

**Exploring the motivation of grade 9 learners in their subjects' choices in a school in
Nqutu: a case study**

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Declaration

I Alfred Sibusiso Kubheka declare that:

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As the candidate's supervisor/s we agree / do not agree to the submission of this dissertation.

N.P. Mbatha (Supervisor)

(Co-Supervisor)

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my late mom Mirriam Qhalazi Khumalo for growing me up, and nurturing me, teaching me respect until I got to manhood. I am saying to you mom, you did not get a chance to go to school but through me today in the heavens where you are you have the master's degree. Thank you, mom.

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Abstract

This is a qualitative study that is intended to explore the motivation of grade 9 learners in their subjects' choices in a school in Nqutu: a case study. Using Lent's Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) explored how subject choice affect the career decision of a learner and its influences thereafter. The case study methodology has been used together with two methods of generating data. Participants were interviewed and had to write a one-page essay titled my future career reflecting on their future career choice. I used the random sampling method to recruit twelve participants. The findings of the study emphasise that grade nine learners are mostly on their own with little assistance they get from subjects' educators regarding the choice of subjects at grade ten. The study also indicated that parental support, most parents left the decision to be taken by the learners; they only advised them to choose right. Another important finding is that in the area of Nqutu, uMzinyathi district, not all grade nine learners are taken for career expo or career guidance, unlike in other districts like aMajuba district where all the grade 9 learners are invited into a common venue for subjects' choice. What was also evidenced in the study was that the world of work term four chapters in the Life Orientations chapter is not dealt with in grade 9 in preparation for grade ten subjects' choice. The study reveals that the subject choice at grade 9 is neglected. As a result, learners do not choose subjects correctly; as a result, they fail in the FET phase or else fail their first year at tertiary, and they change courses. I, therefore, suggest a policy that will promote more advocacy programmes on subject's choice across the country by the national department of education to provinces and then districts to schools.

Abbreviations

BEd	Bachelor of Education
FET	Further Education and Training
SCCT	Social Cognitive Career Theory
PPN	Post provision norm
FAL	First additional language
NSC	National Senior Certificate
MEO	Multiple examination opportunities
DBE	Department of Basic Education
NSFAS	National Students Fund of South Africa
NATED	National Accredited Technical Education Diploma
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
GRDS	Engineering graphics and design GRDS
SMT	School management team
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NCV	National Certificate (Vocational)
STW	School to work transition
GETC	General Education and Training Certificate
DoHE	Department of Higher Education

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Chapter 1: Background and introduction

1.0. Introduction

Schools in rural areas like in Nqutu are deprived in different ways. The rurality affects important developmental aspects such as network coverage, internet connectivity, infrastructure, and even the basic necessity of lights and water remain a challenge. Schools in Nqutu and the resources they offer their learners is also a critical issue that often impedes the capacity and capability of schools to optimally serve the learners registered. Moreover, subject packaging in rural schools also remains a challenge for certain subjects requiring technical expertise post-school. The school chosen for this case study, located in Nqutu, is not spared from these conditions.

Currently, it offers three streams for subject packaging, which are technical, commerce and science streams. An anecdotal observation I have made as an educator in the school is identifying a trend of high failure at grade 10, contrary to the high pass rate of the same learners in grade 9 of the previous year. This observation became a motivation to engage in research and further probe the probable cause for this problem.

The assistance given to learners when choosing subjects at grade nine for the Further Education and Training (FET) phase is poor compared to career guidance assistance given to grade 12 learners. The “KHETHA” programme spearheaded by the department of higher education to assist grade 12 learners with career guidance is popular. Whereas department of basic education (DBE) currently has no similar programme in place to assist grade nine learners with subject choice. Dabula & Makura (2013) states that a learner cannot make a suitable career choice without choosing the best subjects for themselves at the end of their grade 9. The matter of subject choices may also be integrated by the DBE to positively contribute to the increasing unemployment rate among youth in South Africa.

Depending on the level of education of the parent's other races at home can decide what career the child will choose and that will be favoured by the available school, former Model C, which has all the facilities even the career guidance personnel besides the Life orientation educators (Davis-Kean, 2005). The black communities, on the other hand, with their low level of education, would wait for the school to be the one to decide the learner's career. Unfortunately, one cannot choose something you do not know of and never heard about it anywhere. If no career guidance is offered, this will limit the ability of the learners to make a career choice.

Consequently, if no career decision is made, there will be no subject choice made at grade 10. As a result, black children will become employees of other races.

That is why in my study, I advocate the issue of more technical schools or schools of skills to be in place. One other thing that causes poor advocacy of career guidance in schools is because the schools of skills are minimal and the few available are far from rural communities. Most of them are in suburbs and townships, which disadvantages the rural communities. It should not be taken as usual for grade 10 learners that they do not have to get proper career counselling which will help them make correct subjects' choices at grade 10. In many cases, at the beginning of the year in grade 10, many of the learners are not sure of which stream to choose. They decide to change the stream before the subject teacher gets in or wait to fail the first term, then move to another stream.

South Africa is passive regarding positive changes that would upgrade the standard and the level of education (Hoadley, 2017). Education in South Africa, especially in rural areas, is still depriving rural communities of employment obtained by their counterparts in urban areas. Currently, the Basic education is piloting nationwide the Technical Occupational Subjects in the senior phase (grade 8 and 9). The intention is to attract the senior level learners to choose the technical subjects at grade 10 level.

1.1 Rationale

The concern which led me to engage in this study is the increasing failure rate among the grade 12 learners in schools surrounding Nqutu. Despite the various opportunities and interventions made by the schools and Department of Basic Education, such as rewriting their failed subjects in the following year, upgrading their marks in the poorly performed subjects or completing their grade 12 over two years instead of one. Even with these opportunities made available to the learners, some are still having challenges passing their grade 12. This has led me to probe into the potential causes of this problem. I have realised that it may not be due to the insufficient opportunities or lack of school support from the school or Department of Basic Education that learners continue to fail. However, it may also be due to the subjects they choose at the end of grade nine. By conducting this study, I wish to understand the influences that lead learners to make their subject choices and their level of understanding in the prospects they may have post-matric due to the subject's choices made in grade 9. As an educator, I want to

make a positive contribution towards finding a solution to this high failure rate at grade 12 level in Nqutu.

1.2 Focus and purpose of the study

The focus of this study is to explore the relationship between subject choices and the post-school opportunities for high school learners as influenced by choice of subjects chosen at the end of grade 9.

The purpose of conducting this study is to understand the learner's motivation for their subject choices at the end of grade nine and how those choices may affect the opportunities they have after high school.

1.3 Objectives

The following objectives inform this study:

1. To explore what motivates learners to choose their subjects at the end of grade 9.
2. To understand the roles played by the different stakeholders with subject choice selection.

1.4 Main research questions

(The critical questions which I intend to answer by undertaking this research –these must be directly correlated to the objectives)

1. What motivates learners to choose their subjects at the end of grade 9?
2. What are the roles played by the different stakeholders with subjects' selection?

1.5 The significance of the study

The study is essential as its focus on what motivates grade 9 learners to choose their subjects at grade 10. Subject choice issues are not popular in the basic education sector as the "KHETHA" programme in the higher education sector is. Poor advocacy of subject choices programmes at grade 10 causes a high rate of passing grade 12 learners who cannot get to institutions of higher learning. At tertiary institutions, learners who did not get a career expo to help them with subjects' choices at grade 10 are likely to change courses before they finish their courses. The study is so significant to decrease the number of learners who drops out of

school due to the frustration caused by choosing subjects not suitable for the learner. When the recommendations of the study are being followed, learners' interest in learning will be stimulated. Learners will achieve more as they will be learning subjects they enjoy the most. The learners will become enthusiastic and achieve more in their learning. The learners in tertiary education will excel in their achievement and achieve the best results. When they are employed, they will be doing their job with pride, and their clients will be happy with the service they provide. As employees, they will please their employers.

1.6 Context of the study

Sihayo high school is the only one in Nqutu, a deeply rural area that offers a diverse curriculum with three streams such as science, commerce and technical. Other schools in the area offer two or three streams depending on the size of the school. It does not offer a general stream with mathematical literacy. Instead, pure mathematics is offered with subjects like information technology, hospitality studies technical subjects such as mechanical technology, electrical technology and civil technology. It is the only one in the area of Nqutu with such a diverse curriculum. In the uMzinyathi district, although situated in the deep rural area of Nqutu, competes in terms of curriculum packages with former model C schools in the area such as Dundee High school and Sarel Cilliers High school. The former model C schools might have other privileges of good facilities such as career guidance officers on top of life orientations educators who assist learners on subjects' choices that will align with their future careers. Currently, it is used by the department of basic education as a pilot school to introduce technical subjects such as mechanical, electrical and civil technology in the senior phase grades 8 and 9. Unlike other model C schools in urban areas, the school is in deep rural Nqutu only depends on life orientations educators to assist learners on career choices then subjects choices in grade 9.

1.7 Overview of the study

Chapter 1 covers the background and rationale of the study, the purpose for conducting the study and the focus, the critical research questions objectives of the study, and the significance of having the study completed.

Chapter 2, the literature on the motivation of grade 9 learners into subjects' choice by other researchers, will be dealt with. Studies on motivation on subjects' choices of grade 9 learners are limited, then the local, continental and international scholars' work will be used to fill the gaps identified in this study. This chapter will also explore the theoretical framework relevant to this study. Social cognitive career theory is the theoretical framework used in this study.

Chapter 3 will cover the methodology that is the qualitative research approach that was adopted in the study. Also discussed in this study is the interpretive research paradigm that drove the study. After that, the location of the study will be discussed, giving the reasons I chose that particular context. In addition, the sampling strategy used to select the participants will be presented, and a detailed list of the participants will be provided. I will also explain how data was generated. Also, the data collection instrument used to collect the data in this study which is semi-structured interviews and reflective letter-writing, will be discussed. The ethical consideration considered when the study was conducted will also be discussed. After that, the trustworthiness of this study will be discussed, and in conclusion, I will present the data analysis process followed in this study. In this chapter, the six -phases guide of data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) will be used.

The methodology chapter is followed by chapter 4, where the discussion of the analysis and presentation of the study findings will be presented. The findings were drawn from the data generated and analysed using thematic analysis. The study is concluded in chapter 5. In this chapter, I discuss the findings concerning the two research questions. In this chapter, I will highlight the main findings of the study. Possible suggestions and recommendations for future policies, practices and further research studies will follow. The limitations of this study will follow the recommendations and lastly, the conclusion summarising all the thesis.

The next chapter reviews the literature related to the study and the presentation of the theoretical framework used in this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.0. Introduction

In the previous chapter, the rationale, background and objectives for this study were provided. In this chapter, the literature review focused on what motivates the grade 9 learners to choose the subjects they chose at grade ten. This chapter's key concepts are the influences that motivate learners in grade nine to choose the correct subjects in grade ten. The chosen theoretical framework to ground the study will be discussed. Guiding this study is the literature review together with the theoretical framework. Reviewing the literature is an important activity that helps the researcher understand the different views, perspectives, and understanding of the related and given topic. While understanding other scholars' views in the field is important, the writer must find their views and integrate them into the current literature (Suddaby, 2010). On the other hand, the theoretical framework is fundamental as it is a lens that guides and directs the research process for this study (Osanloo & Grant, 2016). For this research, the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) was used to frame this study.

2.1. Theoretical framework - Social Cognitive Career Theory

The social cognitive career (SCCT) theory was developed by (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). It addresses how performance outcomes are influenced, how academic and career-related interests are stimulated and developed by academic and career linked choices (Lent et al., 1994). The SCCT emanated from social learning theory (Vygotsky, 1978) and social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). Bandura's social cognitive theory of 1986 was broadened to include academic performance resulting in the development of social cognitive career theory (SCCT) (R. W. Lent & Brown, 1996). (Lent et al., 1994) asserts that three fundamental variables underpin the theory. The first variable explores how career-relevant interests are formed and elaborated. The second variable explores how academic and career choice options are selected. Lastly, the third variable explores how persistence in educational; and occupational pursuit and performance enhance learning. SCCT, according to Lent et al. (1994), focuses on aspects related to career development such as formation and development of career-relevant interest, choosing of academic and options related to career choice, lastly, persistence and performance in educational and in pursuit of occupations.

SCCT was designed as a theory to explain academic and career behaviours. SCCT views academic progress as a developmental complement to career interest and choice. Smith (2002) emphasises that the word career in the SCCT includes career choice, academic interest and performance. Smith (2002) further states that SCCT is a framework for academic and career

behaviours. SCCT views academic progress as being influenced by career interest and choice. SCCT is relevant for this study to explore the motivation of grade 9 learners in their subject choices in a school in one context. In the literature, A. Shumba and M. Naong (2012) agreed that learners in poorly developed rural areas such as Nqutu are commonly deprived of career counselling as most schools are under-resourced, which may contribute to learners failing to choose suitable subjects at grade 9.

Grade 9 learners in a diversified curriculum consist of three streams: commercial, science, and technical stream. Within each stream, there are also subjects choices the learners are supposed to make, such as in a commercial stream, learners choose between information technology and hospitality studies. In the technical stream, the school offers mechanical technology specialising in fitting and machining and automotive, in which the learner has to choose one specialisation. Schools do not give learners a wide variety of unique subject packages to choose from, enabling them to widen the scope of subject choice, which will enable learners to expand on their career choices. The literature emphasised that the type of school, subjects' packages of that school that a learner has attended plays a significant role in the learner's subject choice, which will later influence learners career choice (Chimombe, 2015). As learners cannot invent new careers, they never heard of, and they have never been exposed to. The subjects' packages of schools have a detrimental effect on the learners' career choice as they limit learners to choose only the available subject packages. All these choices have to be made at the end of grade 9.

It is so crucial for this study to explore what motivates learners to make a correct subject choice. Some grade 10 learners, after several failures, which cause them to repeat the grades, decide to change the stream; some change the subjects within the stream they pass. It is the learners' career interest that will guide the learner in what to choose. It is that career interest that will influence a learner's performance and academic progress. To reduce the high failure rate, I felt the relevant theoretical framework for this study is SCCT.

For the learners to reach grade 12 and beyond, career-relevant interest, career choice-related options found in SCCT are relevant to assist them in achieving academic development. For the above to be implemented accordingly, the SCCT consists of the cognitive variables that contribute to the career and academic interest development, career-related choices and performance outcomes of the learners. Hui (2018) emphasises that SCCT determines how people's interests are stirred and established. Furthermore, how do people make the right

choices and how the different categories of success in education can be attained regarding job-related issues. That is the reason why SCCT is most relevant in this study.

2.1.1 Self-efficacy beliefs

Self-efficacy refers to people's judgments of their ability to organise and perform courses of action required to attain designated performance types. Scholars such as Piquart (2003) says it is the self-belief about their personal ability to plan and implement activities, while Smart and Peterson (1997) say self-efficacy is about one's positive attitude and capability to achieve a task. I understand self-efficacy as motivation emanating from the interest in performing a task. Once the task is achieved, the interest in achieving more tasks increases. That motivation boosts a person to want to achieve more tasks. Bandura (1986) theory states that in the SCCT, self-efficacy belief is contextualised and dynamic; it depends on other people, behaviour, and the environment's nature. Sadri and Robertson (1993) agree that Self-efficacy is dynamic and specific to that particular performance and depend on contextualised factors. I view self-efficacy as determined by academic interest and career-related choices. Only on what the learner is interested in will the performance improvement and achieve more results.

Bandura (2000) also mentions four different ways of getting and shaping self-efficacy: vicarious learning, social persuasion, physiological and affective states. Personal performance accomplishment contributes to self-efficacy, which is evidenced when a learner has achieved a given task because he has made the right subject choice. His self-efficacy is developed as a result. Whereas repeated failure of the learner due to incompleteness or making the wrong subject choices may yield negative results as the learner's self-efficacy is underdeveloped or diminishes. Vicarious learning refers to the observation of the success or failure of people close to you. A learner doing any grade below grade twelve sees the achievement of grade 12 learners. The learner then takes the decision within himself of wanting to excel in grade 12. That taken decision serves as the motivation to work much more challenging and excel.

Social persuasions are when a person is convinced to attempt certain behaviours. That is when a group of learners would all agree on having only one group member participate in an activity. The group members would all persuade and influence and provide more support to that individual member. Due to that provided support and encouragement, the individual member

gains self-efficacy to participate and do not want to disappoint his fellows and achieve. Physiological states refer to when given the task to perform, your body's physical condition, which might be tiredness, depression. Informs your self-efficacy judgement that you cannot perform the given task. During the task performance, depression or tiredness due to inferred self-efficacy stamina and composure comes back, and the activity is performed outstandingly. According to Lent, Brown, and Hackett (2000), there are different ways to encourage involvement in career acquiring activity, such as skills acquisition.

The exposure of adolescents to different environments with different career relevance force them to perform different occupational tasks that they know nothing about. The learners find themselves exposed to such difficult and diverse activities that they are forced to pursue such activities may not be possible to achieve them. Through repeated engagement in the activity and getting feedback, modelling from supervisors and peers refine their skills and perform better than their self-efficacy is gained. Other scholars, Hidi (2000), emphasise that interest is the relationship between a person and the particular content. The power of interest works inside the person, whereas the content and the environment direct the development of the interest. It is then upon the individual; the way environment is organised, that individuals' capability, such as self-regulation, can enhance interest development to be able to achieve various occupational tasks (Renninger, 2010)

I view self-efficacy as being gained through involvement in several activities in diverse situations, ignoring failure, but through continuous participation, perfection is realised, bringing self-efficacy as being gained. I also view self-efficacy as the key to learning; it is attained and improved by using correct learning experiences. That will enable the learners to perform their academic work with success. Self-efficacy is a vital variable that may help determine one's choice of activities and effort, endurance and persistence, and display emotional strength when facing difficult times.

(Bandura, 2010) states that academic success is caused by educational expectations that are elevated by positive academic efficacy beliefs. Lent et al. (2000) emphasise that a strong sense of personal efficacy creates a self-directed lifetime of the learners who are valued and economically rewarded in today's society of personal efficacy. Other scholars Tierney and Farmer (2002) mention that formal education provides strong efficacy beliefs, together with basic learning tools, which result in students who have the required skills for economic and

social stability. In my view, a lack of confidence in learning does reduce the academic performance and career success of that learner. Other scholars such as Smith (2002) discovered that self-confidence in learning boosts the learner's self-efficacy to achieve more. I also view that when a learner is doing subjects of his choice, he realises his potential of achieving in learning, he then sets the goals to achieve more, and that causes the expectations of outcomes to increase, all that is determined by one's self-efficacy (Archer & Scevak, 1998).

2.1.2 Outcomes expectations

Refers to the action that is expected to happen after the outcome is achieved. Outcomes expectations ask what will happen if the task is achieved, meaning outcomes expectations as the anticipated benefits one will obtain after completing a particular task (Lent et al., 2000). Other scholars such as B. J. Zimmerman (1990) emphasise that it is through the standards one set for himself to achieve. Learners attach value to their learning, and their educational expectations cause academic success tasks (Lent et al., 2000). My understanding is that when learners are promised some incentives emanating from their performances; their performance is then enhanced.

According to Lent et al. (1994), outcomes expectations is divided into anticipation of physical consequences such as money, the anticipation of social consequences such as recognition. Other scholars, Small (2000), believe that these expectations serve as extrinsic reinforcement as they directly cause performance. My understanding it is always necessary for the learners to get incentives for all the excellent performance done.

Lent et al. (1994) emphasise that some people value the outcomes of the performance they are to undertake, but due to doubt of their capabilities, they do not participate in activities. In situations where the quality of performance guarantees outcomes, the self-efficacy becomes more substantial, and the strength of outcomes expectations is reduced. In cases where the outcome expectations are most available compared to the quality of performance outcomes, expectations may not be a strong determinant forcing the activity (Tremblay & Schultz, 1999). Other authors view that same as in self-efficacy outcome expectation increase after one has been rewarded for a particular performance. By observing the outcomes received by other people, self-generated outcomes such as self-approval increase, causing the goals set to increase. I understand that no matter how challenging the content of work is to be learnt by the

learner. Due to certain credits, he will dedicate more of his time to executing those tasks and ensuring he succeeds in them. The learner will set goals that will make him achieve those outcomes.

2.1.3 Goals

Goals are defined as the purpose and determination to perform a particular activity (Lent et al., 1994). Other scholars, Bandura (1991), mention that goals play a significant role in the self-regulation of performance. According to Lent et al. (1994), the early setting of goals helps prioritise essential things that will lead to success for the individual. Goals that are set earlier are more effective than goals set too late. It is advantageous to set goals so first then set goals so late. Other scholars such as Schunk (1991) mentions that learners in the elementary grades were struggling with mathematics due to lack of motivation. The early personal setting of goals assisted them in achieving their desired outcomes. Learners with page completion set daily in their seatwork for mathematics showed significant intrinsic interest in the subject. The learners also showed more self-efficacy and attainment of mathematical skills compared to learners who depended on term goals that were longer (Lent et al., 1994).

In my opinion, goal setting is crucial if successful learning is to be achieved, as any activity at a school level must have a determined set date to be completed. Students with long term goals and use metacognitive ways to regulate processes are imagined to be relying on views of self-efficacy and affect. Lent et al. (1994) state that learners with higher self-efficacy have their challenging goals set higher to accomplish. Other scholars such as Cervone, Kopp, Schaumann, and Scott (1994) indicate that the goals set per subject are correlated meaningfully with their self-efficacy estimates. In my view, through the setting of goals, one can organise and guide the behaviour. Through goal setting, the behaviour is non-stop for an extended period, not requiring outside reinforcement. Goals operate mainly through the capacity of the person to represent the outcomes desired in the future.

Lent et al. (1994) emphasise that when one has achieved the goals he set, he develops the internal satisfaction that is self-motivational. Goals apply in any sphere of life and can be part of career choice and used in decision-making theories. Other scholars, Banks, McCauley, Gardner, and Guler (2016), emphasise that goal-setting constitutes a vital mechanism people use to fulfil self-empowerment. One's behaviour is determined by personal history,

environmental events not even by genes but shaped by self-directed goals and social cognitive factors which interrelate with goals. In my view, what a learner is, is determined by the goals set. The set goals must be realistic and be achievable. The goals set must be the one that guides one's achievements. Without setting goals, one cannot succeed in life.

Lent et al. (1994) further emphasise that goal settings are self-regulatory and self-reinforcement to learning. Goals settings are mainly used in important cases such as decision-making, career plans and occupational aspirations. Other scholars such as Zimmerman, Bandura, and Martinez-Pons (1992) mentions that to make the learner performance more self-regulatory, specific strategies to achieve educational goals and proper career development must be employed. In my view, there is inadequate learning that can succeed without appropriate goal setting. Goals setting is vital as it directs all the learning activities. Goals setting also serve the role of facilitating self-regulatory learning. With developed self-efficacy, high-performance outcomes and goals set correctly, a learner can have a career choice and academic interest and more performance improvement.

I view what I wrote above will help my study because currently, there is a crisis in schools' subject choices. The choosing of wrong subjects by the learners has long-term consequences in their lives. Wrong subject choices may lead to learners not having stimulated academic interest relevant to their future learning (Iannelli, Smyth, & Work, 2017). The schools where learners enrol shape the learners' subject choices (Jin, Muriel, & Sibieta, 2011). The country where the schools are situated determines the education system and the acts that govern that particular country's schools. For example, in America, there is the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 to cater to school to work transition (Bambara, Wilson, & McKenzie, 2007).

Haynes (2015) also states that the schools' act controls the schools' operation in a country. McCrone, Morris, and Walker (2005) raises another point that schools even fail to execute the educational act to guide learners to the right path. Schools fail to help the learners determine the core and correct subjects' combinations to be studied (Bovaird, 2007). Schools have a huge responsibility and potential to influence the learners' future careers (Woods, 1993). The learners' socioeconomic background, especially from rural schools, is disadvantaged concerning subjects' choices. The curriculum offered by the schools and exposure of the learners to career guidance at the end of grade 9 affects the way learners choose subjects at the end of grade 9 (Anders, Henderson, Moulton, & Sullivan, 2018)

In RSA, less study is conducted on subject choices; there is more emphasis on career choices. In my view, there is no career choice without the subject's choice. Higher education speaks about the "*KHETHA*" programme for a career choice in institutions of higher learning. No equivalent programme in the department of basic education emphasises the subject's choice in schools (Anders et al., 2018). Most of the former model C schools in towns, on top of life orientations educator there is personnel on-site specially trained to advise learners on career choice that enables them to make correct subjects' choices. Rural schools rely on life orientations educators who may not be monitored to advise learners accordingly.

2.1.4 Social cognitive career theory as applied to the school-to-work transition

The SCCT is also used to address the school to work transition (STW) (Lent et al., 1994). This study also researches how ready the learners to move from school to work situation in Nqutu. The theorists such as Blustein, Juntunen, and Worthington (2000) advocate for the reformation of education to address how schools prepare learners in terms of subject's choice for a work situation. The three SCCT variables, such as self-efficacy beliefs, outcomes expectations and goals set, were introduced, which aimed to understand how academic and career interests are formed. SCCT also looks out how career interests are executed and attained career performance outcomes (Lent et al., 1994). The vocational researchers are attracted to SCCT to address the learner's vocational opportunities during their post-matric.

The variables such as self-efficacy beliefs, outcomes expectations and goals set that Bandura identified in social cognitive theory have been related to the vocational outcomes (Lent, Brown, Nota, & Soresi, 2003). SCCT is the theoretical framework that helps learners form their career interests, make educational and vocational choices, and form their occupational endeavours (Lent et al., 1994). The SCCT states a correlation between job satisfaction and outcomes expectations. According to Lent et al. (1994), outcomes expectations are a valuable determiner of work-related conduct for individuals such as ethnic and racial minorities who need more representation in career development. (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1996) emphasised that the expectations of the outcome play a significant role as it determines the vocational behaviours. In this theoretical framework, the aim was to look at career and academic interests and develop career-related choices and performance outcomes.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.0. Introduction

The previous chapter presented the literature review and theoretical framework on which this study is based. This chapter will use the below titles to explore what motivates the grade 9 learners to choose their chosen subjects. In this chapter, the research approach, the research paradigm most relevant to the study, the location of the study, the sampling methods and the data collection methods used for the study were discussed and presented.

3.1. Research approach

The research design used in this study is the qualitative design. Qualitative research uses human experiences as a source of knowledge (Hoepfl, 1997). This kind of research is non-numerical as it is not a quantitative research design, instead it deals with images, text or sound interactions people may have with their environment (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992). According to Merriam and Grenier (2019), qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the way peoples' experiences are interpreted and the meaning they attribute to those experiences. This research design gives a structure and logic that directs this study (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). As the study is a qualitative one taking place at Nqutu, it allows me as a researcher to look at how the grade 10 learners are affected by the environment in which they live.

Stake (2005) emphasises that the research design aims to understand and give meaning to that phenomenon studied. My emphasis as a qualitative research designer is on how learners choose their subjects in grade 9 for grade 10. That is how grade 10 learners in Nqutu make their subjects choices. This research design gives a structure and logic that directs this study. It is through this research design that the collected data becomes the evidence of the research question (De Vaus & de Vaus, 2013). That is why I used qualitative research design to explore and gain information and understanding about what influences learners to choose subjects at grade 10. As a qualitative researcher, I study the phenomenon in its naturalistic approach to make meaning through interpretation of the findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). For the study to be accurate as a researcher, I need to take a position the way I view the world (Bryman, 2017)

3.2. Research Paradigm - interpretivism

Paradigms refer to the researcher's position, which forms a belief based on the world view of how the researcher views the world (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). There are four different types of

paradigms used in the research, namely positivism, post-positivism, critical and interpretivism. The paradigm I used in this study is the interpretivism paradigm. The rationale for using the interpretive paradigm was to understand how the environment in Nqutu influences the subject's choice at the school. Moreover, this paradigm aims to interpret how human behaviour is associated with the social life (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, Davidson, & psychiatry, 2002). The interpretivists interpret the world differently, according to how they view it (Dunlap & Van Liere, 1978; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The interpretivists understand the world as human experiences (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 1994). This interpretive paradigm I chose guided the selection of tools, research methods, instruments and participants in the study (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).

It is through this worldview that, as a researcher, I determined the way the research process is to be approached. Using interpretivism, I assume that the world consists of many realities. Reality is subjected to the way one gives interpretation to it. In the interpretive paradigm, there is no wrong or correct information as the paradigm is subjective (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). The way I think is guided by the way I view the grade 10 learners who fail to pass at grade 11 to 12, which then also determines my actions to conduct this research (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). As a researcher, using the interpretivist paradigm, I have formed a strong link between me and what influences learners to choose subjects at grade 10, which is the phenomenon I study (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). According to Blatter, Haverland, and van Hulst (2016), the world is made up of people's interactions with their context of the environment where they are situated. The different contextual factors of the environment bring different interpretations, which cause people to understand the world differently. The context where the study is conducted is most relevant and critical to interpreting data collected there (Ormston, Spencer, Barnard, Snape, & researchers, 2014). As for a researcher like me, it is essential to study the context first and also to note that the reality is always socially constructed (Thanh & Thanh, 2015)

3.3. Location of the study

The location of this study is in Nqutu at one high school. The department of education ranks places where schools are situated according to the poverty index. Places with enormous job opportunities where parents can get employment are ranked as quintiles 4 and 5. Schools situated in places where there are no job opportunities in the area are ranked quintile 1 and 2.

The quintile number determines whether the school is a fee-paying school or not. Schools ranked quintile four and five are fee-paying schools, and quintile 1 and 2 are not fee-paying schools. The school is a quintile two school in a deep rural area of Nqutu in uMzinyathi district Northern KwaZulu-Natal. Currently, the school has 783 learners. The number of learners determines the number of educators in a school, both post level 1 and the number of teachers making the school's management team. That number of educators, including the head of departments and deputy principal, is called post provision norm (PPN) of 29 educators.

The school is situated in a deeply rural area that lacks ample employment opportunities in industrial and professional sectors as the people rely on the economy's informal sector. The school as such is a double-storey building built with face brick and has electricity supply and also with running water equipped with flushing toilets. That makes the school not to be utterly rural as it enjoys some facilities enjoyed in urban environments. The context as such is rural. The school in its nature offers better quality education compared to the neighbouring schools as the school has a library and various laboratories, among which are the computer labs and science laboratories.

The subject's packages offered by the school include mathematics, physical sciences, life sciences, technical drawing, mechanical technology, electrical technology, civil technology, economics, accounting, business studies, life orientations and two languages English first additional language (FAL), isiZulu home, hospitality studies and information technology. With learner's distribution according to the streams is 80% of the learners are doing science subjects which include technical subjects, and 20% of the learners are doing commercial subjects in each grade in the FET (Further Education and Training) phase.

The school enrolls learners from grade 8 up to grade 12. Although the double-storeyed face brick-built school with electricity and constant water supply is built in a challenging rural area without industries and ample employment opportunities. The learners in Nqutu are challenged as all the schools in the area are quintile 1 or 2. With the school being quintile 2 declared a no-fee school. Parents focussed on the school's potential and neglected the challenges of Nqutu where a school is situated. Through the boarding facility, the school has attracted learners from various places in the country, including other provinces such as Gauteng, Mpumalanga, and the rest from KZN coming from towns such as Durban, Ladysmith, Escourt, Newcastle, Vryheid Pongola, Nqutu, Babanango etc. about 75% of the enrolment are the day scholars and

only 25% of the enrolment are the boarders. The diverse places from where learners come to make the sampling of the learners to be diverse as well.

3.4. Sampling - Random Sampling

Sampling is when the researcher identifies a group of participants for the study using relevant tools aligned to the research design. Samples can be composed of people, behaviours (Barbour & Barbour, 2003). There are many forms of sampling (Tuckett, 2004). The type of sampling method that I used was a random sampling method. The random sampling method is where participants are picked up at random without following a specific pattern. The rationale for using random sampling is that all the participants shared similar characteristics and had equal opportunities to give the same results. All grade 10 learners at the school had none of them having their grade 9 situation known prior; no prior interviews were conducted on participants. That is due to diverse environments from where learners come. All learners have equal chances to be sampled and to give any kind of results.

These are the reasons why random sampling has been used for the study as the study is a single case conducted at the school that will make the study to be a case study.

3.5. Research methodology

A case study as a research methodology is an “in-depth” investigation undertaken in the natural habitat or environment of the participants (Merriam, 1998). A case can be defined as an incident, can be a person, organisation with a phenomenon to be studied (Ragin & Becker, 1992). The grade 10 learners are studied in their natural environment. This study qualifies to be a case study as its focus is pointed on the grade 10 learners. They were focusing on their behaviour as affected by subjects’ choices made at grade 9. They were observing how the subject choices in grade 9 affected them whilst doing grades 10, 11 and 12. In the in-depth study, there can be more than one case, which can be studied where multiple sources of data collection such as interviews, observations, reports and so forth can be applied (Tellis, 1997). There are three types of case studies, namely naturalism, positivism and constructivism. Naturalism promotes natural generalisation. Positivism promotes statistic generalisation while constructivism promotes analytic generalisation, which this study is based on (Williams, 2000). Constructivism is more based on theoretical generalisation as an interpretive approach in its analysis characterises it. Eisenhardt (1989); (Swanborn 2010) also categorises cases into the micro level (dealing with personal matters), meso level dealing with the incident taking place

in the (institutions or organisations) and macro-level dealing with communities and prominent societies. The study takes place at the meso level as it is based at an institutional. According to Ragin and Becker (1992), case studies can be treated as being practical situations or theoretically crafted and can either represent the exact situation or just not specific scenarios.

Case studies are not sampled but are exact situations or incidents in a specific place at a specific time (Stake, 1995). What I understand about the case study is that case studies focus on that particular context, and every information gathered will be explicitly collected from that environment. The school offers a curriculum that accommodates various streams such as commerce, science and technical. The school is the only one in Nqutu that offers technical subjects such as engineering graphics and design, mechanical technology, electrical technology, hospitality studies and is the only one that introduced information technology in the district.

The grade 10 learners study their various subjects according to the streams offered by the school. Learners doing commercial and science subjects choose either hospitality studies or information technology. Learners doing technical subjects choose between electrical technology or mechanical technology, or civil technology. The learners doing mechanical technology further choose either motor mechanics or machining and fitting. Learners doing electrical technology choose between electronics and heavy current. The curriculum in the school is diverse, and the learners are just like any other learner in any grade in a school with one stream in the FET band. The only challenge is what influenced them to choose the subjects amongst the subjects they are doing at grade 10. To find that out the data generation to be employed is semi-structured interviews and reflective letter writing.

3.6. Data generation methods

The two methods I used for data generation in this study were semi-structured interviews and reflective letter writing. Semi-structured interviews are a form of interview where the researcher talks to participants in a partially structured way (Wengraf, 2001). The researcher, during the interview process, ought not to be judgemental but listen attentively to participants (Longhurst, 2003b). Semi-structured interviews involve verbal communication, which is interchanged between the participants and the researcher to make clear the information is given (Wengraf, 2001). The conversation between the participant and the researcher is open, and the researcher is allowed to ask the follow-up questions not set, without a 'yes or no' answer

(Irvine, Drew, & Sainsbury, 2013). The participants, who can be up to 12 people, would be interviewed individually by the researcher (Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech, & Zoran, 2009).

The semi-structured interviews assisted me in generating data using the orally asked questions. During the interview process, the researcher can ask the probing questions not set on the list of questions to be asked but in the form of follow-up questions (Longhurst, 2003a). That is the rationale I chose semi-structured interview process. As the scope of the data to be gathered from the participants is diverse in its magnitude. During the interview process, I set 9 questions except for the probing questions, which were to be asked as follow-up questions.

The second method of generating data was reflective letter writing. Letter writing is a reflective research method used in the qualitative research design (Pithouse-Morgan, Khau, Masinga, & van de Ruit, 2012). This research method is made for self-reflexive purposes where the participants write a letter that reflects on themselves to show pain experienced, emotions that one went through (Pithouse-Morgan et al., 2012). The reason reflective letter writing was used was to showcase precisely that participants had a clear understanding of the careers they sought to pursue after finishing their matric. That is the reason why they had to do even the newspaper cuttings or draw pictures of people making their future careers choices. The participants need to show their creativity by either drawing or cutting the photograph of that career he desires (Pithouse-Morgan et al., 2012). In this kind of research method, I used lived experiences of the participants as a data source (Whitehead, 2008). This is a personal study where all the frustrations, the grief, the joys and the dilemmas the participants went through are reflected (Cole & Knowles, 2001). The rationale for choosing reflective letter writing also indicates the long relationship to come or past experiences of a participant (Pithouse-Morgan et al., 2012).

The participants use their current grade 10 learning to figure out how their post grade 12 situation wishes to be (Pithouse, Mitchell, & Weber, 2009). Other scholars such as Parker (2006) have used the same method but collegial letter writing as a form of self-reflexive letter writing to his college students. The experiences experienced or future wishes become the data source for the research (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994). The participants are to be creative in engaging with their lived experiences (Scott, 2005). The reflexive findings of the participants, their envisaged career choices and requirements for each career is made public for the benefit of the society on how those challenges can be resolved in the social world (Pithouse et al., 2009). For the data generation process to be done successfully, some ethical issues must be considered.

3.7. Ethical issues

The wrong and the right conduct of a researcher is called ethics (S. Banks, 2004). As a researcher dealing with children, the issue of ethics is a priority (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Before the research was conducted, ethical procedures from the university and the department of basic education were followed. As a researcher have an obligation not to falsify information, and abuse of the learners are part of the ethics issues. To ensure that I conducted research lawfully, I had to get the gatekeepers letter that permitted me to conduct the study at school. As a researcher, I had to uphold the principles of ethical research advocated by (Wassenaar & Mamotte, 2012) as the participants in this whole study are the school children. They are the minors; they might get the challenge of victimisation.

Prior to the data collection process, the permission from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Basic Education was applied for and granted. With the gatekeeper's letter in my possession, I then applied for the clearance letter from the ethics office in the UKZN after the university had granted the full approval to start conducting the research.

To avoid victimisation, learners cannot participate in a research study without the concern of their parents. Prior to the interview process, the participants' parents were informed and had to give concern for their children to participate in the interview process. The parents have to sign the concern letters granting the learners and the researcher permission to participate in the study while observing the participants' privacy. As a result, I did not involve the learners in a research study without the concern of the parents.

Before the interview process started, the participants were informed of their rights, that they were not forced to participate in the process. Their participation was voluntary. They were also informed they had the right to withdraw at any stage of the process if they felt uncomfortable or for any other reason if they wanted to. Moreover, that after they had withdrawn, there are no negative consequences that they will face after that. Participants were also informed that they would be audio recorded and also give concern to that. To avoid children's victimisation, their real names were not to be used, but pseudonyms were to be used to identify them (Sanin & Cahill, 2006). Apart from ethical issues also the truthfulness of the collected data is a priority; hence we look now at trustworthiness.

3.8. Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is the concept of the truthfulness of the whole process of the research study, including the data collection process, which should ensure that the in-depth understanding of the phenomenon studied is researched to the latter leaving out any form of generalisation (Franzel du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis, & Bezuidenhout, 2014). Trustworthiness is the relevant term used in qualitative research representing validity and reliability (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Trustworthiness has confirmability, credibility, dependability and transferability. Credibility to the truth regarding the collected data should be truthful about the participant's lived experiences (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). To ensure credibility to the whole interview process, I audio taped and later the voice recordings I transcribed, and the transcriptions were given back to the participants for verification purposes. I did that to ensure that the given information was the one that was transcribed (Franzel du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014)

The quality of assimilation must be maintained during data collection methods, referred to as dependability (F Du Plooy-Cilliers & Cronje, 2014). If that is not the case, the researcher is to be held accountable for the differences in data collection (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). The steps that I followed and how the information was gathered during the research process increased dependability (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). The researcher's analysis must be confirmed by another person, and that is termed confirmability (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Most of the time, the information gained during the research study should be precisely the same as lived of the participants. The data collected during the research process should be in line with the findings and what the researcher has interpreted, that is confirmability as according to (Franzel du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014).

To make confirmability better in the study, I must maintain transparency on the collected data and provide researchers' sufficient details. Once trustworthiness on the whole data collection process is done, it is then that data collected must be analysed.

3.9. Data analysis strategy

For data analysis in this study, thematic analysis was used to form themes. Thematic analysis is a method that is systematically used to identify, organise, and bring more information and clarity about the patterns of data collected called themes (Boyatzis & Publications, 1998). Data analysis in this study serves the purpose of identifying the patterns in the collected data, noting the newly emerged data; data analysis is also used to analyse the collected data and lastly make the report back on the gathered data (Wolfinger, 2002). During the data analysis, three crucial

processes, namely data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing that needs to be followed (Bradley, Curry, & Devers, 2007). Data reduction is when data is consolidated through the formation of themes, which I did by grouping similar data forming themes. During data display, I organised the data to make meaning and take suitable actions from similar data (Miles, Huberman, Huberman, & Huberman, 1994). During the conclusion drawing, the researcher draws conclusions based on patterns observed from the data supplied and then make explanations out of them (Miles et al., 1994)

The six phases of thematic analysis are outlined below

Phase 1: The researcher familiarises himself with the collected data by reading and rereading transcripts and listening to audiotapes. As I read, I highlight items of interest, putting the initial codes.

Phase 2: The researcher generates the initial codes is the beginning of the systematic analysis of data using coding.

Phase 3: This is the phase for searching for themes. The analysts shift from codes to themes. In themes, there is the interconnection with the research question; the themes are patterned (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

Phase 4: The potential themes are reviewed. This involves reviewing the coded data concerning the entire set of data. The themes are rechecked to find out the impact they make in the study.

Phase 5: Naming and defining of themes. The themes are not the same are unique. Their uniqueness must be explained. In this phase, the researcher checks the repeated themes to avoid redundancy.

Phase 6: This is the final phase of the thematic analysis process. The key and prominent themes are identified, and the report is produced.

.3.10. Conclusion

In this chapter, the process that was followed during the research study has been given. The research methodology, research approach, a research paradigm that the study employed, the sampling procedure, data collection and analysis process were also discussed. The ethical issues taken during the research process were also discussed. The next chapter on analysing the collected data using themes developed from the generated data will be discussed.

Chapter 4: Data analysis and finding

4.0. Introduction

In the previous chapter, the research methodology was presented, the approach to research, and the paradigm I found to be most relevant for this study. I described the location of the study, the procedures for sampling and procedures for data collection. In the previous chapter, study limitations concerning reliability and validity, the ethical issues related to this study were dealt with. In this chapter, the approach used for data analysis will be discussed, and the data generated will be presented.

4.1 Understanding thematic analysis

To analyse the data gathered for this study, thematic analysis was used. Thematic analysis is the process used during data analysis to identify patterns of codes in a qualitative research study (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is approached differently (Javadi & Zarea, 2016). In this study, Braun & Clarke (2006) 6 – a step framework was followed. The rationale for choosing thematic analysis was because it is commonly used in social sciences; its form provides clarity and allows for more flexibility during thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The aim of using thematic analysis is to identify the key and significant patterns of data that are relevant to the research study called themes. There are two types of thematic analysis, namely latent and semantic themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Latent themes, the researcher looks beyond the given data and focuses more on the causing factors also assumptions, and predict the outcomes beyond the given facts. Semantic themes only focus on the given data by the participants and do not look beyond that.

Data used in this study were collected from 12 participants who were in grade 10 learners from the school. The 12 participants were divided into three groups of four according to the academic streams, namely science, commerce and technology stream. Each group has 4 participants. The rationale for dividing the participants into their streams was to streamline the method of data generation. There were two research questions for this study. There were more questions generated for the semi-structured interviews that were conducted with the participants for data generation purposes. In the paragraphs to follow below, various data will be presented following the six phases of thematic analysis. This is to understand the data generated for this study.

The extracts were collected from the participants' responses during the interview process conducted on the exploration of motivation of grade 9 learners in their subjects' choices in a school in Nqutu. The interview session lasted about 30 minutes with the individual participants. The interviews were audio-recorded with the consent of the participants.

In this phase, we start to organise our data in a meaningful and systematic way. Coding reduces lots of data into small chunks of meaning. There are different ways to code, and the method will be determined by your perspective and research questions.

The six -phases guide are as follows (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

1. Become familiar with the data

Reading and re-reading of transcripts become the first step in any qualitative data analysis study. The researcher at this stage becomes familiar with the gist of data which forms the body of data. The researcher reads and notes down all the facts of interest.

2. Generate initial codes

The research questions are brought to the fore. The research questions guide how data will be coded. Hands were used to mark the codes with similar data the same colour code using highlighters were used. Any data that had something to say about the research question was coded. Open coding was used as there was no pre-determined coding, but the given collected data determined all the coding. Every transcript that had data relevant to the research question was coded. Once all the transcripts relevant to the research questions were coded, codes were then compared, discussed, modified before all the transcripts were done. During the initial codes, the new codes were also formulated at times the old ones were modified.

3. Search for themes

The theme is a pattern that focuses on the essential or significant data collected and or research question formed when a pattern of significance is formed when there is a link between the collected data and the research question. Codes were examined, and similar codes were organised and grouped to form themes. At the later stage, codes were organised to make themes that are broader and relevant to the research question.

4. Review themes

During the theme review stage, the preliminary themes identified in step 3 are reviewed, modified and developed to see if they make sense. At this stage, it is essential to gather all the relevant data and put it together. Pair of scissors can be used to cut the transcripts or use the cut and paste function in Microsoft word. The colour-coded theme was associated with each data. The data associated with each theme was read to check whether it did support it. In the next step, I examined whether the themes were relevant to the entire context of the data collected.

I needed to make sure themes were interconnected at the same time, standing on their own. Things I needed to consider:

- Are the themes making sense?
- Are the themes supported by the data?
- Is there not enough data in the theme?
- When themes overlap, are they the separated themes?
- Are they the subthemes (themes within the themes)?
- Are there no other themes within the data?

5. Define themes

In this final refinement of the themes, assessing the essence of what each theme is all about is made (Braun & Clarke, 2006). What is the theme all about? Are there the subthemes, how are they interacting and relating to the main theme? How does each theme relate to the other?

6. Write-up

Phase 1: As a researcher, I familiarised myself with the collected data by reading and rereading transcripts and listening to audiotapes (Liamputtong, 2009). As I read, I highlight items of interest, putting the initial codes. All the information given was audio recorded (Al-Yateem, 2012). The recordings were then transcribed as they are, including the smiles, the frowns, and things like *ehh*, *ahh* said by the participants during the interview process (Karnieli-Miller, Strier, & Pessach, 2009). After audio recording, transcriptions were made (Davidson, 2009).

Most of the parents left it with their children to decide the issue of subject's packages to be chosen by their children which would later determine their careers. Most parents were not part

of the decision to be taken by learners on subjects' choices. With regards to the life orientations educators in schools, assisting the learners at grade nine, very few of the learners who got assistance with subjects' choices at the end of grade 9. The subject's teachers are mainly most likely to be involved in assisting learners in making subjects preferences. The learners from the uMzinyathi district, where the school belongs, have never had district officials conducting campaigns advocating subjects' choices for grade 9 learners. Unlike in other districts such as aMajuba and King Cetshwayo had called grade 9 learners to a common venue to address issues related to subjects' choices.

Phase 2: The researcher generates the initial codes is the beginning of the systematic analysis of data using coding.

When the codes were to be initiated, the research questions were put in mind, which were:

3. What motivates learners to choose their subjects at the end of grade 9?
4. What are the roles played by the different stakeholders with subjects' selection?

When codes were to be initiated, any data that was interesting, meaningful, and relevant to the research question was noted (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). I then decided on how different facts relevant to the research questions was to be given which colour by setting up a separate coding transcript. I then checked on each transcript for the data relevant to the research question. Once I was done with that, I then compared the codes. The facts that kept on coming out many times during the interview from different individuals' participants were noted and coded (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Similar facts were then grouped and given their colour coding. Different facts were also coded with a different colour using coloured pens and highlighters.

Phase 3: this is the phase for searching for themes. The analysts shift from codes to themes. There is an interconnection with the research question; the themes are patterned (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Themes are defined as patterns most significantly related to the data and the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I examined the grouped-together codes that formulated an initial or preliminary theme, which was the lack of motivation of grade 9 learners into subjects' choice.

Moreover, as a preliminary theme, there was no significant role played by life orientation educators towards assisting grade 9 learners in making correct subjects' choices at grade 10. The learners rely on friends to decide on subject choice (Shumba & Naong, 2012). What also

transpired was that the parents left them to decide on their own what career to choose, as indicated earlier on that most of the parents are not learned (Mhlongo & O'Neill, 2013). So it was upon the learners as participants to decide. This is in line with Useem (1991), as he states that rural parents do not know anything about the school logistics. Instead, they rely on the school for assistance on their learners. Schools' officials such as educators and school principals are the ones the rural community relies on because they are learned (Mncube, 2009). As a result, parents in rural areas cannot assist learners in making subjects choice (Stern, 1994). I then reorganized the themes and made them be relevant to the research question.

Phase 4: The potential themes are reviewed. This involves reviewing the coded data concerning the entire set of data. The themes are rechecked to find out the impact they make in the study. There is a difference between looking at the subject as a subject educator and looking at the subject as a life orientations educator.

The codes that seemed related to the research question were identified and marked (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). The codes are similar, and most appear from the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Most of the participants indicated to have never attended the career guidance. Subjects teachers appeared most frequently assisting the learners on subject choice. The themes were checked and relevant to the research question (Hancock, Ockleford, & Windridge, 2001). The themes identified are as follows: Lack of exposure to career guidance; Guidance from unqualified individuals. In conclusion, the following section will now focus on the themes that emerged.

Phase 5: Naming and defining of themes. The themes are not the same are unique. Their uniqueness must be explained. In this phase, the researcher checks the repeated themes to avoid redundancy (Hancock et al., 2001).

Themes are defined as follows:

- Lack of exposure to career guidance
- Guidance from unqualified individuals

Phase 6: This is the final phase of the thematic analysis process. The key and prominent themes are identified, and the report is produced.

4.2 Lack of exposure to career guidance

The two themes emerged from the codes, such as lack of exposure to career guidance and guidance from unqualified individuals. The theme that we are to start with is a lack of exposure to career guidance. This chapter explores the motivation of grade 9 learners in their subject choices: a case study of one school in Nqutu. The school is a boarding school starting from grade 8 to grade 12. About 75% of the learners are day scholars, and 25% are boarders staying in the hostel. The school offers three subject streams at the FET phase. Grade 10 – 12 such as commerce, technology and science. Some learners fail in the FET phase, in the science stream, change to the commerce stream and then manage to pass at the end of the year (Goodson, 2013). Others fail science stream, especially maths and science, until they drop out of school or change the school and change the subjects (Rylands, Coady, & Technology, 2009). For this study, I interviewed twelve learners. Interviews lasted on average 10 minutes for all the participants. What was most familiar with all participants was that they had never attended the career expo at the school since grade 8. For their ten years of schooling, they never attended a career expo. The first group of participants was interviewed in April, which is not too far from grade nine. If they had forgotten in October, they could have remembered in April. What was common in this study was that the grade nine learners never attended the career expo.

The interview question was: Do you know anything about career expo, career counselling? I will ask the learner if they have received career counselling or if they have gone to a career expo and how was that beneficial to him or her.

“No, I have never heard of anything like that” (Siphosethu).

“I never attended such meetings” (Thobekile).

“Not really because most of the time I did not get a chance to go to a career, but I had to do it myself with no one assistance I had to push myself” (Nkosinathi)

“No, I did not” (Mthunzi)

“No” (Nomcebo).

“No” (Bongani).

“No” (Lungile).

“No” (Landuvuyo).

“No” (Sizwe).

In the above extracts, all the participants have never been exposed to career expo or career guidance. Although they passed grade 9, they never learned about subjects’ choices and career choices which is the last chapter in the Life Orientations syllabus in grade 9. The district office did not orientate the grade 9 learners on subjects to prepare them for career choice, at tertiary. The learners rely on friends to decide on subject choice (Shumba & Naong, 2012). What also transpired was that the parents left them to decide on their own what career to choose, as indicated earlier on that most of the parents are not learned (Mhlongo & O’Neill, 2013). So it was upon the learners as participants to decide. This is in line with Useem (1991), as he states that rural parents do not know anything about the school logistics. Instead, they rely on the school for assistance on their learners. Schools’ officials such as educators and school principals are the ones the rural community relies on because they are learned (Mncube, 2009). As a result, parents in rural areas cannot assist learners in making subjects choice (Stern, 1994).

Other learners that enrolled at grade 10 from other schools out of the uMzinyathi district are aware of the career expo. Other districts such as aMajuba and King Cetshwayo had all their grade 9 learners invited into the big hall on the fourth term. The officials from different institutions of higher learning workshopped the learners about different careers to choose from in preparation for grade ten subject choice. As a result of attending the career expo, the participants as according Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT). SCCT explains three interrelated aspects of career development, namely how essential academic and career interests develop, how educational and career choices are made, and lastly, how academic and career success is obtained (Zimmerman, 1995).

Another interview question asked was: Do you know anything about career expo, career counselling? I will ask the learner if they have received career counselling or if they have gone to a career expo and how was that beneficial to him or her.

And the responses were:

“Yes, in primary school when I was doing grade 8, some acting agent since from primary till grade 8, I used to go there to the agent” (Lungisani).

“I once attended that meeting. I received a pamphlet about different careers and on how to choose them” (Sithokozile).

“Yes, In Newcastle hall. Grade 9 in November preparing us for next year. They took all the grade 9 learners into the Farmers hall.” (John).

“In grade 7, at Empangeni”. It ended there at Empangeni; you never heard of it in grade 8 and never heard it 9. Was only there at grade 7? “Yes” (Siphuthando).

“Yes, in Farmer's hall, I was doing grade 9 in Newcastle” (Alwandiswe).

“Yes, when I was doing grade 7 we went to a trip on OR Tambo airport and they asked us what do want to be when we grow up, so I told I want to be a pilot then he took me inside the plane told a lot about how the pilot must operate what he or she must do when holding the steering. That career expo was organised in OR Tambo Airport as Trip to OR Tambo not organised by the school.”

“Yes, Miss Mzobe IT educator, also in grade 8 my friend Buthelezi Abongile we attended miss Mzobe after school, motivated them about the subject she teaches and the opportunities it holds in life” (Siphosethu).

“Mr Shozi, the mechanical technology educator, assisted me while in grade 9 when he was teaching me technology” (Thobekile)

“Mr Shozi assisted me in choosing technical subjects” (Siyabonga).

In the above extract, the participants are not all from Nqutu. All the participants joined the school in grade 10 after they were well aware of the suitable subjects, careers, and subjects' choices in the schools from where they come. The world of work chapter on Life Orientations starts from grade seven to grade nine, the beginning of the senior phase. In other districts, the grade seven to nine educators were able to teach the topic on the ‘world of work’ (Steyn, Hartell, & Mosia, 2013).

4.3 Guidance from unqualified individuals

In this section, we will look at the second theme, which leads to poor subject choice. The second theme is guidance from the unqualified individual. Most participants did indicate that they

obtained some assistance regarding subjects' choices from their subjects' teachers. That was on an individual basis and based on a friendly relationship between the learner and the teacher. That was informal and unofficial. The assisted learners were based on the excellent relationship between the teacher and the learner as the learner trusted a teacher and believed in all that the teacher said by being a teacher. The teacher advised the learner, but in the wrong way (Lowe, Cook, & education, 2003). As the guidance was based on a good relationship, the educators advised the learners to learn their subjects. Sometimes because the learners were brilliant and the educators wanted to keep those learners in their class. This kind of assistance is biased due to wrong assistance, as they did not advise the learners to choose subjects of not their own.

“Yes, Miss Mzobe IT educator, also in grade 8 my friend Buthelezi Abongile we attended miss Mzobe after school, motivated them about the subject she teaches and the opportunities it holds in life” (Siphosethu).

“Mr Shozi, the mechanical technology educator, assisted me while in grade 9 when he was teaching me technology” (Thobekile)

“Mr Shozi assisted me in choosing technical subjects” (Siyabonga).

The educators in the above extract, Miss Mzobe, Mr Shozi, all advised the learners to choose the subjects they teach. These educators are not trained to offer career guidance but trained to teach their subjects.

Also, the wrong guidance was issued by unqualified individuals where the Economic and Management Sciences (EMS) and IsiZulu educators advised a learner on correct subject choice. The two educators advised the learner to choose science subjects.

“Yes, one of the teachers advised me, EMS teacher and Isizulu teacher she saw potential in me she knew what I wanted to be she suggested if I want to do science.”

This advice given to the learner is contradictory. How did the EMS teacher and IsiZulu teachers able to advise a learner to choose science subjects they are not teaching and the ones they do not know of? The potential the two educators saw on a learner is doubted, why science not commercial subjects (Bennett, 1992). Using the SCCT, according to (Smart & Peterson 1997), self-efficacy is all about one's positive attitude and capability to achieve a task. Self-efficacy is the key to one learning; it is attained and improved through using correct learning experiences. When bad career advice is provided, the theoretical framework SCCT will not be achieved.

As part of the unprofessional guidance, the security personnel advised the sister doing commercial subjects to choose chartered accountant as a career. The situation is that the security personnel has no knowledge and information regarding the chartered accountant as a career. *“I was told by my sister who was doing the economics subjects” (Landuvuyo)*

Finally, the Life Orientations educator was approached by the learner seeking advice on the career of being a medical doctor. The LO educator, instead of advising the learner, otherwise referred to the book on different careers. The learner was asked by the educator about her strength, her weaknesses and her abilities. Did not focus on one specific subject but was more open to discovering the learner's personality, which is the one that was to assist the learner in making the correct subject choice.

“Yes, there was. Mr Sithebe is a (life orientations educator). He came with a thick book with all the careers he said I must shortlist the careers I wanted. I wanted to become a medical doctor. I had to look for different medical doctors and other careers. I then went to him; he asked me about my strength, my weaknesses and my abilities. He helped me a lot” (Sithokozile).

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, the analysis of the findings from the collected data was analysed using six phases guide thematic analysis Braun & Clarke (2006). The discovered codes and themes were also presented. In the next chapter, the findings of this chapter will be discussed.

Chapter 5: Discussions, Recommendations and Conclusion

5.0. Introduction

In chapter four, the research findings collected from interviews, the findings from data analysis and the themes discovered were presented. In this chapter, the summary of the key findings from the theoretical framework used in this study, the literature review, and the two critical questions used were also discussed. The summary of findings, suggestions and recommendations for the following upcoming studies and interventions were looked at. The conclusion at the end of the chapter was presented.

The study was based on these critical questions:

1. What motivates learners to choose their subjects at the end of grade 9?
2. What are the roles played by the different stakeholders with subjects' selection? What then follows is the discussion on what most transpired and their connectivity with the two critical questions that guide the study.

The theoretical framework employed in this study was Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT). The theory is divided into three parts: self-efficacy, which forms the first part emphasises that when one has performed outstandingly in the first encounter, he will be more eager to perform outstandingly again in the next activity. Outcome expectation is the second part of the SCCT, which emphasises that when one is expecting a particular reward, that person, due to expecting a reward, will then perform more outstandingly for he wants to receive that reward. Moreover, lastly, goal setting talks about the setting of goals and targets to execute a particular task in order to achieve a particular performance. According to the SCCT, learners perform outstandingly to achieve a particular task should they have been given a particular task to perform.

5.1. Discussion of the main findings

The title for this study was exploring the motivation of grade 9 learners into subject choice a case study. In the literature review, it transpired that mothers especially get close to their children and play an active role in discussing subjects and career choices issues with their children. It also transpired that other children chose the careers of their parents especially educated mothers, to influence their daughters' careers. Also, mothers do influence the choice of careers for their boys. The scholars emphasize that only the children born by educated

parents get career advice at home. Parents who are not educated are disadvantaged as they cannot assist their children much about subjects and career choices.

Contrary to the reality during the interview process, it was clear that most of the educated parents left the issue of the subject's choices to be decided by their children. They did not want to be involved but instead left it with their children to decide. I see the parents putting more of their trust on learners' knowledge of technical subjects such as information technology and other technological subjects. Children of today are more exposed to technology more than their parents, and they watch most of the television, and they are more informed more than their parents, especially when it comes to technology. Nowadays, more careers were not there previously, like drones and robotics, which parents do not know anything about but only to find that their children know about them. In chapter 3 of this study, my findings were subject choice was based on the subject as an individual instead of subjects as a collective.

When the analysis was done, one of the findings in chapter 4 was the lack of exposure to career guidance where participants were never exposed to career guidance at the end of grade 9. Learners were never awarded a chance to do introspection to help them gain self-identity as to whether they like working with people or wildlife from nature or what conditions mostly to suit them when they make career choices. The only thing that drove learners to subjects various streams was the love of subjects and the achievements made in a subject. The love and knowledge do not fully determine the career one can do out of that subject. Out of a subject, so many careers can be attached to it for example life sciences, one can be an educator for life sciences, life sciences can assist one to become medical doctor, life sciences can help one to become environmentalist there are so many careers one can attach to one subject. One key question that guides the study is 1. What motivates learners to choose their subjects at the end of grade 9?

There is a difference between looking at the subject as a subject educator and looking at the subject as a life orientations educator. The learner is doing well in life sciences. A career guidance or life orientations educator will not focus on subject life sciences but the career of medicine, for example. The findings indicate that learner's performance in a subject plays a vital role in the choice of subjects at grade 10 (MacPhail, 2000). Learners passing the subjects well at grade 9 are influenced to choose those subjects at grade 10 (Mji & Makgato, 2006). Passing the subject well also cause the learner to be on good terms with the subject teacher, a good teacher-learner relationship. The good teacher-learner relationship causes the learners to

assume that those subjects will determine their career choice quickly. Being on good terms with the subject teacher does not determine the future subject choice; subject teachers keep on changing, but the choices of subjects and careers stays the same. At the same time, it is good that learners have an interest in the subjects as that subject choices determine the interest in the subject, as interest pushes the drive the passion.

What has been discovered in the study suggests that the area of Nqutu, which is a deep rural area, has few people that are employed as civil servants or in an informal sector of employment, and most of them are unemployed. There are also no industries in the area where people can get employment. That, in the end, has less influence on the learner's motivation to be aware of other careers except being civil servants or informal sector of employment. The parent's level of education in the area is so low that most of the parents are illiterate or has the lowest level of educational attainment.

During the interview process, no parents had influenced the learner to choose a specific subject for a particular career (Al-Yousef, 2009). Also, during the interview, it was discovered that parents left the subject's choice with their children to decide. During the interview, it was hard for some participants to know the division of the subjects according to the streams, as others were to be reminded about technical streams, commercial streams and so forth. The school where this data was collected is a boarding school, some parents outside of Nqutu who are educated have their children looking up to those parents as their role models (Adeyemi, Moumakwa, Adeyemi, & Science, 2009).

It also came out that learners that started grade 8 at the school were never exposed to career expo or career guidance which was to motivate them to make correct subjects' choices. The motivation of the learners to choose a particular subject is made by the context they find themselves in at that particular time (Beaty, Gibbs, & Morgan, 1997). Being at the school is the one that makes the learner choose the subjects of their choice. It transpired that some grade ten learners were taught about career choices as early as grade seven and others in grades eight and nine in the urban schools where they were learning, which are outside of Nqutu. The urban schools have the advantage of being resourced, which offers them the opportunity to provide diverse curriculum in the district (Zhang, 2006).

All schools in the area of Nqutu offer a curriculum that is uniform. The ruralness of the area is the one that has a significant influence in making the curriculum to be uniform (Powell, Higgins, Aram, & Freed, 2009). The schools in Nqutu that have uniform curriculum also share

a problem of being under-resourced due to the ruralness of the area. As a result of the uniform curriculum, the common subjects among others are taught such as humanities, for example, history, tourism, geography, mathematics and also mathematical literacy and commercial subjects the science subjects are limited and technical schools are not possible to find. That is a problem as it suggests that all learners in the area can learn academic curriculum, which is not the case. In the whole area of Nqutu, with 160 schools in the area, only two schools offer the curriculum with speciality, as they will all be competing for the same career due to the curriculum offered in the area. Unemployment will increase in the area poverty will set in as learners will sit at home with their matric certificate not being used. The leading cause of that is the ruralness of the area.

Apart from rural schools, the urban and township schools are better resourced compared to the rural schools and are also better resourced than rural schools (Goyette & Education, 2008). The curriculum offered in the schools may include computer skills subjects such as information technology, computer application technology (CAT), technical subjects such as engineering graphics and design, electrical technology mechanical technology. The context in which the school is situated influence the learners to choose specific subjects from others (Opdenakker & Van Damme, 2007). Above the context where the school is situated, the stakeholders found in that particular place has a positive role to play.

Learners learn better if they are motivated (Dickinson, 1995). Learners learn better if they know what to achieve in their learning. The high failure rate will decrease because learners will be learning with a purpose. It is very accurate that every learner is expected to further his or her studies after finishing National Senior Certificate (NSC) with subjects the learner has passed in grade 12. The learner chooses the desired career, which is determined by the subjects the learner has chosen. It is essential that the learners are exposed to different careers at the end of grade 9 to prepare themselves to choose the correct subjects they will be doing at grade 10.

2. What do the different stakeholders play with subjects' selection?

The stakeholders play a significant role in the motivation of grade nine learners to the subjects they choose. Learners are minors. They always depend on the adult to become a mentor or the advisor in every critical decision they take (Maccoby, 1994). The issue of subject choice is not minor as it pertains to one's life and the time one will spend making that career. The very close stakeholders, in this case, are the parents. The role to be played by the parents is not guaranteed as it is based on the parent's level of education (Owoyele & Toyobo, 2008). The only thing the

uneducated parent can do is to send the child to a school which they do perfectly. When it comes to the taking of the decisions of what career is correct or not is the somebody's role.

The role played by the parents on the taking of the decision on subjects' choice is very minimal; the decisions are taken by the children (Owoyele & Toyobo, 2008). Most of the parents are not educated. As a result, they have little support to their children subject's choice. The decision the children take they take it on their own even if parents try to persuade their children to take a particular career, the children remain rigid, not wanting to be flexible. The children also hear from other children about which career is most suitable (Quimby & O'Brien, 2004). Many times due to peer pressure, the teenagers want to comply with the groups' needs that they belong into. At times the wrong decisions are taken based on peer pressure, not wanting to disappoint their fellow friends (Lopez, Andrews, & Development, 1987). Career guidance is the responsibility of the qualified individual to do that, such as the qualified Life Orientations educator who has specialised in it (Watts, Sultana, & Guidance, 2004).

That is well designed by the department of education when they designed the content of work for the whole year and what is to be covered at a specific grade. The National Department of Education designed a learning programme for grade nine learners Life Orientations and arranged the topics covered in advance. The national department of education designed that in the fourth quarter in Life Orientations, the topic in the senior phase that will be dealt with is called "World of Work".

The World of work talks about the careers and subjects' packages related to those careers. The grade 9 LO educators at the school skipped that section. As a result, the grade 10 learners are not aware of different subjects' choices. Only the learners who came to do grade 10 know the different careers and subjects' choices.

The key problem is that the LO educators were not trained to teach LO; it was taken for granted that anybody, as long as is, a teacher can teach LO, which is not the case (Jimmyns, Meyer-Weitz, & Policy, 2019). The training of LO educators even when it was introduced as a subject, educators were not trained it was assumed that any educator could teach LO. As failed educators in a school once have failed to teach their subjects were shifted to teach LO (Peske & Haycock, 2006). That is a way of frustrating the teacher to decide to leave the school. They also do what school management wants to maintain the educator's position at school as an educator. The educator already had a negative attitude towards LO (Van Deventer, 2009). The subjects were introduced as not serious subjects. Along the way was the personnel from

“winning teams” that would go visit the schools checking the progress LO programme of the winning team. Most of the time, that personnel were disliked by the LO educators as they claimed that the programme was boring, yet the official came looking for it. That, at the end, was undermining the most important content contained in the subject which the learners were supposed to learn.

The LO educator as a stakeholder should also have organised together with the school or department of education (District level) career expo for grade 9 learners in preparation for grade 10 learners’ subject’s choice. That is very important as it is done by other districts such as aMajuba and King Cetshwayo to prepare the grade nine learners for subject choice, which is also accompanied by career choice of the interest of the learners (Osborne, Marks, & Turner, 2004). When the career choice is not done, learners lose interest in learning and can even drop out of school (Bridgeland, DiIulio Jr, & Morison, 2006). During that career guidance session, there might be a possibility of informing the learners about the careers whose subjects are not available in the schools around. Although that might bring a challenge to the learners and parents that most schools in the area offer a curriculum that is uniform. The subject’s packages are the same and for a learner to learn new or other subjects has to go far to other places which will have extra financial constraints on the parents' side.

In this study, it was the subject’s teachers who seemed to be motivating the learners to take certain specific subjects. They only did not teach the learners but also motivated them to choose the subjects at grade 10 that they are good at (Moore, 2007) as the role of the teacher cannot be separated from being a motivator (Whitmore, 1986). Positive motivation encourages learners to choose certain specific subjects.

Learners learn better if they know what they are learning for (Jackson & Development, 1997). The learners must have a career they want to pursue after they have finished their grade 12. The stakeholders in the department of education have a huge responsibility of showing the learners why they should learn, which is because of a career the learner wants to pursue. If the learners were learning for making a particular career, the dropout rate in South African schools would have dropped (Schunk & Mullen, 2012). Learners in grade 9 are enthusiastic about the future career they intend to pursue. The stakeholders have a responsibility of exposing the learners to different careers opportunities. That can be done by either inviting the different officials making different careers such as medical doctors, lawyers, attorneys to the school.

Alternatively, the workplace visits where learners can be taken to the workplace to see how different careers are performed.

It is only the subjects' teachers that motivate the learners and not all of them but only those that show dedication to their school work, specifically on their subjects. Due to lack of motivation on subjects' choices, some learners find themselves doing the wrong subjects. As a result, they fail their grade 11 and are forced to modularise; even after modularising, they become the multiple examination opportunities (MEO) learners. They are awarded an opportunity to write three subjects instead of six. Moreover, be allowed to write their examinations in June. After they have written in June and they find themselves not passing, they are also allowed to come back and register to write in November / December final examinations. Because they made the wrong subject choice, they do not pass again. This takes place until they go back to grade ten or eleven and register for the new subjects, and then they pass.

Parents must first find out about the future career choice of their children before they enrol them in a school. To see if the subject's packages offered in that school is in line with the future career choice of their children. Learners fail their grade 12 due to the wrong subject's choice (Dunning, Johnson, Ehrlinger, & Kruger, 2003). Their failure is due to the wrong subject choice because there is a lot that is done by the school and also by the department of education to assist the learners. Only to find that out of all that which has been done, they cannot pass. They then register for supplement examinations only to find that they do not pass those supplementary examinations.

On the other hand, the department of education spends a lot of money printing the examination material, including the question papers. Appointing the chief invigilators and invigilators only to find that the candidates will not turn up to come and write or they come and write but fail more than they did before. The thing that makes them not pitch up to write is because they are frustrated they do not know what to write (Rammala, 2009). The problem is they did not choose the subjects at grade nine relevant to their capability and to the career they want to pursue at grade ten.

The failure of grade nine LO educators to assist the learners in choosing their subjects fails the institutions of higher learning. That is why the Higher Department of Education (HDE) has introduced the "KHETHA" programme aiming to assist the learners in choosing careers in the institutions of higher learning. According to the "Khetha" programme, we need to have one that will focus at the end of grade 9 that will be preparing learners for choosing the suitable

subjects at grade 10. Learners cannot achieve their grade 12 because of the wrong choices when choosing the subjects they are doing. Then they are forced to go back, change the subjects and choose correctly; then they pass after that. As a result, they do not pass, and the KHETHA programme cannot help them.

Grade 9 learners are not getting the attention they deserve regarding the subject's choice issue. Recently the national minister of the Department of Basic Education (DBE), Angie Motshekga announced that grade 9 learners would be awarded a grade 9 certificate called General Education and Training Certificate (GETC) (Authority, 2001). The main question will be for what, will they get that certificate as the learners will be clueless as to where to progress after they have obtained that certificate. Those learners will be running around in the streets, not knowing where to proceed with their learning if the current situation of the subject's choice at the end of grade 9 is not taken care of. We have begun strengthening our curriculum by introducing new and exciting subjects such as aviation studies, maritime, coding and robotics, she said (Africa, 2019). Yes, good but what about subjects' choices. How will learners choose those subjects? Currently, the DBE, through the guidance section in the districts, requests to be invited to the parent's meetings to inform the parents of grade 9 learners about subjects' choices. Some schools hold parents' meetings during weekends when the officials are not working, and no official will ever attend that Sunday meeting. Sometimes the gathering about subject's choice is called into an organised venue, there only a limited number of learners will be attending the rest be represented by those who attended. To me, all that is insufficient is not enough. There is still a need to do more advocacy on subject choice.

5.2. Possible recommendations

In the previous section, the summary of the findings and how they relate to the research question was presented. In this section, suggestions and possible solutions to the problems will be looked at. It will focus on the suggestions based on policy, based on what is commonly done and researched.

5.2.1. Suggestions for policy

In as much as the issue of career choice is advocated at universities by the Department of Higher Education (DoHE). In order to reduce the dropout rate of the learners, especially at the Further Education and Training phase (FET) phase. There must be a policy that emphasises the programme of subject's choice in schools. Also, the curriculum in schools must be regulated

using a policy that in each circuit, there must be at least one school that will offer the technical subjects to address the issue of one size fits all approach to learning as it is not all learners that fit in academic learning. Also, one special school is a requirement in the circuit to cater for the diversified needs of our children. That will also help South Africa increase the number of artisans that will increase job creation and decrease unemployment and poverty. The department of basic education must cater for diverse learners.

There must have a policy that caters for the diversity of the learners in their learning. Some learners are good at skills work. The policy must be in place that will address the issue of subject choice at grade 9. Learners in grade 10 must learn subjects of their choice that they would not have been forced by the fact that they are not informed of the possible careers and suitable subjects for their careers. Life orientations should be taught by the educator that has specialised in them, unlike as it is happening that a teacher who has failed to teach a particular subject to be given Life Orientations to teach. All the subjects are important and deserve attention just like any other subject. The department of basic education nationally must introduce a policy that allows once a term at least once term personnel from nearby government sectors such as hospitals, magistrate courts, banking institutions and so forth that will visit the school to talk to the learners about careers.

5.2.2. Suggestions for practice

Life orientations as a subject are very much important. This subject is supposed to be treated as the mother of all subjects taught in schools. According to the subject is not getting the attention it deserves from the department of education and any other stakeholder involved in education as its name suggests, Life Orientations. These subjects orientate about life in general of a school going learner.

Regarding the world of work which is our important field. It must be considered we use LO in order to fight poverty in our country. We use LO to solve the problem of unemployment in South Africa. That is the reason why I suggest that every school in the area must invite an official from any government sector that is qualified to come and talk to the grade nine learners about careers. The departments that can be invited, such as the justice department, as some learners would like to make careers on the law. Also, from the health sector, the medical doctors, radiographers, pharmacists must all go visit the schools and talk to the grade nine learners. It must be made compulsory for the grade 9 LO educator to finish the syllabus teaching the world of work. That is due to the KHETHA programme advocated by the

department of higher education having no foundation if the world of work chapter in grade 9 is not taught.

It must also be noted that grade 9 is the exit grade for the senior phase and the General Education and Training (GET) phase. So cannot be treated normally just like other grades where no important concepts are strengthened like there has been that strong debate of GETC that the learner has exited grade 9. So it is important to consider the learner at the tertiary institution. Learners are supposed to be separated in grade nine by choosing the different careers, which informs the different subjects they will choose. By not choosing the different subjects influenced by the different careers they will choose that cause the institutions of higher learning a burden as it is compulsory for the students to choose subjects at the universities. The choosing of the university careers must be done faithfully. As if not done well will lead to dropout at university and also cause changing of courses which is time and money wasting. That subject's choice, which leads to career choice, should have been don at the end of grade 9 while at school.

The district career development section must develop a programme for all grade 9 learners in the district to be invited into the common venue and invite officials from the institutions of higher learning to address them on different careers and their requirements. That will help the learners to have a focus in their learning. The type of education based on theory must be reduced by including skill development in the children's learning as not all learners are capable of academic learning, as some of the learners are excelling in skills work. To reduce the high dropout and failure rate, education must not be treated as a one-size-fits-all approach. The programmes such as taking a girl child to work must be strengthened throughout the year. In schools, there must be strict monitoring of syllabus coverage. That term four work of world of work is required; it is important that it is taught to bring the learners to the required standard.

5.2.3. Suggestions for further future research

The research field is occupied by a few research studies on subjects' choices done by grade 9 learners. Subject choices are less popular compared to career choices. There would be no career choice in the absence of the subject's choices. Further research on the subject's choice is required to address the challenge of high failure rates common in the department of basic education and higher education. High school dropouts need to be further researched in order to explore whether is it not a result of the absence of excellent subjects' choices programmes

taking place at the department of basic education. According to the challenges of people changing courses, dropping out at the institutions of higher learning, wasting the state funds National Students Fund of South Africa (NSFAS) is all due to the shortage of research done at the Basic Education level. More researchers are suggested to explore this work at a higher level further to solve the problem the country is facing urgently.

In order to decrease the high failure rate and high dropout rate in schools and institutions of higher learning, I urge more research to grow students holistically. When learners are doing correct subjects of their choices, they develop self-confidence in learning, and they then have goals they will want to achieve. The research must be strengthened on how can South Africa use learners to plough back the money it has spent on funding NSFAS programmes. Using Life Orientations as a subject, RSA needs to strengthen the fight against drug abuse in youth as that youth the government has invested in them in several different ways, health, education and so forth. So those learners must be preserved from dropping out and do away with drug problems. They must be channelled to career development using the world of work in the life orientations. The increasing number of LO educators must be researched as these educators develop the learner holistically. These must be the educators who have specialised in LO, not just educators without specialising in LO. For that to happen, successfully trained and specialised LO educators are required, not just any educator. It needs to be further researched the strain the universities and other institutions of higher learning are experiencing due to the insufficient work done in LO in grade nine.

5.3. Limitations of the study

There are no limitations to this study. This study was undertaken in Nqutu at one high school (case study) in the uMzinyathi District. Only learners coming outside of Nqutu has an advantage to career expo or career guidance which then uses the advantage of the school to their benefit. However, it might happen that some schools do not have this challenge of teaching the world of work thoroughly in the fourth term.

5.4 Conclusion

The focus of this study was to explore the motivation of grade 9 learners in their subjects' choices in a school in Nqutu at the end of grade 9. The critical question for this study was what motivates learners to choose their subjects at the end of grade 9, and the second critical question

was what the roles played by the different stakeholders with subjects' selection are? The findings for the study are that in grade nine, there was a lack of exposure to career guidance, and the second theme for the study is Guidance from unqualified individuals, which lead to learners being misguided on career choice.

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kzn education

Department:
Education
KWAZULU-NATAL

**Application for Permission to Conduct Research in KwaZulu Natal Department of
Education Institutions**

1. Applicants Details

Title: Prof / Dr / Rev / Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms

Surname: Kubheka

Name(s) Of Applicant(s): Alfred Sibusiso

Email: sibusiso.khathide@gmail.com

Tel No: 081789 0142 Fax: 086 585 0008

Cell: 079 8920 345

Postal Address: P.O. Box 106, Nqutu 3135

2. Proposed Research Title:

Exploring the motivation of grade 9 learners in their subjects' choices in a school in Nqutu: a case study

3. Have you applied for permission to conduct this research or any other research within the KZNDoE institutions?

Yes	No
-----	----

If "yes", please state reference Number: N/A

4. Is the proposed research part of a tertiary qualification?

Yes	No
-----	----

If "yes"

Name of tertiary institution: University of KwaZulu -Natal

Faculty and or School: Education

Qualification: Masters Degree in education

Name of Supervisor: Mrs N.P. MBATHA

Supervisors Signature:

If "no", state purpose of research:

N/A

5. Briefly state the Research Background: the influence of subject choice done at grade 10 has on high school achievement and how it effects on post school opportunities.

6. What are the main research question (s)?:

1. To explore what motivates learners to choose their subjects at the end of grade 9.
2. To understand the roles played by the different stakeholders with subject choice selection.

7. Methodology including sampling procedures and the people to be included in the sample:

Qualitative study, learners will be interviewed. Random sampling will be used to choose the participants.

8.What contribution will the proposed study make to the education, health, safety, welfare of the learners and to the education system as a whole?: learners will be aware that after grade 9 there are other subject packages that leads to different careers, and options to further their studies other than NSC.

9.KZN Department of Education Schools or Institutions from which sample will be drawn – If the list is long please attach at the end of the form

Sihayo High school		

10. Research data collection instruments: *(Note: a list and only a brief description is required here - the actual instruments must be attached):* **grade 10 learners will be interviewed observation will be conducted on how learners are assisted by the schools to choose subjects at grade 10.**

11. Procedure for obtaining consent of participants and where appropriate parents or guardians:

After the Department of education and the research office of the university have issued the clearance letter. I will design the forms that will serve as consent forms that the parents or guardians will sign. On those forms the letter from the DoE granting me permission to conduct the study will be shown to the principal.

12. Procedure to maintain confidentiality (if applicable): Pseudo names will be given to learners. The oath of secrecy will be signed between the researcher (myself) and the participants. No photographing will ever take place only the audio recorder will be used. Coding will be used to identify the participants.

13. Questions or issues with the potential to be intrusive, upsetting or incriminating to participants (if applicable): no such questions will be asked. The questions to be asked will focus on subject choice and career choice development.

14. Additional support available to participants in the event of disturbance resulting from intrusive questions or issues (if applicable): there will be no intrusive questions or issues.

15. Research Timelines: Max of three hours per school per day

16. Declaration

Signature of Applicant

Date

17. Agreement to provide and to grant the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education the right to publish a summary of the report.

Signature of Applicant(s)

Date

Return a completed form to:
Connie Kehologile – Tel: 033 392 1004
Office of the HOD; KwaZulu Natal Department of Education

Hand Delivered:
Office 318; 247 Burger Street; Anton Lembede House; Pietermaritzburg; 3201

Or

Ordinary Mail
Private Bag X9137; Pietermaritzburg; 3200

Or

Email
kehologile.connie@kzndoe.gov.za / Nomangisi.Ngubane@kzndoe.gov.za

Or

Fax
033 392 1203

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

INDEPENDENT RESEARCH PROJECT (IRP)

Exploring the motivation of grade 9 learners in their subjects choices in a school in Nqutu: a case study

To the Principal

I am Alfred Sibusiso Kubheka studying towards Master's degree in curriculum education. For me to obtain the Master's degree the requirement is to conduct a research project that is independent in a particular school. That is the reason why I am writing this letter to request the permission to conduct the research in your school: Sihayo High school, uMzinyathi District in Nqutu. I therefore request the permission to interview the grade 10 learners on issues relating to their subjects' choices, in preparation for career choices after finishing grade 12. Kindly read the information below that gives more clarity to the research study I will conduct. If there are clarity seeking questions I'm also available to explain them.

✓ **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

My purpose for conducting this study is to understand the learner's motivation for their subject choices at the end of grade nine, and how those choices affect the opportunities they have after matriculating from high school.

✓ **PROCEDURES**

Learners will be selected at random and voluntarily. Four learners from science stream, commercial and technology stream comprising of equal gender representation on each stream. Their parents will sign the concern forms to give concern to the interview process. The learners' names will not be disclosed instead pseudonyms will be used so that they would not be identified.

✓ **POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

I foresee no potential risks or anything that can be threatening as learners will be interviewed on what motivated them to choose the subjects they choose.

✓ **CONFIDENTIALITY**

All the information collected during the interview will remain confidential and will never be disclosed without a learner concern.

✓ **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

Learners will have a choice to indicate whether they like to participate in the interview or not, should they wish to withdraw they can do so without consequences. Learners are free to withdraw from participating anytime they feel uncomfortable or due to whatsoever reason. Should learners feel uncomfortable with certain questions they have a right not to answer them.

My contact details are as follows:

Email: sibusiso.khathide@gmail.com

Cell: 081789 0142

079 892 0345

My supervisor is Ms. Nosipho P. Bele who is located at the School of Education, Edgewood campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Contact details: email: MbathaN5@ukzn.ac.za Phone number: 031 260 3301

You may also contact the Research Office through:

P. Mohun

HSSREC Research Office,

Tel: 031 260 4557 E-mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

DECLARATION

I understand the procedures described above. All questions or concerns relating this consent form have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to allow the Grade 10 learners to participate in this study. A copy of this form has been given to me to retain.

Principal (Surname and initials)

Date

Signature



School Stamp

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

1. What career do you want to pursue when you finish school?
2. What subjects are you currently doing?
3. Which stream do they fall under?

4. Why did you choose to do these subjects? (here I can elaborate using one or two subjects as examples, e.g. Accounting. Why did you choose to do accounting specifically?)
5. Were your parents involved in the choosing of your subjects? (if yes, I will allow the learner to elaborate on how the parents were involved)
6. Did you receive any assistance from your teachers when choosing your subjects? Elaborate.
7. Do you know anything about career expo, career counselling? (if yes) I will ask the learner if they have received a career counselling or if they have gone to a career expo and how was that beneficial to him or her.
8. How do you think the subjects you are doing now will help you in achieving your goal of becoming a _____ (refer to the answer in Q1) when you finish school?

Letter writing activity

Write an essay about the career you wish to pursue when you have matriculated. In your essay include how you plan to achieve your goal and explain what kind of work people in your envisaged career do. You may write a minimum of a page. The topic of your essay is: my future life. In your essay, draw or paste a picture of a person from your envisaged career.

DECLARATION OF CONSENT AS PARENT

PROJECT TITLE: Exploring the relationship between school subject choices and post school opportunities for high school learners in Nqutu.

RESEARCHER

Full Name: Sibusiso Kubheka

School: Education

College: Humanities

Campus: Edgewood

Contact: 0798920345/ 081 789 0142

Email: sibusiso.khathide@gmail.com

HSSREC RESEARCH OFFICE

Full Name: Prem Mohun

HSS Research Office

Govan Bheki Building

Westville Campus

Contact: 0312604557

Email: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Dear Parent/Guardian

I am a Master's student at UKZN, School of Education. My research focuses on exploring the relationship between the subject choices made by students at grade 9 and the opportunities they have after matric. The aim of the study is to understand the learners' motivation for their subject choices at the end of grade nine, and how these choices will affect the opportunities they have after matriculating from high school. I would be pleased if your child would be part of this study. During the semi-structured interviews, the learners will be asked questions related to

subject choices. The questions will take between 20 – 30 minutes. I will also use an audio recorder during the interview. Thereafter learners will be given an essay topic “where they will write about their envisaged future career in relation to the subject choices they have made. Please note that your child’s responses will only be used anonymously, and your child’s name will not be used in the publication of the study. Your child’s participation is voluntary, and s/he can withdraw as a participant at any point. Please sign on the dotted line to show that you have read and understood the contents of this letter

DECLARARTION FOR CONSENT

I..... (Full Name) parent of in grade 10 hereby confirm that I have read and understand the contents of this letter and the nature of the research project has been clearly defined prior to participating in this research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw my child from the project at any time, should I so desire.

Please give consent that you agree or disagree that your child be audio recorded by making a cross on your decision.

	Agree	Disagree
Audio recorded		

Parent/Guardian
Signature.....

Date.....

DECLARATION OF CONSENT AS LEARNER

PROJECT TITLE: Exploring the relationship between school subject choices and post school opportunities for high school learners in Nqutu.

RESEARCHER

Full Name: Sibusiso Kubheka

School: Education

College: Humanities

Campus: Edgewood

Contact: 0798920345/ 081 789 0142

Email: sibusiso.khathide@gmail.com

HSSREC RESEARCH OFFICE

Full Name: Prem Mohun

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at any point. Please sign on the dotted line to show that you have read and understood the contents of this letter

DECLARARTION FOR CONSENT

I..... (Full Name of learner) in grade 10 hereby confirm that I have read and understand the contents of this letter and the nature of the research project has been clearly defined prior to participating in this research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

Please give consent that you agree or disagree that I be audio recorded by making a cross on your decision.

	Agree	Disagree
Audio recorded		

Learner

Signature.....

Date.....

DECLARATION OF CONSENT AS PARENT

PROJECT TITLE: Exploring the relationship between school subject choices and post school opportunities for high school learners in Nqutu.

RESEARCHER

Full Name: Sibusiso Kubheka

School: Education

College: Humanities

Campus: Edgewood

Contact: 0798920345/ 081 789 0142

Email: sibusiso.khathide@gmail.com

HSSREC RESEARCH OFFICE

Full Name: Prem Mohun

HSS Research Office

Govan Bheki Building

Westville Campus

Contact: 0312604557

Email: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Mzali

Ngingumfundi owenza iziqu ze Masters enyuvesi yakwa Zulu Natal. Ngenza ucwaningo olugxile ekubhekeni ubudlelwano obukhona Phakathi kwendlela abafundi abakhetha ngayo izifundo ebangeni lika grade 9. Kanye namathuba abangaba nawo okuqhubeka nemfundo yamazanga aphezulu emveni kokuphasa kwabo ibanga leshumi. Inhloso yocwaningo ukufuna ukuqonda ukuthi yini ekhuthaza ne gqugquzela abafundi ukuba bakhethe izifundo abazikhetha ekupheleni kwebanga lika grade 9. Nokuthi lokhu kukhetha kwabo izifundo kuna muphi umthelela ekubavuleleni amathuba okuqhubeka nemfundo yabo uma sebeqedile ibanga lika grade 12. Bengingajabula uma umtwana wakho ebenga bamba iqhaza kulolucwaningo. Kulolu cwaningo abantwana bazo buzwa imibuzo egxile endleleni akhetha ngayo izifundo. Imibuzo

iyothatha isikhathi esiphakathi kwemizuzu engamashumi amabili kuya kwengamashumi amathatu. Ngesikhathi umfundi ebuzwa imibuzo isiqopha mazwi siyosetshenziswa. Emveni kwalapho uyonikezwa isihloko lapho ezobhala khona ingxoxo ngezifundo azikhethile azenzayo ukuthi zizomholela kanjani kummsebenzi afisa ukuwenza uma eseqedile ibanga leshumi. Okubalulekile mzali, ukuthi ulwazi oluyotholakala ezimpendulweni zomtwana wakho luyosetshenziswa ngokuyimfihlo angeke kudalulwe igama lakhe. Umtwana wakho kukuye ukuthatha isinqumo sokuba yinxenye yalolu cwaningo akaphoqelekile ukuba abe yinxenye yalolu cwaningo futhi angakwazi ukuba angazimbandakanyi naloluncwaningo noma yinini uma ezwa engasathandi.

Ngicela umzali angisayinele ngezansi ukukhombisa ukuthi uyifundile wayiqonda inkulumo ebhalwe kulencwadi.

DECLARATION FOR CONSENT

**Mina (amagama aphelele omzali)
umzali ka (igama lomfundi) owenza u
grade 10 ngiyavuma ukuthingifundile ngaqonda okubhalwe kulencwadi nohlobo
locwaningo luchazeke kahle kimi ngaphambi kokuba ngibambe iqhaza kulolu
ocwaningo.**

**Ngियाqonda ukuthi ngikhululekile ukuba ngihoxise ingane yami kulolucwaningo noma
yinini uma ngifisa.**

**Ngicela unikezele ulwazi lokuthi uyavuma noma awuvumi ukuthi ingane yakho iqoshwe
ngesiqopha mazwi ngesikhathi semibuzo.**

	Ngiyavuma	Angivumi
Ukuqopha amazwi		

Umzali

Ukusayina

Usuku

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