

## Research Article

# Significance of Proficient Communication on Career Choice Among First Years in Rural South Africa

Chinaza Uleanya<sup>i</sup>, Mofoluwake Oluwadamilola Uleanya<sup>ii</sup>, Gedala Mulliah Naidoo<sup>iii</sup> & Yasmin Rugbeer<sup>iv</sup>

## Abstract

*Career choice involves the selection of one occupation over another. It is very important as it gives people focus on what career to follow. However, a lack of adequate information on career choice is capable of negatively influencing career choices. Hence, this study examines the significance of the adequate information on career choice among first year students using a selected rural South African university. A quantitative research method was employed for data collection. Purposive and random sampling was used to select the institution and sample respectively. Questionnaires were administered to 375 randomly selected first year students studying in the selected rural South African university. The findings of the study show that career choice is important and can contribute to the success of students. Attempts are made to communicate about career pathways with students while in high schools through the provision in the curriculum. Various factors ranging from parental influence, teachers, presence or absence of career counsellors, amongst others affect the career choice of students. The study recommends that education stakeholders, inclusive of parents, should be informed on the need to guide students in making informed career choices. Career information centres should be made available to students in various locations in the country.*

## Keywords

*Career choice, career guidance, first year students, proficient communication, rural South Africa*

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## ***Introduction***

Adequate information is an important part of educating students on making meaningful career choices. Keyton (2011) defines communication as the means of transmitting or conveying information from one person to another. Communication is being used in every facet of life including career choice. The term career choice involves the selection of one occupation over another. Greenhaus (2003) explains that career choice involves making career decisions to pursue a particular job or career, which is expected and desired to bring changes to occupational fields Özbilgin, Küskü and Erdoğan (2005) argue that for career choice to take place, two conditions are required which include: availability of alternative career options, and an individual's/personal preference between the available career options.

Sauermann (2005) and Krieschok, Black and McKay (2009) are of the view that there are various factors that contribute to the difficulties involved in making career decisions which are: work environment, length of training, and using or avoiding using numerical ability, amongst others. Whiston and Keller (2004) indicate that the family, most especially parents, seem to have a pronounced impact on the career choice of people, and in this regard, the students. The study of Illouz (2008) reveals that students often find themselves overwhelmed in this kind of situation, and as a result, they struggle to plan their professional future, therefore need to seek help from career counsellors in deciding on career paths most suitable for them. Conversely, Boo and Kim (2020) opine that career indecision might pose difficulties for students and might eventually affect them negatively. Thus, the role of career counsellors is needed to help students make this important decisions with the assistance of professional help. Gati, Osipow, Krausz and Zaka (2000) are of the opinion that career counsellors may do well to first discover the cause of students' difficulties in making career choices, thereafter look for ways to empower them to deal with this. Exploring the difficulties faced by students in making career choices, Greenhaus, Callanan and Godschalk (2000) state that sourcing information regarding a career is the first and one of the most crucial stages in students' career decision making. Meanwhile, a review of the work of Boo and Kim (2020) indicates that poor or lack of career information is a major cause of poor career decision making and can have adverse effects on students. This implies that students tend to encounter conflicts and might make mistakes due to a low career information. Conversely, rural based students are considered as experiencing more challenges compared to their counterparts in urban centres (Uleanya et al., 2020). Inclusive of the challenges is the lack of adequate information. Uleanya and Rugbeer (2020) suggest that rural based students lack help and adequate information. This seems to have put rural-based students at a disadvantage. Information is crucial, and how it is communicated is more important. Hence, in view of the foregoing, the study investigates the significance of proficient information on career choice using a selected rural university in South Africa as a case study.

### ***Conceptualisation of Terms and Adopted Model***

**Proficient:** This implies competence or skilful in the use of a thing (Vijayakumar, 2014). In this study, proficient means skilfulness or competence in transmitting necessary and useful information, especially as it concerns students and their career choices.

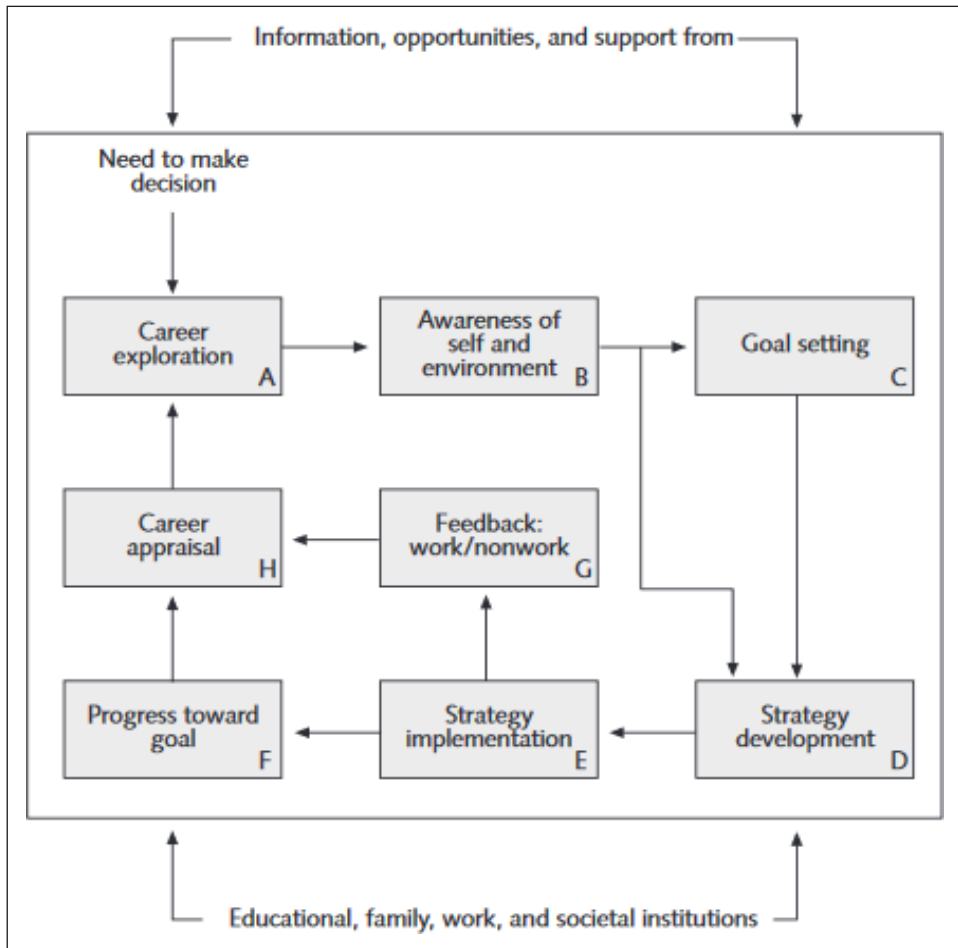
**Communication:** According to Pearson and Nelson (2000), communication is defined as the process of transferring information and understanding its meaning or what it entails from one place to another. They state further that before communication can take place, seven elements are involved which are: sender, message, receiver, feedback, channel, context or setting, and noise or interference. Dwyer (2005) emphasises that these seven elements are equally important in the process of communication and if one is missing, there will be a gap or break in the communication process, and the process will be incomplete. Keyton (2011) asserts that the elements involved in the communication process are important, because it determines the quality and effectiveness of communication. In this study, communication is used to mean transfer of career related information from one person to another.

**Communiqué:** A review of the work of Vijayakumar (2014) shows communiqué as a device used in the transmission of information or a message from one point to another. According to Dhimi and Sharma (2017), communiqué is a mode of transmitting information from one person to another. Dhimi and Sharma (2017) further state that communiqué can be done using social media or face-to-face. However, they opine that communiqué is most proficient when it is done using a face-to-face mode. This implies that communiqué can be carried out through devices or a face-to-face mode.

### ***The Greenhaus, Callanan and Godschalk's Model of Career Management***

In this study, the Greenhaus, Callanan and Godschalk's (2000) model of career management was adopted. This model offers insights into the processes involved and undertaken by students when attempting to make career choices. Figure 1 below, which is the Greenhaus, Callanan and Godschalk's (2000) model of career management, indicates the flow chart of different stages involved for students when reaching a career decision and strategizing to succeed in the chosen field.

**Figure 1:** *The Greenhaus, Callanan and Godschalk's model of career management (2000)*



**Source:** Greenhaus, Callanan and Godshalk (2000)

The Greenhaus et al. (2000) model concentrates on people, and in the context of this study, students who can be described as the decision makers. Following this model, students preparing to make career choices are expected to firstly realise that they have a need to make career decisions. This leads the students exploring various career options via critical thinking, asking relevant questions from different sources, and reading, amongst others. Hewitt (2010) opines that as students explore various career options, different groups of people, such as parents are consulted. Davies, Telhaj, Hutton, Adnett and Coe (2004) state that peers also have influence in the exploration stage. Levon (2007) states that lack or low

level of exploration is associated with career indecision. This implies that lack of adequate career information causes indecision in students, which might be affecting them negatively (Boo & Kim, 2020).

The next stage to be considered by students wanting to make career choices is to understand them. This is described as self-awareness. In considering themselves, students need to evaluate their abilities, strengths, and weaknesses (Bell, 2013; Sham, 2012). They also need to understand their environment before reaching a decision. After the decision has been reached, students are expected to set realistic goals. In order to achieve the set goals, students are expected to develop possible strategies. The next stage is the implementation of the developed strategy. This enables students to make progress by working towards the achievement of their set goals. At the point of implementing the developed strategies, students are expected to evaluate themselves to get feedback on what has been, or should still be done. Such evaluations are envisaged to enable the students to make progress towards achieving their set goals as adjustments can be made in all necessary areas. The final stage is career appraisal. At this point, the students evaluate their career choices to ensure that the decisions made are worthwhile, otherwise, there may be a need to begin the process all over again by considering the most suitable career choice.

Having considered the Greenhaus, Callanan and Godschalk's (2000) model of career management with regards to the present study, the need arises to explore the research site where the research was conducted. The study was conducted in a rural university in South Africa. Thus, the next section gives a brief about rural South Africa and its institution of learning.

### ***Rural South Africa and Institution of Learning***

Rurality varies from one country to another, especially with the discrepancies existing among developed, developing, and underdeveloped nations. Flora and Flora (2013), as well as Uleanya, Gamede and Kutame (2020) opine that rural nations in developed countries are characterised by the lack of rail transport systems, and airports, amongst others. Conversely, review of the works of Uleanya and Yu (2019) together with Uleanya, Gamede and Kutame (2020) indicate that rural environments in underdeveloped and developing countries are usually characterised by high levels of illiteracy, high rate of unemployment, poor infrastructures, and poor road network systems, amongst others. These suggest some of the reasons for rural-urban migration. The rural environment in South Africa is characterised by a high rate of illiteracy, poor road networks, and high rates of unemployment, amongst others (Uleanya et al., 2020). They further suggest that to enhance development in rural South Africa, institutions of learning are established. This concurs with the view of Dani and Shah (2016), who opine that institutions of learning are strategically situated in selected rural environments to aid development of such areas. However, according to Uleanya, Gamede and Kutame (2020), the quality of education provided in such institutions of learning is worth reviewing if the reason

for their establishment is to be achieved. Meanwhile, one of the reasons for the establishment of such institutions of learning is to help young people in succeeding in their career choice and path like their counterparts in urban based institutions of learning. However, the way career related information is passed across to young people appears questionable. Thus, the need for this study is aimed to investigate proficient communication on career choice, using first year students in a selected rural South African university. Meanwhile, there is a need to understand first year students in rural South Africa.

### ***First Year Students in Rural South Africa***

Rural South African students, like their counterparts in urban areas, are given the opportunity to apply to various universities of their choice, during and after completing their matric, which is done in Grade 12. This takes place after they have spent twelve years to complete primary and secondary school grades. However, some students who choose to acquire a university education. First year students, regardless of their location being rural or urban, encounter challenges trying to acclimatise with their new environment due to varying factors (Uleanya & Rugbeer, 2020). Amongst the challenges faced by first year students are: time management (Mukwevho, 2018), access to higher education, coping with coursework, work overload, lack of effective and efficient self- and work-load and time-management, poor learning environments not conducive to academic engagement, challenges associated with reading and writing ability, class unpreparedness, poor study skills, poor or no academic support, and shortage of skills (Jordaan, 2016). Other challenges faced by first year students in South African universities include problems of writing, plagiarism, referencing, poor socio-economic backgrounds, and the low level of pre-university education (Tanga & Maphosa, 2019). However, in addition to the challenges experienced by first year students in general in South Africa, some challenges are peculiar to first year students in rural South Africa. These challenges include: absence of mentors and supervisors such as parents, family, and teachers (Mukwevho, 2018), distance from home to campus, lack of transportation (Uleanya et al., 2019), language barriers (Uleanya et al., 2019), little or no knowledge and access to information and communication technology (ICT) (Czerniewicz & Brown, 2014), teaching and learning in English as a medium of instruction, lack of computer knowledge and skills, poor social relationships, and poor access to support services are other challenges experienced by first year students in rural South African universities (Ajani & Gamede, 2020). The foregoing suggests that there is a difference between first year students' experiences in rural South African universities and urban. However, the students are expected to have been guided by the same curriculum while in high school. The curriculum is envisaged to possibly affect their experiences in their first year at university. Hence, the need to briefly examine the curriculum guiding South African high schools.

## ***South African High School Curriculum***

Education in South Africa is one of the sectors that have been restructured since the democratic dispensation in 1994. Chisholm (2005) explains that after South Africa became a Democratic Nation in 1994, a new constitution was adopted to promote social justice and this initiated the beginning of development and curriculum change in the country. According to Maher (2009), with the goal of promoting educational equality in South Africa, the former 19 different departments during the apartheid era were replaced by one National Department of Education. De Villiers (2011) and Van Deventer (2009) observe that the main aim of the curriculum change was to cleanse the syllabi from out-dated content and racist language to the implementation of the Outcomes Based Education (OBE) Curriculum. Horn (2005) points out that OBE encompasses purposeful goals which were envisaged to bring commendable ideas to the development of Educational Systems. Chisholm (2005) states that OBE was followed by the introduction of Curriculum 2005 in 1998, which later became a policy in 2002 and was revised to National Curriculum Statement (NCS). The National Curriculum Statement contains the following areas of human endeavour: Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Technology, Social Sciences, Arts and Culture, Life Orientation, Economics, and Management Sciences (Department of Education, 2003).

Life Orientation is one of the four fundamental subjects required for the National Senior Certificate, which means that it is compulsory for all learners in Grades 10, 11, and 12, which incorporate subjects such as Health Education, Life Skills, Career Guidance, Physical Education, Human Rights Education, and Religious Education (Department of Education, 2003). Maree and Ebersohn (2002) describe the word Life as the combination of spiritual, physical, psychological, vocational, and health beliefs of a living being, while Orientation refers to an ability to adjust to any situation people find themselves in. Maree and Ebersohn (2002) further state that Life Orientation (LO) refers to a subject area that involves both learners' insight about an understanding of life, and skills needed to prepare and guide them to encourage a successful life. The motive of this subject is to engage learners in personal, psychological, neuro-cognitive, motor, physical, moral, spiritual, cultural, and socio-economic areas to help them develop and achieve in the new democracy of South Africa (Department of Education, 2003). Prinsloo (2007) affirms that Life Orientation is meant to help learners understand and accept themselves as being unique and special; by using the skills and ideas they have obtained through the programme to showcase their values, understanding, and an attitudinal disposition to improve their families, community, and the country at large. However, in the subject of career decision making, various factors in addition to the curriculum of high schools affect the career choices of students. Some of the identified factors are presented and discussed in the next section.

## ***Factors Influencing Career Choices***

Career choice has been defined as the total pattern of one's activities held during a person's life-time (Natalie, 2006). Issa and Nwalo (2008) reveal that in many cases, the choice of careers, course of study, and the subsequent career paths to follow are challenges for prospective undergraduate students. Ackermann, Alberts and Mbalo (2003) attest to the fact that career choice is one of the major areas of concern for young people nearing the end of their high school education. This implies that for young people who are about to complete their high school education or begin their tertiary education, career choice is crucial.

Additionally, Kerka (2000) suggests that career choice is influenced by multiple factors which include personality, interests, self-concept, identity, globalisation, socialisation, role model, social support, and available resources such as information and finance among others. However, this study focuses on the issue revolving around information and how it is communicated. In the case of Bandura, Barbaranelli, Vittorio and Pastorelli (2001), each individual who undertakes the process is influenced by several factors including the context in which they live, their personal aptitudes, social contacts, and educational attainment. According to McQuaid and Bond (2003) students' perception of being suitable for a particular course of study has been found to be influenced by a number of factors which include ethnic background, year in school, and level of achievement, choice of science subjects, attitudes, and differences in job characteristics. Ferry (2006) suggests that a variety of influences such as family, school, community, and social and economic factors are likely to manipulate one's ultimate career decision. However, for the purpose of this study, only selected factors, especially those related to communication that influence career choice, shall be identified and discussed. Meanwhile, factors around communication are emphasised in this study following the aim of the study, which is to explore the significance of proficient communication on career choice. The identified factors are as presented and explained below.

### ***Parental Influence***

Gostein (2000) explains that the influence parents have on the career choices of their children can be in diverse forms such as direct inheritance, the provision of apprenticeship, and role models. He further stressed that parents cultivate certain career interests in their children from an early age, which is done through encouragement or discouragement of hobbies and interests, and by the activities they encourage their children to participate in. Hewitt (2010) notes that one reason many young people select careers that are favoured by their parents might be to avoid conflict in the home. Taylor, Harris and Taylor (2004) emphasise that due to parental support and encouragement, children's career choices are influenced because some might tend to choose what their parents desire in order to please them. Beyer (2008) states that parental



aspirations and expectations tend to affect the self-efficacy of their children, because they serve as important role models in their lives. Ahmad, Benjamin and Ang (2004) undertook a study in Asia and assert, following their findings that expectations and advice from parents are deemed important in influencing children's career decision-making.

However, this is sometimes identified as a complex factor in that children might choose careers that mismatch their personality. Also, the study carried out on college students and adults by Mau and Bikos (2000) reveals that parents have a greater influence on an individual's choice of career. This implies that parents tend to have influence over the career choice of their children. Hence, parents who influence their children to choose careers which might not suit them may lead to certain challenges for them. For instance, such children may be less enthusiastic about their chosen career paths.

According to Oyamo and Amoth (2008), studies in Kenya show that rural students tend to seek help from parents, more so than urban students. Also, it was discovered that parents more than teachers play a major role in the career choice of students (Oyamo et al., 2008). Meanwhile, Rathunde, Carroll and Huang (2000) explain that parents help to create challenging and supportive environments where they allow their children to explore their own interests and listen to their ideas in a non-judgmental manner.

### ***Academic Ability***

Many students choose their careers based on their academic ability (Beggs et al., 2008). Bell (2013) and Sham (2012) points out that for success to be achieved in the educational institution, it has to be measured by the academic performance of students, which generally refers to how well they succeed in their studies or meet the standard set by the institutions of learning. Abiola (2012) states that academic performance reflects students' ability through consistency, determination, and focus; this serves as the best indicator for success in life. This means that the students' academic performances contribute to determining their career choice in life.

### ***Peer Pressure***

Ryan and Deci (2000) define peer pressure as a situation where people are encouraged by those of their age range to do something which they intend to do, or otherwise. According to Blank (2002), peer pressure provides a forum where teens construct and reconstruct their identities. Burns and Darling (2002) concur that self-consciousness of whether others will react or ridicule one's future action is one of the ways that adolescents are influenced by peers. Davies, Telhaj, Hutton, Adnett and Coe (2004) explain that students' choice of subjects can also be influenced by the aspirations or expectations of the peer groups. This implies that students sometimes make certain career choices following pressures or influence from their peers. Peers may be proficient in communicating career choices to one another using various means.

## ***Indecision***

While various factors affect the career choice of students, indecision also has an effect in this regard. It is an integral area that needs the attention of professionals such as career counsellors (Xu & Bhang, 2019). Indecision is usually caused by a lack or low level of exploration (Levon, 2007). However, according to Fabio, Palazzeschi, Asulin-Peretz and Gati (2013), career indecision is mainly associated with emotional intelligence. Marcionetti (2014) states that it is caused by students' level of self-esteem and neuroticism. This might have negative effects on students. The finding of the study of Bullock-Yowell, McConnell and Schedin (2014) suggest that academic advising is one of the remedies to helping students struggling with career indecision. Boo and Kim (2020) state that indecision in the choice of career of students is often caused by lack of adequate career information, and it might hampers the academic success of students.

## ***Lack of Proper Career Information***

Mbetse (2002) indicates that there is evidence that shows a misconception about the lack of career information amongst learners, parents, and teachers. Sequel to the findings of research conducted in South Africa, Stead and Watson (2006) state that high school leavers often have limited career knowledge and this has a negative impact on effective career decision making. Following the Greenhaus, Callanan and Godschalk model of career management and according to Stead and Watson (2006), access to career information and the usage is often an integral part of the decision-making process. Webber and Zhu (2007) declare that research has shown that before decisions are taken, most students do not endeavour to seek information about job and career choices. To corroborate this assertion, Zhou and Santos (2007) suggest that one of the major factors that affect or influence career decision-making deals with lack of proper career information about steps involved in the career decision making, lack of proper information about the various occupations, and ways of obtaining additional information about those occupations or professions.

Additionally, Bojuwoye and Mbanjwa (2006) state that lack of finance, lack of proper career information, poor academic performance, and unsatisfactory career counselling services negatively influence the career choice of tertiary students from disadvantaged institutions of learning, in the context of this study: rural South African universities. According to Koricich (2014) and Uleanya, Uleanya and Oluyemi (2019), lack of career counsellor and counselling for young people such as first year university students constitute challenges in career choice decision making. On the other hand, Ngesi (2003) states that poor financial abilities of students coming from disadvantaged communities, might affect their choice of educational programmes and careers. For instance, as a result of financial constraints, many students tend to avoid careers that require a longer period of training which their finance cannot support (Ngesi, 2003).

However, the lack of information about career choices tends to have an effect on students, and the mode of transmitting such information matters. Hence, this study examines the significance of proficient communication on career choice. In order to achieve the objectives of this study, an attempt is made to seek answers to the following research questions guiding the study: Are career guidance programmes included in the South African high school curriculum? What are the factors influencing the career choice of first-year students in the selected rural South African university?

### ***Research Methodology***

A quantitative method was adopted for this study to allow the collection of large data which aids generalisation of results. Kumar (2019) suggests that the use of a quantitative method in a study aids the collection of large amounts of data, which can consequently allow the generalisation of the results. A survey method, which adopted the use of a structured questionnaire for data collection was employed in this study to identify the significance of proficient communication on career choice of first year students in a selected rural South African university. Purposive and random sampling techniques were respectively used to select the university and first year students who formed the respondents in the study. First year students were selected for this study because they are considered to be more prone to facing challenges with regards to career choices, compared to other levels, following the works of Koricich (2014), Uleanya, Uleanya and Oluyemi (2019), and especially Ackermann, Alberts and Mbalo (2003) who hold the view that career choice is one of the major areas of concern for young people nearing the end of their high school education and in search for tertiary qualifications to build their careers. The target population for this study comprised first year students of a selected rural South African university. According to the Information Communication and Technology unit (ICT) of the selected university, the number of first year students of all the faculties namely Arts, Commerce, Law, Education, and Science was 4,283 at the time of this study. Using simple random sampling, 375 students were selected as respondents for the study.

Additionally, a self-designed questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire contained two sections. Section A contained questions which sought information on the demographic profile of respondents and included gender and year of study. Section B examined the significance of proficient communication on career choices. The questions were developed following the objective of the study. The questions sought to establish whether career choice was well communicated to learners, and the factors that influence their choice of study. Each questionnaire was attached with the information sheet and consent form. This was done to ensure that respondents voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. Both the researchers and the respondents signed the consent form. The information sheet contained guidelines on how the questionnaire was to be completed. This was done to clarify to the respondents the rationale

behind the questionnaire. Meanwhile, a pilot study was conducted using 10 first-year students in the selected university to provide dependable and valuable information when gathering data from the questionnaire. The researchers ensured that the students who participated in the pilot study were not selected for the actual research. The collected data from the questionnaire were analysed using frequencies and percentages by means of MoonStats software.

## ***Results***

The demographics of respondents are presented below followed by the results of the analysed data.

### **Demography of Respondents**

The demography of respondents is as presented in tables 1 and 2 below:

**Table 1: Gender Distribution of Participants**

<b>Value</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Cum. %</b>
Male	157	43.98	43.98
Female	200	56.02	100.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100.00</b>	

Table 1 shows that 157 (43.98%) of the respondents were male, while 200 (56.02%) were females. The results of the collected data are presented, following the identified research questions guiding the study.

**Research Question 1:** Are career guidance programmes included in the South African high school Curriculum?

**Table 2:** *There are Guidance Counsellors in High Schools Value*

Value	N	%	Cum. %
Yes	240	67.23	67.23
No	95	26.61	93.84
Not sure	22	6.16	100.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100.00</b>	

Table 2 shows that 240 (67.23%) of the respondents agreed that there was a special subject on Guidance and Counselling where they were given advice on career choice in the school. However, 95 (26.61%) of the respondents disagreed, and 22 (6.16%) were unsure. This finding shows that career choice is part of the high school curriculum. This corroborates the works of Ackermann, Alberts and Mbalo (2003), Koricich (2014), as well as Uleanya, Uleanya and Oluyemi (2019) who advocate for this need for young people especially those completing high schools and first year university students.

**Table 3:** *There are Special Subjects in High School on Career choice*

Value	N	%	Cum. %
Yes	226	63.31	63.31
No	86	24.09	87.39
Not sure	45	12.61	100.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100.00</b>	

Table 3 shows that 226, representing 63.31% of the respondents, agree that there were special subjects on career choice in the high school. Conversely, 86 (24.09%) of the respondents disagreed that there were no special subjects on career choice in the high school, while 45 (12.61%) were unsure. The finding implies that there are likely to be special subjects on career choice in the high schools but that this might not be delivered consistently across the schools that the participants attended. Following the Greenhaus, Callanan and Godschalk model of career management, the inclusion of a special subject on Guidance and Counselling will assist students in the exploration stage of exploring career options in order to make fitting decisions.

**Table 4:** *Career Choice is a Problem in High School*

Value	N	%	Cum. %
Yes	219	61.34	61.34
No	86	24.09	85.43
Not sure	52	14.57	100.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100.00</b>	

Table 4 shows that 219 (61.34%) of the respondents agreed that career choice was a problem for high school learners, 86 (24.09%) disagreed, while, 52 (14.57%) were unsure. Following this result, it can be implied that career choice is a problem for high school learners. This finding agrees with the work of Issa and Nwalo (2008) who state that in most cases, the choice of career, course of study, and the subsequent career paths to follow are a nightmare for prospective students. The work of Uleanya, Uleanya and Oluyemi (2019) also corroborates the finding that career choice is problematic for students and guidance is needed. Sequel to the Greenhaus, Callanan and Godschalk model of career management, career choice is problematic, hence, the various stages involved in the model suitable for guiding students towards making career choices. This finding implies that students can possibly experience challenges in making the most appropriate career choices, however, if guided to follow due process, such challenges can be overcome.

**Table 5:** *The Department of Education sends Counsellors to Schools for Career Talks 2 or 3 times a year*

Value	N	%	Cum. %
yes	115	32.21	32.21
No	146	40.90	73.11
Not sure	96	26.89	100.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100.00</b>	

Table 5 shows that 115 (32.21%) of the respondents agreed that the Department of Education sends Career Guidance Counsellors to schools twice or thrice a year. On the contrary, 146 (40.90%) of the respondents disagreed, while 96 (26.89%) were unsure. The result shows that the majority of the respondents disagreed; however, because the number is not significant the findings may not be accepted. Meanwhile, Uleanya, Uleanya and Oluyemi (2019) hold the

view that career counsellors should be recruited permanently to provide counselling assistance and guidance to students.

**Research Question 2:** What are the factors influencing the career choice of first-year students in the selected rural South African university?

The results of the analysed data from the second research question are presented below.

**Figure 1:** *Effective Communication on Career Choice at School*

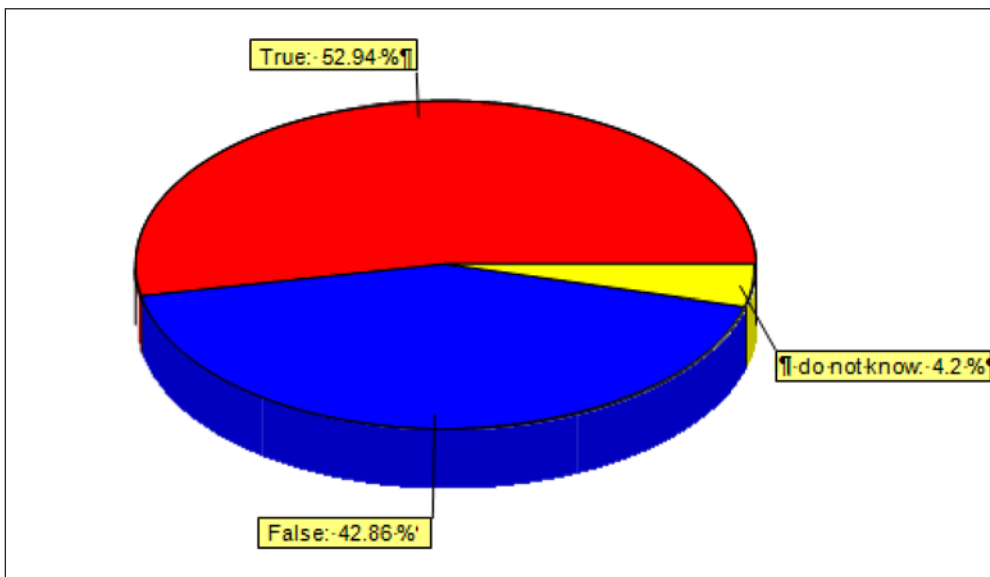


Figure 1 shows that 189 (52.94%) of the respondents agreed that there was effective communication on career choice in school. However, while 153 (42.86%) of the respondents disagreed, 15 (4.20%) were unsure. The above analysed result indicates that just more than half of the respondents subjectively reflect that they received what they describe as effective communication on career choice in school. The findings contrasts the work of Stead and Watson (2006), who suggest that high school leavers often have limited career knowledge and this brings a negative effect on effective career decision making. Conversely, the finding corroborates the works of Mbetse (2002) and Christiaans (2006) that high school teachers have roles to play in the career choice of their learners. Meanwhile, the work of Uleanya, Uleanya and Oluyemi (2019) supports this finding stating that the success of students, among many other factors, also depends on the curriculum of high school teachers. This implies

that if the curriculum of high school teachers is designed to assist and caters for issues around career choice, then students can be helped on these issues. On the other hand, sequel to the Greenhaus, Callanan and Godschalk model of career management, as well as Boo and Kim (2020), effective communication on career choice contributes toward guiding students in making good career choices. This means that students will make good career decisions if career related information is effectively communicated.

**Figure 2:** *Effective Communication on Career Choice from Parents*

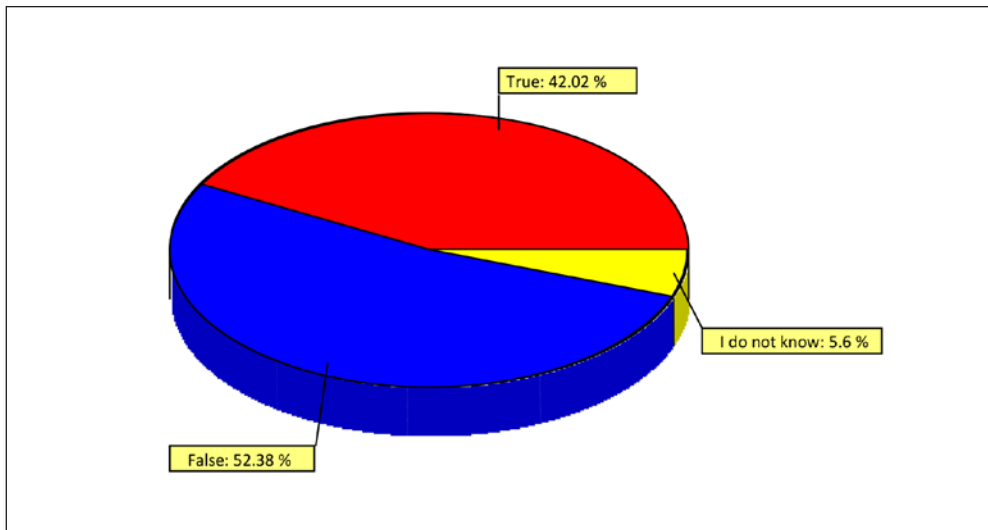


Figure 2 shows that 150 (42.02%) of the respondents agreed that they received effective communication from their parents on career choice, while 187 (52.38%) disagreed, and 20 (5.60%) were unsure. This finding contrast the work of Mau and Bikos (2000) who opine that parents have a greater influence on students' career choices. Meanwhile, Beyer (2008) argues that parental aspirations and expectations tend to affect the self-efficacy of their children because they serve as important role models in their lives. Taylor, Harris and Taylor (2004) and Oyamo and Amoth (2008) agree that due to parental support and encouragement, children's career choices are influenced as they choose what their parents desire to please them. This finding contrasts the finding of the works of Bell (2013) and Sham (2012) who argues that it is issues like the academic performances of students that influence their career choice, not parental influence. This implies that proficient communication from parents with regard to career choices can have a significant impact on students. Thus, parents play significant roles in communicating proficiently on career choices to their children.



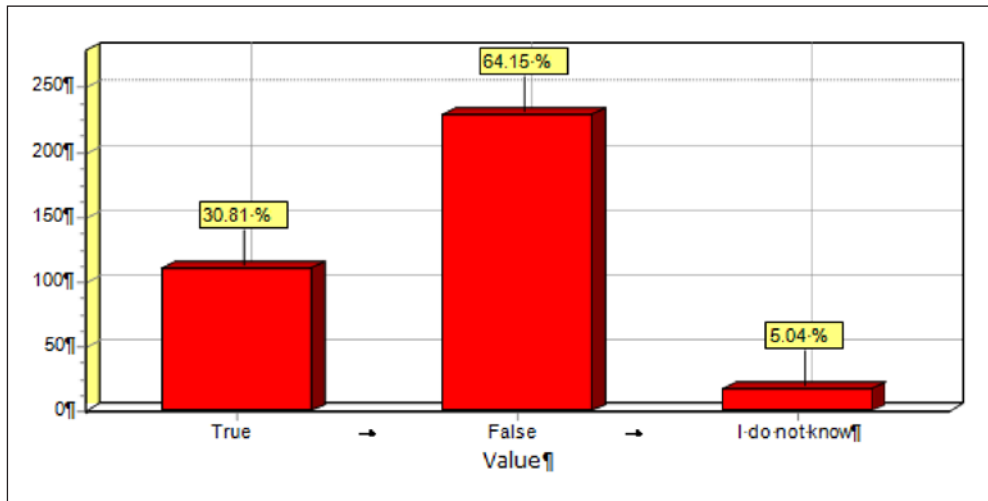
**Figure 3:** *No Communication on Career Choice was received from anyone*

Figure 3 shows that 110 (30.81%) respondents agreed that nobody communicated career choice to them, 229 (64.15%) disagreed, while 18 (5.04%) were unsure. This result shows that the majority of the respondents disagreed that they received communication on career choice. The result indicates that the majority of the students received information on career choice from one person or the other. This finding agrees with the works of the Department of Education, Mbetse (2002), Christiaans (2006) as well as Uleanya, Uleanya and Oluyemi (2019) who opine that various people has an influence on the career choice of students and play different roles, such as communicating information to the students to enable them in their choice of career. The finding also corroborates the Greenhaus et al. model (2000) which suggests the need for students to explore when attempting to make career decisions, which is done by gathering adequate information. The findings of the works of Bullock-Yowell, McConnell and Schedin (2014) and Boo and Kim (2020) agree with the finding of this study and the Greenhaus et al. model that information is vital in career decision making, hence, the lack of such causes indecisions for students. This finding further implies that proficient communication on career choices for students can be performed by people other than their parents or guardians, as long as they are well equipped and versed in the subject matter.

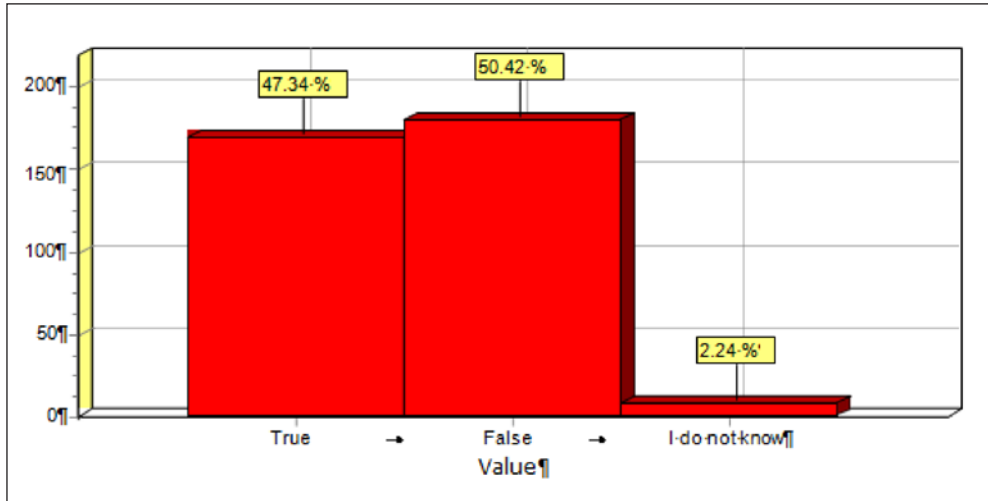
**Figure 4:** Available Career Choice

Figure 4 shows that 169 (47.34%) of the respondents agreed that they made a career choice based on what was available when they came to the university, 180 (50.42%) disagreed, while 8 (2.24%) was unsure. This result shows that those who did not make a career choice based on what was available when they came to the university were in the majority. This implies that some students met the requirement of the university and chose according to their career choice. However, some only chose what was available to them, possibly due to the result they had from their matric exams. This finding agrees with the work of Stephen (2003) who opines that poor academic performance influences the career choice of students. The finding further suggests that career choices are made on the basis of what is made available to students, not necessarily what they would have preferred. In other words, students tend to change their career choices following what the university has to offer. Hence, universities are obliged to ensure that a wide range of courses are made available to students, rather than restricting them in following a certain course of study or programme. Meanwhile, Greenhaus et al. model, Bullock, Yowell, McConnell and Schedin (2014) as well as Boo and Kim (2020) suggest that adequate information of what is made available needs to be provided, otherwise, this might be limiting to students. This finding implies that while universities make various career options available for students in order not to limit them, there is a need to also make adequate information available about the offerings to the students.

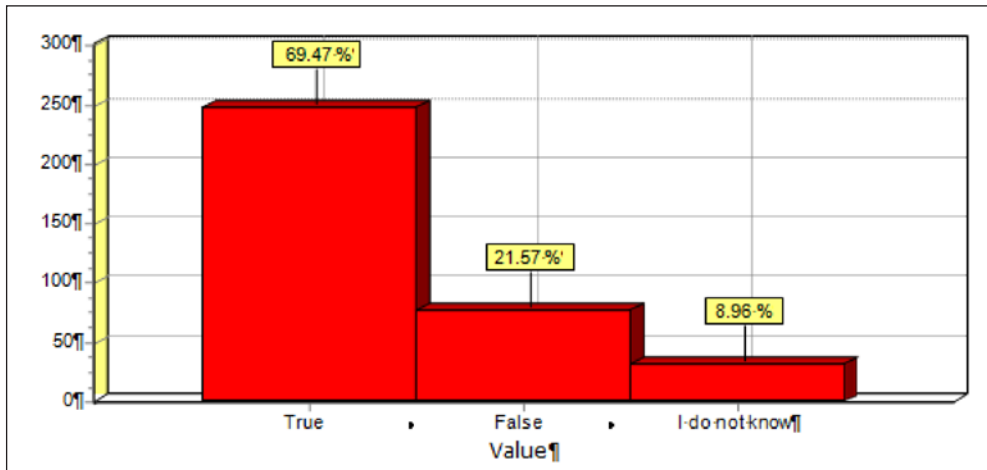
**Figure 5:** *Satisfied with One's Career Choice*

Figure 5 shows that while 248 participants (69.47%) were satisfied with their career choice, 77 (21.57%) were unsatisfied and 32 (8.96%) indifferent. As illustrated in the figure, those who are satisfied with their career choice are more than those who are unsatisfied. This result suggests that the respondents know what they want in the university. This could be as a result of the previous information on career choices that they have received from someone. This finding corroborates the works of Koricich (2014), Bullock, Yowell, McConnell and Schedin (2014) as well as Boo and Kim (2020) who opine that the information received by students on career choice puts them in advantageous positions for success. The finding also concurs with the Greenhaus et al. model, which suggests the need for exploration in the form of seeking adequate information from various sources. Suffice to state that proficient communication on career choices aids success and satisfaction for students.

**Figure 6:** *Satisfied with the Way Career Choice was Communicated to them*

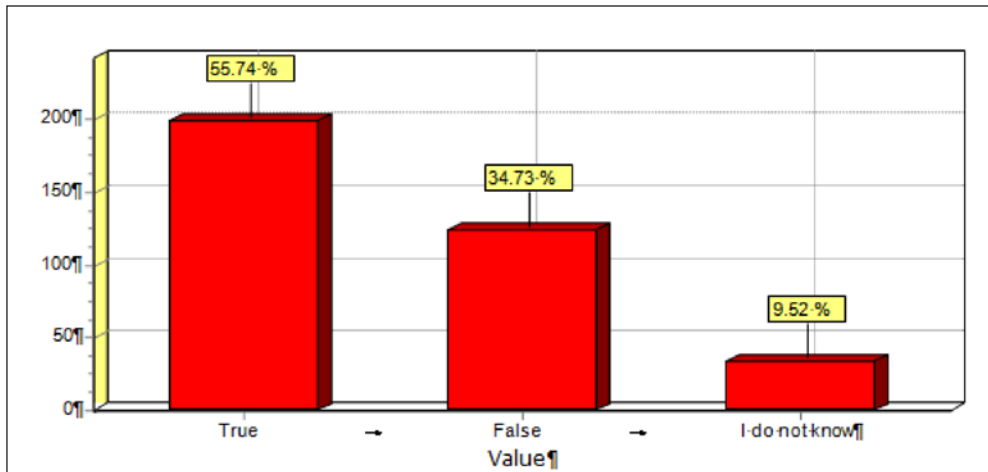


Figure 6 shows that 199 (55.74%) of the respondents agreed that they were very satisfied following the way career choice was communicated to them. However, 124 (34.73%) disagreed, while 34 (9.52%) were indifferent. This result indicates that the majority were very satisfied with the way career choice was communicated to them. This implies that adequately and appropriately communicating issues of career choice to students is important, and determines their level of success in some instances. Hence, Uleanya and Rugbeer (2020) explain the need for orientation and other activities, channelled towards helping students in their life decisions and goals.

### ***Conclusion and Recommendations***

The study examined the significance of the proficient communication on career choice among first year students using a selected rural South African university. The findings show that issues of career choice are catered for to an extent in the curriculum guiding high school teaching and learning activities. Provisions of issues on career choice are provided in the curriculum through compulsory subjects for students. Also, programmes where career counsellors are made available to speak to learners are included in the curriculum. Additionally, the findings of the study indicate that career choice is an important decision that must be made by students; however, it is influenced by various factors. These factors include parental influence, guidance of teachers, academic performance, and exposure to information on career choice.

Subsequent to the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- Career guidance should be given to high school learners at an early stage from grade 8 to grade 12, because this will help them in choosing correctly. This can be done by ensuring that career counsellors are recruited permanently in schools. Also, a subject specifically for career choice can be designed and made compulsory for all students.
- Parents and other education stakeholders should be informed on the need to guide students properly in making the right career choice. This can be done by organising seminars, conferences, and workshops periodically where students, parents, and other education stakeholders will be exposed to issues on career choice and taught how to guide students in making the most suitable career choice.
- Most youths appeared to have limited knowledge of occupations, so their choices might be limited, especially for those in rural areas. Hence, career information centres should offer information to assist youths in rural areas in avoiding mistakes in career choices. These information centres can be structures where career counsellors who are recruited by the government will be situated.
- Universities should ensure the availability of a wide range of courses. This will enable students to make choices in accordance to their chosen career path.

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