewer barriers and greater social support reported higher career decision self-efficacy and academic self-efficacy. The study concluded that attachment plays a key role in individual perceptions of support and career barriers and their academic self-efficacy and career decision self-efficacy (Wright et al., 2015).

Ali and Menke (2014, p. 175) conducted a quantitative study on rural Latino, youth career development using the social cognitive career theory (SCCT). The results indicated a higher likelihood to encounter barriers as compared to white youth but, on the other hand, they were able to overcome such conditions and achieve career goals more effectively than white students. Further gaps were evident when establishing the relationship between the contextual system, systemic barriers, and support structures in rural communities and their career achievements.

Hsieh and Huang (2014, p. 29), in a study on the effects of socio-economic status and proactive personality on career decision self-efficacy using SCCT concluded that socio-economic status and proactive personality is positively associated with career decision efficacy and, as a result, the college students demonstrate a willingness to confront career barriers and maximise all forms of opportunities. Gaps in the study were centred around the relationship between socio-economic status and other variables such as social support, or career barriers on career goals and career choice behaviour.

Noonan et al. (2004) in a qualitative study, examined the career development experiences of 17 highly achieving women with physical and sensory disabilities. The emergent theoretical model was conceptualised as a system of influences organised around a core dynamic self, which

included identity constructs like disability, gender, racial/ethnic, cultural, personality characteristics and belief in self. The many contextual inputs included developmental opportunities (education, peer influences), family influences (background and current), disability impact (ableism, stress and coping, health issues), social support (disabled and non-disabled communities, role models, mentors), career attitudes and behaviours (work attitudes, success strategies, leadership and pioneering), and the socio-political context (socio movements advocacy). The study concluded with implications for theory, research and for practice in policy to address issues of access, ensuring that people with disabilities experience a full range of opportunities for leading fulfilling and productive lives.

In 2013 Raque-Bogdan et al. conducted a quantitative study on career-related parent support and career barriers with a specific focus on contextual variables using social cognitive career theory. They considered gender differences and the emotional support particularly between women and men and ascertained that females experienced more career barriers than their male counterparts. Suggestions for further study were directed towards parents' differing perceptions of career and educational barriers of sons and daughters as well as the contextual factors including behavioural choices, interests, goals, and actions. More inquiry should be directed towards research on categorical variables that are based on ethnic membership, the role of ethnicity, and its influence on adolescent career-related outcomes.

Other studies using SCCT have pointed to the various personal accomplishments that are prioritised by generational differences which include freedom, creativity, and utilisation of technology. In other instances, career counselling boosted confidence and self-efficacy (Hanani, 2018, p. 137; Prawitasari, 2018, p. 15). A study on social career influences of Xhosa adolescents within peri-urban townships utilised SCCT, among other methodologies. Results pointed to complexities inherent in adolescent career decision-making processes especially in low-income environments to include vocational barriers but, overall, cultural identity emerged as a significant influence in an individual's career development (Albien & Naidoo, 2017, p. 11).

It is noted that the most reviewed studies on career development utilise the social cognitive career theory because of its ability to interact on issues of culture, gender, genetic formation, social context, and unexpected life events that affect career-related choices. In other instances, social cognitive career theory is summed up to include a comprehensive framework by which self-efficacy, outcome expectations, goals that interact with demographic variables, contextual factors, and life experiences that influence interest development, career choice, and performance (Mubiana, 2010).

## **2.18 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have presented the historical perspectives of career development over a pre-modern, modern and post-modern era to position the study in terms of contextual, and conceptual, for a build-up of the theoretical framework. The chapter proceeded to review various historical perspectives on career development, career decision-making in both the international and local scenes. An extensive review of previous studies was done on the issues surrounding career indecision, barriers to career development, socio-economic, cultural, political, and other contextual factors within both the disadvantaged communities, characterised by poverty, low income, unemployment, among others, as well as in the affluent communities. Many of the studies pointed out the sharp differences between the white youth or adolescents and the black African as well as other nationalities across the globe. In addition, the review of literature on the most common methodologies used in career development, and career decision-making included mostly the system theory framework and social cognitive career theory and mostly articulated socio-environmental factors. The gaps in the literature especially in the rural communities of the Northern Cape, Douglas, did not capture the unique narratives and post-matriculant experiences and various ways in which the inadequate absence of career development processes, and career decision-making could be addressed. Using the narrative approach I investigate the factors, systems of influence, and concerns experienced by post-matriculants in the Douglas community. With the acknowledgment of storytelling as a fundamentally essential and human characteristic, clarity is sought on career development narratives and experiences of the post-matriculants in a disadvantaged community such as Douglas.

## CHAPTER 3

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out to discuss contemporary key developments in career theory that inform the present study in examining the career development narratives and experiences of post-matriculants and the factors influencing their career development. Eisenhart's overview (as cited in Grant & Osanloo, 2014) states that theoretical frameworks can be viewed as a structure that guides research by relying on a formal theory. Theoretical frameworks consist of the selected theory or theories that undergird one's thinking about how one understands and plans their topic (Grant & Osanloo, 2014, p. 4). These are the lenses through which one views reality and therefore presents a framework or blueprint in which to guide the study. Such realities include career behaviour, career counselling, career education, career guidance and various career interventions that are important in career development. This theoretical framework focuses on the selected relevant key aspects and theories such as the trait and factor theory, vocational theory, social cognitive theory, development theory, social cognitive career theory (SCCT) in the development of the career theory, eventually leading to the systems theory framework (STF) that undergirds the current study. A summary will be given of each of the theories that serve as indicators for the context of South Africa and why the SCCT and STF are the most relevant theories.

The nature of the current study and discussion of the theoretical framework was eventually narrowed down to the content and process theories of career development (Patton & McMahon, 2014) as the most relevant to addressing the problem statement and the research question. Drawing from the system theory framework and the social cognitive career theory, it is argued that the process of career development cannot be constructed in the absence of historically and culturally situated individuals who construct and derive meaning from it. These two theories therefore were chosen for their ability to integrate the individual, the context, contextual internal and external factors, and the interaction between factors that are internal and external to the individual. Post-matriculants live in and interact with a society that is constantly affected by various social, economic, cultural, political, and other environmental factors. It is therefore important that these factors are considered when accounting for the career development

narratives of individuals and more so the individuals from historically disadvantaged communities.

### **3.2 Brief Overview and Critique of Selected theories of Career Development**

Career development is a continuous, lifelong process of developmental experiences that focus on seeking, obtaining, and processing information about self, occupational and educational alternatives, lifestyles and role options (Hansen, 1976, p. 42). Career theories therefore provide lenses by which career behaviour, career counselling, career education, career guidance and other career interventions are visualised as part of reality and implemented. According to Stead and Watson (2006, p. 206), career theories enhance comprehension of career behaviour and allow predictive behaviour.

There are several career development theories, the primary examples being the trait and factor theory, emanating from the seminal work of Frank Parson, John Holland's person-environmental fit theory, vocational theory, social cognitive career theory, arising from the work Albert Bandura, and Donald Super's theory on the career development over the life span. Having critiqued some of the foregoing theories, and for the purposes of this study, the social cognitive career theory and the systems theory framework are utilised to make sense of the data from career development narratives and experiences of the post-matriculants.

#### **3.2.1 Trait and Factor Theory**

Trait-factor approaches in career psychology, arising from the seminal work of Frank Parsons, are premised on the understanding that matching of occupational choices occurs when individuals' traits achieve a best fit with occupational profile, leading to occupational success and job satisfaction (Coertse & Scheepers, 2004, p. 56). Patton and McMahon (2006, p. 153) argue that trait and factor theory views vocational guidance as a process that requires rational decision-making in which individuals are matched to articulate best fit with a specific career.

Trait and factor theories are premised on assumptions, amongst which are the following: every person has unique patterns of traits made up of interest, values, abilities, and personal characteristics as identifiers for an individual's potential. Every occupation is made up of factors necessary for the successful performance of a particular occupation and therefore enable best fit with individual traits and factors using straightforward problem solving. Lastly, the closer the match between personal traits and job factors, the more likely the successful

performance and satisfaction (Heussen, 2001). Therefore, as Stead and Watson (2006, p. 207) argue, knowledge of self as well as one's work (environment) and the breadth of the career opportunities would enable decisions that are more informed.

Nicholas et al. (2006) describes a three-step model in relation to trait-factor theories: understanding of the individual (traits), aptitudes, interests, abilities and limitations; understanding the job market (factors) and job opportunities in favour of or not in favour of personal abilities; and matching of individual traits and job opportunities and factors surrounding job opportunity.

Trait and factor theories were popular during the pre-modern era that culminated in the industrial revolution. Careers were understood as a lifelong vocation (Watson & Kuit, 2007, p. 73). Parsons' three step matching model consists of studying the person, studying the career options and finally matching the person with the career option. This model is criticised as not focussing on the different aspects of the individual traits and their relationship to the job opportunities. Furthermore, this theory is silent on the contextual factors influencing career decision-making.

Contextual factors that have a bearing on career decision-making are more important in a country like South Africa, with its history of legalised racism (Nel, 2006, p. 35). In a culturally diverse country such as South Africa, trait-factor theories cannot account for the career development experiences of all learners and, in particular, those coming from historically disadvantaged communities that are communal in their orientation. While the theory assumes that individual characteristics such as abilities, interests, and values would boost good performance in well-matched occupations, the prevailing socio-economic, socio-cultural, and socio-political conditions in previously disadvantaged communities and the ever-changing environment pose serious challenges to the contextual validity of trait-factor approaches.

### **3.2.2 Holland's Theory**

Holland (1997) provides a criterion that people can use to determine their career decisions by checking their resonance with the personality type. The theory raises aspects of awareness of self-knowledge to determine their best fit especially between personality and compatibility with the workplace to ensure a successful and satisfactory career. Studies by Miller (2006) show that Holland's theory has been tested and retested and key focus areas were on congruency, reflecting the degree of individual personal qualities and the match with environmental demands in chosen careers.

Holland's (1997) theory predicts that individuals tend to choose careers that are consistent with their personality characteristics. It follows therefore that the lack of self-knowledge and career information would affect decision-making on career choices and have an impact on the personality and occupational fit. However, in the context of South Africa, the theory does not account for various contextual factors including socio-economic and cultural factors that affect the process of vocational decision-making (Du Toit & De Bruin, 2002, p. 62). In addition, the six personality types – namely, realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional - assumed in the theory do not apply to everyone and especially in the context of South Africa where people emanate from numerous backgrounds and contexts.

In addition, the career choice theory embodies a person-environment fit and is sometimes referred to as a typological interactive theory that points to the interaction between people and their environment (Nel, 1999). Osipow's overview (as cited in Gothard, 2001) indicates that Holland's theory is based on career choices representing an extension of personality and holds that there is an attempt to implement personal behavioural styles in the context of work. According to Gothard (2001), career choice theory is based on the assumption that most persons can be categorised as one of Holland's six personality types mainly realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising or conventional and through these personality types people would create an environment typical of the particular type. People search for environments that allow them the latitude to exercise their skills, and abilities, express their attitudes and values, and take on agreeable problems and roles. A person's behaviour is determined by interaction between his personality and the characteristics of his environment.

Although the career choice theory is based on Holland's theory, there is however a distinct difference in the outcomes these theories present. Holland's six personality types do not apply to everyone because of people's complexities. Furthermore, the career choice theory cannot integrate the six personality types into one person with the expectation of a career determination. The argument is that one personality type can be categorised in one person based on the individual and the characteristics of their environment.

### **3.2.3 Super's Development theory**

Donald Super is one of the prominent scholars on occupational choice theory. His theory sets forth certain propositions, namely that vocational preferences and competencies are the result of a continuous process that affects self-concept within the change of time and experience through adjustment. The nature of the career pattern is determined by the individual's parental socio-

economic level, mental ability, personality characteristics and opportunities (Momberg, 2004). Success refers to coping with demands of the environment in the context of any given life career stage, depending on the individual's readiness to cope with demands; development through life stages can be guided by the process of career maturity of abilities and interests by facing reality and enhancing the development of self-concept (Gothard, 2001).

According to Super, the process of vocational development is essential in the developing and implementing of self-concept. This results from the interaction of inherited aptitudes, neural, endocrine make up, opportunity to play various roles and determining the extent to which the role playing meets the approval of superiors and fellows. Work satisfaction and life satisfaction are dependent on an individual's adequate discovery of their abilities, interests, personality traits and values in relation to the type of work establishment, work situation and lifestyle (Momberg, 2004). Lastly, Super (1957) proposes that work and occupation provide focus for personality organisation for all individuals.

Super's (1957) developmental theory suggests that people differ in abilities, interests and personalities and are therefore qualified by virtue of each of these characteristics for various occupations. Therefore, the continuous process to which individuals adjust contains the transition of people through various life stages characterised by growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and the decline (Momberg, 2004). Such stages provide a platform for future and different career decisions that individuals traverse through (Watson & Stead, 2006). In Super's theory, emphasis on the role of self-concept was centred on an individual's abilities, interests, and aptitudes. Further still, the role of contextual factors in the process of career development and career decision-making was viewed as a constant negotiation between these factors (Watson & Stead, 2006, p. 11). Other studies by Brown (1990, p. 171), Osipow and Fitzgerald (1996) and Vondracek et al. (as cited in Chinyamirindi, 2012) critiqued Super's theory for failing to integrate aspects of individual's life as interrelated but rather fragmented, the neglecting of economic and social factors and their influence on the individual's life in early career development, and failure to capture the dynamic interaction between the person and their environment.

The above discussion of selected theories of career development shows that while each theory has something to contribute to advancing the career development of black South Africans, the theories tend to fall short when it comes to accounting for the social and cultural embeddedness of career development. The trait and factor theory emphasises the best fit of individual traits and career choices of individuals and therefore individual traits reflect the personal potential to perform successfully. The career choice theory, on the other hand, emphasises the interaction of

people through their personality types and the environment. Individuals therefore search for suitable environments that would enhance various skills and abilities, and foster positive attitudes and personal values. The career choice theory, therefore, suggests that personality types are critical for the determination of career decisions.

Super's theory introduces a new dimension to the aspects that determine career decision, behaviour that emphasises the individual coping with demands of the environment in the context of a given career life stage. Therefore, the development of self-concept would be a gradual process through the life stages that would be guided by the process of career maturity. It can also be deduced from the theory that work satisfaction and life satisfaction are dependent on individual self-discovery, personality traits, and values and therefore the transition through life stages provides a platform for the future and different career decisions. The limitation of Super's theory and the subsequent theories discussed is the failure to articulate the role of contextual factors, and the tendency to consider self-concept as singular construct. Thus, changes in individuals' career narratives, which reflect their social and cultural positionality, are not adequately factored into the above theories. While acknowledging the usefulness of some of the constructs arising from the theories, the current study proposes the systems theory framework and social cognitive career theory as most suitable in accounting for the career development narratives of learners from disadvantaged communities such as Douglas.

### **3.2.4 Systems Theory Framework of Career Development**

#### ***3.2.4.1 Description of the Systems Theory Framework***

The systems theory framework is a proposed meta-theoretical framework created to form an integrative and coherent framework of career influences that accommodates various types of career development theories (Patton & McMahon, 2006, p. 153). It is a theoretical foundation that accounts for career development in relation to individuals' interaction with each other and within their contextual social, environmental, and societal factors (Amundson, 2005, p. 91; Arthur & McMahon, 2005, p. 208). Central to the systems theory framework is the individual who constructs his or her own meaning of career in context and therefore depicts both the content and dynamic process of career development (Sampson et al., 2017).

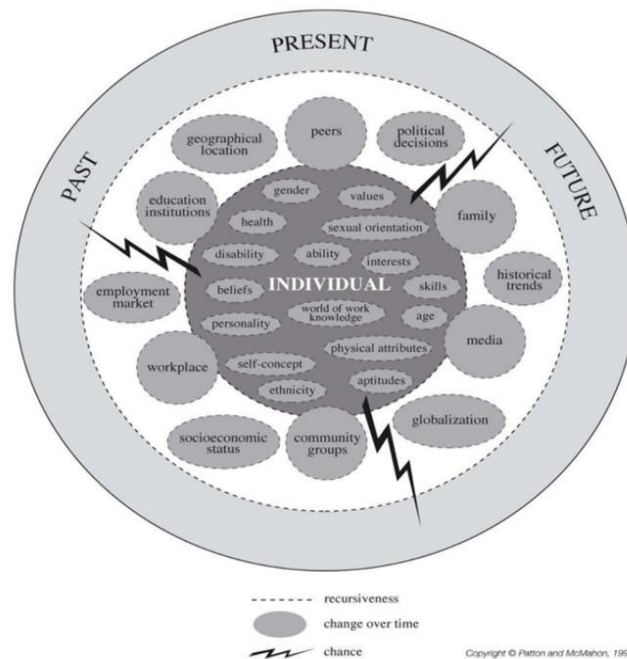
The systems theory framework emphasises the importance of the construction of meaning based on a holistic view. It involves an examination of the entire system and its parts, its connectedness and recursiveness, thereby reflecting the interdependence and interaction between individuals and their environment (McMahon & Watson, 2006, p. 26). Therefore, the systems theory framework integrates various theories aimed at visualising the individual but

influenced by various factors internally and externally in the process of career development (McMahon & Patton, 2018, p. 229).

According to Arthur and McMahon (2005, p. 208), in the composition of the systems theory framework are content and process influences that manifest the holistic nature of influences in career development. The content influences include various individual variables, gender, values, sexual orientation, ability, interests, skills, age, physical attributes, aptitudes, ethnicity, self-concept, personality, beliefs, disability, health, and the worldview of work knowledge. In addition, there are environmental/societal variables that encompass peers, family, community groups, socio-economic status, media, educational institutions, geographical location, political decisions, historical trends, globalisation, workplace, and labour market. Process influences in the systems theory framework include three aspects, namely, the recursiveness pertaining to the openness of systems, the dynamic and ever-changing variables within the various horizons of time - past, present and future - and lastly, the sudden, unanticipated shocks beyond a person's control (Patton & McMahon, 2006, p. 26; Arthur & McMahon, 2005, p. 208).

Figure 2

***The Systems Theory Framework of Career Development***



Adapted from: *Career Development and Systems theory: A New Relationship* by W. Patton & M. McMahon, 1999, Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole. Copyright 1999 by Brooks/Cole.

According to Arthur and McMahon (2005, p. 209), in the composition of the systems theory framework are content and process influences that manifest the holistic nature of influences in career development. Figure 2 illustrates the two main constructs of the systems theory framework, namely the content and process influences. Content influences include various individual variables: gender, values, sexual orientation, ability, interests, skills, age, physical attributes, aptitudes, ethnicity, self-concept, personality, beliefs, disability, health, and the worldview of work knowledge that form the centre of the framework (Patton & McMahon, 2006, p. 27). In addition, environmental/societal variables or rather social and environmental systems of influence suggest coexistence that encompass peers, family, community groups, socio-economic status, media, education institutions, geographical location, political decisions, historical trends, globalisation, workplace, and labour market. Such distal influences are very crucial to the social construction of the context in which individual careers unfold.

Recursiveness in the framework incorporates key aspects of influence such as nonlinear, casual, mutual, multidirectional nature as well as the ongoing relevance between past, present and future (Patton & McMahon, 2006, p. 28). The dynamic and ever-changing aspect of the process influences depicts changes over time. Change is inherent in an individual's career experiences, it depicts an intrinsic and interactive relationship with the past, present and future (Patton & McMahon, 2006, 28).

Unanticipated shocks beyond a person's control or rather chance is a depiction of the continuous interaction between individuals and their environment, according to Patton and McMahon (2006, p. 29). Career development is not always planned, predictable or logical. Hence, the chance and unpredictability of the influences in career development are a result of the inherent interactions with the ever-changing environment.

#### ***3.2.4.2 Suitability and application of the Systems Theory Framework (STF)***

From a qualitative perspective, as applied in the current study on career narratives and experiences of post-matriculants in Douglas, the systems theory framework allows for the exposition of various contextual and environmental factors that inhibit or influence various aspects of career development, particularly in the diverse disadvantaged communities (Watson et al., 2011). From a constructive approach to career development (Patton & McMahon (2006, p. 30) alludes that human behaviour can only be understood in context and individuals would define themselves within their environment. The implication of this individual-environment interaction is that individuals cannot be separated from their environment. Watson and McMahon (2005, p. 119) profess that constructivism is a movement that shifts from the

traditional positivist approach that utilises quantitative approaches to an approach that centres on the uniqueness and dynamism of individual lives. Brott (2001, p. 304) challenges westernised models of career development as irrelevant to marginalised communities as they fail to integrate individuals' contextual circumstances and dynamic life. South Africa poses various contextual circumstances and diversity of its people, especially in previously disadvantaged, marginalised communities that affect career development.

#### ***3.2.4.3 Application of the Systems Theory Framework***

The focal point of the study was to extract the narratives of career development and experiences of post-matriculants, using qualitative approaches, to gain in-depth understanding of their experiences with their specific contexts (Patton, 2005). The systems theory framework was identified as the theoretical framework of the study as it allows for in-depth understanding of inhibiting factors embedded in the narratives and experiences of career development within previously disadvantaged communities. According to Watson et al. (2011), the systems theory framework is relevant to career development in the South African context as it considers the individual, social and contextual factors as critical to career development.

Patton and McMahon (2006, p. 30) note that the systems theory framework is applauded for its adaptability to different contexts focusing on individuals and their contexts and yet ideal for embracing multiple contexts and diversity. Besides, the systems theory framework incorporates various career theories into a multidisciplinary framework that ties together theory and practice (Arthur & McMahon, 2005, p. 209). Moreover, McMahon and Watson (2008, p. 280) argue that the systems theory framework views the entire therapeutic system, interaction, and collaboration between the counsellor and the client as well as their distinguishing roles and values.

Del Corso and Reh fuss (2011, p. 250) state that previously, positivist approaches were utilised to study career indecision and self and career construction difficulties. However, in using these approaches, no insights were gathered on individuals' life themes and their ability to adapt to circumstances. Hence, the application of constructivism that allows the redefining of career as an ever-shifting personal negotiation of professional and life roles (Bimrose & Hearne, 2012, p. 338). Systems theory framework plays an integrative role. Besides the influences contained in the individual systems, the role of other disciplines such as economics and sociology, which are neglected in traditional career development approaches (McMahon & Patton, 2018, p. 229), afford researchers a comprehensive lens by which to examine career development. Blustein (as cited in McMahon & Patton, 2018) stated that systems theory framework provides an excellent

synthesis of the systems perspectives of career development. The systems theory framework approach stimulates meaning of identity influences, which shape individual's self-identification in career as well as addressing the possible barriers within specific career environments (Chan, 2019, p. 6). Through storytelling, the systems theory framework enhances the individual's ability to examine their own career pathways and initiate their own agency for change and action, and contextualise forces shaping career barriers (Chan, 2019, p. 6).

In addition, Patton and McMahon (2017, p. 50) state that systems theory framework is primarily concerned with factors and influences that affect career development for culturally diverse and marginalised individuals and communities. The basis for this approach is that it provides a platform for interaction and advocacy between individuals and various stakeholders, which then broadens perspectives on the approach to career development. Further still, individuals construct meaning of their identities because of their ability to interpret their environments, influences, and experiences (McMahon et al., 2015). The current study investigated career development narratives and experiences of post-matriculants as such stories capture key influences on their career development and capacities to adapt to ever-changing environments. Through such approaches and articulations of the current experiences and barriers of post-matriculants, remedial action, and initiatives were identified to address the flaws in career development within such communities.

Albien and Naidoo (2017, p. 3) use the systems theory framework to present the voices of black adolescents struggling to emerge from the shadow of the apartheid legacy, focusing on the career beliefs perpetuated in low socio-economic communities and negatively influenced career opportunities. The study revealed that the meaning-making of those adolescents from disadvantaged contexts, based on their unique constellation of contextual career influences and their resultant storytelling, is intrinsic to understanding local South African identities embedded in townships.

Matshabane (2016) explores the influence of role models on adolescents in low-income communities. The study was contextualised in relation to the tenets of social cognitive career theory and revealed that the influence of role models, along with cultural values play a vital role in informing decisions about the future careers. McMahon and Watson (2009, p. 184) have discussed the future direction of career psychology on the international scenes and South Africa. The study reflects on how qualitative career assessment tools in South Africa and Australia, namely the My System of Career Influences (MSCI) derived from the systems theory framework of career development and demonstrates versatility of application in one-on-one career counselling and in-group settings.

In 2008 McMahon et al. conducted a study on South African career development using lenses of the systems theory framework. Using the MSCI qualitative career assessment tool, the study revealed that parents had the most influence followed by working overseas. The study also concluded that the MSCI tool was effective in providing insight into both context and process of career development.

### **3.2.5 Social Cognitive Career Theory**

The social cognitive career theory, developed by Lent et al. (1996), draws upon Bandura's (1977, p. 1) self-efficacy theory. It outlines career development, and accounts for the interaction between educational and career interests, career-related choices, and work performance. The Social Cognitive Career Theory emphasises the collaboration of personal attributes, external environmental factors, and behaviour in career decision-making. An imperative contribution of the Social Cognitive Career theory to the career development sphere is that it focuses on the relationships among social cognitive variables such as self-efficacy, and their relationships with other variables in the individual's socio-contextual environment, such as gender, race/culture, family, community, and political constituents. Brown (1997, p. 295) contends that the incorporation of self and social context offers a chance for individuals to gain a sense of control over their career development and increases their career-related self-efficacy expectations. The theory states that if individuals have confidence in their own ability and have a clear expectation of the outcome of their behaviour, they will act in a way that will help them attain their goal (Herr, 2001, p. 196).

Social cognitive career theory (SCCT) views career development as a dynamic interaction between an individual and their environment. According to this theory, four key individual factors influence career behaviour: self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectancies, goals, and behaviour. Self-efficacy and outcome expectancies are believed to be foremost in guiding career interest. According to SCCT, self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectancies result from a combination of personal and vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and affective states. SCCT also describes environmental factors that affect career development, which include chance events. In the short term, these factors are believed to influence the likelihood that individuals act in their interest. In the long term, they have the potential to shape self-efficacy and outcome expectations via learning experiences (Rice, 2014, p. 445).

Lent et al. (2002) point out that people construct their own career outcomes. Based on this, individuals may experience constraints and barriers in their environmental contexts, yet they

can exercise agency in their career aspirations. The social cognitive career theory (SCCT) proposed by Lent et al. (2000) focuses on cognitive variables and the processes that influence career behaviour, including support gained from role models. The theoretical premise of the SCCT originates from Bandura's (1977, 1986) social cognitive theory and Krumboltz's (1979) social learning theory.

Social cognitive theory (SCT) posits that learning occurs in a social context with a dynamic and reciprocal interaction of the person, environment, and behaviour, and that much of what is learned is gained through observation. Krumboltz's (1979) social learning theory contends that people bring genetic and socially inherited attributes to their environment, and these interact to produce the self-view. Conceptually, SCCT was most closely aligned with Betz and Hackett's (1981) position as SCCT focuses on the belief systems that influence career behaviour and is a conceptual framework that emphasises understanding people in their context.

More specifically, SCCT maintains that environmental and personal factors, for example, socio-economic status, genetics, culture, abilities, interests, needs, and personality variables play a significant role in determining career-related behaviour. SCCT shares Krumboltz's (1979, p. 19) emphasis on learning experiences such as direct and vicarious learning, and their influence on occupational interests, values, and choices. Nevertheless, SCCT differs from Krumboltz's (1979, p. 19) conceptualisation of cognitive processes and specific outcomes as SCCT focuses more on cognitive, self-regulatory and motivational processes that move beyond learning and conditioning (Lent et al., 2002). SCCT is applicable to the South African context as environmental factors are essential to our understanding of career choice in a country that is characterised by extensive economic, cultural, and educational variances (Naicker, 1994; Stead, 2005). Socio-political factors also play a significant role in career behaviour and, therefore, need to be taken into consideration when examining the career development of South Africans.

SCCT describes an interrelated and dynamic model of career development and proposes three core constructs or processes, namely, self-efficacy expectations, outcome expectations and choice goals. SCCT has been adapted to elaborate on and extend the aspects of Bandura's social cognitive theory that are most related to processes of interest formation, career selection and performance (Lent et al., 2000). In essence, SCCT draws on the empirical foundations of the constructivist approach about an individual's capacity to influence their own development and surroundings. SCCT views people as active agents in the process of career development.

In this instance, personal beliefs, environmental surroundings, and possible career paths have a significant impact on this process (Lent et al., 2002; Stead & Watson, 2006, p. 206). On the

other hand, researchers and career counsellors acknowledge that the career development process is not solely a cognitive enterprise, as there may be potent (both external and internal) barriers to choose, change and growth (Lent et al., 2002). For example, Gottfredson (2002, p. 156) contends that gender and socio-economic position exert a significant circumscribing and compromising influence on career options an individual is likely to consider.

Additionally, it is crucial to consider that individuals differ in terms of their abilities, interests, and achievement histories and, therefore, it is of the utmost importance to consider this in terms of the career development process of adolescents. Researchers such as Turner and Lapan (2002, p. 44) have deployed the SCCT framework to examine relationships among perceived parental support, career self-efficacy, career planning/exploration, gender, and career gender typing, as well as career interests of middle school adolescents. Consistent with SCCT, their findings suggest that career self-efficacy, career planning/exploration efficacy and perceived parental support, interactively predicted young adolescents' career interests.

#### ***3.2.5.1 Basic tenets of Social Cognitive Career Theory***

SCCT proposes several core concepts, namely the triadic-reciprocal model that consists of three interlocking components, namely: the vocational interest model, the choice model, and the performance model (Lent et al., 2002; Stead & Watson, 2006, p 209). In addition, Lent et al. (2002) identify three mechanisms in the framework, namely: personal attributes, such as internal cognitive and affective states as well as physical characters; external environmental factors, and overt behaviour (distinct from internal and physical qualities of another person) (Lent et al., 2002).

Furthermore, within the personal attributes' mechanism exist three key constructs labelled as the 'building blocks' of career development. These are defined by Stead and Watson (2006, p. 209) as self-efficacy (self-concept), outcome expectations (satisfaction, stability) and personal goals (based on interests, abilities, and needs). Fundamentally, it is pivotal to point out that SCCT highlights the avenues in which individuals exercise personal agency in their career development.

Moreover, Lent et al. (2002) emphasise the position of SCCT in terms of the manner and diverse ways in which variables such as interests, abilities and values interrelate with the influence of personal and contextual factors in the process of career development. The authors conclude that SCCT has been developed to aid understanding of career development among individuals from diverse backgrounds in terms of race, ethnicity, culture, gender, socio-

economic status, age, and disability status (Lent et al., 2002). The social cognitive career theory developed by Lent et al. (1996) draws upon Bandura's (1977, p. 1) self-efficacy theory. It outlines career development, and accounts for the interaction between educational and career interests, career-related choices, and work performance.

The social cognitive career theory emphasises the collaboration of personal attributes, external environmental factors, and behaviour in career decision-making. An imperative contribution of the social cognitive career theory to the career development sphere is that it focuses on the relationships among social cognitive variables (e.g., self-efficacy), and their relationships with other variables in the individual's socio-contextual environment, such as gender, race/culture, family, community and political constituents. Brown (1997) contends that the incorporation of self and social context offers a chance for individuals to gain a sense of control over their career development and increases their career-related self-efficacy expectations. The theory states that, if individuals have confidence in their own ability and have a clear expectation of the outcome of their behaviour, they will act in a way that will help them attain their goal (Herr, as cited in Hoorn, 2014).

### ***3.2.5.2 South African application of SCCT***

In relation to career psychology within the South African context, SCCT significantly recognises the critical role that contextual and environmental factors play in individual career development (Miles & Naidoo, 2016; Stead & Watson, 2006, p. 2010). De Bruin (1999, p. 91) introduces the notion of barriers, which he sees as an instrumental concept in the career development of South African youths, more specifically African South Africans and individuals from low socio-economic backgrounds. He asserts that SCCT is of relevance to the South African context as opposed to the traditional theories of career development, because it specifically focuses on the social and environmental context of the individual. SCCT has previously been applied in South African career psychology research literature (Bester, 2011; Buthelezi et al., 2009; Miles, 2015). Specifically, Buthelezi et al. (2009) has sought to understand the perceived career challenges and needs of Grade 9 and 10 learners from a disadvantaged background by deploying SCCT.

Bester (2011) explored the diverse perceptions of career barriers among South African university students and examined the extent to which internal and external barriers affect individuals' career barriers. Her findings suggest that career barriers vary significantly by gender, race/ethnicity, and academic year of study. More recently, Miles and Naidoo (2016) have utilised SCCT to assess socio-economic differences in self-efficacy beliefs of Grade 11

learners. In this instance, SCCT was deemed a suitable theoretical framework as a base for this study given its emphasis on understanding the individual within his or her context.

### **3.3 Implications for career development of disadvantaged youth**

While the abovementioned theories have contributed to the growth of career counselling as a speciality in Psychology, they have been criticised for the fact that, in general, the empirical studies on which the theories are based relied primarily on white male participants (Bimrose, 2001, p. 79; Fitzgerald et al., 1995; Gies, 1990, p. 54). Therefore, the applicability of the theories' constructs and assumptions to females has been disputed (Coogan & Chen, 2007, p. 191). Another criticism is the lack of African perspectives in the theories (Langley, 1999, p. 67). The importance of understanding people from their worldview has been emphasised (Lee, 1999; Pedersen, 1988; Steere & Dowdall, 1990, p. 11). A worldview provides a framework for the person's behaviour and perceptions of life. The individualistic values, which are the philosophical foundations of most career theories, have also been criticised in relation to their appropriateness in different cultural contexts, including Africa. The theories generally assume that the "individual is a free and autonomous agent" (Akhurst & Mkhize, 2006, p. 146), which is in contradiction with the philosophy of connectedness which underpins most collectivist societies. Another critique is failure to account for social class (Bimrose, 2001, p. 79).

As the review above indicates, assumptions embedded in career counselling may render career-counselling practices either insufficient or irrelevant to the experiences of the disadvantaged. For example, portraying career decision-making as an individual process is not consistent with other cultures of the world (Cook et al., 2002; Bingham & Ward, 1994). The family, group and collective (Betz, 1994; Cook et al., 2002; Zunker, 2002) may influence youths' career decision making. The current study employed narrative approaches (Polkinghorne, 1988) to understand how disadvantaged post-matriculants make sense of their own career development.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have directed the discussion to the various career development theories, namely trait and factor theory, Hollands's theory on vocational choice, Super's development theory, social cognitive career theory and the systems theory framework. The career theories stretch over the transition of periods from pre-modern, modern and postmodern eras to theoretical positions underpinning key arguments and interpretation of the study. The career theories mentioned resonate with the various research studies in the literature review on career

development, career decision-making, and career choices, especially in the context of previously disadvantaged communities. The current study therefore singled out the social cognitive career theory and the systems theory framework as critical to the interpretation of the uniqueness in the career narratives and experiences of post-matriculants in Douglas, Northern Cape.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the methodology used in this study. A snapshot of this section was briefly introduced in Chapter 1. This chapter details the research methods used to guide the entire research process. The research methods referred to in the research process are research design, population and sampling procedures, data collection techniques and instruments, and selected techniques used to process the data. In addition, the chapter articulates the concerns around ethical considerations and guidelines followed in the research study. The research approach in this study was guided by the key research questions deduced from the problem statement, the aim of the study, and the review of literature on aspects of career development contextualised within the South African environment. The focus in the chapter is narrowed down to exploring the career development narratives and experiences of post-matriculants in previously disadvantaged communities in the Douglas community in the Northern Cape.

#### **4.2 Narrative paradigm**

For this study, a narrative paradigm was applied to explore the career development narratives and the lived experiences of the post-matriculants of Douglas. Narrative inquiry is a form of qualitative research in which stories themselves become the raw data (Bleakley, 2005, p. 534). According to Lieblich et al. (1998), the narrative approach has been used in various disciplines to learn more about culture, historical experiences, identity, and the lifestyle of the narrator. The narrative approach involves inquiry directed at narratives of human experience or inquiry that produces data in narrative form (Hoshmand, 2005, p. 178). Narratives provide platforms through which people make their present and past experiences meaningful. By so doing, narrative inquiry increases the understanding individual lives, especially taking into account the pre-democratic and post-democracy experiences. In addition, Pinnegar and Daynes (2007, p. 3) posit that the narrative paradigm embraces narrative as both the method and phenomena in the study. It begins in lived and told experiences and involves the reconstruction of a person's experience in relationship both to the other and to a social milieu (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Many contemporary narrative researchers situate their work as emanating from ideas

disseminated by Jerome Bruner (1987), Ted Sarbin (1986), and Don Polkinghorne (1988), to mention a few.

Polkinghorne (1988) emphasised the dynamic aspect of the self-as-a-story and wrote: “We achieve our personal identities and self-concept through the use of the narrative configuration and make our existence into a whole by understanding it as an expression of a single unfolding and developing story” (Polkinghorne, 1988, p 150). Since the 1990s, work in narrative research has flourished, as researchers use narrative analysis to understand how people construct their lives. Inductive in essence, narrative inquiry is conducted within a postmodern frame in which knowledge is constructed rather than discovered; as such, it is assumed to be “localised and perspectival, occurring within inter-subjective relationships to both participants and readers” (Josselson, 2011, p. 34). Lieblich et al. (as cited in Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007) referred to a ‘narrative revolution’ because of the decline in an exclusively positivist paradigm for social science research.

Polkinghorne (1988) differentiated between a story and a narrative by asserting that “a story is a single account, reviewing life events in a true or imagined form and a narrative as a series of multiple stories that organises events and human actions as a whole” (p. 18). Bruner (1987) says stories are constructed in people’s heads and can direct the author’s life, as “we become the autobiographical narratives by which we tell about our lives” (p.694). His ideology on the narrative approach suggests that narratives are formed over time which is structured around particular events. He further argues that when a story is being told, characters have intentions, such as beliefs, desires, theories, and values. Bruner posits those narratives reference realities and frame meaning which is a culmination of old and new stories.

Sarbin (1986) calls this approach the narratory principle, “in that human beings think, perceive, imagine and make moral choices according to narrative structures” (p. 8). Sabrin (1986) believes stories provide the context in which people act, and they are also the causes of subsequent events.

The justification for the narrative approach is amplified by its defining features of a collection of narratives from individuals or small groups, usually in collaboration with the researcher capturing the individual experiences and gaining a sense of the individual identities (Butina, 2015, p. 190). Therefore, by using the narrative inquiry approach, the career development narratives and experiences of the selected post-matriculants would be captured and analysed to establish an understanding of the contextual issues facing post-matriculants and career development.

### **4.3 Qualitative Research Design**

Qualitative research is useful for studying the uncharted ground and rich descriptive explanations of processes in identifiable local contexts. It further preserves chronological flow, sees precisely which events lead to which consequences and derives fruitful explanations. Furthermore, qualitative research is concerned with how human behaviour can be explained within the framework of social structures in which that behaviour takes place, and where individual experiences can provide detailed descriptions to bring to light the unknown (Austin & Sutton, 2014, p. 436). Furthermore, qualitative research enables the researcher to explore pertinent attitudes, feelings, and beliefs around the topic of study by aspiring to obtain a thick and rich description of the interview data (Bryman, 2012; Harrison et al., 2001). Applying a qualitative approach enables an in-depth exploration of the context of the study (Neuman, 2011).

The qualitative research design in this study is particularly appropriate to present an intricate and thorough understanding of the Douglas community's career development narratives and experiences. Information can thus be gained about the constraints of what is known and unknown in the career development of disadvantaged post-matriculants (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 101). However, exactly how the thoughts and feelings of participants should be represented honestly and systematically is an intricate task (Burnard, 1991, p. 461). Qualitative data raise complex issues that require responses obtained from participants to be presented truthfully. Reliability of the research, known as trustworthiness, at times allows replicability of procedures, and data generated under different circumstances can yield similar results (Bryman, 2001; Stiles, 1993, p. 593).

### **4.4 Location of the study: The Town of Douglas**

The Northern Cape is geographically the largest province in South Africa, having a landmass of 372 889 km with the introduction of the new provincial boundaries, and covers approximately one-third of the country's surface area. The Northern Cape is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean on the west, Namibia on the northwest and Botswana on the north, the Western Cape on the southwest, and the Free State on the east. The demarcation process of 2000 resulted in five district municipalities (Frances Baard, Pixley Ka Seme, Namaqua, Siyanda, and John Taolo Gaetsewe (Siyancuma IDP Report, 2018/2019).

In a community survey conducted in 2016, the population size of the Northern Cape was 1 193 780 (Stats SA, 2016) of which the Pixley Ka Seme district municipality had a population size of approximately 186 351. The Siyancuma local municipality had a population size of just more than 35 941 people during 2016 (Stats SA, 2016). The municipal area encompasses a geographic area of some 10 041 km, which implies that Siyancuma accounts for some 9.8% of the total district surface area (Siyancuma IDP Report, 2018/2019).

The Siyancuma municipality consists of three urban settlements, namely Douglas, Griekwastad, and Campbell; two restitution settlements, namely Schmidtsdrift and Bucklands, and vast rural areas with family clusters in Salt Lake, Plooyburg, Witput, and Belmont. The spatial frameworks of all areas were shaped by their very different histories and the framework will continue to impact the economic and social lives of the residents (Siyancuma IDP Report, 2018/2019).

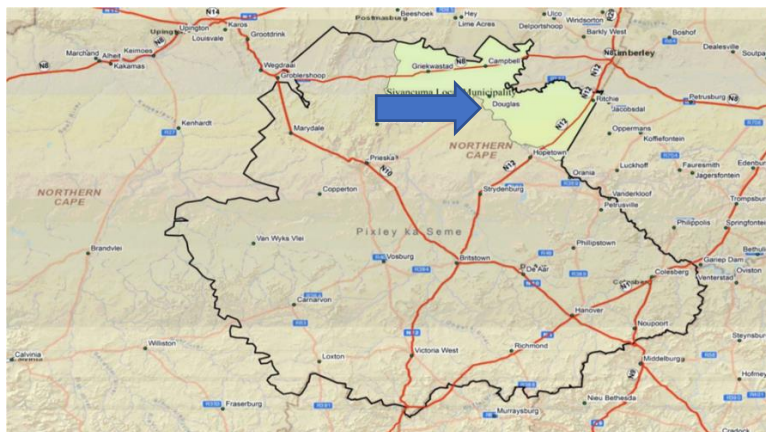
The town, Douglas, is situated 100 km west of Kimberley on the R375 that connects Prieska and Kimberley. It has three main residential areas - Bongani, Breipaal, and Douglas town. Douglas is the economic hub of the Siyancuma municipality. It is divided along racial lines by industrial areas and the Vaal River. Since 1995, the local municipality has spent most of its budget to provide basic infrastructure in the poor area to catch up with service backlogs. However, the influx of unskilled people from farms has and is continuing. The agriculture and stock farming sector, community, the social and personal service sectors are the strongest economic sectors and biggest job providers in this town. Key service sector employers include agriculture entities, provincial and local government, education and health facilities, the local prison, services to the agricultural sector, and the financial sector (Siyancuma IDP Report, 2018/2019).

The history of the town of Douglas extends for over 150 years, as such the town itself is a heritage arena and bears many signatures of the past. The town was founded in 1848 as a mission station on the farm Backhouse by the Reverend Isaac Hughes. In 1867, a group of Europeans from Griquatown signed an agreement giving them the right to establish a town. The town was named after General Sir Percy Douglas, Lieutenant Governor of the Cape Colony.

Figure 3

### *Map of Douglas*

## 4.5 Location of Douglas



(Siyancuma IDP Report, 2018/2019, p.22)

## 4.6 Major economic drivers

Agriculture and mining are the major economic drivers of Douglas. The agricultural sector incorporates establishments and activities that are primarily engaged in farming activities, although the sector also includes establishments focusing on commercial hunting and game propagation as well as forestry, logging, and fishing. The existence of the Orange and Vaal rivers in the region as well as exemplary soil conditions make Douglas ideal for irrigation farming practices, which include the cultivation of various crops from grains to vegetables. The main livestock farming in the region primarily consists of cattle, sheep, and goat farming. Game farms also operate in the area and facilitate tourism and hunting activities.

The mining activities in Douglas include alluvial diamond mining along the Orange and Vaal rivers. Various semi-precious stones such as tiger-eye, are produced in the region. It is said that production activities are slightly lower in Douglas. Growth around minerals broadens the economic linkages. The challenges facing Douglas are how to broaden and encourage the opportunity spaces presented by the availability of mineral resources. Furthermore, mineral-based activities, whether large or small scale, have the potential to stimulate economic diversification and industrial development in a region, provided several issues are borne in mind. These issues include global market trends and technology change. Most of the issues are

technical in nature and require skills that are largely absent in Douglas. Critical skills are needed within these sectors, such as technical and artisan skills. This is one of the major development constraints in Douglas.

#### **4.7 Overview of Douglas**

The 2011 census conducted by Stats SA (2011) showed that Douglas had a total population size of 20 083 people, with 62.7% in the economically active age group between 15 - 64. The percentage of no schooling age of 20 and above was 14.4% of the population, 5.4% attended higher education and 20.5% obtained a matric qualification. . There were 4707 households with an average household size of 4,2. Females headed 41.7% of these households. In terms of housing, in 2011 67,2% of the population of Douglas had formal dwellings; 52,4% were house owners and some were paying off their houses. Of these houses, 69.4% had flushing toilets which were connected to the sewerage system, 51,6% of these households had piped water inside their dwellings and 90% had electricity for lighting.

The census in 2011 (StatsSA, 2011) revealed that 17,7% of the population had no income and the lowest individual income ranged from R1 – R4 800, while the highest individual income ranged from R12 801 – R204 801 or more. StatsSA Census (2011) further revealed that the unemployment rate had increased, the employment rate had decreased and the group classified as the “not economically active” had increased marginally. Housing increased during the period of 2001 – 2011. The type of dwelling had increased from the structure of the traditional material to brick structures. Access to health services was a primary function that was adopted by the national government ensuring that services were available within walking distance of communities. The health care systems that presently exist in the district consist of provincial hospitals and provincial clinics.

##### **4.7.1 Level of Education**

The challenges faced by the education system in the Northern Cape are many and diverse. The major contributing factor to the state of education in the province is because the Northern Cape is the largest and most sparsely populated province of South Africa. Table 1 include for comparison the Siyancuma Municipality, Northern Cape Province, and South Africa’s education level as I draw specific attention to Douglas. As at 2011, 9% of the population of

Douglas had completed their secondary level, meaning they had a Grade 12 pass. Table 1 further indicates that 2% of the population attempted tertiary studies. The table seems to suggest that there is no synergy between parents, teachers, and learners to improve the quality of education. An effective and efficient education system should be responsive to socio-economic goals and targets of the province.

Table 1

***Education level in the Siyancuma Municipality***

Level of Education	% Griekwastad	% Campbell	% Douglas	% Schmidtsdrift	% Rural	% N Cape	% SA
No schooling	20	18	18	58	23	15	14
Some primary	27	29	26	20	28	23	22
Some secondary	34	37	35	9	28	38	36
Completed secondary	6	5	9	1	6	12	14
Tertiary qualification	1	0	2	-	3	3	4
Unspecified	11	10	10	11	11	10	10

**Source: StatsSA Census (2011)**

Table 2 provides a detailed account of the education level in Douglas out of a populace of 20 083 thousand. Because of the location of Douglas and it being a business hub for the surrounding areas like Campbell, Schmidtsdrift and Bucklands, one finds that the children of these areas attend school in Douglas. Schooling facilities in Douglas include two primary schools, one intermediate school and three high schools. At the beginning of 2021, another new primary school was opened in Breipaal. The additional school will assist with overcrowded classrooms, amongst others. The table further suggests that several people completed their Grade 12, yet the progression to the next level which is tertiary is not being pursued. Only a limited amount of people attended tertiary institutions. Many factors can be taken into consideration to justify this slow progression - amongst others, child-headed households, teenage pregnancy, lack of information regarding career choices or limited access to resources.

#### ***4.7.1.1 Education level in Douglas***

Table 2

#### ***Education level in Douglas***

No Schooling	2 072
Some Schooling	6 257
Completed Primary	1 369
Some Secondary	5 159
Grade 12	2 268
Higher	495

**(Siyancuma IDP Report, 2015/2016)**

The levels of tertiary education are the lowest and the major contributing factors are poverty and lack of tertiary institutions within the Municipality (Siyancuma IDP Report, 2015/2016). In addition, the lack of information about career options are also contributing factor to the low levels of tertiary education.

Information obtained from Census 2016 (StatsSA Census, 2016), indicate that in terms of gender, females are the most represented in terms of completing school and furthering their studies with an approximate total of 10126 and males approximately 9957.

#### ***4.7.1.2 The population groups in Douglas***

The population of Douglas is divided into the Black African, Coloured, Indian/Asian, White, and Other. Most of the population consists of coloured people. Douglas is predominantly a farming area and consists of mines scattered in the Siyancuma municipality, leading to or inviting migration from various race groups. Interracial relationships are also contributing factors into how population groups are formed. Table 3 gives an overview of the population groups which exist in Douglas.

Table 3

*Population groups in Douglas*

<b>Population group</b>	<b>People</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Black African	6 450	32.1%
Coloured	11 705	58.3%
Indian/Asian	153	0.8%
White	1 602	8.0%
Other	173	0.9%

*4.7.1.3 Language in Douglas*

The community of Douglas is diverse in its languages, with Afrikaans being the dominant medium of communication (Census 2016). The inter-relational and migration of people in and to Douglas has given rise to a diverse usage of languages. Table 4 gives an overview of the language composition in Douglas. Afrikaans, as demonstrated by Table 4, is the predominant language.

Table 4

*First language of the people in Douglas*

<b>First language</b>	<b>People</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Afrikaans	18427	93.12%
Setswana	448	2.26%
English	302	1.53%
isiXhosa	164	0.83%
Sign language	134	0.68%
Sesotho	82	0.41%
Other	80	0.40%
isiZulu	40	0.20%
isiNdebele	33	0.17%
Tshivenda	28	0.14%
Xitsonga	25	0.13%
Sepedi	22	0.11%
SiSwati	3	0.02%
Not applicable	294	

*4.7.1.3 Infrastructure in Douglas*

Infrastructure and social amenities such as transport, energy supply, refuse removal, water and sanitation appear to be widely available throughout Douglas, however, some areas require development. In terms of transport, most of the people of Douglas do not have transport of their own and walk on foot to their places of employment, school, and businesses in town. A small percentage of people in Douglas make use of bicycles or public transport like minibus taxis. In terms of access to electricity, the bulk of the households make use of in-house prepaid meters.

The challenge being faced by the municipality is the expansion of informal settlements, which requires electrical infrastructure. Water is accessible to the households of Douglas. Water is available inside their homes followed by taps inside the yards. However, many households are still dependent on communal taps. Sanitation remains a challenge, although the majority of households have flush toilets, a small number of houses still make use of the bucket system which is collected by the municipality (Siyancuma IDP, 2020/2021).

These socio-economic indicators are key areas and require attention as they will eradicate and address the issue of poverty and shift the focus of factors that could influence a community or individual's progression. By eradicating challenging factors, opportunities for growth and development can surface, which will show exactly what the needs of the local community are and, in so doing, will strengthen the career options for youth. Watkinson and Hersi (2014, p. 44) are of the view that to enable career development in students, school counsellors need to identify and understand both the socio-cultural and contextual factors that influence career choice amongst the learners. Furthermore, career development is not an isolated process. According to Super (1957), by the time an individual is ready to make the change from secondary school to work or college, several different choices have already been made. In other words, a person's career development starts as soon as he or she becomes aware of life and how one finds oneself through life, finally reaching a point in life where you can look back and see what has influenced your decision to become who you are today. Super (1957) argues that career planning is an ongoing process and not a single choice.

#### **4.8 Population and sampling**

Population is defined as a cumulative or totality of all the objects, subjects or members that conform to a set of specifications. In this study, the population was South African post-matriculants from Douglas, Northern Cape. According to the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET) (2009), the age (18 – 24) cohort has been identified and confirmed by UNESCO and recommended by the Department of Education in South Africa as the age group who participates in post-school education. Participants were born and completed their primary and secondary schooling in Douglas. They must have passed matric and be between the ages of 18 – 24.

Purposive sampling was determined to be suitable for this study as the selected participants would be the ones that fit the description alluded to. Creswell (2014) recommends a sample size between five and twenty-five and Morse (1994) suggests at least six participants to gain

rich insights for one's study. There are no specific rules when determining the appropriate sample size in qualitative research. However, the approach I took was to collect diverse samples until redundancy was reached.

Maximum variation sampling, as proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), provides the ability to compare and contrast, to identify similarities and differences in the phenomenon of interest. The maximum variation sampling strategy highlights important shared patterns that cut across cases and derived their significance from having emerged out of heterogeneity. The current study comprised a heterogeneous sample of both genders, those who left school at different periods, those who were working and not working, as well as those who had proceeded to study at a tertiary institution and those who did not. Furthermore, a qualitative sample size may best be determined by the time allocated, resources available, and study objectives (Patton, 1990).

#### **4.8.1 Procedure to gather the sample population**

In collaboration with a local organisation, MarDan Enterprises, I planned a Careers Exhibition in Douglas during September 2017. The invitation was extended to high schools as well as post-matriculants and the broader community in Douglas. Letters were sent to various religious institutions and non-governmental organisations. Posters were published at key communal areas such as the library, schools, and shops. Social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp were used to extend the invitation. I was of the view that this event would draw the required target group as there are not many events of this nature that take place in Douglas.

A database with contact details were collated of the attendees. The contact list included a column in which the attendees had to indicate their status at the time of the careers exhibition, that is, were they still at school and, if so, which grade. Or they had to indicate whether they had completed matric and in which year. From the database a list of post-matriculants was extracted. The researcher contacted the post-matriculants and scheduled convenient meeting times to present the research project and ascertained their interest to participate in the research. The invitation was extended to the employed and unemployed; those who were pursuing a post-school qualification or not. The intention was to gather a fair representation of both genders (male and female).

Once the invitation was extended, there was a response rate of approximately 30 post-matriculants. I gave a detailed explanation of what the study entailed and outlined the process that would take place. At the end of the briefing session, I distributed another contact list form in which those who were interested in being part of the research study could put their names

down for further interaction with me. Out of the 30 post-matriculants who attended the briefing session, 23 signed up to form part of the research study. I believed the novel and rich data could be elicited from the group of post-matriculants.

#### **4.9 Instruments for Data Collection**

Data collection in the study followed an iterative process as well as methodological triangulation. The participants completed a demographic questionnaire, which was followed by individual interviews (twenty three participants). In a group setting, eleven participants completed the MSCI instrument, and this was followed by an individualised session in which the researcher created a space for the participants to reflect on their responses. Finally, a focus group discussion was held with the eleven participants who had completed the MSCI. The individual and focus group schedule was adapted from the MSCI. It consisted of 15 questions that were used for interviews as well as focus group interviews. The interview schedule helped to ascertain what the participants' experience were before completing the MSCI and their reflections post completion of the MSCI.

##### **4.9.1 Demographic questionnaire**

To obtain the relevant biographical and demographic information, a self-developed questionnaire was administered to source the information (Appendix B). The demographic questionnaire was used to get an overall sense of the participants. The questionnaire consisted of nine categories and the participants had to place a tick in a box that applied to them and in some categories they had to fill in the blanks. The participants had to respond to their gender, age, home language, mother's education level, father's education level, mother's job, father's job, participants' date of birth, grade passed and they had to identify three career interests. The data with respect to these biographical questions were subsequently graphically represented and discussed to provide an indication of the most significant findings in respect of these variables. In addition, the biographical questionnaire gave an overview of the parents' disposition in helping the post-matriculants to formulate their educational worldview.

##### **4.9.2 Narrative interview schedule**

The narrative interview schedule consisted of sixteen semi-structured questions (Appendix C – Adapted from the MSCI: McMahon et al., 2005). The purpose of using the interview schedule was for participants to share the story of their career journey, their earliest recollection of their

career journey until the day we had our meeting. They had to highlight the highs and lows of their career journey, how they got through the lows, who assisted them, as well as challenges and obstacles they had experienced, and what they did to address those challenges and obstacles. The interview schedule helped to set the tone for engagement with the participants during the data collection period. The narrative analysis interview schedule was used to respond to research questions (1) What are the career development narratives of post-matriculants in Douglas? (2) What is the gendered dimension of the career development narratives and experiences of post-matriculants in Douglas? (3) What factors enable and constrain the career development narratives of these post-matriculants? and (5) What are the individual (self) and communal (self-in-community) concerns experienced by post-matriculants in Douglas?

#### **4.9.3 My System of Career Influences (MSCI)**

The MSCI is a qualitative career assessment reflection process based on recent developments in theory and practice (McMahon et al., 2005). It uses a constructivist view and encourages a narrative and story-based approach to one's career development. It provided an opportunity to reflect on or think about the influences on career decisions. For the purposes of this study, sections that speak to systems of influence were extracted in response to the 4<sup>th</sup> research question: What are the systems of influence that have a bearing on career development narratives and experiences of post-matriculants in Douglas? These sections where applicable responses were extracted were individual, social and environmental-societal influences. The MSCI was used to look at the post-matriculants' perceived challenges in relation to themselves, society and the environmental society which suggest a bearing on their career development.

The MSCI (Adult) has been used successfully by career development practitioners working in private practice in one-on-one career counselling with small groups of individuals (e.g., adults in a return-to-work programme). In addition, MSCI has been successfully used by career development practitioners working in large organisations as a resource in career development programmes provided for employees.

The My System of Career Influences (MSCI) booklet contains a personalised map based on the systems theoretical framework (STF). Visually represented information encourages individuals to reflect on their career realities and tell their career stories (McMahon et al., 2004; McMahon & Watson, 2008, p. 280). The qualitative story-telling approach, specifically the MSCI, was found to be effective in research conducted on rural and urban middle class Australian secondary school learners (McIlveen et al., 2012). In the South African context, research has been conducted on low socio-economic urban black secondary school learners as well as

middle-class urban white and black secondary school learners. The appropriateness of the MSCI across a diverse group of individuals was demonstrated in past research (McMahon & Watson, 2012, p. 440). The meaning-making that disadvantaged adolescents undergo based on their unique constellation of career influences and resultant storytelling is intrinsic to understanding local South African career identities (McMahon & Watson, 2008, 2009). The usefulness of the MSCI as a qualitative career measure was analysed in this exploratory research to address the career needs of post-matriculants living in a disadvantaged context, such as that of Douglas (McMahon et al., 2008). It provides an opportunity for individuals to reflect on their systems of influence in a systematic process.

The MSCI (Adult Version) (McMahon & Watson, 2008, p. 280) was appropriate for the current study in terms of its development. Trials of a modified MSCI for adults were conducted internationally in Australia, South Africa, and Great Britain, with feedback being provided both by facilitators as well as by adult participants in the three countries. Trials included males and females from trade, managerial and professional backgrounds, and from urban and rural locations and settings such as a large public sector organisation and small-medium enterprises. In terms of the South African trials, participants indicated that the MSCI assessment process had increased their awareness of the diversity and critical importance of systemic influences in their lives and provided them with the opportunity to put things into perspective. The MSCI has proven useful in enhancing the career development of middle class South African high school students. The MSCI was applied in response to Research Question 4: What are the systems of influence that have a bearing on the career development of the post-matriculants of Douglas?

Kuit (2005) used the MSCI in a collaborative group approach to help adolescents elaborate on their career narrative and find meaning in their personal career development. In a further case study, Watson and McMahon (2005, p. 119) described the case of a 33-year-old English-speaking black South African higher education student with whom they used the MSCI (Adult version). The case study illustrated how career counsellors can assist tertiary students to reflect on intrapersonal strengths and macro-systemic barriers and in doing that link their life stories to their career choices.

The MSCI is sensitive to variables such as culture, socio-economic background, barriers to career development, and other contextual influences that have been less focused on in quantitative career assessment. The MSCI can be used in group and education settings and it is a cost-effective approach to qualitative career assessment in South Africa. Such an approach would seem to be exceptionally relevant in the present context within which South Africans live. In this research, the MSCI was used as a conceptual guide for exploring the career

influences and factors impacting the career development of post-matriculants in Douglas. It was envisaged that insight could be gained into the content and process influences in post-matriculants' career ideation construction (Usinger & Smith, 2010, p. 580).

In a study conducted in a low socio-economic area, namely Kayamandi, Albien (2013) illustrated that the MSCI identified career influences located at individual, social and environmental-societal levels as well as significant time elements. At the individual level, Afrocentric values and beliefs, personal abilities, and a lack of self-knowledge were prominent themes. Parents, teachers, and friends were identified as significant social-level influences. The environmental-societal level showed that the local area of Kayamandi was an important influence, with educational resources, transport, and jobs being available, although financial aid was needed. Time elements indicated that all the participants anticipated an improved future lifestyle, but the uncertainty was exhibited about work overseas, and proximity to family was paramount.

Affordances as well as obstacles towards the participant's career development initiatives were assessed using the *My System of Career Influences* (MSCI) (McMahon et al., 2005). The MSCI is a qualitative career assessment instrument derived from the systems theoretical framework (STF) of career development (Patton et al., 2006). The MSCI is adaptable for either individual or group career counselling processes (McMahon et al., 2005b). The main strength of this instrument is that individuals identify their unique constellation of influences and narrate their own career development stories. Learning about the interaction of various elements that constitute the systems of career influences helps to develop an understanding of what is important and why this is so (McMahon et al., 2003; 2005b; McMahon & Watson, 2009, p. 184).

#### **4.10 Procedure**

I had been working in the community by organising career exhibitions and speaking at high schools on various career options and had built a relationship with the community as well as the high schools. At the career exhibitions, the team who assisted to execute the event collected the information of learners and post-matriculants who wanted to stay connected to the organisation. The main purpose of creating a database was to share information on bursaries, job opportunities, and general information on careers. They created a database of the attendees in which they captured their contact details, current grade, and post-school status.

I collated the information of the post-school attendees. Furthermore, a meeting invitation was extended to them via WhatsApp and email. The WhatsApp message was detailed and concise, inviting the prospective participants to a meeting. The request to conduct research using them as participants, should they be interested, was highlighted and details were given of the meeting venue and time. Thirty prospective participants attended the meeting. We had a fruitful discussion and informed the prospective participants that they were free to leave should they not want to participate. The research objectives and the outline of the data collection plan was clarified. In addition, an overview of the questions that were going to be posed were shared with the prospective participants. The issue of language was highlighted as Afrikaans was the predominant medium of communication. I ascertained from the group who would be comfortable in speaking English; thirteen participants gave an indication that they were comfortable to speak English. The remaining prospective participants preferred to respond in Afrikaans. I did not foresee a challenge in this approach as I am bilingual and would be able pose questions with the same standard and integrity as if it was presented in English. I took notes during the discussion in order to not lose track of the realities of the prospective participants, especially through the usage of language. Furthermore, at the end of the research, a report would be provided and availed to those interested.

Data collection was administered in a four-phase research process:

- Firstly, a research introduction (Appendix A) and demographic questionnaire (Appendix B).
- Secondly, interviews were conducted to elicit personal career stories (narratives) (Appendix C).
- Thirdly, the administration of the My System of Career Influences (MSCI) followed by interviews based on MSCI experience (Appendix J).
- Fourthly, the focus group interview session was administered to cross-validate some of the experiences from the individual interviews (the same questionnaire was used – Appendix J).

#### **4.10.1 Research introduction**

Post-matriculants were invited to a meeting where the introduction, purpose and procedure of the study were outlined. Interested post-matriculants were given a take-home pack, consisting of a covering letter explaining the research (Appendices A & D), a consent form for the post-

matriculant to sign (Appendix E) and a demographic questionnaire (Appendix B). The completed forms and demographic questionnaires were collected and checked by me. Once all the documentation was returned, research participants were informed of Phase 2 which was the interviews. A schedule with timeslots was created in which participants could identify a suitable time for the interview to be conducted. Interviews were scheduled for 45 mins – 1 hour. The interviews were the platform for the narrative exercise to be conducted.

#### **4.10.2 Interviews – Narrative Exercise**

The interviews were scheduled to take place three days after the initial meeting, completion and return of the consent form and demographic questionnaire. Twenty-five participants completed and returned the required documents. However, a total of 23 ended up participating. Two weeks were set aside for the interview process to be conducted. The interviews started daily at 09:00am. A total of 3 – 4 interviews were scheduled for the day. Participants had to tell their career development stories and 16 semi-structured questions were used for probing purposes. Anonymity and confidentiality of data was assured before the interview commenced, and throughout the research process. The interviews were conducted at the offices of MarDan Enterprises, located in town, which was easily accessible to the participants. A digital voice recorder was used to record and transcribe high volume and sensitive data without compromising confidentiality. I requested permission from the participants to record the interviews electronically. Interview data were stored electronically for data analysis and were only accessible to my supervisor and me.

The narrative exercise was used to elicit narratives of post-matriculants' career development experiences. This data set assisted the researcher to respond to the following research questions:

1. What are the career development narratives and experiences of post-matriculants in Douglas?
2. How do gendered cultural scripts (schemata) influence the career development narratives, experiences and choices of the post-matriculants in Douglas?
3. What factors enable and constrain the career development narratives of these post-matriculants?
4. How do systemic factors, as assessed by means of the My System of Career Influences (MSCI), influence the career development experiences of the post-matriculants of Douglas?

5. What is the individual (self) and communal (self-in-community) concerns and tensions experienced by post-matriculants in Douglas?

Although the narrative exercise was guided by semi-structured questions, the participants could express themselves fully and I took notes on what I observed during the interview process. Furthermore, the participants and I could ask for clarity if a question posed or responded to was misunderstood. Participants' perspectives and understanding of career development could be elicited. Furthermore, I could gain insight into how different genders perceived the career development journey.

#### **4.10.3 Administration of the MSCI**

The MSCI booklet (McMahon et al., 2013) was administered in a group because post-matriculants were hesitant to participate individually. This could be ascribed to the experience of group situations in school learning, with limited one-on-one interaction (Alexander et al., 2010). The MSCI booklet was administered two weeks after the individual interviews were conducted. I also noted that the total participants reduced from 23 to 11 participants. An introductory session was used to familiarise the group participants to the concept of systemic thinking, as recommended in the MSCI Facilitator's Guide (McMahon et al., 2005b). This familiarised the participants with the terminology used. Examples of systemic thinking were also provided, and career development was conceptualised as a continuous process (McMahon et al., 2005b). I played a facilitative role in guiding the group of participants through the various levels of influences in the MSCI step by step. The MSCI booklet can be completed in a single sitting of 30 – 40 minutes, but the group took approximately an hour each. Participants identified the MSCI as a fresh way of thinking. I had a conversation with each participant to enable personal reflection on their own career narrative. The participants did not require continuous guidance, they would call on me if the need arose.

The MSCI booklet was used to solicit data to respond to Research Question 4: What are the systems of influence that have a bearing on the career development of the post-matriculants of Douglas? The MSCI booklet addresses individual, societal and environmental-society influences, which have a bearing on career development, which also speaks to the context of Douglas.

After participants had completed the MSCI booklet, they were invited on an individual basis to discuss their career development narratives and experiences as well as their views on completing the MSCI. Eleven participants came back for the interview after the MSCI was

administered. This discussion was guided by 15 open-ended questions in an interview schedule which took approximately 45 minutes – 1 hour (Appendix J). During individual interviews, richer narratives of career development were gained. The advantage of interviews is that high response rates are achieved. It gives the platform to engage with the participant should the researcher find the response of the participant was not clear or the interviewee does not understand the question. Detailed information about personal feelings, opinions and perceptions are obtained when conducting interviews.

In addition, as individuals experience life, they try to make sense of it and organise it. Narratives can provide an organising framework through which individuals can come to understand and make meaning of their life experiences (Campbell & Ungar, 2004, p. 27; Gibson, 2004, p. 134; McMahon & Patton, 2006, p. 94; White as cited in Chetty, 2014). Narratives play a crucial role in individuals' career development because they express their uniqueness, offer explanations for career choices, as well as the meanings of those choices (McIlveen & Patton as cited in Chetty, 2014). Narratives are intrinsic to all individuals and they could shape identity and reveal what has shaped identity (Reid & Scott, 2010, p. 27; Savickas, 2013, p. 147). Savickas adds that clients' narratives can reveal how they have constructed self, identity, and career. Reid and Scott (2010, p. 27) argue that narratives could engage clients, encourage them to reflect at a deeper level, and enable them to gain greater self-awareness in their search for a meaningful career identity.

#### **4.10.4 Focus Groups Interviews**

The remaining 11 participants were invited to the focus group lunch. Invitations were based on criteria that respondents had completed their demographic information, had been interviewed individually and had completed the MSCI booklet. Those who were present showed commitment until the end. They had undergone a process of career reflection and development. It was said by some participants that this MSCI booklet exercise stretched them to do a reflection on where they saw their lives and which career path they would follow. Although the same interview questions were used for the individual interviews (Appendix J), group interaction was encouraged to determine participants' perceptions of the MSCI and their career influences. The focus group interviews were administered to cross-validate some of the experiences from the individual interviews.

## **4.11 Data Analysis**

In the sections that follow, the procedures that were used to capture, transcribe and translate the data (where this was called for) are described, as well as the methods that were used to analyse the data arising from the interviews, administration of the MSCI and focus group discussions.

### **4.11.1 Capturing, Transcribing and Translating the Data**

The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. After the relevant documentation was collected and compiled, interview schedules were created to ensure that data were collected in response to the research questions. I coded each participant to maintain anonymity. I had a digital voice recorder to capture the narratives of the participants. A notebook was included to take notes of keywords as well as gestures made by the participants. I did daily reflections by listening to the recordings and taking notes on what was said and the interpretation thereof. This also assisted me to get a better understanding of the participants within their context. In addition, I made notes on which interviews required transcription.

At the end of the data collection process (demographic questionnaire, individual interviews, MSCI booklet and focus group interviews), I began the process of analysing the data. Sufficient time was set aside to transcribe and translate the interview responses that had been captured in Afrikaans. Out of the 23 interviews that were conducted, 10 interviews required translation. Once the data had been transcribed and translated, I read through the information. With each reading, notes were made. At the end of the first process, I went back to the notebook used during the interview process to ascertain what side notes were made and what thoughts were captured as the interview was being conducted. Another round of reading followed to ensure that I had captured the narrative accurately. Furthermore, data were sorted and grouped for easy reference in response to the applicable research questions.

Transcribing the focus group interviews took extensive time. The same approach with the individual interviews was taken in that I had to transcribe the data and at certain points had to translate those sections of the discussion that were in Afrikaans. Upon completion, I read through the data several times and made notes as well as cross-validated the responses to the individual interviews.

#### **4.11.2 Analysing Individual Interviews and Focus Group**

Narrative thematic analysis was used. Narrative thematic analysis can be defined as an approach taken to interview data that is concerned with understanding how and why people talk about their lives as a story or a series of stories. Although narrative thematic analysis has its origins in literary theory and is closely associated with media and cultural studies, social scientists have become interested in using it to gain greater understanding of the social world and the production of data (for example, Bruner, 1987; Denzin, 1989b; Geertz, 1973; Riessman, 2008; Rosenwald & Ochberg, 1992).

Perhaps reflecting its multidisciplinary use, the term narrative thematic analysis can refer to a variety of different approaches to data collection and analysis, including biography, autobiography, life history, oral history, auto ethnography, life narrative and the sociology of storytelling. While not dismissing the differences between these approaches, all share a common aim, namely, to explore the different ways in which both the production and analysis of qualitative data can be understood as processes whereby different groups of people engage in 'storytelling' and in doing so produce narrative accounts of their lives. As a result of this, those using narrative analysis prefer to use the terms 'narrative' or 'story' rather than 'account'. For this study narrative thematic analysis inevitably included issues of identity and the interaction between the narrator and audience (Gilbert, 2008, p. 641). Narrative thematic analysis is used to make meaning of the stories that have been shared - how participants relate with their personal identity as they grapple to make sense of themselves in their context. The narrative thematic analysis highlights and strengthens the story of the individual without having to lose the essence of the lived experience. The process usually consists of five stages: organisation and preparation of the data; obtaining general sense of information; the coding process; categories or themes and interpretation of data (Creswell, 2014). A qualitative description of post-matriculants' subjective career stories allow new and critical issues in career counselling with marginalised South African youth to be explored (Ebersöhn & Mbetse, 2003, p. 323; Patton et al., 2003; Stead et al., 2004).

#### **4.11.3 Analysis of the MSCI Data**

On completion of the narrative exercise (individual interviews) data assortment and once satisfied with how the data was grouped, I moved onto the MSCI booklet. Analysis of the MSCI booklet did not require extensive time like the individual interviews. The MSCI booklet has specific sections which speaks to a system of influences. I created a template to capture

responses to the system of influences. I then went through each participant's MSCI booklet and grouped the responses accordingly. The data compiled and retrieved from the MSCI booklet were aligned to the applicable research question to ascertain systems of influences that have a bearing on career development of the post-matriculants in Douglas. Recorded statements were transcribed line-by-line to form numbered interview scripts that I checked to ensure accuracy of captured data (Roberts et al., 2006). Throughout the process, intensive engagement with the data and a range of verbatim examples were used to make solid links between the data and interpretations to increase confirmability (Lewis, 2009, p. 1).

#### **4.12 Strategies employed to ensure data quality**

Issues of reliability and validity in this study were addressed using various prescribed guidelines (Creswell, 2009). Trustworthiness of this study was enhanced in the following ways. Firstly, rich and thick descriptions of the data were formulated in order to allow readers to make decisions regarding the scientific merit of the findings. This is important, especially when there is need to understand career behaviour from a multi-cultural context with the ultimate purpose of sharing the results on an international scale. Secondly, data were gathered over a period to avoid participant and interviewer fatigue. Finally, to ensure that all the data were accurately recorded, interviews were audiotaped, and extensive notes were taken during the fieldwork (Creswell, 2014). To enhance the validity or trustworthiness of the study, issues of credibility, confirmability, transferability, dependability and triangulation were addressed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

##### **4.12.1 Credibility**

Credibility refers to the fit between participants' views and the researcher's representation (Schwandt, 2001; Tobin & Begley, 2004). Credibility is obtained through extensive and consistent engagement with the community (Erlandson et al., 1993). Presence and prolonged interactions in the research area, is key to obtain a credible status. I was involved with a non-governmental organisation in the Douglas community as a volunteer at Douglas Aids Action Group (DAAG) and Douglas Women's Empowerment Group (DWEG). I was also active in community forums, career exhibitions, workshops and counselling sessions with post-matriculants. Face-to-face meetings with key stakeholders such as the local municipality and community leaders and community development practitioners as well as retired educators in Douglas provided first-hand, lived experience of the community's conditions, which added to the validity of the study.

#### **4.12.2 Transferability**

Transferability is also known as the generalisability of the inquiry (Sandelowski, 1993, p. 1; Tobin & Begley, 2004, p. 388). The current study was based on an extensive and comprehensive description of a specific sample that is not generalisable to other contexts. However, if a high degree of similarity exists between times, people and settings in the original research and the applied context, then findings could be transferred (i.e., proximal similarity) (Appleton, 2006, p. 993; Lewis, 2009, p. 1; Tobin & Begley, 2004, p. 388).

#### **4.12.3 Dependability**

Dependability refers to technical accuracy which is seen as equally important in the recording and transcribing of data. To maximise credibility, prolonged engagement in the research site, with extensive fieldwork was undertaken. I ensured my presence at key community activities such as funerals, church programmes and street bashes. This approach was taken to build trust. In addition, I stayed for a period of two years in the community. This experience further strengthened the trust and dismissed possible distortions of the research.

During my stay in Douglas, it was observed that conversations about career aspirations were not held. If a person completed school, then they were on their own. However, it depended on the kind of support the post-matriculant got at home or in the community. Later, I identified the need to make career information available. Talks were arranged at the various high schools, and I was invited to be a guest speaker on career pathing. Specific talks were arranged to speak to the Grade 11s and 12s. Furthermore, I arranged career exhibitions where various stakeholders like TVET College, Sol Plaatje University, University of Free State, the banking sector, and SETAs were invited to bridge the gap of lack of information and career aspirations. I pursued this career exhibition once per year, whilst staying in Douglas. Later, I observed that young people took an interest in their future and made use of the office, MarDan Enterprises, to seek further assistance to pursue a qualification.

#### **4.12.4 Triangulation**

Triangulation refers to different methods of data collection that will enhance the consistency and the validity of the study (Halcomb & Andrew, 2005, p. 71; Henning et al., 2004; Williamson, 2005, p. 1). Methods used included a demographic questionnaire, narrative

interview questionnaire, the MSCI, individual and focus group interviews. Thereafter a process of triangulation followed to cross-check data collected. Verbatim accounts (i.e., direct quotations) were used to validate findings (Boeijie, 2010; Johnson, 1997). In addition, participants were asked to validate interpretations after the analysis. It was difficult to get hold of all the participants; however, a few were approached individually to check or validate (Bryman, 2001; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Roberts et al., 2006). The participants who were approached were those who were committed from the beginning of the data collection process until the end. The selection was random; however, the criteria were consistent in that participants had to be part of the demographic questionnaire, the individual interviews, the MSCI booklet and the focus group. A balanced gender representation was not considered at this point. My experience and opinion in terms of reflexivity as a research instrument, is described at the end of this research methodology chapter (Holloway & Biley, 2011, p. 968).

This study was conducted in one community, the infrastructure and circumstances of this community may have an impact on the findings of the study, reflecting the unique system and conditions employed by the community. Therefore, the research findings cannot be generalised to the Douglas inhabitants, nor to disadvantaged inhabitants in other communities. The administration of the career measure in English to a predominantly Afrikaans sample is a limitation. However, complex terminology was simplified to elicit understanding; this may affect the validity and coherence of the findings, with subtle nuances being overlooked (Cubizolles, 2011, p. 33). During my stay in the community, I could implement interventions such as career exhibitions and career guidance. However, these interventions were not fully embraced by important figures within the community, which can be considered a limitation.

Furthermore, the administration process in collecting data presented challenges. For example, participants indicated their time to be slotted in for the interviews, however, some came late which then overlapped with the next interviewee. I overcame the challenge by sending messages to the participants reminding them of their time slots and encouraged them to be on time. In terms of the language, there were three participants who could understand the question being posed in English, however they responded in Afrikaans. I recorded the response in Afrikaans and in my notebook wrote down the response in English, reading the response in English back to the participant who then confirmed the response. Other challenges I encountered were the responses to certain questions. Some responses were not appropriate to the questions posed. I scheduled follow-up sessions with the respective participants to verify their responses. It was important for me to ensure that the meaning of the responses was not lost or even minimised, hence a follow-up call was made to some participants to verify responses.

#### **4.13 Ethical considerations**

To begin with my researcher project and approval of the research topic, a presentation was scheduled by the administrator for me to defend the research proposal before the Research and Higher Degrees Committee of the School of Applied Human Sciences at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Ethical approval and clearance for the study was obtained from the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (Appendix L – HSS/0612/018D).

According to Emanuel et al. (2004), informed consent is a key element when conducting research. They further state that the context of developing countries can be complex and suggest that researchers be mindful of the environment of the community where the research will be conducted. Understanding the context and aligning oneself as the researcher to the procedures, cultures and norms of the community, is vital. Therefore, in line with the guidance provided by Emanuel et al. (2004), I provided a copy of the consent form content to all the participants. The predominant language of communication in Douglas is Afrikaans; so I made the consent form available in both English and Afrikaans. The content was read out in English and Afrikaans. Thereafter, I encouraged the post-matriculants to sign the consent form if they agreed to participate in the study. In addition, I reiterated that no one was obligated to be part of the study. The post-matriculants did not require consent from their parents or guardian as they met the South African consent age to participate in the study. Participants in the study were assured anonymity and confidentiality and were respected throughout the duration of the research study. This study posed no foreseen risks and no apparent benefits (apart from the opportunity to reflect on one's career development). The career narratives that were elicited by completing the MSCJ would enable individuals to gain insight into their career development and career choices (McIlveen, 2019).

In terms of benevolence, I was inspired not only to protect others from harm, but also to ensure and promote the well-being of all those affected by research. It was important for me to minimise the risk of exploitation. In their study, Emanuel et al. (2004) alluded to collaborative partnership. I am of the view that it was important to develop a collaborative partnership with community organisations and various stakeholders to maintain the respect of community values, culture, traditions and social practices. It was important for me to build relationships and be present at various community activities such as funerals and church programmes. This approach was to optimise buy-in from the stakeholders. Participants were encouraged to reach out should they require support in terms of career counselling. They were provided with contact details. I

was aware of the lack of information that existed in the community, especially when it came to career support. Therefore, contact details as well as resources were made available for post-matriculants to use. This approach was also used to raise awareness and confirmation that I was serious in wanting to help change the narrative of the post-matriculants, especially around their future goals.

Furthermore, in terms of social value, Emanuel et al. (2004) highlights the importance of reciprocity. From day one, expectations should be made explicit both from the researcher and the beneficiaries. Both entities would benefit from the study or while the study was being conducted. The participants would be assisted with career counselling, information relating to their preferred career choices, and they would be supported in terms of sourcing information on the various programmes they could pursue and at which institutions these programmes could be studied. The community would benefit as the post-matriculants would start adding value and making their mark within their context and the narrative would change for the community of Douglas. I would be able to get the necessary information to complete my project and at the same time leave an impression on the hearts of the post-matriculants, families and leadership of Douglas. Furthermore, I focused on structures within the community that post matriculants have access to and reminded them that they are responsible for their career decisions. The aim was to instill a sense of ownership in their personal development. The post-matriculants as well as the leadership of the community would benefit from the information obtained through the research.

The research findings would provide insight into how the youth of Douglas can be supported in terms of their development. The participants were informed that the research results would be used as part of the requirements for completion of a doctoral degree in Psychology. Chapters 5 and 6 of the research results and recommendations would be made available to the participants upon request. Furthermore, it is my intention as the researcher to schedule a meeting with the mayor of the Siyancuma Municipality, ward councillors in Douglas, principals of the various schools in Douglas, church leaders and community leaders to share short reports on the findings of my research and recommendations. The intention is primarily to make progress in youth development in Douglas and the Siyancuma Municipality as whole.

In addition, Emanuel et al. (2004) refer to scientific validity. They argue that research must be reliable and valid, and the outcomes of the study should be usable for the beneficiaries of the study. They further argue that if participants do not benefit from the study, social value has been lost and participants' lives have been exposed to risks for no benefits. Therefore, the scientific validity of the research enables the post-matriculants to reflect on their personal growth and development in pursuance of their career. This will further enable them to change the landscape

of their community. The selection of the study population was a fair representation in that the sample included both genders as well as representation of the youth of Douglas. Respect for the participants was maintained throughout the data collection process as well as keeping them anonymous.

#### **4.14 Reflexivity**

In my informal conversation with Mzi (pseudonym name), he highlighted that growing up in a community like Douglas, witnessing and being part of the struggle to survive, felt like that was how life was supposed to be, a continuous struggle. Mzi drew my attention to the biggest private owned agricultural company in the Northern Cape. For the study I will call it Agricultural Enterprise (AE). Their head office was based in Douglas and most people of Douglas were employed at AE as general workers, shop assistants and drivers. Mzi mentioned that many of the friends he grew up with and who he attended school with gave a clear indication that they would not work at AE or on the farms during harvest time. The reasons were not made explicit, however, most of the youngsters' parents worked at AE and they knew what the circumstances were like working for the company.

Although there was a knowing and understanding that education was the key that would help bring transformation for self and the community, it was difficult for some to see beyond their current situations. There were households who required someone to work and bring food to the table; furthering studies or pursuing a career was not a priority. In fact, it was said that "education will take too long and we cannot afford to have you studying, who is going to take care of the family?" (Lucky [pseudonym name], personal communication, April 2018).

The context of Douglas is complex because you sit with a generation who have struggled and the cycle of poverty is perpetuating. In addition, many young people who had an opportunity to leave Douglas after they had matriculated and who pursued a career, have no intention of coming back to see how they can plough back or be a role model for the younger generation. Unemployment, service delivery and leadership were the major components that delayed the development in Douglas (Previous Mayor, personal communication, June 2018). In 2017, the biggest mine who had employed most of the residents of Douglas closed. People were retrenched and they found themselves at home without a job because there were no other job opportunities in Douglas. Many of the retrenched people had families and in most cases were the only breadwinners in their homes. The challenge for some was that they could not leave

Douglas to find employment outside. It would mean that families must be uprooted and start over somewhere else.

Furthermore, the absence of the very basic services such as water, electricity and sanitation, was a major challenge which often led to protest action and in turn took the community a step back. In the wake of protest action, learners did not have access to school due to the roads being blocked off or barricaded. Unemployed post-matriculants participated in these actions because they felt that the municipality had failed them and jobs were not being created (Jerome [pseudonym name], personal communication, June 2018). In a general conversation with the participants regarding the challenges experienced in Douglas, they alluded to the fact that there were no work opportunities, people of the community did not want to see others progress in life, and would sabotage your plans and vision. The community was politically driven and political parties had an influence on the development of people. Young people took gap years without having a plan for themselves; during the gap year the females became pregnant and the plan to further their studies dissolved. Thus, the cycle of poverty was perpetuated. Young girls became mothers and the young men sat on corners, getting caught up in substance abuse and in most cases getting infected with incurable diseases.

I admit that at the beginning of the project I was excited and looking forward to gathering information from the community where I spent some time during my initial years as a toddler, teenager and adolescent. The emotions emerged while listening to the lived experiences of frustration, constant struggle, misery, confusion that elicited shock from the stories of the young people of Douglas. Hopes and dreams were voiced even if the dream sounded farfetched or unattainable. The challenges expressed included lack of support, finances, and opportunity, among others.

Whilst listening to the stories, the resounding question in my mind was: What can be done to make things better for the youth of Douglas? How can one intervene to create opportunities for the talented and passionate young people to follow their desires? These and so many questions popped up as I listened to how they articulated their lived experiences. The challenges and how they navigated themselves out of unbecoming circumstances; the dire need to provide for their families and to make a difference in the community, these were the major issues that stood out. "I want to get my family out of poverty and I will do everything in my power to do just that" are some of the desires that were verbalised during my interaction with the post-matriculants. But what I also noticed was a cycle of feeling trapped.

Disadvantaged communities such as Douglas look to government to save them from their socio-economic circumstances. I observed that political affiliation was a key factor, hence the trust in government to turn their socio-economic status around. The youth were of the view that government must alleviate their poverty by providing jobs and giving financial support for further studies. It is an ongoing cycle of interdependency.

#### **4.15 Conclusion**

This chapter aimed to explain in detail the methodological approaches and processes chosen for the current study. Detail was substantiated and justification was given for the selected methods such as the central approach of inquiry coupled with the chosen research design, the population sampling techniques, the data collection and suitable instruments, the procedures, the data analysis and suitable steps for analysis. Furthermore, the ethical considerations were explained, clarifying that the participants were protected. Lastly, I shared a reflection on certain observations that were made while the study was conducted.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings and discussions of this research study on the career development narratives and experiences of post-matriculants in the Douglas community of the Northern Cape. Guided by the research questions and objectives, the chapter first presents the findings from each research question. This is then followed by an in-depth presentation and interpretation of the results gathered from the individual participants interviewed about their perception of the career development narratives and experiences as post-matriculants followed by the gendered dimension of these career development narratives and experiences, the enabling factors and constraints of these narratives, the various systems of influences and finally, the individual self and communal self-concerns of these post-matriculants' experiences. Thereafter, the discussion of these results follows, from the major themes and subthemes that emerged from the data accrued from the actual narratives of the individual participants in the study. The abovementioned results were analysed using both narrative thematic analysis and MSCI quantitative analysis.

#### **5.2 Biographic details of participants**

The biographical variables below provide a breakdown of the participants in the study. There was a total of 23 participants with 12 being females and 11 being males. They were post-matriculants with ages ranging from 18 – 24. The predominant home language was Afrikaans, with other languages identified being of Setswana and isiXhosa origin. All of the participants had a matric grade 12 qualification. Fifteen of the participants at the time of the interviews were unemployed with the exception of a four who were employed and five pursuing post-school studies.

Table 5

***Biographic variable of participants (23)***

Gender	Female (12)	Male (11)
Age distribution	18 – 24	18 – 24
Home Language	Afrikaans/Tswana/isiXhosa (12)	Afrikaans/Tswana/isiXhosa (11)
Highest qualification	Matric (Grade 12)	Matric (Grade 12)
Current status/occupation	Unemployed = 9 Post-school studies = 1 Employed = 2	Unemployed = 6 Post-school studies = 2 Employed = 2

**5.2.1 Coding and Summary Profiles of Participants**

***5.2.1.1 Coding***

For ethical purposes, the principle of anonymity was used during the data collection process. All participants interviewed were not identified with their actual names rather, they were assigned codes based on their male or female gender. The male participants were coded as “PM” for participant male and the females were coded as “PF” for participant female.

***5.2.1.2 Summary Profiles of Participants***

**Males:**

PM 1 was a 21-year-old male who matriculated in 2015. His home language was Afrikaans. His mother’s education level was primary school and his father, high school. His mother was a domestic worker and father an entrepreneur. PM 1’s career interest included theologian, career coordinator and law. At the time of data collection, PM 1 was busy with a paralegal course and he volunteered at an advice office in Douglas.

PM 2 was a 21-year-old male who matriculated in 2015; his home language was Afrikaans. His mother and father's education level was primary school.. Both parents were pensioners. PM 2's career interest included acting and drama, motivational speaking and teaching. At the time of data collection, PM 2 was unemployed.

PM 3 was a 20-year-old male; his home language was Afrikaans and Tswana. Neither parents had attended school. His mother was a housewife and his father was a farm worker. PM 3's career interest included agriculture management, Human Resource Management and teaching. At the time of data collection. PM 3 worked on the farm with his father.

PM 4 was a 20-year-old male, his home language was Afrikaans. Both parents had attended high school. His mother was a housewife and his father was a driver. PM 4's career interest included teaching, historian and lecturer. At the time of data collection, PM 4 was unemployed.

PM 5 was a 21-year-old male, his home language was Afrikaans, and both parents had primary school level. His mother was unemployed and his father was a truck driver. PM 5's career interest included teaching, nursing and playing professional soccer. At the time of data collection PM 5 was unemployed.

PM 6 was an 18-year-old male whose home language was Afrikaans. Both parents had primary level education. His mother was a housewife and his father was a farm worker. PM 6's career interest included information technology (IT) technician, electrical engineer and information technology (IT) specialist. At the time of data collection, PM 6 had completed his school year.

PM 7 was a 23-year-old male, his home language was Afrikaans. Neither parents had an education and they were unemployed. PM 7's career interest included acting, TV producer and TV editor. At the time of data collection, PM 7 was busy with his 2<sup>nd</sup> year of post-school studies in media communications.

PM 8 was a 22-year-old male, his home language was Afrikaans. Both parents had primary level of education. Their employment status was not recorded. PM 8's career interest included nursing, sound engineering/producing and accountant. At the time of data collection, PM 8 was busy sourcing funding to set up a recording studio.

PM 9 was a 21-year-old male, his home language was Afrikaans. Both parents had high school level education. His mother was unemployed and his father was a diesel mechanic. PM 9's career interest included painting, information technician and marketing management. At the time of data collection, PM 9 was working as a waiter at the local restaurant.

PM 10 was an 18-year-old male, his home language was Afrikaans. His mother's education level was post-school studies, his father's education level was high school. His mother was a government official who worked at correctional services and his father was a business person. PM 10's career interest included law, teaching and marketing. At the time of data collection PM 10 had completed his matric year.

PM 11 was a 19-year-old male. His home language was Afrikaans. His mother had post-school education and his father had high school level of education. His mother was a data capturer and his father was a merchandiser at a retail store. PM 11's career interest included information technician, chemical engineering and pilot. At the time of data collection PM 11 had submitted applications to further his studies and he was sourcing bursaries to fund his studies.

### **Females:**

PF 1 was a 22-year-old female whose home language was Afrikaans. Her mother's level of education was high school; her father's level of education was not recorded. Both parents' employment statuses were not recorded. Her career interest included teaching, administration and marketing. At the time of data collection the participant was unemployed.

PF 2 was a 21-year-old female, with Afrikaans her home language. Both parents' level of education was primary school. The participant did not record her parents' employment status. PF 2's career interest was Law. At the time of data collection, PF 2 had applied to the Education department to rewrite some of her subjects to improve her admission points score (APS).

PF 3 was a 20-year-old female whose home language was Afrikaans. Both parents had attended high school. Her mother was a housewife and her father a grader operator. PF 3's career interest included teaching, nursing and social work. At the time of data collection, PF 3 was unemployed.

PF 4 was a 21-year-old female. Afrikaans was her home language. Her mother had attended high school and her father had attended primary school. The mother's employment status was not recorded; however her father was a credit controller. PF 4's career interest included teaching, social work and quantity surveying. At the time of data collection, PF 4 was unemployed.

PF 5 was a 18-year-old female, her home language was Afrikaans. Both parents had attended high school. The mother's employment status was not recorded; however, her father was a plumber. PF 5's career interest included teaching and nursing. At the time of data collection PF 5 was in the process of completing a computer skills course.

PF 6 was a 20-year-old female, her home language was Afrikaans. Her mother's education level was high school and her father had obtained a post-school qualification. Both parents were unemployed. PF 6's career interest included nursing, teaching and becoming a medical doctor. At the time of data collection PF 6 was unemployed.

PF 7 was a 23-year-old female with Afrikaans as her home language. Both parents' education level was primary school. The mother's occupation was an assistant chef and the father was a truck driver. PF 7's career interest included teaching, journalism and nursing. At the time of data collection, PF 7 was unemployed.

PF 8 was a 22-year-old female, her home language was Afrikaans. Both parents' education was up to primary level. Her mother was a domestic worker and her father was a pensioner. PF 8's career interest included management, journalism and teaching. At the time of data collection, PF 8 was in the military.

PF 9 was a 21-year-old female whose home language was Afrikaans. Both parents' education level was high school. Both parents were unemployed. PF 9's career interest included nursing. At the time of data collection, PF 9 was taking care of her sickly mother.

PF 10 was a 22-year-old female, her home language was Afrikaans. Her mother's education level was high school and her father had post-school education. Her mother was employed as a deli assistant and her father's occupation was not recorded. PF 10's career interest included teaching, accountant and human resources (HR). At the time of data collection, PF 10 worked as a shop assistant at a local video shop.

PF 11 was an 18-year-old female. Her home language was Afrikaans. Her mother's education level was post-school studies and her father's education level was high school. Her mother was a government official and her father was a contractor/business owner. PM's career interest included teaching, psychologist and arts. At the time of data collection, PF 11 had applied to rewrite subjects with low scores.

PF 12 was a 23-year-old female; her home language was Afrikaans. Her mother had primary level education and her father had high school level of education. Her mother was a domestic worker and her father, a carpenter. PF 12's career interest included social work and teaching.

### 5.3 Presentation of data

The following section outlines the presentation of data according to the research questions. The data from each question is presented and includes the narratives that spoke to the question. This data is then interpreted and thereafter the emerging themes and subthemes extracted from the narratives are discussed.

#### 5.3.1 What are the career development narratives and experiences of post-matriculants in Douglas?

Career development narratives and experiences vary from individual to individual. Post-matriculants' interpretation of their career development narratives and experiences was heavily dependent on various factors including their personal resilience, family influence, the social context and affiliations, among others. Various themes and sub-themes such as *life as a personal struggle*, *career as a service to the community*, *first generation pursuing university studies*, were identified from the narratives, and are discussed in more depth below.

The narrative of Female Participant Two sets the tone of these themes. She was 21 years old at the time of the data collection. She shared her narrative as follows:

*I started thinking about my life and where I want to go to in this life when I was in Grade 8. The circumstances in our house were unpleasant. I have older sisters who completed matric, however, they are unemployed and have been unemployed for a long time. I did not want to find myself in that situation, so I was thinking about how I can change my life. I spoke to a teacher at my school as I really felt the need to get direction before I leave the school premises. I always had this urge to help our people and this one day I was sitting in front of the TV and a movie came on, I cannot remember the name of the movie or what the case was about, but I remember it was about a black lawyer who was defending someone in court. The person he was defending came from a poor background and it was just tough for the person appearing in court. But the lawyer was defending him well, they won the case at the end. As I was watching the movie, I said to myself, I would like to do that. I would like to be there for our people who cannot help themselves.*

*One day at school we were given a task, we had to put information together on the career we want to pursue. We had to go to the library and gather the information from there. The information I found drew my interest to law as I also remembered the movie*

*I watched. I gathered my information and completed my task and there I decided that Law will be the career I want to go for. I have no interest in pursuing other careers, law it is. In the community I stay, I also do not see black females that is lawyers, so that was what motivated me to even be the first black female in Douglas to be a lawyer. Because we are a small community, we know what happens in the area. I know of cases where people went to jail, yet they are innocent. But because there is no one to defend them and also the cost of appointing a lawyer is high, innocent people go to jail without having a fair chance of being heard. There are too many cases like these in Douglas. Obtaining legal services in Douglas costs a lot of money. Also, the unemployment rate in Douglas is so high, our people will never be able to afford legal services. I want to help our people by defending and guiding them by giving legal advice when needed. Even families who lost the only breadwinner due to death, at times find themselves at a lost because they do not know what to do after the person has passed away. You will also find that the deceased did not prepare a will and in the absence of a will fights break out amongst those who are alive and circumstances in the home is unpleasant just because proper documentation is not in place. Even in this our people need help.*

*Although I want to be a lawyer, in my household there are many challenges that I have to overcome and finances is the biggest one of them all. We do not have money in the house. I said that my father is the only one employed in the house and his income is very little, it only covers the small basics. My older sisters have been looking for work but they are not getting work. Another thing I have to do is to better my AP scores. This one time during my matric year when we had to prepare for the preliminary examination, I got very sick. There were two subjects I could not write and this made me to feel sad. I went to the school and enquired about writing those subjects over but was told I will only be allowed to rewrite it the following year.*

*In the meantime, I tried to find out more information about Law. There was a career exhibition held in our community and I went there to find more information. The career exhibition helped me a lot and the advice given helped me to understand that there are bursaries I can apply for, like the national government funding scheme. This information helped me as I don't have to feel that the money must come from our house. What I have to do is just better my AP scores so I can apply for the bursary, better my AP scores so I can get admission to the university to study for Law. I have not identified a university where I can study Law but I know of UWC and University of Johannesburg. I think when I am going to study at any one of these varsities it will be the first time that I will be leaving Douglas for a long period of time. Just the thought of*

*it makes me excited and nervous at the same time. There is nothing that is keeping me in Douglas. I can go out and go to other places if an opportunity knocks on my door now. What I will do though is to go and get my qualification in Law, come back to Douglas and be of a much needed service in my community. My community needs help and I want to help them. Law is really the one career that I want to pursue, I do not want to study anything else and my AP scores, yes, it is the one thing that I need to better. I also feel that law will put me in a position to assist people in need, especially those who has serious cases and Douglas is a good motivation for me to pursue Law because there is not a lot of people that does the same thing. I want to do Law out of the depths of my heart. Not only for me but for my broader community and for my family. I always wanted to be the one who makes a difference in my family and to be of help to the people of my community. It's not always about the money, if someone comes to me for information, then I can help them to do this and that, you understand.*

#### **5.3.1.1 Life as a Personal Struggle**

From the above career narrative of the participant, life was experienced as a personal struggle. Through this, the participant is noted to be referring to her poor living conditions as being unpleasant and as the researcher unpacks the meaning thereof, it is discovered that there has been a history of unemployment in the household and that the whole family survived on one income, which needed to sustain the basic needs of the house. Further on, life as a personal struggle is experienced through the current situation of her siblings. The participant referred to her older siblings who completed matric but found themselves having to fend for their survival without having the means or capacity to support her as the last born in the family. As a result, everything she wanted would be achieved through personal drive and personal ambition. In terms of guidance on possible careers, she could not look to her older siblings for guidance as they found themselves in an equally hopeless situation. Having a plan on what to pursue, personal ambitions in the absence of guidance turned out be a constant frustration. For instance, in the narrative, the participant explained:

*I started thinking about my life and where I want to go to in this life when I was in Grade 8. The circumstances in our house were unpleasant. I have older sisters who completed matric; however, they are unemployed and have been unemployed for a long time. I did not want to find myself in that situation, so I was thinking about how I can change my life. I spoke to a teacher at my school as I really felt the need to get direction before I leave the school premises... in my household there are many challenges that I have to overcome, and finances is the biggest one of them all. We do not have money in the*

*house. I said that my father is the only one employed in the house and his income is very little, it only covers the basics. My older sisters have been looking for work, but they are not getting work”.*

I gather from the above extract that the participant is continuously striving to break out of the mould of struggle - struggle in her home and struggle in the community in which she grew up. The socio-economic state of her household and her older siblings' struggle to find employment sets her into definite clarity of wanting to do something different with her life. As the researcher working in the community there has been a consistent truth around the struggles post-matriculants like Participant Two is experiencing. There is evidence that many without employment live in impoverished households, dependency on one of the family members as a breadwinner, the absence or lack of support and guidance towards career. The majority of post-matriculants in such settings, as expressed by the participant, find themselves in situations of darkness, confusion, uncertainty, and helplessness because of the immediate barriers experienced.

In addition to the narrative of life as a personal struggle, we note that Female Participant Two had a challenge with rewriting two subjects of matric that were prompted by her health condition at the time. Succumbing to illness during the examination period resulted in a serious setback to her career goals. She indicated that failing those two subjects affected her APS score that would have enhanced her chance of admission to tertiary education. The participant also noted that she made efforts to approach the school to request support to better her marks but these efforts were met with very little willingness and information and support to rewrite her subjects. No feedback was ever received, even after the many follow-ups. In the extracts from the participant, I noted the following:

*Another thing I have to do is to better my AP scores. This one time during my matric year when we had to prepare for the preliminary examination, I got very sick. There were two subjects I could not write, and this made me to feel sad. I went to the school and enquired about writing those subjects over but was told I will only be allowed to rewrite it the following year. In the meantime, I tried to find out more information about Law. There was a career exhibition held in our community and I went there to find more information. The career exhibition helped me a lot and the advice given helped me to understand that there are bursaries I can apply for, like the national government funding scheme. This information helped me as I don't have to feel that the money must come from our house. What I have to do is just better my AP scores so I*

*can apply for the bursary, better my AP scores so I can get admission to the university to study for Law.*

From the above extract, it is evident that failing matric would cause a serious barrier towards progression in tertiary education. The participant acknowledges the need to improve the APS scores but such efforts were met with little to no support and even worse off, especially when living in a small previously disadvantaged community like Douglas. The vast majority of post-matriculants or youth find themselves in such situations of poor performance in the matric exams. They have a lack of information on how to improve scores or even an unwillingness to improve their matric results due to the realities in the households like where the older siblings were reported to have completed their matric but were still unemployed.

In addition to the narrative of life as a personal struggle, Male Participant Seven shared his narrative of studying outside Douglas and the kind of struggles he had to overcome. He drew my attention to his relocation from a small community to a city to pursue his studies. He did not know any people except one family member, yet the conditions in which he found himself were not conducive because of alcohol abuse. Furthermore, the university was situated 17 kms from where he stayed, and he had to walk in the morning and afternoon fearing for his safety. However, amid the unpleasantness, he was committed to bring change to his own life and other people. He narrated his story as follows:

*So I belief in taking in as much as I can and trying to bring change into my own life and other people's life. But I have to attend to, ok firstly, like I said, the bursary thingy I had to apply for like numerous times, when I first step into university, man I walked 17 km for 2 hours, I only had one family member that I knew in Cape Town, so it was like for me walking 17 km every single day, in the morning, in the afternoon, you know, walking with that fright, being afraid of what will happen. But that whole year, I was committed to go to school whatever the circumstances because that's not what define us ..., my bursary does not cover all of my finances, like my fees, so I had to think of that as well and I will be able to get the outstanding fees, so I can get my results. So not only that, I had to live with people who are alcoholics, I had to persevere, I had to wait until they fall asleep and then I can study which is 01:00 a.m. in the morning, there is no time to sleep, I had to study, stayed up late and just like grinding it out.*

From the extract we can see that personal sacrifices needed to be made for his goal to be achieved. Male Participant Seven had to find ways to work around the circumstances he found himself in as he had no other alternatives that would get him through his first year. In addition,

he had to focus and pass because the loan which he acquired could change to a bursary should he obtain a certain percentage, financially that would be a great help as there was no financial support from the family back home. Adjustments to his sleeping arrangements needed to be made to study. More especially seeing that he was the one in need of accommodation, he could not make demands, he had to adjust. These type of sacrifices can take a toll on an individual, more especially if exposure to this type of behaviour was not evident in his own house. However, for the sake of completing his programme, he needed to adjust. It was also his first time moving out of Douglas.

Having the ability to become vulnerable during a strenuous time can at times lead to self-esteem issues, however becoming vulnerable to get help to complete the task at hand speaks to much bravery and personal resilience. Male Participant Seven continued:

*I think January or February, I had to transition. I had to look for people who were willing to take me in as a child. I do not have money to pay rent and all of that so I had to look out for people. I had to build relationship with the security guards at the university, I had to talk to lecturers, I had to share my story, I had to tell them what I am worried about, what I am afraid of.*

This extract shows that Male Participant Seven must stay committed to his goal and that is to complete his studies. Stepping out of familiarity and comfort, stepping out of a small town and into a big city speaks of determination even though the odds might be against him. Having to walk 17 kms every day in a place that is not familiar to him, risking his life, speaks to another form of life as a personal struggle. In Douglas, he can walk freely, everyone knows everyone and one feels safe in what is known to you. He alluded to a consciousness of his safety: *“walking with that fright, being afraid of what will happen. But that whole year, I was committed to go to school whatever the circumstances”*. As much as there was anxiety, Male Participant Seven did not allow his anxiety to overshadow his mission. His family is dependent on him, people from Douglas are dependent on him. It is evident through the narrative of Male Participant Seven, it is impossible to throw in the towel as too much is at stake.

Exploring another narrative of life as a personal struggle, Male Participant Three came from a household in which he was the eldest son. There was a lack of finances and unemployment. Instead of him pursuing his career, he needed to find employment to earn money because no one in the house was working apart from his father who was a farmer. He explained:

*I was in grade 10 when I started thinking about what interest me. When I left matric, that is in 2015, I was thinking about a career I want to pursue, I was serious. I come from a household where no one was working. I wanted to pursue further studies, but because I am the eldest in the house, I had to cut the idea of studying short because I needed to earn some money. I started doing small jobs just to bring food on the table. If I had an opportunity to study and go for a career, I would like to do something around Agriculture ... It is a challenge for me to think about studying because I must earn some money and because nobody is working at home. So, the idea of studying is there but I cannot do anything about it now because I have to work fulltime. I have the application forms too, but I did not complete it, I am still planning to do so. It is difficult because I am the oldest son, and it is my responsibility to help in the house.*

From the narrative, it can be gathered that the household has been stretched in terms of being poor. What is available in the house barely covers the minimum. Male Participant Three, who is the eldest in the household, is required to help put food on the table. Feeding and providing for the household has become the main priority. Pursuing studies is not taken into consideration to help alleviate the poverty-stricken household. There is a tension between what he wants to do, that is, to pursue his career in agriculture, versus the reality of and the condition of his household. As much as he has made attempts to get the application forms to start his career pursuit journey, he has to put it on hold until the household is in a stable position. Furthermore, the weight of being the eldest son comes through very strongly and it can be assumed that being the eldest son comes with an added responsibility, even if means having to make personal sacrifices. The household find themselves in a financial predicament and if Male Participant Five can help to change the narrative of his household from financially challenged to financial freedom, why can it not be considered, especially in a household where there is lack of provision. To help bring relief to the household, Male Participant Five alluded to obtaining a driver's license and being a driver like his father, however, the process of obtaining a driver's license requires money and there is no additional money for this skill to be pursued.

*I was also thinking of becoming a driver like my dad but I need a driver license and that also requires money and if I get a driver license, will be able to find employment in agriculture. I will be able to help my family.*

From the narratives, one can see that the post-matriculants of Douglas have a willingness to change the course of their lives.- However, life as a personal struggle keeps on presenting itself in various ways. The quest is to change the narrative from hopelessness to hopeful, but the journey to hope can stretch those who find themselves in a predicament. The journey can feel

like there is no end unless a few hurdles have been overcome. Female Participant Two, and Male Participants Three and Seven gave us a glimpse of what is typically happening in the world of a post-matriculant in a disadvantaged community like Douglas. They are in the same environment and the same circumstances, yet the experience thereof is different. The absence of finances and employment delays the opportunity to live a better life. Furthermore, the weight of responsibility further rests on the child who is the eldest amongst the siblings.

### ***5.3.1.2 Socio-economic condition: High Unemployment and Low-Income Jobs***

The socio-economic conditions in which the households of Douglas find themselves can be attributed to the high unemployment rate and the low-income jobs that exist, jobs such as being farmworkers, domestic workers and handyman-related work. Female Participant Two's narrative directs me to the socio-economic state of the household and how it has an impact on the progression of the individual. Female Participant Two commented: "*we do not have money in the house. I said that my father is the only one employed in the house and his income is very little, it only covers the small basics*". In addition, Female Participant Ten stated that "*finances are the challenge that I have to overcome and also to complete my studies. I studied last year at Boston College, then I dropped out because of money, the finances*". Furthermore, Male Participant Six's narrative is no different to his peers. He stated: "

*The financial situation at our house. There is a lot of financial reasons because my father is a farmworker and has a low income. He is the only breadwinner in the house, and we are a lot of brothers in the house. If I can get a better job or achieve the career I want to do, I will be able to overcome these challenges and will be able to assist my family.*

Furthermore, households have experienced a history of unemployment over a long period of time. This leads to challenges in pursuing post-school studies. Lack of finances in the home can have an impact on furthering a career in Douglas. Financial challenges seemed to be the biggest hurdle disadvantaged communities must overcome. You will find in many households there is a history of unemployment and because of unemployment, there is no money or if there is employment, the income is so scant that it only covers the basics of the house.

The extracts suggest that socio-economic conditions do not prevent the financial challenges that are being experienced in certain households of Douglas. It is imperative for these post-matriculants to achieve their career goals, however, lack of finances cause a stumbling block on their path. Unless this challenge is overcome, there will be cases like Female Participant Ten

who will start her career journey but have to drop out because there are no finances for her to continue. Many private institutions like Boston College do not make use of the Government Financial Aid Scheme, meaning students have to pay for their fees themselves. Furthermore, you will find that private colleges like Boston do not have rigid admission requirements for their programmes like the universities, you only need a matric pass. Prospective students go to these institutions because they qualify, yet, financially they are not sustained to see them through to the end of the programme. The alternative option is to apply for a study loan. Even pursuing this approach, permanent employment and an affordable credit rating should be achieved to access the student loan. This approach can also serve as a setback, considering the unemployment rate in Douglas.

### ***5.3.1.3 Impact of Admission Point Score (APS) system***

*My challenge was my AP score, it was very low. I applied to Sol Plaatje but I did not make it and I could not get a bursary, my parents are unemployed. And finances are a huge challenge. A way in which to overcome the challenge is to rewrite some of my subjects to boost my AP score. (Female Participant eleven)*

Female Participant Eleven admitted that her challenge was her AP scores which were a hurdle, beside the finances, she would have to attend to. The Admission Point Score (APS) system was introduced by the Department of Higher Education and is the point score that universities use to ascertain if prospective students qualify for entrance into a specific course. Each institution has its own format of how the APS is applied per programme. The AP scores have been a consistent narrative that the post-matriculants of Douglas have alluded to. The narrative suggests the impact AP scores have on admission to the University and access to bursaries.

Post-matriculants of Douglas referred to their low AP scores and how it was a stumbling block for their progress and desire to pursue their careers. Low AP scores can be due to many reasons and it forms part of the overarching narratives and experiences of post-matriculants of Douglas' career development. A required AP score must be attained to get an admission opportunity at a university. As indicated, there are various reasons why low AP scores are obtained. Female Participant Two drew my attention to her reason when she stated:

*Another thing I have to do is to better my AP scores. This one time during my matric year when we had to prepare for the preliminary examination, I got very sick. There were two subjects I could not write, and this made me to feel sad. I went to the school and enquired about writing those subjects over but was told I will only be allowed to*

*rewrite it the following year ... What I have to do is just better my AP scores so I can apply for the bursary, better my AP scores so I can get admission to the university to study for Law.*

Through the extract it can be noticed that obtaining a low AP score was not the fault of the participant, she had fallen ill during the exam period and could only do a rewrite the following year. This could cause a delay in her getting started with her studies to pursue her law qualification. Female Participant Four also acknowledged that to pursue a qualification, she needed to rewrite some of her subjects. She stated: *“I know in order to pursue my qualification I have to rewrite some of my subjects. The levels I have obtained does not qualify me admission to university, so I have to rewrite my matric”*. The extracts suggest that obtaining a low AP score can cause delays in obtaining a qualification in record time. In some cases, the low AP scores were obtained due to unforeseen circumstances, other times it was due to lack of motivation. However, the acknowledgement of where it went wrong indicates that the post-matriculants are willing to take responsibility for themselves and their future. The option to rewrite some subjects is there. Another element the low AP scores highlight is that bursaries cannot be obtained if the scores are low, therefore it is imperative for the post-matriculants to consider bettering their marks to secure funding.

#### ***5.3.1.4 Career as a service to the community***

Female Participant Two drew my attention to the lack of information around legal matters in Douglas. Gaining a qualification in law and bringing that knowledge to the community would be of great help. She stated:

*I always had this urge to help our people and this one day I was sitting in front of the TV and a movie came on, I cannot remember the name of the movie or what the case was about, but I remember it was about a black lawyer who was defending someone coming from a poor community in court ... I said to myself, I would like to do that. I would like to be there for our people who cannot help themselves.*

This narrative points to a career being of service to the community. In most cases, pursuing a career is not for personal gain and is not necessarily driven from a personal interest. However, it is driven from the social context and how the lives of people can change for the better. Female Participant Four remarked: *“I notice in my community there is a lot of unemployment and as a way of bringing change, I want to start my own business and want to create job opportunities for people”*. The needs of the community have come through many generations and to learn

how the post-matriculants want to align their careers to that of the need of the community brings forth a sense of hope. These kinds of narratives also suggest that these post-matriculants are tired of their social context and they want to do something to change the realities. For example, Male Participant Three stated that:

*I would like to do something around agriculture, I will even share my skills and knowledge to those of the community who might be interested in agriculture. I will share my knowledge around planting, the different landscapes, and different structures. If there are opportunities of this sort, I will be the first to help and bring about change in my community.*

The quest to bring change to their disadvantaged community stems from the seriousness of the context. Female Participant Five stated that:

*If I had an opportunity to pursue a career, it would be teaching. The children at home and in my street encourages me a lot to study toward a teaching degree. I know there is a lot of children who struggles, and their parents do not have the time to support their children. Then I felt, why not someone come and help the children, go and study further and come back to teach them.*

This generation of children need to know that having a lack of support is not normal. They need to start creating their own narratives that speak of abundance in every sphere of their lives. Female Participant Twelve referred to the state of her community and how many changes were occurring in the community. Pursuing a career in social work would help to change the negativity in the community. She shared as follows:

*There are so many changes that occurs in the community that is why I want to pursue social work as my career choice because there are so many children that is walking in the street and who have been neglected, it is not right. And this is where my motivation to pursue my career choice come from because I know I will make a difference.*

Changing the social context of a community like Douglas requires an inclusive approach. This can only manifest if the current generation of post-matriculants acknowledges the important role they play. From the extracts one can ascertain that the post-matriculants of Douglas are opting to align their careers to that of the needs of the community.

### **5.3.1.5 First Generation attempt University Studies**

In a disadvantaged community such as Douglas, reaching matric is an achievement. Many of the parents of the post-matriculants that were interviewed to collect data indicated on the demographic questionnaire that some of their parents never attended school or left school when they were in primary school. Some got to high school but dropped out, but very few reached post-school studies. Thus, there is a history of incomplete schooling in Douglas. Reaching matric and completing it is indeed a big achievement. However, as much as there is complete joy when a child obtains a matric pass, preparation for post-school studies is not in place. Female Participant Two noted: *“I have older sisters who completed matric, however, they are unemployed and have been unemployed for a long time”*. The burden of changing the course of their lives rests on the post-matriculants as they want to be relevant and not form part of the narrative unfolding in their homes. Female Participant Two further stated: *“I did not want to find myself in that situation, so I was thinking about how can I change my life”*. There are clear indicators in the data that post-matriculants of Douglas made an attempt to sign up at institutions of higher learning even though they had met with many challenges. Female Participant Two remarked:

*I have not identified a university where I can study Law but I know of University of the Western Cape and University of Johannesburg. I think when I am going to study at any one of these varsities it will be the first time that I will be leaving Douglas for a long period of time.*

From the extract, it can be ascertained that Female Participant Two is the first one in her home that will attempt further studies outside Douglas. It is like giving up on what is known and stepping into the unknown. It is about stepping out of a small community and stepping into this big city. It does evoke some anxiety, however, much rests on her shoulders as she is not only representing herself but her family and the community she comes from.

In addition, Male Participant Seven was involved with the next step of his life the day he stepped into Grade 12. He explained:

*The day I first step foot in Grade 12, I was thinking about what am I going to do next, like in what am I going to do after matric. First of all I tried out different universities, I would apply to different universities, I would apply to different bursaries and all of that and I knew that I should have a plan B, C, you know and a plan D ... March, when I was in Grade 12 my first results that I got, I applied at a private university and I got accepted provisionally. And as I was accepted, I applied at University of Free State and*

*they had long strings, sending documents back, and I had to like resend them back, it was a long process but meanwhile, I knew I was accepted at a private university.*

Male Participant Seven sat with this overwhelming responsibility to be active in his life. This extract shows that all attempts had been made to get signed up with a university to ensure that he achieved his goal. He further indicated that he should have a plan if one plan fails, he must have a back-up. In most scenarios, first generation prospective university students have to deal with a number of disappointments, especially if they are energised, motivated and determined to prepare for their career. Male Participant Eleven, for example, expressed his disappointment because of a trust fund that declined his application. He opined: *“I applied last year to study chemical engineering at Free State University, however the trust fund declined my application, it was disappointing”*. In addition to an attempt to gain access to university, Female Participant Eight gave a clear indication that attending university was something she really wanted to do; however, at the time, finances were the challenge. She stated:

*Then I went to NWU Potch (North West University in Potchefstroom), I was accepted at NWU Potch, but when I got there, my bursary forms got lost and we had to come back to Douglas.... NWU Potch was not the only time where I was not financially in a good place, before that I was accepted at University of Free State and for them to see that I was accepted twice but financially I could not do it, now this. Many people thought that I would give up. For my family it means a lot to see that I have not given up.*

The extracts are a clear indication that attempts have been made to attend university. It can be further noted that the post-matriculants attempted more than once to attend a university. This behaviour also suggests that they want to change the narrative of their households and break the ceiling that suggests that obtaining matric is the highest achievement. They also want to dissolve the notion that one must find employment once you have passed matric as it will help to change the socio-economic status of the house. First generation prospective university students do set the tone for the younger children of the community. This course of action will demonstrate positive remodelling, which is lacking in a community such as Douglas.

#### **5.3.1.6 Interests versus Experience: Lack of Information**

Female Participant One had a narrative that speaks of career interest versus experience. She stated:

*I was in Grade 10 when I was thinking about my career and what I wanted to be one day. Firstly, I wanted to do the bachelor of agricultural science but then I realized it was not for me, it requires somebody who has more experience in the agricultural side of things.*

The narrative suggests that experience is needed for a career to be pursued. It is highly unlikely that experience speaks to career interest. Alternatively, it can be assumed that this kind of understanding exists in communities like Douglas. It can also suggest that there is not enough conversation around various types of careers and what the requirements are to pursue them. The thought of wanting to pursue agriculture could have been ignited by the context in which Female Participant One grew up. One of Douglas' economic drivers is agriculture. The experience as alluded to by Female Participant One can also suggest that she has been exposed to agriculture because of her context, however, because she does not have experience, she will be changing her course of direction and pursuing something else. Yet any other career pursuit requires experience. It is clear from the narrative that there is a lack of understanding and information about pursuing a career in agriculture. Furthermore, Male Participant Three identified pursuing a career in agriculture because of a passion he developed whilst doing the subject in Grade 10. He stated:

*The thought of pursuing Agriculture came when I was in grade 10 at Douglas High when I did my subject selection, I chose Agriculture. I saw I had the passion for it because I obtained the highest marks in that subject although I did not know what the subject entailed.*

Male Participant Three did not have an interest in agriculture, however, his passion was ignited because of the high marks he obtained. His good academic performance led him to follow the agricultural career path. The change in career interest may be caused by various factors. If a person had a clear career path he or she wanted to follow, sometimes the reality can make them change their course. For example, Male Participant Eleven was clear in his pursuit to study towards chemical engineering; however, due to his funding not being approved, he had to make a shift. His interest changed from chemical engineering to information technology. He stated:

*I applied last year to study chemical engineering at UFS, however the trust fund declined my application, it was disappointing. My mother suggested I do the ICDL programme. At first, I was not interested to do the course, however with the first exam I obtained a mark of 100%, then I told myself, I will continue with the course maybe it will be worth my while. I completed the programme within 8 months, the course is*

*structured for 1 and 3 years. So, I have completed it in 8 months and have obtained good results. IT is the career I want to pursue.*

From the narrative, Male Participant Eleven submitted his application at a tertiary institution who offered the programme. There is no indication that Male Participant Eleven submitted his application at other tertiary institutions. However, the setback he experienced was the non-approval of his funding application. The narrative further suggests that if he had finances to pay for his chemical engineering career interest, he would not have pursued information technology, which was his second interest. Thus, due to a lack of funding and obtaining good marks, he opted to pursue a career in which his academic performance was excellent, which was information technology.

Through these extracts it can be observed that lack of understanding, information, academic performance and finances have an influence on career pursuits. It is evident through these extracts that there are not enough conversations being held about careers. The Life Orientation subject offered at high school does not delve into the career choices. Furthermore, the lack of information highlights the need for career services within the community. Career services will help with information and formulation of understanding as well as options for funding opportunities. The extracts further suggest that there are no career counsellors or practitioners in Douglas for the discussion to continue once an interest has been developed. The school curriculum does not have the allowances for in-depth discussions on career pathing. Also, educators who form a base of support do not necessarily have the skill to provide career information and guidance to learners.

Career practitioners suggest that careers should be aligned to a person's interest and personality. However, in the case of the post-matriculants in Douglas, this approach does not hold. It seems like if their confidence is boosted when they obtain good results, and because of their high marks, they would explore that career even if it was not their initial interest. In addition, Male Participant Nine identified himself as someone who was creative and through the art of painting, he would express himself. It is a rare career to pursue in a community such as Douglas. Again, it is through changing the traditional narrative on what kind of careers are acceptable to pursue and pursuing a career that will sustain the individual. It is a clear struggle between passion and what is traditionally acceptable as a career choice within a poor community. He stated: *"It has always been painting for me. Painting has a way of expressing plenty of things as a person ... we did a lot of painting and I decided to fall in love with it"*. The extract alludes to clarity in terms of career pursuit which is driven by interest and passion.

Career exploration, as alluded to by Super (1990), suggests that a lot of back and forth takes place at this stage. The career exploration stage cannot be completed during mid-adolescence due to various factors that have an impact on the career choices. These are factors such as lack of information and social changes, which are evident through the narratives of post-matriculants of Douglas. Furthermore, the ideal services for a disadvantaged community such as Douglas would require a centre where advice on career options can be discussed in more depth and the relevant guidance be given to set the adolescent on his or her career path. There is not a definite end to the exploration phase because of the intricacies that exist within and around the adolescent.

### ***5.3.1.7 Positioning self as a Role Model***

Female Participant One expressed a narrative of role modelling in which there was a quest to inspire and empower through support. She was changing from hopelessness to hopefulness and moving from a mindset of ‘I do not know’ to ‘I know what to do’. There is a sense that the community are lost and require direction with the necessary help and support and motivation. She stated:

*I think it's more like you see, you can see when somebody is down and you want to change that person's life for the better, you want to help them prosper, you want to help them to become a better person than they are already, you want them to become successful, you want them to become, you can see that hopelessness in somebody's eyes, they don't know what they want to do with their careers, they don't know what to do with themselves, so that's why I want to help them. I want to help them build themselves up so they can have a nice life forward, I think, with a brighter future.*

Because of the lack of role models in Douglas, educators have been identified as the biggest supporters for young people to move forward. Female Participant One identified herself as part of this role and granted a reassurance that people were not alone: there was support and help was readily available. Female Participant Eight shared the same sentiment in that she wanted the children of Douglas to be inspired when they looked at her. She opined: “*I also want children in Douglas must look up and say that person could do it, why not me ... for my community I will be a role model, if I can do it then they can do it as well*”.

Male Participant Seven put himself forward by stating:

*I want to be a role model because there is not a lot of people who does what I am doing and some people are scared to take a challenge and they say that it is not their place to do it, but I believe that there will be a change.*

The extracts suggest that in order for change to occur within Douglas, the participants need to step up and be the change they want to see. The participants further suggest that they need to equip themselves first in order to be a role model where people can look up to them and aim to present themselves better.

#### ***5.3.1.8 Being Inspired and Inspiring the Next Generation Through the Teaching Profession***

The teaching profession has presented different reasons why various post-matriculants of Douglas should pursue it. For some, like Female Participant One, teaching would help inspire and encourage the young people of Douglas to find direction. She stated: *“I really want to go into teaching, I want to inspire people’s life, I really, really, really want to inspire someone’s life”*. The extract suggests that the people of Douglas lack inspiration. The fact that they walk around looking demotivated ignited a spark within Female Participant One to inspire them. Furthermore, teaching has been identified as a need within our country. Male Participant Five stated: *“it is actually a good idea to study teaching because our country need teachers and our country need more people to train our people”*.

The extract of Male Participant Five suggests that there is a lack of teachers within the country and the need is there to have sufficient human capital to keep the profession going. The lack of teachers can cause a delay in developing people. Female Participant Five has been inspired by her teachers in the way they have lived out the teaching profession. She stated:

*My interest to do teaching was activated by two teachers. They made teaching look interesting and fun to do. It’s not only about covering the curriculum, it’s about taking interest in the learners... Every day children are born, the teachers are becoming less, the children must study hard to pursue further studies in teaching in order to help the next generation to study further.*

The narrative suggests forward thinking and an opportunity to help the next generation. The teachers who inspired Female Participant Five set the platform for how he can approach his career path as it will also have an impact on the learners he will get to teach.

Another reason for pursuing a career in teaching alluded to by Female Participant Ten, was because of job security and the stability teaching brings. She stated: “*Most people in Douglas study toward a teaching qualification because they know that if they have completed, they will get a job ... teaching brings stability*”. The history of unemployment and getting into the economic sector has been and still is a challenge in Douglas. To ensure job security, the choice of the teaching profession as a career option has become a most sought after field. In most cases it is used to break the cycle of unemployment within the home and the community. The traditional way of pursuing a career in teaching and the reasons therefor have taken a different form in Douglas and more vigorously so. Traditionally, and more so under the apartheid regime, choices of careers within the previously disadvantaged populace, teaching and nursing were the careers to be pursued. There were limitations in pursuing other careers.

#### ***5.3.1.9 The Constraining Influences of Subject Choices***

Female Participant One highlighted the limitations in subject choices to follow the preferred career path. In other words, the subject choices did not allow a variety of career options. She opined: “*I had a subject at school but it was more like you don’t have a choice at our school, it’s more like those subjects, you only have a number of subjects*”. This narrative seems to suggest that there are limitations when specific subjects are selected and learners are steered to pursue a particular career based on the subject combination. This can also lead to them pursuing a career they have not considered. In addition, subject choices that might minimise career options, and selecting subjects based on the combination can also have an influence on career options. Male Participant Five had a challenge of personal potential as well as the subject selection challenge. He stated:

*And for me it will be a challenge to become a doctor. I believe since I was very young that I wanted to become a doctor and I always wanted to become a doctor, but the reason when I got to high school, I discovered that I do not have the necessary level of competence and subject selection.*

The narrative highlights an important note in that as much as Male Participant Five wanted to pursue medicine, he confirmed for himself that he did not have the necessary level of competence and the subject selection. It is also interesting to note that apart from the subject selection limitation, he stated that he did not have the level of competence. The question is, what informed him to develop an interest in becoming a doctor and at what point did it occur to him that he does not have the level of competence? This seems to allude to self-esteem issues. Furthermore, subject combinations are predetermined by the school management as it is dependent on class sizes, staff complement and the school's overall performance.

#### ***5.3.1.10 Discussion on the narratives and experiences of post-matriculants in Douglas***

The career development narratives and experiences of post-matriculants of Douglas reflect a combination of what exists in their context. It is evident through their narratives that they cannot separate themselves from the realities they were born into. The career development narratives and experiences of post-matriculants in Douglas include life as a personal struggle expanded through financial challenges and the admission point score (APS). Furthermore, the narratives also suggest that post-matriculants seem to align their career choices based on the needs of the community and so doing they render a service. And finally, in most households it was confirmed that some post-matriculants were the first generation who pursued post-school qualifications.

According to Strydom and Loots (n.d.), 70% first-generation entering students do not have parents who graduated from a university. Furthermore, 45% of entering students have no family members who graduated from higher education, and finally, 79% of first-generation students are black African, with all other groupings below 10%. The effect of these findings suggest that first-generation students are at far greater chance of failure. Universities need to apply their minds differently about how they familiarise and help first-generation students. Furthermore, the career development narratives of the post-matriculants of Douglas include how they position themselves as role models and use the teaching profession in most cases as their base. The career development narratives and experiences further highlight how subject choices can cause minimum exposure to different types of career options. The career development narratives and experiences of post-matriculants of Douglas suggest their lives are integrated with their context.

Another element that came out very strongly through the narratives is the socio-economic conditions, with finances being the major challenge. In addition, a high level of unemployment exists which further perpetuates the lack of finances within the home. Finances play a critical role in determining the success or failure of various career choices and pursuits. Most of the

participant narratives highlighted that the availability of finances had a direct or indirect impact on the further pursuit of their careers at institutions of higher learning. These findings on the role of finance in career development are consistent with the previous literature. Eiditimas and Juceviciene (2014, p. 3983) argue that among other factors that influence a school leaver's decision in choosing a career path are the economic factors, which include study fees and career prospects. Kazi and Akhlag (2017, p. 187), in a study conducted in Lahore, Pakistan, pointed out that finance was among the most significant influences on the learner's career. In addition, Denhere (2013, p. 46), who conducted studies in Australia, concluded that financial difficulties were among the factors that impede the students' progression to tertiary studies, therefore emphasising financial resources as a key influence on career choices. Besides, research conducted on the African continent and also in the existing literature corroborates that the career choice is steered by many factors of which finances play a critical role (Edwards & Quinter, 2011, p. 81; Denhere, 2013, p. 46; Myeza, 2015).

Finances are the common denominator which enable the growth and development of the individual and later the family and, finally, the community. The absence of finance can either cause a delay in an individual's growth and development or it can deter them from their personal set goals. The narratives of the post-matriculants voice their desire to better their lives. However, the lack of finances does not allow this. The lack of finances in disadvantaged communities like Douglas will be part of the narrative unless post-matriculants understand the role they must play in securing funding. Institutions need to be held accountable for negligence of important or confidential documentation of the prospective client. Unless the role and responsibilities are clearly understood of those involved with career pursuits and the support needed, the issue of finance will be part of the narrative of a post-matriculants coming from a disadvantaged community would remain.

Furthermore, the community would stay disadvantaged because of the stagnation of its people. In addition, different institutions play a role in the process and in many instances. Disadvantaged communities look to government for direction and support to ease the financial challenges experienced by post-matriculants. One of the critical roles of local government would be addressing issues of welfare and development of its people and ensuring effective and efficient services through, among others, apportioning budgets to take care of critical areas of development to their constituents. The prevalence of poverty in households, the high number of school dropouts, and the high number of frustrated post-matriculants due to lack of finances raises critical issues that would need to receive the urgent attention of the local municipality. Through the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) of the municipality - a document whose sole purpose is to lay out the strategic plan, its implementation as well as its evaluation - the

municipality is given a 5-year period to address the critical areas that require urgent attention to fulfil the mandate of their people.

According to the IDP (2020/2021), one of the most critical challenges facing the municipality is the reduction of poverty and, among others, increasing access to services in education, health and social sciences. While emphasis on education is identified as the other critical socio-economic challenge, the IDP does not articulate education services as a priority area with aligned strategies on how to attain efficient and effective delivery. The youth are being disadvantaged and this has a direct impact on their development. With this being said, the career development narratives and experiences of disadvantaged post-matriculants in Douglas will remain prevalent unless there are radical changes in prioritising education and accessing of finances for post-school studies. The career development narratives and experiences of post-matriculants illustrated a combination of dynamics. It is evident that the environment has an impact on their career aspirations.

Furthermore, there is an overwhelming need to change the direction and cause of the community, hence the type of careers being considered, careers such as law, teaching and social work, amongst others. The context of the community calls forth their career choice being rendered as a service instead of accumulating wealth. Berry (2017) notes that perspectives in decision-making have an impact on the individual's action and societal pressure. He further argues that society has an impact on career development as it forces young people to tap into their capabilities as well as creating a balance between individual capability and social structures. It is therefore important to note that career choices are embedded in and speak to the need of the community.

In relation to role-modelling, Matshabane (2016) explored the influence of role models on adolescents in low-income communities. The study was contextualised in relation to the tenets of socio cognitive career theory and revealed that role model influence along with cultural values play a vital role in informing decisions about the future careers. Post-matriculants of Douglas identified the need for positivity and brought themselves forward to serve the younger generation in being role models. It is about presence and being a beacon of hope within their context. The narratives and experiences of the post-matriculants in Douglas illustrate the need to be and position themselves in such a way that the younger generation can look up to them. Furthermore, research has shown that visibility of a role model can have a significant impression on confidence and success. Joubert and Slabbert (2017, p. 180) are of the view that disadvantaged youth have a crisis of confidence, which at times is caused by the lack of something compared to their peers. Role models have been typically defined as adults whom

youth look up to or desire to be like (Hurd & Zimmerman, 2011, p. 2390). They are traditionally looked to as adolescents form their identities. Furthermore, Hurd and Zimmerman (2011, p. 2390) suggest that the most important character of the role model is to model attitudes, values and behaviour. A study conducted by Madhavan and Crowell (2014) postulates that youth in rural South Africa construct role models and connect them to their life aspirations. The choice of role models reflects a balancing strategy to reconcile individual and group identity development.

Furthermore, career exploration has become a misfit in the context of Douglas. This is due to a lack of information, awareness and understanding as well as resources within the community. The lack opportunities which exists in Douglas has a direct impact on career exploration. Super's theory in terms of the career exploration stage seems to be invalid in the context of Douglas' 15 – 24 age group. The weight of internal and external factors is heavy on the adolescent, leaving little to no room for career exploration. Moreover, Del Corso and Rehfluss (2011, p. 250) posit those attitudes, beliefs and competency influence the four dimensions of career adaptability, mainly, how concerned people are about their career, the control they believe they have over their career, the extent of their curiosity about existing work roles and opportunities and the confidence they must initiate and complete career tasks. Usinger and Smith (2010, p. 580) suggest that favourable career planning and exploration attitudes are theorised to result in positive attitudes towards the future, more internal attributes for success and higher levels of self-esteem

Savickas and Porfeli (2012, p. 661) revealed that there is a correlation between career adaptability and career identity in relation to vocational identities and identification with career commitments. Therefore, individuals with higher levels of career adaptability competencies are more able to make career choices that facilitate their identity construction (Albien & Naidoo, 2018). However, in the context of Douglas, existing limitations have caused some of the youth to reprioritise what is important and survival has become the key mode and position they have taken. Therefore, cognisance should be given of where individuals find themselves. The approach to career exploration and career counselling should be reframed in the context of disadvantaged communities like Douglas.

Studies by Brown (as cited by Chinyamirindi, 2012), Osipow and Fitzgerald (1996) and Vondracek et al. (1983) have critiqued Super's theory. They see it as failing to integrate aspects of individual life as interrelated but rather fragmented, the neglecting of economic and social factors and their influence on the individual life in early career development, and failure to capture the dynamic interaction between the person and their environment. The systems

theoretical framework, however, visualises the individual as a whole, but influenced by various factors internally and externally in the process of career development. Furthermore, the social cognitive career theory views career development as a dynamic interaction between an individual and their environment. According to this theory, four key individual factors influence career behaviour: self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectancies, goals and behaviour.

### **5.3.2 How do gendered cultural scripts (schemata) influence the career development narratives, experiences and choices of the post-matriculants in Douglas?**

The key objective of this research question was to highlight the different gendered dimensions evident in the career development narratives of post-matriculants. The narratives from various participants, based on their gendered differences, point to the reasoning that informs the different career choices that the participants pursue. The themes that seem to be highlighted by the participants' narratives are that of willingness to challenge traditional male dominated careers and breaking gender barriers. Female Participant Eight illustrates the willingness to challenge the traditional male dominated career. Her narrative reads as follows:

*I actually wanted to do management but financially I could not get to do it, then I went to the military instead. I thought of management when I was on school. It was not something I wanted to do, I just imagined myself, but for me it was always probably something which will never happen. Then I went to NWU Potch, I was accepted at NWU Potch, but when I got there, my bursary forms got lost and we had to come back to Douglas. Then someone gave me forms to complete for the military, I applied and the next year I was in the military. I did not speak to anybody, someone just gave me forms and I applied.*

*It is hard, I am currently in Oudtshoorn and I was never really away from my parents and family. And there we are not allowed to have our phones with us, so to be without your people and not be in contact with them is hard but I overcame it. My mother has a big influence me, she is taking it very hard because we come from a family where there is no money. She ensured that we have food, she ensured that I go to school and there were times when no one believed in me, she was there and I just want to make her proud. Business management was my main career choice, but as I said, financially I could not pursue it, but I am still going to do it. After my two-year training then I am going to study.*

*To be in the military changed me as a person, it made me realise that I can do what they train, you do things which you never realised that you could do, it made me realise that I am able to achieve what I really want to achieve. I will say circumstances made me to actively look out for opportunities to make something out of my life. Many young people complete their schooling then they do not have that thing to move forward. I have decided for myself that I want to become something.*

*Training in the military is very hard, especially for me as a female. There are times where you feel you want to give up. If I think of the circumstances where I come from, I really want to make a difference, I want to give my children and parents a better life, I also want children in Douglas to look up to me and say that if that person could do it, why not me. My career is very important, interesting, I enjoy it. For my family, my career is something big, they are proud of me. NWU Potch was not the only time where I was not financially in a good place, before that I was accepted at University of Free State and for them to see that I was accepted twice but financially I could not do it, now this. Many people thought that I would give up. For my family it means a lot to see that I have not given up. For my community it will mean that I will be a role-model, if I could do it then they can do it as well. Factors that hinder us to move forward is our circumstances and I think some come out of families, many of them believe if you have done matric there is nothing for you going forward. So they do not have people that can motivate them. So I think they need people who can motivate them and they themselves can also motivate them. This is what keeps them behind, they feel that Douglas is a small town, they feel trapped in this place and with the matric they have, they do not have the vision.*

### **5.3.2.1 Willingness to Challenge the Traditional Male Dominated Career Script**

From the above narrative, it can be noted that the Female Participant Eight did not have an alternative after her bursary documentation was misplaced, instead she had to go back to Douglas and continue her life maybe not knowing how to proceed from this experience. Things changed for her when someone gave her forms to join the military. She stated “*Then someone gave me forms to complete for the military, I applied and the next year I was in the military. I did not speak to anybody; someone just gave me forms and I applied*”. She has had many challenges since joining the military. One challenge was her being moved from home and placed in a different province, all communication was cut off and she indicated that she had never been away from her parents and family. She stated:

*It is hard, I am currently in Oudtshoorn and I was never really away from my parents and family. And there we are not allowed to have our phones with us, so to be without your people and not be in contact with them is hard.*

Adjusting to the new environment in the absence of family can be daunting and hard, however, Female Participant Eight was determined to complete her training because the challenges at home would not allow her to give up. She stated:

*Training in the military is very hard, especially for me as a female. There are times where you feel you want to give up. If I think of the circumstances where I come from, I really want to make a difference, I want to give my children and parents a better life.*

Female Participant Eight's circumstances at home do not allow her to give up, even though the training in the military is hard. Thinking about her family back home and how they are dependent on her is enough motivation for her to persevere. The issue of gender does not have a platform because of the reality that is being faced. Furthermore, men would leave the home to provide for their families and the women would be at home to take care of the household. However, the context of Female Participant Eight is different and does not allow the traditional way of attending to the household. In the previous dispensation, the military was male dominated. Young men had to go to the military to be of service to the country; females had to stay at home and take care of the household. The new era made room for females to experience equality in their choice of career, breaking the notion of male-dominated industries and career choices. Through Female Participant Eight's experience and the outcome of her military training, she is hoping to be a role model to the children in the community, "*I also want children in Douglas to look up to me and say that if that person could do it, why not me*". There are not a lot of positive role models in Douglas for children to look up to, hence Female Participant Eight alludes to her being a role-model and that children can also have someone they can aim to be like when they grow up.

#### **5.3.2.2 Breaking Gender Barriers**

Female Participant Two brings in another view into this gendered dimension narrative and her willingness to push boundaries and barriers. She alluded to her community that lacks black female lawyers and she is determined to break that barrier. She stated: *In the community where I stay, I also do not see black females that is lawyers, so that was what motivated me to even be the first black female in Douglas to be a lawyer.* The extract suggests that females do not pursue a career that is not known to them and the intention for pursuing a career in law is because there

is a lack of information and innocent people go to jail without having an opportunity to be defended. This speaks to the concerns of the community she carries with her. Entering and pursuing a career in law is to be a pioneer in the community and to break into uncharted territory and this is how gender barriers are broken. Male Participant One referred to his involvement in the community by providing legal advice and the opportunity granted to him to travel and attend workshops deepens his interest in pursuing law. He stated:

*My number one career choice I am actively pursuing is law, because as an advice officer, working under ACAOSA, I am travelling a lot and I am attending a lot of workshops based on the law of justice department ... My career interest in law started in 2013 whilst I was still in school. I remember I was in Grade 11, then we had a career exhibition, everyone was like I want to become a teacher, I want to become this, I want to become that, and I always told myself, because my father wanted to become a lawyer and he could not achieve his dreams, so I helped him take that forward. It was not only about my father but as I was growing up in life, most people defined me as a lawyer, even though I did not see that in me. They said that I was a great liar and that I was a great storyteller, and helping people out of trouble or situations where they find themselves in.*

The extracts suggest that different motivations activate different reasons for pursuing a qualification in Law. Female Participant Two is motivated through her community and what she observes happening to supposedly innocent people. She wants to create a platform for people who have wrongfully been accused to get an opportunity to be heard. Her career development trajectory is further shaped through the media, referring to the movie she watched in which a black lawyer defended a person coming from a poor background and how the case turned in their favour. Male Participant One on the other hand is exposed to on-the-job experience and his horizons are stretched due to his travels and attending workshops.

It is evident from both participants that a legal service in Douglas is needed. Furthermore, the participants do not present their narratives as one being better than the other; however, it is how they perceive their context and the contribution they want to make in their community. The motivation to obtain a law qualification is different. For example, Female Participant Two alludes to the dysfunction of the social justice system and how she wants to help change the status quo. She commented: *“Because we are a small community, we know what happens in the area. I know of cases where people went to jail, yet they are innocent”*. The extract seems to suggest that people are not being treated fairly or they do not get a fair chance to defend their

case. Male Participant One is motivated to pursue law to live the dream of his father and how he is being perceived by the community members. He stated:

*because my father wanted to become a lawyer and he could not achieve his dreams, so I helped him take that forward, it was not only about my father. But as I was growing up in life, most people defined me as a lawyer, even though I did not see that in me. They said that I was a great liar and that I was a great storyteller, and helping people out of trouble or situations where they find themselves in.*

The gendered dimension narratives of post-matriculants of Douglas suggest a commonality in being of service to the community in which they find themselves, as well as equal representation of both genders.

Although some careers were designed to have a particular gender in mind, the evolution of humanity has proved it to be irrelevant, especially in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Furthermore, the reality of the socio-economic circumstances forces the individual to take up roles that conflict with the normal standard of living. The gendered dimension in the context of Douglas cements this notion and, more especially, the context in which this community finds itself. The common denominator that comes out very strongly in these narratives is (1) to help my family and change the socio-economic circumstances and (2) to plough back into the community. These are major expressions coming from the post-matriculants in Douglas. Furthermore, the career to pursue is not for personal gain, however, it is for the family and the community. Female Participant One stated:

*I want to become a teacher. Because the children encourage me to pursue and study teaching. There are many children who struggle and their parents do not have the time to help the kids. So, I thought, why not extend a helping hand? Why don't I pursue my studies and come and help the children when I obtain my qualification because of the children's parents did not complete their schooling. Teaching will make me happy.*

The extract highlights the struggle that children experience, and that help is needed to change the circumstance. Through the extract it can be noted that the future of the children is at stake and Female Participant One carries the weight of this cause as she commits herself to obtain the qualification and come to serve the children of the community.

Disadvantaged communities do not necessarily have a pool of career information which makes them think and explore. What they do have, however, is what they have seen growing up and

maybe the stories of their parents. Other than that, there is not enough to draw from. According to Lent et al. (1996), the social cognitive career theory emphasises the collaboration of personal attributes and external environmental factors and behaviour in career decision-making. From the narratives it is evident that external environmental factors have a major impact on the career decision-making of post-matriculants of Douglas. The choice of careers by males and females within Douglas does not have vast differences, in fact, their choices are fairly on par, with the exception of a couple of interests being in the entertainment and engineering fields.

The comment made by Male Participant Four indicates why he has an interest in teaching:

*The teacher gave us an opportunity to write on the board and since then I found an interest in pursuing a career in teaching... I spoke to my teachers and asked if that was the right choice I am making to pursue teaching...what motivated me is that teachers have more time to spend with children. I like to speak to children and to crack jokes and I feel comfortable around people.*

The intended pursuit of a teaching career has got nothing to do with climbing the corporate ladder and accumulating wealth, however, for Male Participant Four it is about spending time with children. It is generally about time and feeling comfortable around people. There is no indication in the narratives that money is the driving force behind pursuing a teaching qualification. It is primarily about being of service to the community. This notion is emphasised through both genders.

In addition, the positions or roles the post-matriculants play in the house have a bearing on their career pursuits. Female Participant Seven remarked:

*We are a lot of children in our house and there is always someone who does not like to do their school/homework and because I am the eldest, I have to help. Then I realised that I enjoy explaining to children the work in this that it is also the first time that I am doing the work. But just to explain to them the work and to see that they are understanding and do the work right.*

Taking care of and helping the household is the primary responsibility of the eldest child in the house, gender is not being considered. This also suggests that career interest can be steered by the context and has nothing to do with gender preference.

#### *5.3.2.4. Discussion on gendered dimensions*

Gender is used to differentiate between males and females; it suggests a number of characteristics that go with gender as defined by society. Through various social interactions, men and women are generally created to be different in behaviour, attitude, and emotions. This also has an impact on career choices. Gender roles manifest during adolescence when boys and girls think about the career they wish to pursue. Traditionally, the woman's role is to be the homemaker and the man's role is to provide for the family. However, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, this social obligation has somewhat shifted in many households. Through some of the narratives it was demonstrated that career development is not solely a cognitive enterprise as there are external and internal barriers to choice, change and growth. Take, for example, the narrative of the Female Participant Twelve who joined the military. Her context at home did not leave much room to explore several options. As much as she had a plan in mind to pursue post-school studies, her plan was short lived due to the misplacement of her funding application. She could not proceed with her studies in the absence of funding. An opportunity to join the military was presented to her and she took it, just because of her socio-economic reality at home. The military was viewed to be dominated by men, however the socio-economic position exerts a significant circumscribing and compromising effects on career options an individual is likely to consider. This narrative of Female Participant Twelve is a confirmation that socio-economic challenges have an influence on career choices.

Women share in the financial provision of the family and men partake in childcare and other traditionally feminine aspects of household chores. Furthermore, women are moving towards careers that were previously dominated by men, which indicates a shift from gender segregation. However, in a study conducted by Mahadea (2001), it was found that some form of the gender division of labour persists in South Africa, with women still being sealed into old-fashioned female functions, tending to concentrate on those activities which are well-matched with their domestic and reproductive roles. In addition, Poh et al. (2013) recognise homemaking as an important issue for women. The literature seems to suggest that women will not get the recognition they fully deserve because of the old fashioned functions they need to fulfil.

However, based on the narratives as highlighted, it can be confirmed that gender roles do not have an effect on the post-matriculants of Douglas. In fact, there is synergy and in the purpose of pursuing a particular career and that is primarily to serve the household and community. Through the narratives of the post-matriculants it can be observed that boundaries are being

shifted for the sake of financial freedom that is needed and the socio-economic conditions of the house as well as the community changes. Seabi (2012, p. 765) has confirmed this shifting in his study which revealed that there is no significant difference between boys and girls concerning the process of career decision-making. This suggests that gender does not affect the process boys and girls go through when they select a career. Obiunu (2008, p. 236) supports the fact that gender is not a significant factor in career decision-making. Gender is no longer a barrier to the choice of occupation. This could be the result of global transformation in women's rights and affirmative action in South Africa, especially in the workforce where men and women can contest and occupy the same jobs. Cramer (2000, p. 42) notes that, unlike in the past, women are actively encouraged to consider following stereotypically female as well as stereotypically male paths of career development.

Based on the narratives and literature, I can conclude that there are no vast differences in the gendered dimensions of career development narratives and experiences of Douglas' post-matriculants. It is evident that Douglas is a homogenous community. Furthermore, consistent with SCCT, the findings suggest that career development is not solely a cognitive enterprise, as there may be external and internal barriers that exert a significant circumscribing and compromising influence on career options. Moreover, SCCT significantly recognises the critical role that contextual and environmental factors play in individual career development.

### **5.3.3 What factors Enable and Constrain the Career Development Narratives of these Post-matriculants?**

The focus in the above question was to establish the enablers and constraints from the post-matriculants' narrative and experiences. I intended to identify from the data which responses enhanced various career choices against what responses posed as constraints and challenges in the pursuit of various career choices. The narratives coming through from the post-matriculants in terms of enablers relate to a narrative of support from family, non-governmental organisations and educators. In terms of narratives of constraint, finances and admission point scores (APS) were highlighted as the main factors that impact career development of post-matriculants. The next section therefore will firstly present all the possible factors that positively enhanced the pursuit of post-matriculant career choices and all the constraints and challenges experienced.

### **5.3.3.1 Enabler factors in Career Development Narratives and Experiences of Post-matriculants in Douglas**

#### **5.3.3.1.1 Support from Significant Others**

*Mostly me and my mother talked about it.... what motivated me was my teacher at school she only came to our school last year when I was doing matric and she light up this world for me, I did not know what to do with myself, I even considered not to go to university anymore. She turned my life around.(Female Participant One)*

Female Participant One alluded to the support she received from her mother and teacher. She further cited that she did not know what to do with herself, which seems to suggest that she had no direction on what course her life should take. The support she received from home and school made a difference in choosing a career path. Male Participant Eleven discussed his motivation from his brother, among others, as follows:

*my brother motivated me to pursue my career. He was the one who enjoyed working on computers ... the teacher at the ICDL programme, she said that opportunities can exist when a person has the ICDL and if you believe in what you do and if you enjoy what you do and you are doing your best in what you are doing, it will be easier to make a career choice.*

The provision of support from close acquaintances is important, especially in disadvantaged communities where access to information or career guidance is inadequate. One tends to rely heavily on the immediate people you interact with and such support boosts self-confidence among post-matriculants as alluded to in the study. The narrative of support is extended from families to non-governmental organisations which serve as enablers to assist with the career development of post-matriculants in Douglas. Male Participant Seven cited the support received from a non-governmental organisation:

*Then I met MarDan Enterprises and they helped me like for real for real. I found that that was the only person in Douglas that could help post-matriculants or undergraduates to further their studies to give them career advice”.*

The narrative gives an indication that there are not a lot of organisations that give support to post-matriculants and undergraduate students within the community of Douglas. It also suggests that there is a lack of career advice. It is about knowing where to go to when help is needed and

being supported throughout until the path is clear going forward. Furthermore, Male Participant Three owes his motivation of career choice to the support system and the surrounding environment. He noted the role and participation into farm work with his dad as a major source of motivation to pursue a career in agriculture. He stated:

*I did the subject Agriculture at school, I discovered my passion whilst doing the subject.... I spoke to my nephew about my career and he always said that it is a good choice ... my motivation came from my dad because he was a farmworker. I have been working in the farm since I was a young boy. I know the animals, the differences in their races.*

In addition, his narrative illustrates the theory and practise components in that agriculture was a subject he did at school and on a daily basis he is exposed to doing work related to agriculture.

#### 5.3.3.1.2 Personal Interest

Another element that is viewed as an enabler is personal interest. This personal interest is activated by the involvement of youth within the community. In a study conducted by Mate et al. (2018), mentoring and building networks is a key enabler that provides careers with direction and support. Besides, Male Participant Two's experience is much more of self-driven and personal interest that portrays conviction in a chosen career choice as follows: "*Acting and drama is my passion. We started a drama group of about 10 young people. We acted out stories that is happening in Douglas*".

From his narrative we can see that he is passionate about what he wants to pursue and that is acting and drama. Starting a drama group within the community to demonstrate the realities of Douglas is a strong indicator of his clarity in terms of his career pursuit. Furthermore, Male Participant Four owes his enabling trait to his teacher who gave him an opportunity to write on the board, and his personality, which ignites his personal interest. He stated:

*The teacher gave us an opportunity to write on the board and since then I found an interest in pursuing a career in teaching ... what motivate me is that teachers have more time to spend with children. I like to speak to children and to crack jokes and I feel comfortable around people.*

I note how teachers within the classroom environment are quite instrumental in sparking off certain career interests among their learners. I also note that the participant acknowledges how

his personality would be suitable in the midst of children. He perceives himself as a sociable person and very comfortable around people.

### ***5.3.3.2 Constraint factors in the career development narrative and experiences of post-matriculants of Douglas***

From the study, it emerged that constraint factors are experienced at times more than enablers within disadvantaged communities. Narratives elicited from the post-matriculants reflect their realities which include low marks on Admission Point Score (APS) which cause a delay in pursuance of their desired career.

#### ***5.3.3.2.1 Admission Point Score***

Female Participant Eleven talked to her low AP scores: *“My challenge is my AP scores which is low. I have applied to study at Sol Plaatje University but my application was unsuccessful and I did not get a bursary. My parents are unemployed and finances is a challenge”*. Constraints, as highlighted by Female Participant Eleven, included a cumulation of AP scores, finances and the socio-economic status at home. The AP scores play a critical role in admission to institutions of higher learning. Female Participant Eleven is affected by the entry points to tertiary education, which are determined by the overall performance in the matric examinations. It is evident that such entry points highlighted by tertiary education do affect the number of matriculants who can be admitted to university. In other instances, the entry points will determine the qualification one can pursue which then acts as a deterrent to a desired career.

#### ***5.3.3.2.2 Finance Constraints***

The narrative of finances has been another constraint narrated by almost every participating post-matriculants of Douglas. Male Participant Seven noted his financial challenge and the impact the bursary has on his career pursuit. He stated:

*the bursary thingy I had to apply for like numerous times. When I first step into university, man I walked 17 km for 2 hours, I only had one family member that I knew in Cape Town, so it was like for me walking 17 km every single day, in the morning, in the afternoon, you know, walking with that fright, being afraid of what will happen. But that whole year I was committed to go to school whatever the circumstances because that's not what define us. Ja, so that was one of the struggles or obstacles. And the other one also, my bursary does not cover all of my finances, like my fees, so I had to*

*think of that as well and I will be able to get the outstanding fees, so I can get my results. So not only that, I had to live with people who are alcoholics, I had to persevere, I had to wait until they fall asleep and then I can study which is 1 a.m. in the morning, there is no time to sleep, I had to study, stayed late up and just like grinding it out.*

The narrative suggests that he needs to work hard in order for the loan to turn into a bursary. He cannot afford to be distracted by the challenges around him. The goal is to focus and get the loan granted to him in the form of a bursary. The challenge he is already experiencing is the fact that the bursary does not cover all his study expenses.

Female Participant Ten noted: *“Finances is the challenge that I had to overcome and also to complete my studies. I started studying at Boston College but had to drop out due to finances”*. The narrative is an indicator of the reality that is being experienced by most post-matriculants of Douglas. The unfortunate part of the narrative is due to a lack of finances, Female Participant Ten had to drop out of pursuing her studies. There are no finances to support her pursuit going forward. This could also suggest that she will never be able to complete her programme as Boston College is a private institution and does not get subsidised by the government funding scheme.

Furthermore, Male Participant Ten narrated:

*so the thing is the thing that is stopping me from law is finance, regarding finances, is that I am not financially stable and my family is not financially stable so that I can be able to go to varsity without having to depend on any scholarship.*

The narrative suggests that his household is not in a position to support his career pursuit in law. His narrative further suggests that no provision could be made in order for him to follow his career interest; he alludes to the financial instability of his family. Likewise, he is also not in a position to finance his own studies. This could be due to the lack of working opportunities that exist within Douglas or the kind of job opportunities that could only be executed through volunteering. Due to the lack of finances that already exists in his household, volunteering is not even an option.

In addition, Female Participant Nine drew my attention to the reality that exists within her household in that a choice needs to be made between her sibling and herself as to who will pursue post-school studies. She noted the lack of finances in the home. *“Finances is the*

*challenge. At the moment we are two at home who need to study, but the finances”.* It is evident from the narrative that lack of finances in the home does not allow both post-matriculants to study simultaneously. The extract seems to suggest that households need to decide who they can send to further their studies. The reality of the household speaks to affordability, that is, which child’s programme is affordable and, at the same time, which programme will have an almost immediate return on investment upon completion of their studies.

Furthermore, Female Participant Twelve demonstrated a desire to further her studies, being willing to go to any college where she could be accepted:

*I have not been accepted at the colleges. It does not matter where it is in the country as long as I can be accepted and can pursue my studies. Our finances does not allow me and I also do not get a bursary.*

It can be concluded through the narrative that finances causes a major stumbling block. As much as Female Participant Twelve has a desire and a willingness to leave Douglas, this does not carry enough weight to be exempted from needing finances. Likewise, Male Participant Six expresses his main challenge being finances and in addition to the financial challenge, he mentioned his poor academic performance. He stated:

*There are many things that I need to overcome, but the main challenge I am experiencing is finances, I am not financially stable ... it is a challenge to apply for bursaries because my academic performance is poor.*

The narrative suggests that there is a link between academic performance and obtaining a bursary. If the academic performance is poor, then chances of obtaining a bursary are limited. Prospective funders need to know where their monies will go and whether there will be a return on investment. This can only be confirmed through academic performance. Through academic performance, prospective funders will be able to ascertain whether the bursary applicant is serious about his or her career. However, the context of Douglas is complex and a number of factors like the school system and household circumstances, amongst others, need to be taken into consideration. Besides, if post-matriculants of Douglas can get a financial break in order for them to focus on pursuing a career, it will make a huge difference in the community. Finances hold the key to realise the dream of the post-matriculants in order to become a qualified individual.

#### 5.3.3.2.3 Socio-economic Conditions

Another constraint cited by some of the participants were the socio-economic conditions experienced in their households - mainly unemployment and no to low income. Female Participant Ten stated:

*I have submitted applications, however, I had no luck. Although there was one College, ICB, I studied Accountancy, but I failed it with 5 points because I froze, I was focussing on people who completed a 3 hour paper in 30 minutes. Other times I struggled to obtain bursaries and financially my family is not in a position to send me to further my studies.*

The narrative suggests that Female Participant Four took a step in furthering her studies amidst the constant struggle of obtaining bursaries. She alluded to her family who was not in a position to support her financially. Post-matriculants look to their households for help, yet, the reality is the household is also struggling to make ends meet. Furthermore, Male Participant Three due to impoverished conditions and the lack of basic needs at home, resorted to putting his studies on hold in order to work and take care of the family. He stated: *“I had to earn some money, at the time nobody was working at home, so I left the thought of studying and work full time”*.

Male Participant Three alluded to his home reality, no one was working. Due to unemployment in the home, he had to put his studies on hold. His narrative also seems to suggest that there is no income. Likewise, Male Participant Six stated:

*It is a challenge for me to think about studying because I have to earn some money and because nobody is working at home. So the idea of studying is there but I cannot do anything about it now because I have to work fulltime. I have the application forms too, but I did not complete it, I am still planning to do so. It is difficult because I am the oldest son and it is my responsibility to help in the house. I was also thinking of becoming a driver like my dad but I need a driver license and that also requires money. And if I get a driver license, will be able to find employment in agriculture.*

Male Participant Six's narrative is a clear demonstration of unsaid expectations placed especially on males, and that is to help the household. Being the oldest sibling suggests he knows the circumstances of the house and he needs to help put food on the table. Male Participant Six alluded to obtaining a driver's license as it would assist in finding a job,

however, the socio-economic conditions in the house do not allow him to obtain the license. Even though obtaining a driver's license would help to alleviate the lack at home, the unemployment and low-income realities suggest otherwise. In addition, Male Participant Three's narrative drew my attention to the occupation of his father and the income. He stated: *"finances at home, there is a lot of financial reasons because my father is a farmworker and his income is low"*. The extract confirms that as much as there is employment in the house, the income is low, which means the income covers only the very basic needs of the house. It can also suggest that there is no budget to pursue further studies because of the low income. The narrative on socio-economic circumstances of post-matriculants in Douglas has an impact on their career development. The challenge is between changing the circumstances of their homes and pursuing their career interest. The narratives seem to suggest that the socio-economic status of the post-matriculants in Douglas is a challenge that requires intervention from external sources to help alleviate the household conditions in order for them to focus on their future and pursuing their careers.

#### *5.3.3.2.4 Lack of Support by Family*

Another narrative that was shared with me speaks to the lack of family support. Female Participant Ten highlighted her personal responsibility and the lack of support from family:

*I have a baby, I could not do much at the time, and however, I am still trying my best. The thing is, I do not give up easily.....I never had any support from my family. I had to reach out to people outside instead of my family.*

The narrative suggests that even in the pursuit of a career, personal responsibility needs to be taken into consideration. As much as Female Participant ten acknowledges her reality of having a baby, the constraint leans more towards the lack of family support in order for her to pursue a career.

Additionally, some participants alluded to the lack of support from family, in that they did not receive guidance, emotional and moral support. In addition, the reality is that some of them have their own responsibility of a child. Some of these constraints can at times have an effect on progression because the reality is the post-matriculants of Douglas does not seem to have alternatives. Again, Super's theory excludes the integration of the individuals' life and social and economic factors that has an influence on early career development.

#### 5.3.3.2.5 Ill health

Furthermore, I also discovered a narrative of ill health - ill health of the post-matriculants and the members of their homes. Female Participant Two stated: *“during our preparation examination I became very sick and as a result I did not write two subjects”*. Female Participant Two has experienced a setback due to her ill health during the preparation for examinations. This setback caused her to be delayed in completing the subjects within that particular academic year. As a result, her plans to pursue a qualification had to be adjusted pending improvement in her health.

Another narrative shared with me was that of ill health experienced at home. Female Participant Six stated: *“there is a lot of things that my mother cannot do, for example, when I am sick then she cannot give me the medication that I need”*. The narrative highlights circumstances at home that can cause a strain on the post-matriculant. The fact that she cannot afford to fall sick suggests she cannot add to the burden that already exists in the house. The narrative further suggests that the mother is dependent on Female Participant Six. It might be a challenge to juggle between post-school studies and maintaining the household. Unforeseen circumstances like these can have an impact on the personal goals that have been set out.

#### 5.3.3.2.5 Negligence by Higher Education Institutions

Another narrative that was shared with me was a narrative on negligence and disorganisation from an institution of higher learning. Female Participant Eight opined:

*I wanted to do management, however, financially I could not get to do that. I imagined myself in this management role. I applied and got accepted at the university. When we got to the university, my bursary papers were misplaced and I had to come back to Douglas. I am currently busy with military training.*

The response from Female Participant Eight reflects the negligence and disorganisation experienced by participants from these impoverished backgrounds while in contact with various tertiary institutions. The participant pointed out the frustration experienced when her bursary papers were misplaced. While the participant was admitted to the university for a career in management, it is because of the negligence of administration that she had to join the military instead of pursuing her ideal career choice. The impact of negligence had a ripple effect on personal goals and plans the individual had, especially if there was a clear plan. The misplacing

of documentation caused the post-matriculant to pursue a path which she was not mentally prepared for. The impact these actions have on an already disadvantaged individual will never be fully understood, hence as institutions of higher learning, it would be ideal to strengthen administrative processes.

#### *5.3.3.2.6 Discussion on enablers and constraints*

Bandura (as cited in Edwards & Quinter, 2011) states that each person undertaking the process of career choices is influenced by various factors, including the context in which they live, their personal aptitudes, social contacts, and educational attainment. There are intrinsic factors which include higher self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and interests related to family support, while the interpersonal factors highlight strong family support, and strong adherence to cultural values (Kim et al., 2016; Hui & Lent, 2018; Tao et al., 2018). According to Sawitri and Creed (2017, p. 530), the intrinsic factors influencing career choices are strongly attached to higher career congruence with parents, leading to career confidence and self-efficacy. On an interpersonal level this reflects a tendency to conform to parents and give up their own career goals and aspirations because of value inequality. The element of support is expressed through the narratives of the participants. Support has been identified as a key role in order to achieve the goals as set out by the post-matriculants of Douglas.

Coetzee (2006) states that career enablers are those capabilities that assist an individual to enjoy a chosen and successful career path. A career enabler as a factor is attributed to provision of support (Rajesh & Ekambaram, 2012). Following the definition, it was evident from the participants' citations that the enablers in their career pursuits included family, teacher support and encouragement, personal responsibility reflected in the individual attitudes and behaviour, accessible financial support, access to information, constant support, encouragement, and affirmation from the community as well as situational factors.

Furthermore, from the narratives, I contend that in a disadvantaged community like Douglas, there are some families who give support to the post-matriculants, and support is received from the educators, non-governmental institutions and corporates like the banking institution within the community. It is therefore through such organisations that, in the absence of the required infrastructure, the youth can access the relevant support for furthering their career pursuits.

It emerged from the study that enabling factors were regarded as the positive attributes in the career development narratives and experiences of post-matriculants. These reflected as a positive, supportive, encouraging and nurturing environment that would be instrumental in the

career choices and decision of these students. Existing literature posits families and teachers at school as key pillars of support, providing guidance on career planning, career decision-making and even student performance (Edward & Quinter, 2011, p. 81; Bollu-Steve & Sannie, 2013, p. 90; Fatoki, 2014, p. 668; Mutekwe et al., 2011; Bates, 2015; Aguado et al., 2015; Mghweno et al., 2014).

From the narratives in the study, notions of personal resilience, and career adaptation amidst individual and social economic factors in disadvantaged communities is prevalent. The career narratives and experiences from the study depict sentiments of continued economic hardship, poverty, unemployment, inequality, lack of adequate resources, little or no career services, among others, and yet amidst all these challenges, post-matriculants have no choice but to forge life ahead.

From the narratives, one can elicit the misalignment of the individual's life and the social and economic factors. The constraint in finance is at times due to the lack of good academic results which disqualifies post-matriculants from obtaining a bursary or a student loan. This is mostly aligned to private bursaries, however the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) which is a South African government scheme, for example, does not require academic results upon application, however, the criterion is acceptance at a public tertiary institution. Circumstances compelled post-matriculants to find a job to help ease the financial burden experienced with such households. It was noted that while finance plays a key role in the continuation of further studies, most of the respondents had serious financial constraints acting as barriers to the pursuit of career choices. In many instances, the participants were admitted to tertiary institutions but lacked the finances to pursue their studies. In addition, some participants who were pursuing a programme had to halt their studies due to lack of finances. Many of the participants' parents were not in position to cater for their post-school studies either because they were unemployed or were in low-income jobs.

Also, I note the difficulty experienced in securing a bursary for further studies as well as the challenges experienced in applying for these bursaries. In addition, it is revealed that poor academic performance also plays a critical role in obtaining a bursary. Another element that the narratives highlight is that of over-reliance on bursaries as a gateway to furthering various career choices. Therefore, in the absence of bursaries, the participants get frustrated and resort to idleness or stagnation in career pursuits or look for menial jobs to survive on and support their families at home. It is evident therefore that many households in Douglas are faced with socio- economic conditions that prevent sustainable livelihoods.

Moreover, the impact of being disadvantaged has a bearing on several things, that is, access to information, financial challenges, self-esteem, and scarce skills, to name a few. Disadvantaged contexts place restrictions on adolescents' career development by negatively affecting their self-efficacy beliefs. Studies have shown that the successes of youth from disadvantaged contexts are slower within the sphere of career development as opposed to their peers in more affluent communities. There is a consistent limitation in career development and choices for adolescents (Seabi et al., 2010). Therefore, once an individual steps out from their disadvantaged community to pursue further studies, they cannot afford to experience setbacks such as misplaced documentation or being turned away when they enquire about rewriting subjects that will enable to become a qualified individual.

### **5.3.4 How do systemic factors, as assessed by means of the My Systems of Career Influences (MSCI) influence the career development experiences of the post-matriculants of Douglas?**

McMahon and Watson (2007, p. 47) is of the view that the participants' classification of influences into individual, social or environmental-societal levels is thought to enable a cognitive re-evaluation of influences needed for vocational identity formation. The next section describes the overall systemic nature of influences on post-matriculants of Douglas' career development. A content analysis of the influences was conducted whereby I used the participants' My Systems of Career Influence (MSCI) diagrams to capture their individual and collective accounts of the systemic influences on their careers. The data was presented as frequency counts based on the percentages for each identified influence across the sample. The results are displayed in the form of pie charts for each system of influence to graphically portray the participants' selected career influences as well as the ranking of importance of these influences. Hence, the data is presented within the three distinct systems of the systems theoretical framework (STF), namely, individual, social, and environmental-societal systems, as well as within the process influences of the past, present and future.

#### ***5.3.4.1 The Individual System of Influences***

The participants identified influences related to their individual system from a range of intrapersonal influences proposed in the MSCI booklet (e.g., *personality, coping strategies, health, ability, beliefs, culture, age, values, gender, interests, and disabilities*). The participants could also identify additional influences that they considered influential in their career development and indicate by marking with an asterisk (\*) those selected influences which have a greater significance.

Figure 3 below presents the frequency counts attached to each individual system of influence as selected by the eleven participants as having an influence on their career development. The percentage of participants who identified each of the individual system influences in relation to the total sample (n=11) is depicted on the chart.

Figure 3

***Individual System Influence***

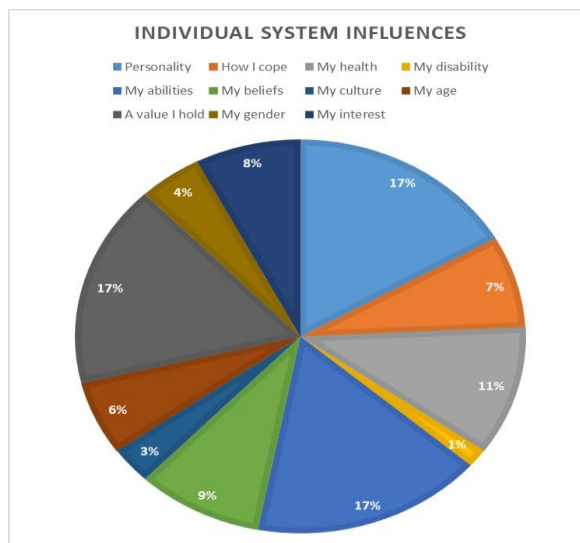


Figure 4 below presents the ranking of importance attached to each individual system of influence. The rankings are presented from the highest percentage to the lowest percentage, which includes my abilities (25%), a value I hold (22%), personality (17%), my age (8%), my health (8%) and my beliefs (8%), how I cope (7%) and my gender (5%).

Figure 4

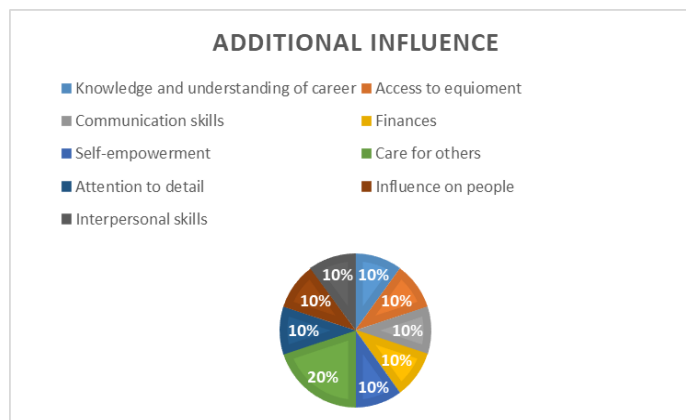
**Importance Ranking**



Figure 5 presents the additional influences attached to each individual system of influence. The additional influences include: care for others (20%), knowledge and understanding of career (10%), communication skills (10%), self-empowerment (10%), attention to detail (10%), interpersonal skills (10%), finances (10%) and influence on people (10%). It is evident from the results that the highest additional influence was care for others (20%).

Figure 5

**Additional influence**



### **Figures 3 - 5: Frequency counts, ranking of importance and additional influences for individual system influences:**

#### **Total sample**

The participants selected all eleven influences suggested by the MSCCI booklet that have an influence on their career development (personality, coping, health, disability, abilities, beliefs, culture, age, values, gender, and interests). Participants added knowledge and understanding of career, access to equipment, communication skills, finances, self-empowerment, care for others, attention to detail, influence on people and interpersonal skills respectively as additional influences. The influences that exceeded 10% were: personality (17%), abilities (17%), a value I hold (17%) and health (11%) (see Figure 3). In terms of ranking the identified influence, abilities (25%), a value I hold (22%) and personality (17%) exceeded 10% and were regarded as really important or major influences (see Figure 4). The influences that participants added (see Figure 5), namely knowledge and understanding of career (10%), access to equipment (10%), communication skills (10%), finances (10%), self-empowerment (10%), care for others (20%), attention to detail (10%), influence on people (10%) and interpersonal skills (10%) were also ranked as important or as major influences. Care for others (20%) exceeded 10%, which is a clear indication of its importance to the individual. When examining the selected influences and the ranking of importance across the sample, abilities (25%) and a value I hold (22%) comprised the highest percentages. The individual system influences are embedded within a larger system, the social system. The following subsection investigates the summary of the participants' responses to the social system influences on their career development.

Existing literature on career development in South Africa depicts black youth now as having access to enormous career opportunities unlike their parents experienced in the past. According to Albien and Naidoo (2017, p. 1), the youth of South Africa negotiate the development of their own career identities and adapt to post-apartheid social changes. There is limited career development that is contributed through the Life Orientation curriculum which is constrained by competing teaching responsibilities and a limited curriculum allocated to career outcomes to which township schools are no exception. Limited self-awareness, access to career information and world of work requirements are cited as major challenges to career development of adolescents in disadvantaged contexts (Stead & Nqweni as cited in Albien & Naidoo, 2017).

Lent et al. (1994) and Blanco (as cited in Akosah-Twumas et al., 2018) postulate that career development behaviours are affected by social cognitive processes that include self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations and career goals and intentions that constantly interact with

variables such as ethnicity, gender, culture, socio-economic status, and social support as well as any perceived obstacles that shape a person's educational and career trajectories. Self-efficacy expectations relate to a person's belief concerning their ability to successfully perform a given task or behaviour and were perceived to be major mediators of behaviour and behaviour change. Low self-efficacy expectations could therefore lead to avoidance of those behaviours while strong self-efficacy could lead to confronting those behaviours (Reddan, 2015). Leong and Barak (as cited in Reddan, 2015) suggest that nearly all individuals have some behavioural areas where they lack confidence in their abilities.

In addition, career beliefs can be described as positive or negative thoughts that are held by individuals about themselves, their careers or the career development process. Self-efficacy beliefs and beliefs about the world of work can affect an individual's career aspirations and actions, often with career decision-making processes (Albien & Naidoo, 2017, p. 1). It is evident that strong and positive intrapersonal attributes of self-belief, self-awareness, person interest, personality, coping strategies, and abilities, among others, do enhance clarity in career choices, and career decision-making in the career development process. The results from the MSCI tool on individual influences reflected importance attached to personality, abilities, a value I hold, and health, which were all scored above 10% frequency accounts. In terms of the ranking of identified influence, it was evident that abilities, a value I hold and personality exceeded 10% and were cited as important influences. The results reflect a strong sense of self-efficacy that partly embodies personality, ability and personal values. Chiesa et al. (2016) posit that career decision-making self-efficacy is similar to perceived competence.

The study suggests that in the midst of the contextual environment post-matriculants find themselves in, they need to navigate and find a path that will take them to their destiny. Taking into consideration the many influences that play a definitive role, one cannot ignore the inner call. Making sense of what is happening for oneself and the realities one is faced with may cause a back and forth and at times a feeling of being lost or even stagnant. The results of the MSCI gave an indication of where the individuals found themselves in the midst of their context. They were aware of their abilities, which echoes the basic propositions of the social cognitive career theory (SCCT) that individuals have the capacity to take ownership of their development and surroundings. Male Participant Eleven opined: *"the results of my first exam I obtained 100%, I told myself let me continue with the programme. I have completed the course within 8 months – it's normally a 1 to 3 year course, I have obtained good results"*. This also speaks to the competence, which affects the self-concept as proposed by Super.

Furthermore, adding value and making a positive contribution to the lives of people is another influence that is important for the individual. Female Participant Eleven opined:

*“I have a passion for teaching and because there is a shortage of teachers in our country... This is what motivates me to move forward in life and I feel that I will make a difference in the lives of people”.*

The individual system of influence is driven by internal factors and career decisions are based on personal interest. Ahmed et al. (2017) are of the view that mismatch of the personality and lack of interest can be dangerous and can lead to many disastrous emotions, like lack of motivation and lack of productivity, to name a few.

#### ***5.4.3.2 The Social System Influences***

The MSCSI instrument suggests six social system influences, namely manager, media, children, friends, team member, and family, from which participants were also provided with the opportunity to add their own influences or modify those proposed. In accordance with a constructionist/narrative or idiographic rather than a nomothetic approach, this creates space for participants to name a personally relevant influence, which may not be listed in the MSCSI (Arthur & McMahon, 2005). Participants made reflective notes in the MSCSI instrument under this social system influence section, however, upon examining the reflective notes, I did not find the notes relevant to be included.

Figure 6 presents the total of number of participants who identified each of the social system influences, the overall percentages in relation to the total sample. The results of the social system influences were as follows: Manager (20%), Media (25%), Children (10%), Friends (12%), Team leader (18%) and Family (15%). The results pointed out that media had the highest social system influence amongst the participants and children had the least percentage.

Figure 6

*Social System Influences*

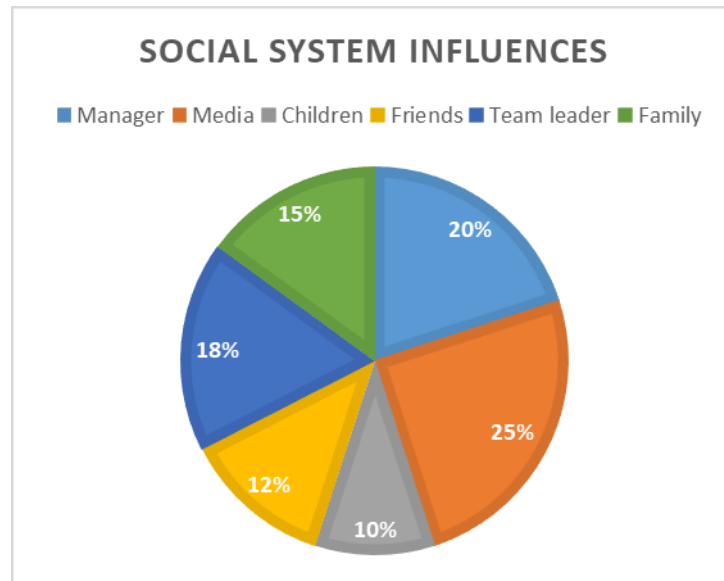
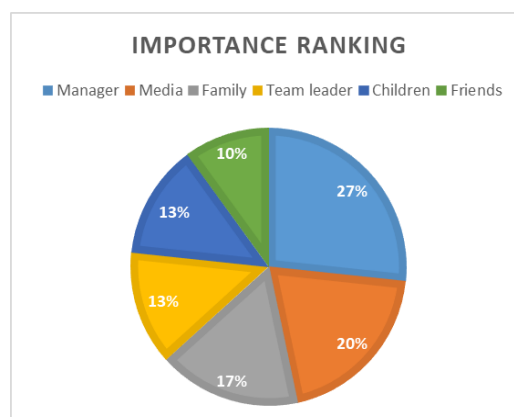


Figure 6 presents the ranking of importance of social system influences for the participants. The results indicated that the highest ranking in importance was Manager (20%), Media (25%), Family (15%), Team Leader (18%), Children (10%) and the least ranking of importance was Friends (12%).

Figure 7

*Importance Ranking*



From the previous literature, it is evident that individuals can define themselves with the confines of their social context that are formed through social interactions and influences from

family, school, friends or peers, media, cultural influences as subsystems of the social system (Arthur & McMahon, 2005, p. 208). Importance is attached to the role of occupation information and guidance from parents, teachers and peers (Shumba & Naong, 2012, p. 169). The narratives for the participants cited the critical role played by parents, teachers, non-governmental organisations and the community in shaping up their career choices and career decisions. Dass-Brailsford (as cited in Albien and Naidoo, 2016) notes that socio-economic disadvantage was found to be outweighed by combined micro-variables of extended family support, parent availability and positive role models.

From the MSCSI tool, the social system influences included influences of the manager, media, children, friends, team members and family. The results reflected stronger influence from the manager, media, team leader, family and friends that all had frequency counts above 10%. In terms of the rankings of importance, participants cited major importance to manager, media, family, team leader, and children, while the least ranked influence was friends. The results augment the existing literature concerning the role of family, teachers, and social networks, among others. Parental influence on career choices of high school learners is further supported in the studies conducted in South Africa (Mutekwe et al., 2011; Fatoki, 2014, p. 668), in Kenya (Obwoye & Kibor, 2016, p. 476), and in America (Bates, 2015, p. 67). In other studies, various conclusions point to the importance of school career guidance, the critical role of teachers, career guidance teachers as career counsellors, and influencing student attitudes (Lazarus & Chinwe, 2011; Mghweno et al., 2014 & Gati et al, 2010).

Some of the narratives cited reiterated the following: Male Participant Three: *“my motivation came from my dad because he was a farmworker. I have been working in the farm since I was a young boy. I know the animals the differences in their races”*, Female Participant One *“mostly me and my mother talked about it”*, and Female Participant Six: *“there is a lot of things that my mother cannot do, for example, when I am sick then she cannot give me the medication that I need”*.

The role of family is explained by the notion of family that disadvantaged communities are very family oriented, children grow up in a specific value system and worldview. Career development cannot be described in the absence of the role the family plays (Fabiano, 2010).

Existing literature on the influence of peers impressed a critical role in influencing fellow peers in career choices. Such advice would be effected through interactions with fellow students and friends to stimulate peer to peer encouragement (Faiter & Faiter, 2013, p. 10; Shumba & Naong, 2012, p. 169; Obwoye & Kibor, 2016, p. 476; Hashim & Embong, 2015, p. 252).

However, the results in the study acknowledged that influence of friends, but in terms of the ranking did not attach a lot of importance to it. This finding seems to portray a situation in which fellow peers are equally not equipped with career-related information and possible choices to pursue. In addition, the results also confirmed limited scope in the choices of careers post-matriculants could pursue. The majority of the participants cited traditional stereotypical careers like teaching, nursing, management, and social work, among others.

The social systems of influence suggest that external factors steer the individual to make and pursue a specific career choice. Super's theory contends that the role of contextual factors in the process of career development and career decision-making was viewed as a constant negotiation between these factors. In the context of Douglas, where there is a lack of resources, and lack of exposure to different careers, a lack of information about a specific career can lead to not making informed career decisions. Furthermore, being exposed to a cycle of poverty, not knowing anything else but the socio-economic circumstances in which a post-matriculant grew up, propels one to go into survivalist mode and consider career choices that will lift the household out of poverty. The attempt is not to gratify the self, however, it is about changing the circumstances.

#### ***5.3.4.3 The Environmental-Societal System Influences***

The third system of influence is the environmental-societal system which looks at external variables such a geographical location and labour market, for example, that might have an influence on career development. The MSCI encourages participants to select from the six proposed influences, namely, my local area, location of universities, government retraining, opportunities for work overseas, cost of my options and job availability, and to modify or add additional influences. In accordance with constructionist/narrative or idiographic rather than a nomothetic approach, this creates space for participants to name any personally relevant influence which may not be listed in the MSCI (Arthur & MacMahon, 2005, p. 208). Participants made reflective notes in the MSCI instrument under this environmental-societal system influence section, however, upon examining the reflective notes, I did not find the notes relevant to be included as it was a repetition of what had already been proposed as influences. The wording was different, but the meaning was the same.

Figure 8 presents the participants' environmental-societal influences suggested by the MSCI instrument and the results were as follows: My local area (23%), opportunities to work overseas (19%), job availability (16%) and the cost of my options (16%) yielded the highest frequency amongst the selected influences. The remaining two influences that exceeded 10% were:

location of universities and colleges of 14% and government retraining at 12% received a limiting rating.

Figure 8

***Environmental-Societal System Influence***

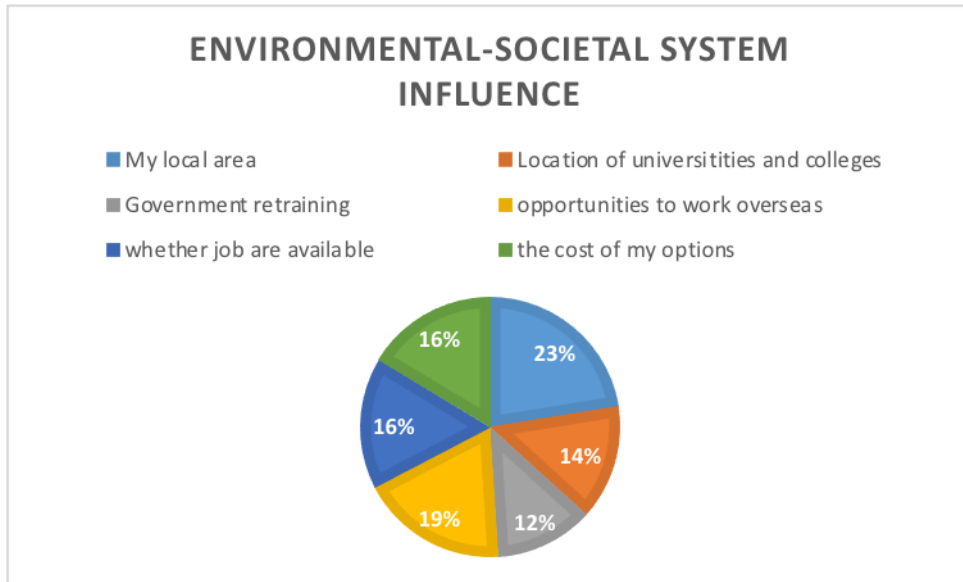
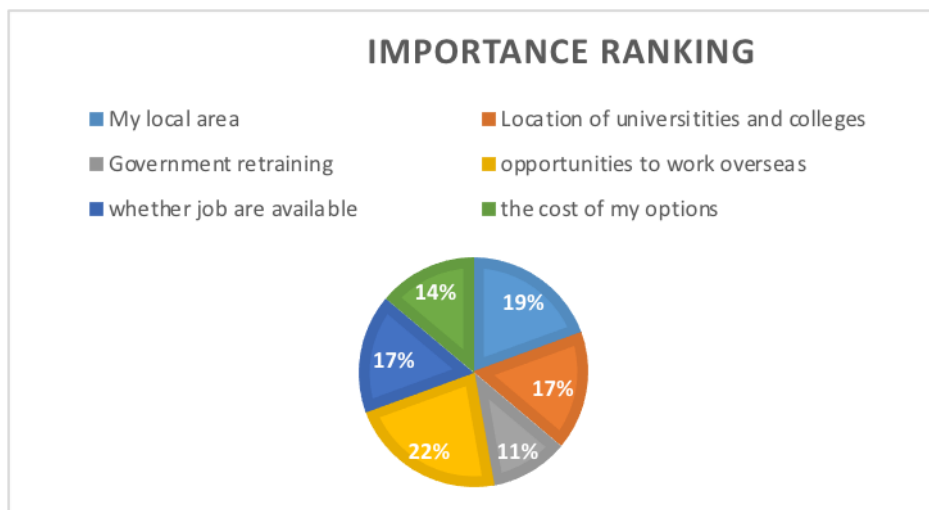


Figure 9 represents the ranking of importance identified by participants, which includes opportunities to work overseas (22%) and my local area (19%) which were rated the highest of the major environmental-societal influences in the participants' career development. Location of universities and colleges and job availability received the same rating at 17% each.

Figure 9

***Importance ranking of environmental-societal system of influence***



The environmental-societal system influences focus more on the much broader external factors that can affect an individual positively or negatively. Patton and McMahon (2014, p. ) posit that external forces would have a significant direct or indirect impact on the individual and such influences would include location, government decisions, historical trends, globalisation, socio-economic status and employment market. According to Arthur and McMahon (2005, p. 210), the environmental-societal system of influence includes geographical, political and social-economic factors. In addition, the environment-societal influences would pose as enablers and barriers in career development. The results in the study confirmed the magnitude of how the geographical location of Douglas, the socio-economic and political environment affect the career prospects and potential choices and aspirations of post-matriculants.

According to the MSCI, the environmental-societal influences included My local area, opportunities to work overseas, job availability, location of universities and colleges, government retraining and, lastly, the cost of my options. From the analysis, the participants cited My local area, opportunities to work overseas, job availability and the cost of my options as the highest in terms of frequency counts, followed by Location of universities and colleges, and government retraining with frequency counts above 10%. In terms of the rankings of importance, participants cited opportunities to work overseas and my local area as the highest major environmental societal influences, followed by the location of universities and colleges and job availability.

While the narratives point out the socio-economic conditions to include poverty, no income, unemployment, lack of finances to further career pursuits, the results from the environmental societal influences depict the urgent need for post-matriculants to either work overseas or my local area. Also, the participants highlighted the location of universities and job availability. Therefore, in retrospect, the results depict a strong sense of self-achievement, further study or work that is not limited by the geographical location. Most of the narratives also highlight a strong sense of community, the constant wish to return and plough back to the community.

Personal achievement is therefore not directed toward person and family but also inclusive of the community. Male Participant Four, for instance, said:

*my career will mean a lot to my family, my mother will not struggle at home and my father do not have work as a farmworker, I will provide for them. ...there are many children in the community who is starving, I will open a feeding scheme one day when I have enough money.*

Female Participant Four also explained:

*My career will be a benefit to my family because we are not financially stable. I will be able to help the children whose parents are not able to help them to further their studies, and with the teaching qualification, I will be able to assist them at home to study hard and to make the best of their lives.*

The results reveal various socio-economic hardships but on the contrary, there is a strong sense of resilience.

The environmental societal influence as emphasised by the study suggests that there is a lack of opportunities within Douglas. Unanticipated shocks beyond a person's control as highlighted by the STF are a depiction of the continuous interaction between individuals and their environment. Participants, in their responses, considered overseas as an option because more opportunities exist. It is interesting to note that other provinces are not being considered or even the African continent, rather, overseas. These responses speak volumes to the thinking pattern of the post-matriculants. Furthermore, it could suggest a silent need to escape. Moreover, some of the post-matriculants have never set foot out of Douglas and it does raise the question of how they would survive in foreign places. Douglas has become a place of comfort and the playing field to explore, yet there is a lack of resources to realise the dream for opportunities that exist in their hearts. At times the environmental societal influences do have a push pull effect on the individual and the SCCT emphasises the collaboration of personal attributes, external environmental factors and behaviour in career decision-making. In addition, disadvantaged communities do experience a lack of resources on a big scale, hence the responses of participants to go overseas. It is impossible to ignore the impact apartheid had on disadvantaged communities. President Cyril Ramaphosa in the State of the Nation address on 20 June 2019 stated, "The persistent legacy of apartheid has left our country with extreme structural problems – both economic and social" (SONA, 2019). Career development is not always planned, predictable or logical, hence the chance and unpredictability of the influences in career development as a result of the inherent interaction with the ever-changing environment.

### **5.3.5 What is the individual (self) and communal (self-in-community) concerns and tensions experienced by post-matriculants in Douglas?**

The next section seeks to address the question about the individual (self) and communal (self-in-community) concerns experienced by post-matriculants in Douglas. For the purpose of

highlighting the uniqueness of the narratives, the question will be answered in two parts, starting with the individual (self) concerns and then communal (self-in-community) concerns.

#### ***5.3.5.1 Individual (self) concerns experienced of post-matriculants***

The narratives that the researcher identified are that of the individual taking ownership of his or herself within their context. Another narrative that has been identified is that of determination. Irrespective of the odds that are against the individual, there is a determination that forces the individual to work their way out of their circumstances. The post-matriculants of Douglas did not demonstrate a struggle between their career interests versus the interests of the family and the community. They are however submerged in the need to bring change in the community. Their personal vision is to empower themselves first and then extend themselves to bring change within their families and the community. In the absence of the experiences of tensions, contradictions and dilemmas because of their context, it might suggest that the socio-context and the environment in which they grew up is so overwhelming that they do not really know what their individualistic orientation is. Hardship was the underlying narrative that emerged from the participants and it was verbalised through the following themes.

##### *5.3.5.1.1 A narrative of taking ownership*

The narratives expressed through the participants are that of taking ownership of themselves and their future. Some of the narratives show that the individual (self) perceives himself or herself as someone who is capable of achieving their goal. These goals are expressed coming from a place of clarity.

Female Participant Two expressed her one and only desire and that was to study Law. She stated:

*the need for black lawyers in Douglas is evident. There is not a lot of people who is doing the same career... I really do want to do law. I want to do law out of the depths of my heart.... Law really does mean a lot to me and I really want to pursue it.*

This is a clear demonstration of how the individual takes ownership of her development, as suggested by the SCCT. Male Participant Seven, on the other hand, demonstrated a strong will of someone who was ready to take on the world. He is capable of doing and achieving. He is

definitely a dreamer, an out of the box thinker. He appreciates possibilities. He constantly uses “I” to emphasise his willpower to overcome his current circumstances:

*My bursary does not cover all of my finances, like my fees, so I had to think of that as well and I will be able to get the outstanding fees, so I can get my results. So not only that, I had to live with people who are alcoholics, I had to persevere, I had to wait until they fall asleep and then I can study which is 01:00 a.m. in the morning. There is no time to sleep, I had to study, stayed late up and just like grinding it out. (Male Participant One)*

It is evident from the narrative that it is important to have a perception of self and the competence one possesses in order to plan for the future, like Male Participant Five rightfully stated:

*My career choice will enable me to achieve a lot in life. It will mean a lot because one day when I have my own family, I will be able to provide for them.*

This narrative also demonstrates forward thinking as the participant prepares for his future. Male Participant Four is another example of one taking ownership for his development, according to SCCT. Similarly, Female Participant Four attached a strong sense of “my career”, a strong sense of ownership. It emphasizes the importance of the chosen career and the expectations of pursuing it. She opined:

*My career will mean a lot to me because I did not get that support ... it will mean a lot to me if I am able to assist and help children and to encourage them to further their studies and to study hard and to achieve their careers.*

The narrative suggests that once the participant has achieved her desired career, she will be in a position to be of service to the children of Douglas; however, the change should start with her first.

#### *5.3.5.1.2 A narrative of determination*

In addition, a narrative of determination was expressed through Female Participant Two’s story. In terms of the individual (self), Female Participant Two portrays herself as a capable individual who is determined to go for what she wants. Female Participant Two’s voice comes through very strongly and seems not to be influenced by anyone. The clarity with which she spoke was well noted. No tensions could be picked up; however, a particular determination was observed

in her hand gestures when she spoke. Another observation was the excitement in her voice when she articulated her plans. She stated:

*the need for black lawyers in Douglas is evident. There is not a lot of people who is doing the same career... I really do want to do law. I want to do law out of the depths of my heart.... Law really does mean a lot to me and I really want to pursue it.*

Female Participant Two's narrative suggests that when she has reached her goal in becoming the first black female lawyer in Douglas amidst the odds that were against her, her achievement will be living proof of what post-matriculants are capable of in Douglas. The outcome of her determination will change the narrative of the post-matriculants of Douglas. Likewise, Male Participant Three pointed out that hard work that will pay off and those sacrifices are important in order to appreciate what has been achieved. He stated:

*If I should get busy with agriculture, it will bring excitement to me and I will help change the lives of the people for the better and for my family it will bring joy in the house because I am the only one who completed school. It takes hard work and sacrifices to pursue something. I believe that we allow our circumstances to determine who we are in life cause everyone strives to be who they want to be and it takes hard work, it is not cheap. You cannot have everything on a silver platter, you have to work hard for it.*

From the narrative it can be deduced that if you put in the effort, positive results will come through as long as you stay focussed on what you want to achieve by being determined. He also stressed that nothing comes easily; therefore, a right mindset and a determination in the heart will realise the dream. Likewise, Male Participant Seven demonstrated the strong resilience of someone who is ready to change his personal circumstances. He is determined and capable of doing and achieving. It is evident that he is a dreamer and looks beyond his circumstances. He appreciates possibilities. He constantly uses "I" to emphasise his willpower to overcome his current circumstances. From his narrative, it is evident that there is a great measure of continuous struggle that is mentioned - from sourcing an institution, to a bursary, to accommodation; having to deal with the circumstances whilst staying with family. He managed to deal with the circumstances; enduring the long nights of self-study, the toxic and alcoholic household that he stayed in, the long distance walks to university as well as the inadequate financial support that could not cater for his personal needs. There is an element of determination which comes through very strongly. He stated:

*the bursary thingy I had to apply for like numerous times. When I first step into university, man I walked 17 km for 2 hours, I only had one family member that I knew in Cape Town, so it was like for me walking 17 km every single day, in the morning, in the afternoon, you know, walking with that fright, being afraid of what will happen ... my bursary does not cover all of my finances, like my fees, so I had to think of that as well and I will be able to get the outstanding fees, so I can get my results. So not only that, I had to live with people who are alcoholics, I had to persevere. I had to wait until they fall asleep and then I can study which is 01:00 a.m. in the morning. There is no time to sleep, I had to study, stayed late up and just like grinding it out.*

In addition, Male Participant Three visualised the career in agriculture as the most appropriate for the betterment of his life. His involvement in his father's occupation as a farmworker not only informs his choice of career but also the expected benefits upon completion of studies within agriculture. There is a strong sense of personal yearning to achieve this qualification and better one's socio-economic conditions that brings out self-satisfaction. He stated:

*My career choice will enable me to achieve a lot in life. It will mean a lot because one day when I have my own family, I will be able to provide for them.*

In addition, Male Participant Eleven also reflects a lot of personal resilience and determination to achieve one's career goals. I note the persistence evident in the continuous application for funding due to impoverished circumstances back home. I also note a lot of flexibility within the participant's ability to switch qualifications and work hard to get results. Male Participant Eleven noted that he was able to complete a programme of 1 to 3 years in only 8 months. He stated:

*I applied to a university to study chemical engineering but my trust fund application was not successful, so my mother suggested I do the ICDL programme...with the results of my first exam I obtained 100% .... I have completed the course in 8 months, it's normally a 1 to 3 year course, I have obtained good results. I feel IT is my career... A month ago I applied at a university to do IT and currently I am completing bursary applications and I am sending applications away to secure financial backing. I am completing as much as possible applications, it is good to have more than one option.*

The post-matriculants of Douglas voiced their desire to add value to their community who lack so many resources. There is a willingness to create building blocks that will enable the community. Male Participant Seven remarked:

*I just want people to actually feel that and know that if they are willing to do whatever it is they want to they can do it... I think of the people back home, there is no one else doing what I am doing, why should I go to sleep if tomorrow someone need me in order to do this, you know, I can produce movies, there is no one that is doing what I am doing. So, it means a lot to me because I belief I can make people become producers, writers, editors and yes that's my passion, and I belief it means the world to me".*

### **5.3.5.1 Communal (self-in-community) concerns experienced of post-matriculants**

The narratives that I identified in the communal (self-in-community) concerns experienced by post-matriculants are that of poverty alleviation, information sharing, and role-modelling.

#### *5.3.5.1.1 Narrative of poverty alleviation and information sharing*

In terms of the communal (self-in-community), Female Participant Two has a dominant view on self-in-community as shown by her wanting to help her family out of poverty and providing advice to the community on legal matters without having to charge them. The fact that she could be or would want to be the first black female lawyer in her community is the motivating factor to want to pursue her qualification as well as to adding value. She stated:

*my career will mean a lot to my family because I always wanted to be the one who makes the difference in my family.... I will be able to assist my community. It's not about money all the time. If someone comes to me for information, I will be able to share information. I will be able to provide guidance.*

From the narrative, it is evident that Female Participant Two, who is the lastborn daughter in the household, perceives the pursuit of law as one that will not only change the status quo but also enable her to support her family and community with her expertise. Likewise, Male Participant Seven views himself as a person who has the ability to empower the people around him back in Douglas with the necessary skills attained in his pursuit of his media qualification in Cape Town. He advocates for self-belief and argues that people should feel free to do what they want to do. He stated:

*I just want people to actually feel that and know that if they are willing to do whatever it is they want to they can do it... I think of the people back home, there is no one else doing what I am doing. Why should I go to sleep if tomorrow someone need me in order to do this, you know? I can produce movies, there is no one that is doing what I am*

*doing. So, it means a lot to me because I believe I can make people become producers, writers, editors and yes that's my passion, and I believe it means the world to me.*

From the narrative, it is evident that the participant has the community at heart, even while he pursues his career goals. There is a strong sense of community and commitment to empower in order to change the circumstances of the people in Douglas. The participant keeps alluding to going back to Douglas after his studies as a means of ploughing back.

Furthermore, Male Participant Three's personal achievement seems to transcend personal satisfaction to providing for the needs of the community, starting with his immediate family, his biological parents and later on a feeding scheme for the needy within the community. He opined:

*my career will mean a lot to my family, my mother will not struggle at home and my father do not have work as a farmworker, I will provide for them ... there are many children in the community who is starving, I will open a feeding scheme one day when I have enough money.*

From the narrative it is evident that the community of Douglas is affected by serious socio-economic hardships, which seems to prompt the participants to want to plough back to the community as soon as they succeed in their career pursuits.

Another narrative shared by Male Participant Two, is that of a strong will to pursue an acting and drama career. He takes on the initiative of creating a group to act out stories in Douglas. The narrative also points out the perceived benefit of pursuing a career that one believes in; such benefits include self-satisfaction, self-affirmation and betterment of one's socio-economic conditions. The participant is also proactive and seeks ways in which to get community support, and shares his plans with the hope of getting approval and assistance. He opined:

*Acting and drama is my passion. We started a drama group of about 10 people. We acted out stories that is happening in Douglas... I am trying to create a better life for myself to show people that you do not have to give up when something does not work, you do not have to give up if people do not believe in you.... I mostly spoke to my friends and community leaders of Siyancuma. I shared my plans with them how I see drama and acting as a benefit for Douglas.*

Furthermore, Male Participant Two participant not only considers himself but also includes others in this career pursuit. There is a strong sense of wanting to gain community approval of the acting and drama career as a suitable career. He stated: *“People do not believe in drama. I have asked people for help to register an organisation to do drama and motivate children. I even went to schools to help teach children, however the school decided they’d rather use a teacher”*.

#### 5.3.5.1.2 Adding value in the community

Likewise, Female Participant Seven emphasises the benefits her career choice can bring not only to herself but also the community. Through teaching, she expresses a strong inclination to help children with their studies at home and has overall concern towards their studies and their lives. She stated:

*My career will be a benefit to my family because we are not financially stable. I will be able to help the children whose parents are not able to help them to further their studies, and with the teaching qualification, I will be able to assist them at home to study hard and to make the best of their lives.*

In addition, Male Participant Eleven was equally concerned about how to make a valuable contribution towards the community through the knowledge and skills acquired.

*Information Technology will encourage me to teach young people about computers. Technology is in fashion these days and the more technology is being used in the world, the more we have to adapt. There are children who does not have access to computers, thus I want to develop learners in computers ... I spoke to a lady at a bank, she is the branch manager. She mentioned that Information Technology is a field that is scarce in South Africa.*

The narrative seems to point out the social systems of influence and the impact on career decision-making; through the career advice obtained by the bank manager, the participant is confident about his career choice in Information Technology. Likewise, Male Participant Four talked about the role he needs to fulfil in his family as well as in the community. He believes in bringing change and teaching the children in the community. Teaching is a much-needed profession as it helps to strengthen the importance of education as emphasised by the participant. Becoming an agent of change in his community and adding value to the development of the children, signifies hope. He stated:

*My career will mean a lot to my family because they always wanted me to have a job... I will bring change...There are many children who still needs to get to school and they need to be taught. The community will definitely benefit from my career.*

Furthermore, Female Participant Twelve aligns herself to the needs of the community. She has a strong sense of community building. The social status of her community motivates her into pursuing a career that will bring personal fulfilment. She stated:

*many changes have occurred in the community that is why I want to pursue social work as my career choice ... I know I will make a difference. As a person, I will enjoy it and I will like it and I will make the best out of my career.*

In terms of self in the community, she believes in the need to provide for her children by giving them the life she never had. Furthermore, the role she wants to fulfil is to be a support and bring change in the lives of the children who roam around the streets in neglect. She opined:

*I have to provide and give my children a better life, a life better than what I had ... Social work will enable me to help other people where I can and to help children who need help and who wants to do something. They will see I will make a huge difference in the lives of the children who are not being treated right, who is roaming the streets and not care about themselves.*

From the narratives, it is noted that the state of the children within the community requires a strong, supportive system. The participant, a young mother who has her own challenges of raising her children, wishes to pursue a career in social work with a clear intent of helping the children who roam the street of Douglas. It is also evident that the individual cannot perceive herself in exclusion from her surroundings. This situation suggests that the socio-economic circumstances may have an impact on one's career decision.

#### *5.3.5.1.3. Positive Role modelling*

Another narrative expressed through Male Participant Five, is that of role modelling. He articulated the need to equip himself and continue to strive to become successful and not complacent based on the circumstances of his community. It is evident that in the absence of being busy with something constructive, this would lead to idleness and stagnation. He expresses strong belief in reciprocating what is learnt by passing it on and adjusting his lifestyle

based on what he teaches. It is also evident that Male Participant Seven strives to be a role model in his community. He stated:

*The moment I teach people something, I will be able to live it out as well....I need to strive to be successful and I need to strive to what I want to become. Because I do not want to end up like people just here in Douglas with no ambition.*

Likewise, the manner in which the Male Participant One perceives himself in the community it is evident that part of his ambition is to be a role model, a symbol of hope in his poor community. His life should reflect the possibilities that exist within those who are in an impoverished state and lift themselves out of their circumstances. He stated:

*they believe in me. I am the person who never disappointed them and I am striving to make them proud of me...I come from a poor community and my career will enable them to look up to me and get out of this impoverished state and to become something and make something of their lives.*

From the narrative, it is clear that role modelling plays an important role in impoverished communities. Role models show the possibilities that are imbedded within individuals and it further brings affirmation that one can succeed in life irrespective of your background. In addition, it is evident that Male Participant Eleven sees himself as a role model in Douglas. He seems to suggest that there is a lack of role models in the community. He believes role models do shape new development of community perception especially the youth and tap into dormant potentials. He commented: *“to be a better person I guess and to express myself more ... A role model, especially in a community where nothing is happening”*

From the narrative, it is evident that rare career choices require the buy-in from a community that only knows and supports traditional career choices. It is about raising awareness of other careers that can add just as much value and benefit to the community that has only been exposed to traditional careers. Changes that a career in painting be sustained in a community such as Douglas is a cause for great concern, primarily because of a lack of understanding and knowledge around non-traditional careers.

#### *5.3.5.1.4 Resilience*

Male Participant Five expressed his interest in teaching and working with people, especially children. He is tenacious in overcoming whatever challenge he is experiencing that might delay

him in teaching. From the response, it is evident that the participant understands the importance of personal resilience in order to achieve and become. The narrative also suggests that enjoyment combined with personal resilience might bring fulfilment. He stated:

*I enjoy teaching people... I enjoy working with people, especially children. If I get a bursary, then I will be able to overcome my challenge ... I do not have an influencer on my career choice, I have to motivate myself.*

In addition, Male Participant Eight has a strong passion for music. It is different from the careers traditionally chosen or pursued. It is interesting to note that through his musical career pursuit he wants to start his own label, which speaks to entrepreneurship and him being able to take care of his family. Furthermore, the clarity with which he speaks, confirms his resilience to achieve that which he is passionate about. Again, pursuing a career that goes against the status quo does make one wonder who decides one's fate. Through the participant, it is evident that one should believe in oneself, believe in one's abilities and act accordingly, irrespective of the circumstances. He narrated as follows: *"I'm in love with music, that's what I always wanted to do, it's my first love ... I will start my own label and I will be able to feed my family"*.

Male Participant Eight is aware of his surroundings and the circumstances of his community. He alludes to children tapping into their musical craft and it is important for that craft to be groomed and captured. By opening a studio within the community, he believes prospective musicians and the community of Douglas could benefit from this venture. He said: *"In my neighbourhood there are kids that rap, that do music. If I can open a studio maybe in Douglas, it will benefit them"*.

From the narratives it can be noted that as much as the participant has a strong passion for music, he does not think only about himself. He wants to include the community once he is established. This speaks to being selfless. In the same community where opportunities lack, it is encouraging to witness how someone with a little bit more strength and ambition would want to help lift others. There is a notion of ploughing back. It is about personal resilience and a vision to help change the narrative of an impoverished community. In addition, Female Participant Six has personal willpower that is expressed through inward drive to pursue her career of choice, which is nursing. The narrative suggests that she has clarity in the preferred pursuit and the possibilities, abilities with which she would be supportive after obtaining her qualification. She stated:

*Nursing is my passion and it will always be there. I will be able to help many people as far as I can think....because I set my mind on it, I will be able to achieve. I can save somebody's life and make a contribution.*

The narrative of Female Participant Six suggests that there is an urgent need to make a difference in her community. A hospital that lacks the basic equipment to be of service to the community is not acceptable. The intention is not to pursue a nursing qualification for personal gain however, it is to help restore the dignity of the people and the facilities they use to fast track their health. She remarked as follows:

*My career will make a hell of a difference in Douglas because I have complete trust in myself and believe that I will help restore our hospital. It will not be a day hospital or a clinic like people are saying, it will have the required tools and equipment that a person needs in a hospital.*

From the above narratives, it can be noted that personal willpower or resilience is what stands out from the participant. The state of the hospital, which is a basic service to the community, cannot be neglected. The standard of the health facility must not drop due to the socio-economic circumstances. Restoration is needed and having a resilient mind will make things happen and fall into place. This is how somebody's life can be saved and positive contributions be made.

While the literature propounds the importance of individual engagement with oneself, there is evidence that socio-economic challenges do exist within the context, however, the ability to look beyond the challenges and adapt as one is moving forward is to be commended. The SCCT highlights the avenues in which individuals exercise personal agency, which is demonstrated through the narrative of the post-matriculants of Douglas. SCCT further emphasises the relationship that exists between self-efficacy and with other variables in the individual's socio-contextual environment. There is bold emphasis through the narratives on the recognition of self. In addition, self cannot be isolated from the context as it has an influence on how individuals adapt to their reality. The expressions of the post-matriculants come with so much clarity and taking ownership. It is only fair that their dreams and career aspirations will reach maturity as they themselves navigate through the challenges that exist within their community. Irrespective of the challenges, Male Participant Five rightly stated: *"I am trying to create a better life for myself to show people that you do not have to give up when something does not work, you do not have to give up if people do not believe in you"*. These are the constant negotiations between individual abilities and the contextual factors (Watson & Stead, 2006). It is also noted that participants acknowledge the constant barriers that are a result of structural

poverty, lack of information and knowledge on career paths, poor households with lack of basic needs, among others, and yet they navigate their career pursuits with the hope of bettering their lives and those of their families.

Personal achievement seems to transcend personal satisfaction to providing for the needs of the community, starting with his immediate family, his biological parents and later on a feeding scheme for the needy within the community. Male Participant Three commented as follows:

*my career will mean a lot to my family, my mother will not struggle at home and my father do not have work as a farmworker, I will provide for them ... there are many children in the community who is starving, I will open a feeding scheme one day when I have enough money.*

Likewise, Male Participant Eleven wants to make a valuable contribution through teaching of computers because times are changing and the world is moving into digitalisation. He does not want the children of Douglas to lag behind. He stated:

*Information Technology will encourage me to teach young people about computers. Technology is in fashion these days and the more technology is being used in the world, the more we have to adapt. There are children who does not have access to computers thus I want to develop learners in computers.*

#### *5.3.5.1.5 Discussion on individual self and communal self*

Through the narratives expressed by the participants, it was evident that the individual is inhibited within their context and environment. It was also evident that the community of Douglas have an influence on various aspects of career development of the post-matriculants. This finding strengthens the argument made by Watson et al. (2011). The STF further suggests that individuals cannot be separated from their environment and the construction of meaning based on a holistic view involves an examination of the entire system and its parts, its connectedness and recursiveness. This connectedness reflects the interdependence and interaction between individuals and their environment.

Moreover, it is evident through the responsibility the post-matriculants placed upon themselves, that is, to develop themselves first and return to give back to the community and to be that which they lacked whilst growing up, for example, positive role models. Furthermore, the SCCT augments this notion in that it focusses on the relationships among social variables, for

example self-efficacy, and their relationship with other variables in the individual's socio-economic environment. The realities of the post-matriculants of Douglas have become part of their DNA. Persuading them to choose a different course of life and to think differently about themselves and their future requires consistent presence and information that will enable them to see their contexts through different lenses. Thus, the SCCT emphasises collaboration of personal attributes, external environmental factors and behaviours. The quest is for individuals to have confidence in their own ability and have a clear expectation of the outcome of their behaviour.

The community does have an impact on development and progression of its inhabitants. Various studies have shown that the context in which you grow up has a direct impact on the kind of career paths chosen. From the narratives, it was evident that the self in the community is about ploughing back, that is, to bring transformation. Career development is influenced by different cultural values that consequently affect the perceptions of choices and behaviours of individuals (Maree, 2010, p 353). Social identity is therefore constructed by the change of attitudes among individual's self as well as others. Cultural values within Afrocentric contexts denote adherence among people and society that construct their identities around such values. One such important cultural value is that of Ubuntu, and further regarded as the philosophy of Ubuntu that emphasises the importance of human interdependence (Theron & Theron, 2013, p. 391).

These narratives are a clear indication of a persistent belief which reflects the determination of the individual to work towards future goals with a sense of purpose and resolve, to strive for a positive outcome in the future (Albien & Naidoo, 2017, 5). Scholars theorise that for young people from collectivist cultures, the duty to contribute influences career choice. Choices are predicted on the remuneration potential of a career, with its potential to facilitate a social contribution; young people want to support their families and uplift their communities. Similarly, Mhlongo and O'Neill's (2013, p. 953) study with first year black students from disadvantaged South African backgrounds showed that a student's choice of what to study was often informed by ambitious careers recommended by their parents. In fact, in underprivileged contexts, the hopes of parents in relation to their children's future shape the aspirations of these young people more significantly than such hopes do in privileged contexts.

Furthermore, role models have become an important presence over decades. Research has shown that visibility of a role model can have a significant impression on confidence and success. This notion is further strengthened through SCCT, in that support can be gained from role models while individuals exercise agency in their career aspirations. A few of the

participants indicated in their narrative that there were no positive role models in the community. If a place like Douglas could have positive role models to influence career behaviour, there is a strong probability that the community could flourish. The motivation and personal agency are there, however, the lack of role models is evident through their narratives as well. Joubert and Slabbert (2017, p. 180) is of the view that disadvantaged youth have a crisis of confidence, which at times is caused by the lack of something as opposed to their peers. Role models has been typically defined as adults whom youth look up to or desire to be like (Hurd & Zimmerman, 2011, p. 2390). They are traditionally looked up to as adolescents form their identities. Furthermore, Hurd and Zimmerman (2011, p. 2390) suggest that the most important character of the role model is to model attitudes, values and behaviour.

A study conducted by Madhavan and Crowell (2014) postulates that youth in rural South Africa construct role models and connect them to their life aspirations. The choice of role models reflects a balancing strategy to reconcile individual and group identity development. The type of role model can be deduced from a teacher, family member or a celebrity on television. Positive role models can enhance social capital in adolescents, and it can strengthen positive academic outcomes (Berry, 2017; Hurd & Zimmerman, 2011, p. 2390). Role models are a powerful dynamic that can strengthen the effectiveness of intervention programmes that can change the lives of disadvantaged young people (Joubert & Slabbert, 2017, p. 180; Madhavan & Crowell, 2014). Likewise, the social cognitive career theory (SCCT) proposed by Lent et al. (2000) focuses on cognitive variables and the processes that influence career behaviour, including support gained from role models.

Moreover, existing literature on self-concept that directly relates to the individual self within the career development process depicts as one personal view of themselves. Self-concept or self-image would be construed as appearance, physical health, abilities, weaknesses and behaviour (Nasir & Lin, 2012, p. 193). The perception of self and their environment through their senses and feelings and their abilities to exude confidence and dignity also contributes to the self-definition of self-concept (Nasir & Lin, 2012, p. 193). It is further cited that self-concept not only includes physical and psychological aspects, but also relates to the experiences and knowledge acquired through out one's childhood. Rogers (1951), a renowned theorist of the self-concept theory (cited in Nasir & Lin, 2012), defines self-concept as the totality of a complex, organised and dynamic system of learned beliefs, attitudes and opinions that people hold to be true about their personal existence.

The findings of other studies conducted on the relationship of self-esteem, future time perspective, positive affect, social support, and career decision, revealed that the intra-

individual variability in positive affect was related to the intra-individual variability in career decision-making self-efficacy as opposed to career choice anxiety (Park et al., 2018). Komarraju and Nadler (2013, p. 67) argue that the level of self-efficacy beliefs in an individual would determine their performance of a task or prevent one from performing a task. The social cognitive career theory argues that performance goals are considerably affected by individual's self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations and posits the interactive relationship between self-efficacy and outcome expectations (Baglama & Uzunboylu, 2017, p. 1). Understanding of career development from the lenses of SCCT, earmark career decision self-efficacy as a crucial element in an individual's career interests, goals, choices, experiences and performances (Jo et al., 2016). The results from the study reflect participants that have a strong inclination to succeed in their career goals and aspirations. The results also depict a certain amount of career decision-making that is expressed in the cited career aspirations.

The Northern Cape province, like other sister provinces, highlights the importance of adaptation and building infrastructure to pave way for the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution that is highly technological, digitised and empowered to create socio-economic linkages with the rest of the regions, African continent and the world. Amidst technological infrastructure development, that Northern Cape is still faced with its traditional socio-economic, structural challenges, part of which are related to post-apartheid residues such as inequality, poverty, unemployment, poor infrastructure, inadequate housing, inadequate educational services, governance challenges and lack of accountability adopted among government and civil servants. The community of Douglas is one such disadvantaged community that has an enormous requirement for infrastructure development and upgrading in line with all the basic needs such as housing, health facilities, schools, and roads, to mention but a few. Prioritising technological development and upgrades as strategic issues propounds skewed development as the actual basic needs should be the starting point.

Hence, the post-matriculants of Douglas are determined to bring their community on the level to be able to participate in the broader global community. With the lack of resources, it is encouraging to observe the willingness to share knowledge and skills to create a standard amongst the younger generation.

#### **5.4. Conclusion**

In this chapter, the focus was the presentation of the collected individual narratives from the selected participants. The results were guided by five main research questions: the career

development narratives and experiences of post-matriculants, gendered dimension of the career development narratives and experiences, the enablers and constraints in the career development narrative and experiences, the systems of influence on career development narratives and, lastly, the sense of individual self and communal self in the career development narratives and experiences. From the above presentation, the perceptions expressed in the career development narratives and experiences are largely influenced by social economic, social cultural, political as well as individual career development factors that pose as both positive support structures and negative factors that influence career guidance, career choices and eventual pursuits of chosen careers. The data from the majority of the career development narratives and experiences pointed to major obstacles experienced by the post-matriculants in the Douglas community to include: serious social economic challenges like poverty, unemployment, financial constraints, family hardships, disadvantaged surrounding circumstances, inadequate support structures in schools, community, government and the all-private and public stakeholders part of which are inherited post-democratic challenges. The gathered narratives also pointed to a strong sense of the urgent need from post-matriculants to better themselves, their immediate families but also the disadvantaged community.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

The following section summarises the discussions that informed the research. Chapter 6 includes the review of the research problem, summary of the findings of the research questions, career development narratives and experiences of post-matriculants of Douglas, the gendered dimensions of post-matriculants, enablers and constraints in career development, the systems of influence on career development and, finally, the individual (self) and communal (self-in-community). Furthermore, recommendations will be outlined. In addition, a proposed framework for career development will be shared. Finally, the limitations of the study will be addressed as well as recommendations for future research, a concluding remark and the unique contributions made by the study.

#### **6.2 Review of research problem**

The aim of the study was to explore the career development narratives and experiences of post-matriculants in Douglas. Another aim of the study was to understand the hindrances, the complexities and the dynamics within the context of disadvantaged communities as well as the factors that impeded them from advancing successfully in their career pathways and pursuits and enhancing their livelihoods. The entrenched challenges of poverty, inequality, high unemployment, drug abuse, inadequate support from stakeholders including schools, families, church affiliations, local political affiliations and social groups are a deterrent to proper career choices for sustainable livelihoods. The current study argued that such socio-economic, socio-cultural, and contextual factors within the rural communities influence the development and the career choices pursued.

Through the application of qualitative approaches on the career development narratives and experiences of post-matriculants, the research argued that in-depth understanding of the environmental factors determined the most appropriate approaches to career development programmes and career decision choices among post-matriculants in rural communities. Disparities are further stretched along racial lines between black African youth in comparison with the privileged white minority. Research conducted on career development, career decision-

making and career choices pointed to the need for career guidance and strong support systems. Such systems are built through individual, social and environmental societal influences, which are instrumental to self-efficacy and resilience.

### **6.3 Summary of the Findings**

#### **6.3.1 Career development narratives and experiences**

It emerged from the study that the career development narratives and experiences of post-matriculants in Douglas are that of constant struggles. These struggles are manifested through frustrations of having no plan or direction as there is a tremendous lack of resources.

The study highlighted that the career development narratives and experiences of post-matriculants in Douglas are embedded in the socio-economic challenges that cannot be resolved because of structural poverty or underlying hardship. If it is not lack of finances, then there are health situations which also extend to taking up the responsibility to run the household. Furthermore, the career development narratives and experiences of post-matriculants in Douglas include a constant struggle of constructing self-identity against a system into which they were born, a cycle of poverty which keeps the post-matriculant hostage to the reality. There is a false belief that life will get better even while it is evident that the system does not support the development of post-matriculants in disadvantaged communities. As a result, they are continuously entangled in the cycle of poverty due to the lack of resources that cripples career development efforts. In the study, therefore, it emerged that the cycle of poverty is layered with potential to keep the post-matriculants on lockdown, which is expressed in their behaviour.

The study further highlighted the actual career development activities wherein as much as there are certain subjects in school, like Life Orientation, that would help shape the thinking around career pursuits, such subjects have little or no impact on the career development of these post-matriculants. The performance and good marks evaluated in these modules are not reflective of the future development in the kind of career aspirations they cite in their narratives and experiences.

It emerged from the study that post-matriculants need to make adjustments and adapt from their initial career pursuits. They seek the next best option, as the realities in which they find themselves do not suggest staying at home as an option due to the socio-economic hardships,

but rather find alternatives that would accommodate them. The results point to involvement in menial jobs to stay afloat and provide for the basic needs of the family. The study further highlighted the constant adaptation required between the individual, the society and the environment. It is almost impossible therefore to obtain a level of career maturity because of the quest to make adjustments as post-matriculants have to navigate themselves through the continuous struggles to make meaning of their livelihoods.

### **6.3.2 Gendered Dimensions of Career**

The study highlighted that the situation in Douglas does not enforce a gendered specific career because the struggle that is experienced is the same for both male and female. Perceptions are challenged around what are predominantly male and what are predominantly female occupations. The affirmative action and employment equity legislations that have filtered down into the communities challenge female gender perception of predominantly male career choices.

From the study it also emerged that there is a move away from a resource-based economy to a knowledge-based economy. Therefore, in this spectrum, a preferred gender is not required to be attached to the fulfilment of outcomes in a knowledge-based economy. Thus, it is not an issue of gender or masculinity, but knowledge and skills. Furthermore, the study revealed that the career choices being considered are still the traditionally stereotypical careers like nursing, teaching and social work, which demonstrates a lack of information to a broader pool of career options to select from.

### **6.3.3 Enablers and Constraints**

#### ***6.3.3.1 Enablers***

It has emerged from the study that enablers are experienced on an individual level. There is a strong sense of resilience demonstrated to fight out of the circumstances. Furthermore, the role and support from family and teachers cannot go unnoticed as their input and contributions to the career development of the post-matriculant in Douglas play a key role.

The study also revealed the active role played by non-governmental organisations as enablers to provide career services. It emerged from the findings that organisations in close contact with the needs of the post-matriculants of Douglas would be instrumental in shaping their career paths.

### **6.3.3.2 Constraints**

The study showed that there is an acknowledgement of the importance of educational service within the community; however, from a strategic perspective such issues are not prioritised. It also emerged from the study that the conditions in which the post-matriculants find themselves have a direct effect on their self-concept, which then later manifests negatively into lived realities of stagnation that enslave the mind. Furthermore, the study also indicated the socio-economic conditions that have a bearing on the career development of post-matriculants in Douglas. The high unemployment and lack of income in the household has an impact progression.

Institutional barriers experienced as obstacles by post-matriculants also emerged. The access to institutions of higher learning, the high admission requirements, the administrative processes and bureaucracies to be followed and unfortunately the unprofessionalism espoused by certain administrators dampens the enthusiasm of post-matriculants leading them to give up on their career aspirations.

## **6.5.4 Systems of Influence**

### **6.5.4.1 Individual systems of influence**

From the study it emerged that the post-matriculant is embedded with personality, abilities, and interests, which they apply in their context. The study highlighted abilities that exist within the individual if the mind is applied fully and change of behaviour is effected. The results revealed that strong and positive intrapersonal attributes of self-belief, self-awareness, person interest, personality, coping strategies, and abilities, among others, do enhance clarity in career choices, and career decision-making in the career development process. The results from the MSCI tool on individual influences reflected the importance attached to personality, abilities, a value I hold and health, which were all scored above frequency accounts. In terms of the ranking of identified influence, it was evident that abilities, a value I hold, and personality exceeded the frequency accounts and were cited as important influences. The results reflect a strong sense of self-efficacy that partly embodies personality, ability, and personal values.

From the study it emerged that self-concept directly relates to the individual self within the career development process and is depicted as one personal view of themselves. The study

further revealed that the perception of self and their environment through their senses and feelings and their abilities to exude confidence and dignity also contributes to the self-definition of self-concept. The study highlighted that self-concept not only includes physical and psychological aspects but also relates to the experiences and knowledge acquired throughout one's childhood. Rogers (1951) of the self-concept theorist defines self-concept as the totality of a complex, organised, and dynamic system of learned beliefs, attitudes and opinions that people hold to be true about their personal existence.

#### ***6.5.4.2 Societal Systems of influence***

It emerged from the study that management, media, team leaders and parents are society systems of influences, and on the MSCI importance in terms of ranking, these sub-systems fall within the same scale. The study also showed that exposure and direct involvement to certain occupations plays a vital role. The study highlighted that influences aligned with the parents' knowledge. The results reflected stronger influence on the manager, media, team leader, family and friends that all had frequency counts. In terms of the rankings of importance, participants cited major importance to manager, media, family, team leader, children and the least ranked influence was friends. The results augment the existing literature with regard to the role of family, teachers, and social networks, among others.

#### ***6.5.4.3 Environmental-society Systems of Influence***

It emerged from the study that there is a lack of opportunities in Douglas. Post-matriculants are of the view that opportunities exist outside Douglas, as in overseas. The study showed the environmental-societal influence is a barrier for further development as a lack of opportunities in Douglas exists and the need to plough back intensifies. The study revealed various socio-economic hardships, but on the other hand, there is a strong sense of resilience. Furthermore, the results in the study confirmed the magnitude of how this geographical location of Douglas, the socio-economic and political environment affect the career prospects and potential choices and aspirations of post-matriculants.

## **6.5.5 Individual (self) and Communal (self)**

### ***6.5.5.1 Individual (self)***

The study highlighted the self-concept as key factor when looking at the individual (self). It emerged from the study that it is important to have a perception of self and the competence one possesses in order to plan for the future. The study further revealed that the socio-economic challenges do exist within the context, however, the ability to look beyond the challenges and adapt as one is moving forward needs to be acknowledged. From the study it became apparent that post-matriculants acknowledge the constant barriers that are the result of structural poverty, lack of information and knowledge on career paths, poor households with lack of basic needs, among others. And yet, they navigate their career pursuits with the hope of bettering their lives and those of their families.

### ***6.5.5.2 Communal (self-in-community)***

It emerged from the study that social identity is constructed by the change of attitude towards self and the community. From the study it was revealed that there is a strong culture of Ubuntu. The participants kept referring to ploughing back to the community which can allude to the African cultural values that make reference to the Ubuntu philosophy in which human beings are interdependent within society. It is evident also that these cultural values have been passed on from generation to generation.

From the study it also transpired that there is strong interplay between the self and others. Hence, the post-matriculants of Douglas do not only commit to their individual success but also seek to contribute to the welfare of the community. While the lack of resources is a hindrance in such communities, there is willingness to share knowledge and skills in order to uplift the hopes and inspire the dreams of the younger generations.

## **6.6 Conclusions**

The essence of this study was to explore the career development narratives and experiences of post-matriculants in the community of Douglas. As reflected in the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the career development narratives and experiences extracted are those filled with a mixture of a few positive experiences but mainly those of frustration, stagnation, and loss of hope that are the results of the uncontrollable external environmental conditions in Douglas.

On the positive side, the study revealed the critical role played by the key pillars of support in the lives of the post-matriculants, like the role of the family, the role played by teachers, the role of some people in the community and, to a lesser extent, the role of non- governmental organisations, to enable the post-matriculants to make the right career choices as well as the pursuit of such careers. The support extended was in the form of career advice, information, counselling, encouragement, and constant affirmation.

On the negative side, the narratives and experiences were tainted with constant frustration against social environmental, and socio-economic factors that posed serious obstacles. Such factors included structural poverty, geographical location, inequality, unemployment, low-income households, and lack of supportive infrastructure especially of educational services that would enhance the career development process.

It can also be concluded through the narratives and experiences of post-matriculants that the current environment experienced in Douglas would not be conducive for career development. This would be due to the urge to survive in order to meet basic needs, the absence of effective career guidance resources and avenues, the limitedness of knowledge, and the lack of useful networks on career advice that would be offered by the immediate pillars of support in the community like family, schools, friends among others.

It can also be concluded in the study that gender did not have any influence on the career choices of the post-matriculants. The findings of the study revealed both the male and female gender were interested in the same career choices of teaching, nursing, social work, and medicine, with the exception of a few careers in the engineering field. The study also revealed that the perceptions around career choices and gender were being challenged partly by the urge to affirm equality and the constant reminder of the poverty-stricken conditions prevalent in the households.

The study further concluded that the post-matriculants in the community of Douglas were faced constantly with constraints as opposed to enablers of career development. The successful pursuit of career choices among these post-matriculants would be enhanced by more enablers of career development.

In addition, the study concluded that the systems of influence like individual, society and environmental-societal are critical in shaping up individual career pathways. The study underscored how individuals are pushed by a strong sense of self-concept, self-efficacy that is propelled by constant resilience to emerge with successful careers even in the midst of existing

deeply entrenched structural systems designed to disadvantage black people, socio-economic challenges, the social ills experienced in segregated geographical locations, issues of bad governance and lack of accountability manifest in public service.

Lastly, the study concluded that the development of self as individuals is done not in the absence of community or society. The study revealed a lot of attachment to society that was expressed in the future plans for Douglas should they succeed in their career pursuits. The construction of social identity was obvious and recurring in the findings on the self within the community.

## **6.7 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study on career development narratives and experiences of post-matriculants in a previously disadvantaged community such as Douglas, the following recommendations from the literature and the findings from the empirical study are suggested:

### **6.7.1 Policy and Legislation**

The study points out that policy and legislation are very instrumental in turning around the dire situation of socio-economic and structural challenges that negatively affect the career development processes among the post-matriculants. The articulation of intervention policy guidelines and legislation would direct the concerted efforts of both public and private stakeholders that seek to commit their efforts to redressing this precarious state of affairs experienced in career development. The policy would cover aspects such as career assessments, and making use of assessment tools to align personality with interest. Furthermore, it should identify specific grades where the career assessments would be conducted. The suggested grades are 7 to 9. Outcomes of the career assessment would be of benefit when the grade 9 learners administer their subject choices. Compulsory sessions should be arranged with grade 12 learners to discuss career prospects and to align relevant institutions of higher learning that speak to those aspirations.

In addition, a merit system, preferably administered by the Mayor, should be introduced as a motivating factor as well as a gesture to prove that local government is in full support of the development of its young people. In addition, spaces within government departments/ municipality/corporates should be made available for internship or learnership opportunities. This would enable the youth to obtain work experience. To highlight the seriousness of the

project, a memorandum of understanding should be drafted between workplaces and the student. Each workplace would appoint a liaison to form part of the project. Another element to be included in the policy and legislation document is the monitoring of academic progress of learners and students. Reports should be submitted at the end of each semester. This would further enable relevant stakeholders to know the overall progress of the learner or student as well as giving an indication where support would be needed.

## **6.7.2 Proposed Framework and Specific Stakeholder roles for career development**

### ***6.7.2.1 Local Government***

For the project to be effective, practical applications would be outlined for each stakeholder involved in the betterment of the youth of Douglas. Roles and responsibilities would be clearly outlined before the project begins and stakeholders are participating. Disadvantaged communities such as Douglas look to local government to give direction and provide the necessary tools, funding, and all-round presence. Thus, the involvement of local government is crucial, as it would make provision for various resources. Local government should ensure education services are highlighted in its strategic plan as well as allocation of resources. Furthermore, there should be an allocation in the budget for specific career development projects. Local government personnel should be assigned to monitor performance of the student. Finally, the community infrastructure should be upgraded that would support career development.

### ***6.7.2.2 Non-Governmental Organisations***

Disadvantaged communities such as Douglas have a substantial representation of non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The NGOs are community workers; they work on the ground and know exactly the state of community members. In addition, they know community members individually. Thus, one cannot exclude the involvement of NGOs in the development of the youth in Douglas. It is envisaged that NGOs could assist to collate information of youth who are interested in pursuing further studies. This information could be sent through to a central office, which is the career office established in Douglas. Furthermore, NGOs can help monitor academic performance as information comes through from the various institutions

where students are placed. Finally, to keep NGOs up to date with developments within the project, training and capacity development would be scheduled twice per year.

### ***6.7.2.3 Role of Family Structures***

The study further highlighted the crucial role family plays in the life of the youth of Douglas. Therefore, it has become apparent that family structures need to be capacitated to give the right support to the post-matriculant. Awareness needs to be raised on broader spectrums of various career options through workshops. Furthermore, workshops on personal empowerment should be arranged. This would enable families to give the necessary support to the learner or matriculant in the home. Another element that requires intervention is the support matriculants need during their matric year. Therefore, sensitising workshops should be arranged to give pointers to families on how to support the learner during their matric year. Proper support at home would equal better academic performance on school, which would enable a space at institutions where further studies could be pursued. This is the goal, as it would help change the narrative of disadvantaged communities such as Douglas.

### ***6.7.2.4 Role of Schools and Teachers***

School and teachers have been the reference points in many of the responses of the post-matriculants who were interviewed in this study. Therefore, the involvement of the schools and teachers in this project is crucial. Schools and teachers would be able to identify poor academic performing learners. Specific attention should be given to grade 10 learners, as they are the group who choose subjects aligned to their career aspirations. Once poor academic performing learners have been identified, an intervention programme needs to be followed. The intervention programme would include personal empowerment strategies, assessment of the home environment and appointing tutors. It is envisaged that the tutors would be recruited from the Sol Plaatje University and the Northern Cape Technical Urban College.

The subject Life Orientation carries a lot of weight in the overall subject selection of the learners, yet it does not add value to secure admission to institutions of higher learning. However, within the subject content, careers are highlighted as a topic, yet not enough time is being spent on interrogating this important topic. It is therefore strongly recommended that compulsory career information sessions during a Life Orientation class time be held. Schools could be creative during these sessions where they could invite various people from the industry to address learners that would enable them to get a better perspective of their career interest.

Furthermore, continuous information sessions around academic performance and workshops could be organised in collaboration with the Provincial Department of Education to sensitise the teachers on what is happening in the industry and supporting them on how to align the learners according to the needs and attributes of such industries.

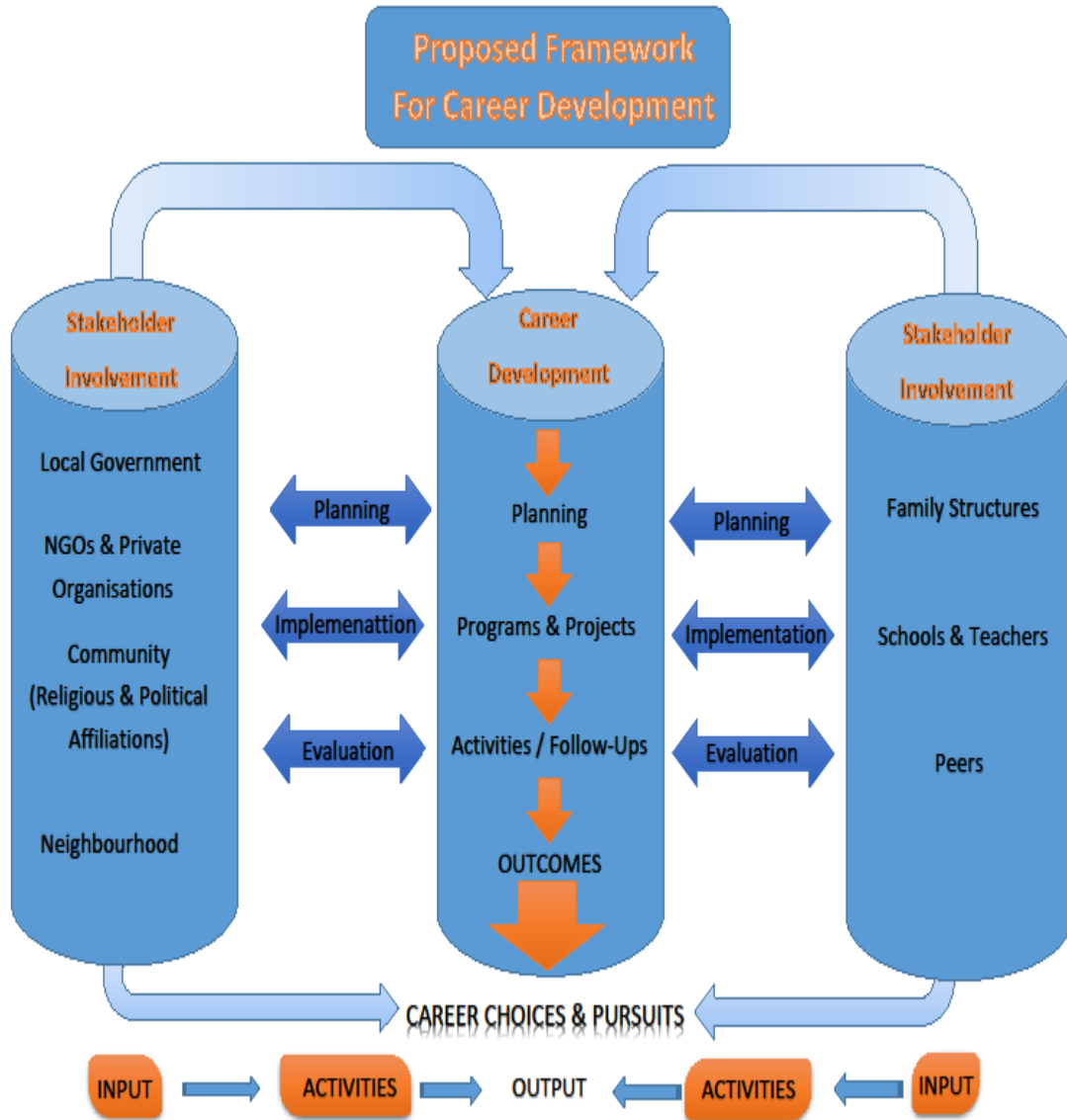
#### ***6.7.2.5 Role of Community and Peers***

It is imperative for the community to be more active in the development of its youth. Various affiliations such as churches, political parties, sport fraternities, and forums make up the community. The youth are aligned to these affiliates and it would make sense to get these affiliations involved in the betterment of the youth of Douglas. The churches could create a space where learners could study, especially those learners whose houses are not conducive to self-study. Furthermore, the community should hold the learner accountable for missing school/bunking school during scheduled calendar days. In addition, churches should have a special service twice a year for the learners, as they would be entering the examination period. Disadvantaged communities such as Douglas have strong associations with the church; thus it would be commendable for churches to take an overall interest in the well-being of its youth. Churches could make the necessary adjustments in their order of service to accommodate the youth.

The career development project would be facilitated by a career office, which would be established in Douglas. This career office would ensure rollout of the framework, ensuring that all stakeholders were involved in the development of the youth of Douglas by providing guidance, being a resource hub and channelling information that would make the project effective. A collective and collaborated approach of all stakeholders would bring benefits to the youth in their personal capacity as well as the community. In order to monitor the effectiveness of the project, a five-year cycle would be introduced. The timeframe would give allowance for planning, implementation and evaluation. It is further envisaged to implement the framework to the broader Siyancuma Municipality, the Northern Cape Province and beyond the borders of the province, specifically targeting disadvantaged communities. The proposed framework previously detailed above is therefore highlighted below detailing the envisaged roles of each stakeholder and the expected input and output in career development.

## 6.8 Proposed Framework for career development in the Douglas Community

Figure 10



The proposed career development framework illustrates the integrated approach of all the stakeholders within Douglas. Each entity will have an input, activity and output which would enhance career choices and pursuits of the youth in Douglas.

## **6.9 Limitations of the study**

The study presents several limitations identified in the research. To begin with, the scope of the study was relatively too narrow as it made use of a narrative approach on the community of Douglas as the case study. As such, the results from the study could not be representative and therefore generalised for a wider population. Nevertheless, the study was also not intended to provide generalised information, but rather to gain insight into the career development narratives and experiences of the post-matriculants in the community of Douglas.

Furthermore, studies conducted using qualitative research designs usually focus on very small numbers and in this study the central focus was on the post-matriculants in Douglas. In trying to establish these career development narratives and experiences of post-matriculants, it would not be plausible to generalise the findings to all post-matriculants in a much wider population as the contextual factors differ from place to place.

Lastly, the study was limited to career development narratives and experiences of post-matriculants. It would have been valuable to include a wider sample of learners in the different levels as well as include even the support structures like the family, teachers in schools, peers, community and all other identified stakeholders of career development. Based on that, the results of the study would require inclusion from the other stakeholders to be able to underpin more substantially the circumstances experienced in career development in previously disadvantaged communities.

## **6.10 Recommendations for further study**

The current study took place in the small community of Douglas in the Northern Cape Province. It is therefore recommended that further study should be directed to other smaller communities and later carried out on a much larger scale within the province. The findings from these studies would then be generalised and representative of the situation in the Northern Cape to enable policy makers to deliberate, design policies and programmes that are specific to the context of the Northern Cape communities.

The focus of the study was to explore the career development narratives and experiences of the post-matriculants in Douglas. The findings therefore are limited to post-matriculants only as designed in the study. It is recommended, therefore, that further studies would include both

primary and high school learners as well as a longitudinal study on the post-matriculants, to get clarity on their current experiences past the actual findings published in this current study. It is also further recommended to explore the narratives and experiences of the supportive pillars in career development including the active local government personnel, the active non-governmental organisations, families, teachers, community and other relevant stakeholders in career development.

### **6.11 Unique contributions of the study**

The current study on the career development narratives and experiences of the post-matriculants in Douglas community is one of the first studies carried out in the Northern Cape Province that extracts the actual contextual narratives that inform the factors surrounding career development. The study makes a significant contribution to the body of knowledge on career development with the theoretical guidance of the social cognitive career theory to underpin the critical factors that would guide the proper redress for career development, especially in previously disadvantaged communities, by the relevant stakeholders responsible for the improvement and implementation of career development programmes and processes.

The study may be useful to other researchers intending to study issues in the field of career psychology with specific reference to career development. The provincial government of the Northern Cape as well as the local municipality in Siyancuma may also benefit from the current study when strategising and designing career development initiatives that address the challenges faced in such smaller communities that have the previously pre-democracy and post-democracy concerns and challenges still prevalent.

The study proposes a framework that is guided by the literature and the findings of the study. The framework would consist of the involvement of local government, non-governmental organisations, family structures and relatives, schools and teachers and the involvement of the community and peers. This framework proposes specific roles and interventions needed to be implemented with integration and common sense of purpose.

### **6.12 Conclusion**

The key focus of this study was to explore the career development narratives and experiences of post-matriculants in the identified area of study of Douglas in the Northern Cape. The study brought to light the various contextual challenges, systems of influences, and unlevelled ground

experienced by post-matriculants in pursuit of different career choices and aspirations. In this chapter, I concluded the study by discussing the conclusions and recommendations, including the limitations, unique contributions of the study and, more importantly, a proposed framework for career development. The nature of the research findings pointed to a dented social, economic, political and environmental climate requiring all identified stakeholders in the proposed framework to make a proactive and concerted efforts to support post-matriculants for career development. The study was mindful of its limitations, particularly on scope, sampling and inclusion of stakeholders for data, including the participants. However, it suggests the importance of stakeholder roles and integration within the planned strategies towards the effectiveness of career development processes and approaches that would in turn alter the career development narratives and experiences of post-matriculants to those that enhance better and successful career choices, aspirations and successful career pathways and growth.

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## **APPENDIX A: Introducing the researcher and research**

Dear Post-Matriculant

Hello, my name is Caroline Hoorn

I am a PHD student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College Campus, Durban.  
Thank you for choosing to participate in this research study!

This study is about exploring your career ideas and influences that make up your career story! You will be asked to complete a booklet that examines different aspects that influence your career choice. By participating you may gain insight that may help with your own career choice. To be able to participate in this study, please give the researcher a copy of the consent form that was signed by your parents or guardians to allow you take part in this research. Please also hand in the copy of the assent form that you signed. There will be a first session of 90 minutes during which a My System of Career Influences (MSCI) booklet will be completed during scheduled time by the individual. On another day a second session of 90 minutes – 2 hours will be held where you will be asked questions what you may have learnt so far about your career influences. Thereafter you may be picked to be part of a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> group where 5 – 8 post-matriculants will discuss the same questions to see if any other ideas have been left out. This focus group will also take 90 minutes in a scheduled time period.

If you want feedback on the interview results or the final outcomes of this study, please contact me on my cell at 076 722 6901 or email me (Caroline) on [choorn@gmail.com](mailto:choorn@gmail.com).

For further career counselling, please contact the MarDan Enterprises in Douglas CBD at [mardanent16@gmail.com](mailto:mardanent16@gmail.com) or 053 298 1171

These career counselling sessions are provided free to you because you are a participant in this research study.

Thank you for choosing to contribute to this research study!

Caroline Hoorn

Student nr. 215080707

School of Psychology, University of Kwa Zulu Natal

## **APPENDIX B**

**Demographic Questionnaire**

Please tick ✓ in the block most applicable to you.  
Your responses will be treated as strictly confidential!

**1. Gender**

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**2. Age**

18	<input type="checkbox"/>	19	<input type="checkbox"/>	20	<input type="checkbox"/>	21	<input type="checkbox"/>	22 - 24	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**3. Home Language**

Afrikaans	<input type="checkbox"/>	English	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tswana	<input type="checkbox"/>	isiXhosa	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
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If other, please specify .....

**4. Mother's Education**

No School	<input type="checkbox"/>	Primary School	<input type="checkbox"/>	High School	<input type="checkbox"/>	Post School studies	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**5. Father's Education**

No School	<input type="checkbox"/>	Primary School	<input type="checkbox"/>	High School	<input type="checkbox"/>	Post School studies	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**6. Mother's job**

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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**7. Father's job**

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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**8 Your date of birth** **Grade passed**

**9. Name your 3 career interests**

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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## APPENDIX C

### Interview questions for narrative analysis

Dear Participant

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study.

This section of the research study is to invite you to share your story on your career journey. Your earliest recollection of your career journey until this present moment. Can you also point out the highs and lows of your career journey? How did you get through the lows? Who assisted you through the lows? What was the challenges and obstacles and how have you addressed it?

I. When did you first consider the career that you wanted to pursue?

*Wanneer het jy begin dink aan die beroep wat jy wil na streef?*

II. What was happening at the time? (Explore changes in family, community, society, etc.), or, in what ways do you think this particular time period influenced your career decision?

*Wat was die kondisie gedurende die tyd toe jy aan jou beroep dink? (wat het gebeur in jou familie en gemeenskap en samelweing), of hoe dink jy het hierdie spesefieke tyd inbraak gemaak op jou beroeps besluit?*

III. Who did you consult about this career?

*Met wie het jy gesels oor jou beroep?*

IV. What motivated you to pursue this career?

*Wat het jou motiveer om hierdie beroep te streef?*

V. What motivated you to make changes in this career path?

*Wat het jou gemotiveer om veranderinge aan te bring in hierdie loopbaan?*

VI. What challenges or obstacles did you have to overcome?

*Watter uitdagings of struikelblokke moes jy oorkom?*

VII. How did you overcome them? Who assisted you? (Explore role of family and other sociocultural institutions, such as church, etc.)

*Hoe het jy dit oorkom? Wie het jou gehelp? (Wat was die rol van jou familie of ander sosiale kulturele institusies soos die kerk)*

VIII. Who was the most significant influence on your career choice?

*Wie was die mees beduidende invloed op jou beroepskeuse?*

IX. In what ways did he/she influence you, and why?

*Op watter manier het hy/sy jou beïnvloed, en waarom?*

X. What did you feel the career choice you made would enable you to accomplish?

*Hoe voel jy oor wat jou beroepskeuse jou in staat kan stel om te bereik.*

XI. What other choices came to your mind, and why did you abandon them?

*Watter ander keuses het by jou gedagte opgekom en waarom het jy die gedagte verlaat?*

XII. Looking back, in what ways has being a (black, Indian, etc.) man, woman, growing up in a society such as X, at a particular point in time, influenced your career choices?

*As jy terug kyk, hoe het jou ras, geslag, opgroei in die samelewing soos Douglas, op n spesifieke tydperk jou beroepskeuse beïnvloed?*

XIII. What sort of conflicts did you have in making your decisions? (e.g. changing from one career to another, leaving one job for another, etc.)

*Watter soort botsende gevoelens het jy gehad onderwyl jy jou besluite maak? (Byvoorbeeld – verandering van beroepe, werksverandering)*

XIV. What does your career mean to you?

*Wat beteken jou beroep vir jou?*

XV. What does your career mean to your family?

*Wat beteken jou beroep aan jou familie?*

XVI. What does your career mean to your community?

*Wat beteken jou beroep aan jou gemeenskap?*

## **APPENDIX D**

### **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET**

#### **TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:**

Career development narratives and experiences of post-matriculants in a disadvantaged community. A study on the Douglas community in the Northern Cape.

**RESEARCHER'S NAME:** Caroline Hoorn

**ADDRESS:** 629 Kerk Straat, Bongani, Douglas.8730

**CONTACT NUMBER:** 076 722 6901

#### **Introduction**

What is RESEARCH?

Research is something we do to find new knowledge about the way things (and people) work.

We use research projects or studies to help us find out more about various things such as disease, illness, or in this case, career ideas. Research also helps us to find better ways of helping or treating children who are sick or helping children make better career decisions in finding their way in the job world.

What is this research project all about?

This research is about the ideas that you may have about career development narratives and career experiences, what is your self concept and what barrier you may experience you might experience to pursue a career, advice you have received from others, different life roles, past role-models, your ideal career, your interests and opportunities that exist in your area.

Why have I been invited to take part in this research project?

You have been invited to take part because you are a post matriculant and you had an opportunity to think about your career options; maybe you need guidance in pursuing your career choice or maybe you have no clue pertaining your career goals. This means that you are weighing up options based on different influences and this research is trying to find out the influences that lead you to make a specific career decision.

Who is doing the research? My name is Caroline Hoorn, I am a Doctoral student at University of Kwa Zulu Natal and am trying to research post-matriculants' career narratives and experiences in the context of your community.

What will happen to me in this study?

Firstly, you will be asked to bring back the form with your parent's signature to let us know that you are given permission to take part in this research. Then we will ask you to sign this form so we can be sure that you have understood what the study is about and give us your permission to participate well as record your answers. There is a questionnaire that you need to fill out, asking you about your name, age and what your parents do for living. After that you will be given a My System of Career Influences (MSCI) booklet that the researcher will help you to fill out about your career ideas, with step-by-step instructions, examples and even diagrams to represent your career influences. This is the end of the first session of 40 minutes, which will take place during an agreed time. The second session will also take place at an agreed time, and follow-up questions will be asked and recorded about how you found completing the booklet. Please answer as honestly as possible, we really do want to hear what you have to say! Thereafter you may be picked to be part of a third session, where a group of post-matriculants will discuss the booklet they have completed, if they think it was a good exercise or not and if they have gained any insight into their unique career influences and experiences.

Can anything bad happen to me?

You could feel scared initially, but the researcher will try her best to make you feel comfortable. If you do not understand anything, please ask to have it repeated in either English or Afrikaans because what you think is valuable to us! You could feel anxious or unsure about your future

career ideas, and if you need someone to talk to about getting career advice, we will provide you with contact details of people who could help you.

Can anything good happen to me?

You could gain knowledge about yourself by finding out what your interests are, certain ideas that you may not have realised about careers or who has made a lasting impression on you. You could also learn more about making career decisions and why it is so important to take control of your career story. These sessions are provided free to you, under normal circumstances standard career counselling fees would be charged for the same content.

Will anyone know I am in the study?

No one will know that you have participated, and your name and details will be kept secret. Only the researcher and the Research supervisor will know who you are because they play an important part in the research project.

Who can I talk to about the study?

If you have any questions you would like to ask, you are welcome to contact me, the researcher, by using the details at the bottom of the page. If you have any questions you may also contact my supervisor, Prof N.J. Mknize, via telephone or via email.

If you have any complaints about this study you may contact Ms Phumelele Ximba of the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee via phone (031) 260 3587 or email [ximbap@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:ximbap@ukzn.ac.za).

Researcher: Ms Caroline Hoorn

Phone: 076 722 6901

Email: [choorn@gmail.com](mailto:choorn@gmail.com)

Supervisor: Prof. Nhlanhla Mhkize

Phone: (031) 260 1249

Email: Mkhize@ukzn.ac.za

What if I do not want to do this?

You have every right to refuse to take part in this research, even if your parents have agreed that you can participate. You can stop being in this study at any time without getting into trouble.

(Circle appropriate answer)

Do you understand what this research study is about and are you willing to take part in it?

YES / NO

Has the researcher answered all your questions?

YES / NO

Do you understand that you can pull out of the study at any time?

YES / NO

Signature of Participant/ Date

## **Appendix E: Informed Consent: Individual Interviews**

I hereby agree to participate in this study on the career narratives of post-matriculants in the Douglas community, Northern Province. I have had an opportunity to read and understand the information sheet given to me.

The purpose of the study has been explained to me. I understand what is expected of me in terms of my participation in this study and the time commitment I am making to participate in this study. I understand that my participation is voluntary, and I know that I may withdraw from the study at any point, without negative consequences. I understand that there is a limit to confidentiality in a focus group setting as the researcher cannot guarantee that the other participants will adhere to the conditions of the confidentiality pledge.

I understand that my data will be stored securely for five years and used for future research. I understand that measures will be taken to ensure that my identity is protected and my participation in this research will be completely confidential in this regard. I understand that no identifying information about me will be published.

I have the contact details of the researcher should I have any more questions about the research.

---

Name of Participant

---

Signature of Participant

---

Date

---

Signature of Researcher

---

Date

### **Appendix F: Informed Consent: Audio Recording of Interviews**

In addition to agreeing to participate in the study, I give permission for audio recordings of the individual interviews to be used as data in this research project.

---

Name of Participant

---

Signature of Participant

---

Date

---

Signature of Researcher

---

Date

**Appendix G: Informed Consent: Focus Group**

I hereby agree to participate in this study (focus group) on the career narratives of post-matriculants in the Douglas community, Northern Province. I have had an opportunity to read and understand the information sheet given to me.

The purpose of the study has been explained to me. I understand what is expected of me in terms of my participation in this study and the time commitment I am making to participate in this study. I understand that my participation is voluntary, and I know that I may withdraw from the study at any point, without negative consequences. I understand that there is a limit to confidentiality in a focus group setting as the researcher cannot guarantee that the other participants will adhere to the conditions of the confidentiality pledge.

I understand that my data will be stored securely for five years and used for future research. I understand that measures will be taken to ensure that my identity is protected and my participation in this research will be completely confidential in this regard. I understand that no identifying information about me will be published.

I have the contact details of the researcher should I have any more questions about the research.

---

Name of Participant

---

Signature of Participant

---

Date

---

Signature of Researcher

---

Date

## **Appendix H: Informed Consent: Audio Recording of Focus Group Interviews**

In addition to agreeing to participate in the study, I give permission for audio recordings of the individual interviews to be used as data in this research project.

---

Name of Participant

---

Signature of Participant

---

Date

---

Signature of Researcher

---

Date

**Appendix I: Focus Group Confidentiality Pledge**

I have consented to participate in this study on the career narratives and life experiences of post-matriculants in the Douglas community. As part of my commitment to participate in this study I hereby agree to keep everything that happens in this focus group confidential. This means that I agree not to talk about any of the issues that were discussed to anyone outside of the focus group or reveal the identities of any of my fellow participants.

I understand that every member of this focus group has the right to respect and privacy. I further understand that while the researcher has no control over my actions, if I break my promise of confidentiality that this may have damaging effects on my fellow participants and research in this field.

I understand that it is important for this research that I, as well as my fellow participants, feel comfortable to express ourselves without fear of any negative consequences. I hereby agree to keep this confidential because I am aware that if I do not, my fellow participants may be harmed by my actions.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**APPENDIX J**

**Individual and focus group interview schedule (Adapted from the MSCI: McMahon,  
Patton & Watson, 2005)**

Dear Participant

Thank you for your participation thus far in the research study. This section of the study will help me to ascertain what your experience has been, what is new to you and since completing the My Systems of Career Influences workbook.

- 1) What are your current career decisions that you have to make?

*Wat is jou huidige beroepskeuse wat jy moet maak?*

- 2) Are there any influences that direct you towards or away from a specific career idea? If so what are they?

*Is daar invloede wat jou na of weg van n spesifieke beroeps idee bestuur? Ingeval ja, what is dit?*

- 3) Do you think that these career ideas and influences will stay the same in the future?

*Dink jy hierdie beroeps idees en invloede sal dieselfde bly in die toekoms?*

- 4) In discussing your past career ideas, have they changed at all? If so how and what has caused them to change?

*Het jou vorige beroeps idees verander? In geval ja, hoe en wat was die orsaak daarvan?*

- 5) Can you describe surrounding environmental barriers that make you feel as if your career goals are unreachable?

*Kan jy verduidelik of die hindernisse in jou omgewing jou laat voel as of jou beroeps doelwitte onbereikbaar is?*

- 6) Are there any surrounding environmental resources that motivate you and make you feel as if your career goals are possible?

*Is daar enige hulpbronne in jou omgewing wat jou motiveer and jou laat voel dat jou beroeps doelwitte wel moontlik is?*

7) What did you find the influence of significant others such as parents, teachers, role models and peers are on your personal career ideas?

*Hoe beïnvloed beduidende andere soos ouers, onderwysers, rolmodelle en portuurgroep jou persoonlike beroeps idees?*

8) Tell me how you would describe your self-awareness before this career exploration? And is your self-awareness different from then? If so how and what do you think contributed to this change?

*Hoe sal jy jou selfbewustheid beskryf voor jy hierdie beroeps eksplorاسie gedoen het? Is jou selfbewustheid verskillend as voorheen? Ingeval ja, wat dink jy het bydrae gemaak tot die verandering?*

9) What if anything did you think about your career influences before completing the MSCI?

*Wat, as daar is, het jy gedink oor jou beroeps invloede voor jy die MSCI voltooi het?*

10) How, if at all, have your thoughts and feelings changed about your career influences since completing the MSCI?

*Hoe, in dien wel, het jou gedagtes en gevoelens verander oor jou beroeps invloede sedert jy die MSCI voltooi het?*

11) How would you describe your overall experience of the MSCI as a career development process?

*Hoe sou jy jou algehele ervaring van die MSCI as beroeps ontwikkeling proses verduidelik?*

12) Is there something that stands out for you or that you would like to change?

*Is daar iets wat vir jou uitstaan of is daar iets wat jy sal verander?*

13) Is there anything else that you might not have thought about before that occurred to you during this discussion?

*Is daar enig iets anders wat jy dalk nie aan gedink het voor dit voorgekom het tydens hierdie bespreking?*


14) Is there anything you would like to ask me?

*Het jy dalk vrae wat jy an my wil vra?*

15) Is there anything anyone would like to add to this discussion that we might have not covered before we end the focus group session?

Is daar enig iets wat enig een van julle wil bydrae tot die gesprek wat ons dalk nie gedek het nie voor ons die fokus groep sessie sluit?

**Ethical Clearance Approval Letter: SB423D041118062112010**



UNIVERSITY OF  
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INYUVESI  
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

19 June 2018

Ms Caroline Hoorn (215080707)  
School of Applied Human Sciences – Psychology  
Howard College Campus

Dear Mr. Hoorn,

Protocol reference number: HSS/0612/018D  
Project Title: Career development narratives and experiences of post matriculants in a disadvantaged community. A study on the Douglas community in the Northern Cape

**Approval Notification – Expedited Application**

In response to your application received 05 June 2018, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.


Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully





.....  
Professor Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Professor Nhlantla Mkhize  
Cc Academic Leader Research: Dr Maud Mthembu  
Cc School Administrator: Ms Ayanda Ntuli

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Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee  
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 15th - 2018   
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