THE ROLE OF LIFE ORIENTATION TEACHERS IN THE CAREER CONSTRUCTION OF YOUTH IN GAUTENG, SOUTH AFRICA

by

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I declare that the above dissertation is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work is dedicated to the memory of my late father, Mhlatyana Horatius Mpahlana, and brother Thanduxolo Mpahlana. I know that although you have departed, you are proud of your daughter and sister, *boo Madiba, boo Yem-Yem, boo Zondwa!*

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ABSTRACT

One of the duties of schools is to support learners to finish high school prepared to pursue at least one career path. This research examined the pedagogical part played by the Life Orientation (LO) teachers when guiding the youth in the career construction process at a high school in the Gauteng Province in South Africa. The aim was to find ways to support LO teachers to create a conducive school environment where young people can properly construct the right path for their intended career choices. In this study, convenient and purposive sampling was used to select a school, LO teachers and learners as informants. Although these informants were key, this study was strengthened by the participation of the provincial coordinator, subject advisors from two different districts, the School Management Team (SMT), and parents.

A qualitative-focused ethnographic approach that embraced the constructivist view was used, which enabled a holistic and in-depth understanding of the career construction process. Data gathering methods included both non-participant and participant observations, field notes and interviews. Semi-structured individual and focus group interviews were conducted. The collected data were analysed using thematic analysis. Findings suggested that some Grade 9 learners were able to properly construct careers with or without the support of LO teachers. While this was the case for some learners, some learners were not even fully cognisant that they had to finish school prepared to pursue at least one career path. The findings identified structural and local practices in the school environment that seem to impede the effective discharge of career construction activities in schools; that support and prepare learners to build their intended career paths that contribute meaningfully to the economy and help to foster social inclusion. This study, therefore, proposed as a recommendation the School Career Construction Framework so that learners could be guided properly when constructing careers and leave high school or secondary school at least with one career path.

Key concepts: Career construction; career activities and services; Career Development Practitioners; Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement; interests; life experiences; Life Orientation subject; Life Orientation teachers; vocational personalities and youth.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AUC	African Union Commission
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements
CDS	Career Development Services
CDP	Career Development Practitioner
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DEL	Department of Employment and Labour
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoE	Department of Education
FET	Further Education and Training
ETDP SETA	Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
LO	Life Orientation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PACE	Professional Body for Career Education
SACDA	South African Career Development Association
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SASA	South African Schools Act
SCCF	School Career Construction Framework
SLES	Special Learning and Educational Support unit
SMT	School Management Team

CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

Careers Research and Information Centre (CRIC). CRIC centres were established before the 1994 democratic elections in South Africa. They provided career construction information, advice and guidance irrespective of colour or creed to everybody in South Africa, particularly to the school youth (Flederman, 2011).

Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS). A national policy document from Grades R -12 stipulates the aim, scope, content, and assessment for each subject listed in the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 (Department of Education, 2011).

Grade. A level in the education system in which a learner may complete an educational programme in one school calendar year (South African Schools Act, No.84, 1996). Grades before the 1994 democratic elections in South Africa used to be called Standards.

Head of Department (HoD). A position normally held by an experienced teacher who is responsible for assisting and guiding teachers in a particular field.

Life Orientation. It is a compulsory school subject from Grade 3 to Grade 12 in the South African education system. A subject with five disciplines. Career construction, the studied phenomenon is one of these disciplines (DoE, 2011).

Public schools. Schools are subsidised by the South African government. However, under this category, there are public fee-free schools and public ordinary schools. On one hand, public fee-free schools are mostly in the poorest areas and have National Schools Nutrition Programmes. On the other hand, public ordinary schools although they are also subsidised by the government, also charge school fees. However, in some instances, parents can apply for an exemption or reduction in the fees. It is noteworthy to mention that public ordinary schools also include all the schools that were established during the apartheid era and designated for white learners, including the former ‘Model C’ schools

(Presidency, 1996). The selected school in this study is classified as a public ordinary school.

The Schools Act of 1996 divides public schools into three categories:

- **General Education and Training (GET) or Basic Education.** This band refers to the ten compulsory schooling years. It comprises Grades R- 9 and is further divided into three phases, namely the Foundation Phase (Grades 1 - 3), the Intermediate Phase (Grades 4 - 6) and the Senior Phase (Grades 7 - 9). This study focuses on Grade 9 learners, which are in this Senior Phase band.
- **Further Education and Training band (FET).** Encompasses Grades 10 -12 (and equivalent levels in FET colleges).
- **Higher Education (HE).** Comprises of education leading to courses at tertiary institutions, including universities and colleges.

South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). A statutory body in South Africa that provides the registration of national standards and qualifications as intended in the National Qualifications Framework, Act No. 67 of 2008 (Presidency, 2009).

Career

A career is a path that encompasses an individual's significant interests, life experiences, learning and work (Andrews & Hooley, 2018).

Career Development

Career development is a life-long process of managing advancement in learning and work (Watts & Sultana, 2004; Patton & McMahon, 2014).

Career Education

It is a process that teaches learners about careers. In career education, learners gain knowledge on aspects such as career path, subject choice, skills, career decisions and what is needed in the labour force market (Patton, 2005; Schreuder

& Coetzee, 2016). Career education also uses experiential education methods and procedures to assist learners to develop aspects such as self-knowledge, vocational personalities and assigns meaning to the intended career path (Hoyt, 1984, Oliveira & Araujo, 2022).

Career Guidance

Career guidance is a process that encompasses the interaction and involvement of LO department officials, LO teachers, subject teachers, career counsellors, Career Development Advisors, family members, relatives, friends, and the labour force world. At secondary schools, career guidance can involve programmes that assist in career paths and institutions that offer their prospective careers. Career guidance can also take place individually or in a group (Maree, 2018; Zhang, Yuen & Chen, 2021).

Career Development Practitioner

A Career Development Practitioner (CPD) is a person recognised as a professional who provides services in the career construction process (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2016). In South Africa, CDPs perform duties that are similar to career counsellors. They are provided by statutory bodies such as the South African Career Development Association (SACDA) and the national Career Development Services sometimes called 'Khetha,' meaning make a career choice.

Life-long learning in career construction

Life-long learning is a continuous process in an individual's life that involves learning, development of approaches and skills to manage transitions and achieve one's potential when constructing a career (Barnes, Bimrose, Brown, Kettunen & Vuorinen, 2020).

Livelihood Planning

Livelihood planning in the career construction process includes a range of aspects such as career goals, coordination of career-related activities and services such as exposure of learners to opportunities, counselling, and interactions with the world of work (Mallick, Sultana & Bennet, 2020).

Human Development

Human development is concerned with developing and nurturing individuals' potential so that they benefit themselves and boost their country's economic growth (Nussbaum, 2011; Rammbuda, 2022). Education is argued to be crucial in human development where learners are equipped with the necessary skills to be more productive in their career choices. In this study, human development includes aspects such as the training of LO teachers and retaining them thereafter, the leading role played by the SMT in planning career programmes for the school and the support given to both LO teachers and the learners.

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CHAPTER 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study explored the role played by (LO) teachers when guiding youth in career construction. Youth in this study refers to all the young learners who are in the Senior Phase between 15 to 17 years old, particularly in Grade 9. Grade 9 is one of the transitional phases in the South African education system. At this level, learners need proper career guidance to arrive at informed decisions about their prospective careers. In this study, this includes constructing an intended career path by making relevant subject choices that are aligned with the subject fields Grade 9 learners are going to study in Grades 10 to Grade 12 in preparation for future careers. This study is, therefore, located in the field of career construction and uses the concepts of career development, career guidance and career construction interchangeably.

Career construction across and within countries in public policy is referred to by various terms such as career education, career guidance, career development, human development, and livelihood planning (Watts, Bezanson, & McCarthy, 2014; National Policy for an Integrated Career Development System for South Africa, 2017; Sultana, 2017). There is also an element that career construction is reformulated by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) researchers and interconnected with the learning objectives, labour market objectives and social inclusion objectives (Sultana, 2004; Watts, 2009). Research on careers in the early 1900s is associated with scholars such as Frank Parsons and John Holland who viewed careers as a match between personal traits such as skills and interests in the world of work. Lately, scholars such as Mark Luke Savickas (1997, 2005, 2021; Watts, 1998; Hartung, 2021) have enabled us to understand that it is not enough to match interests and skills to the world of work, as careers are challenged by the unstable markets and therefore constructed, rather than chosen. This usually requires individuals to view careers as lifelong learning about vocational personalities, paying attention to important aspects of one's life and learning to adapt to those aspects that cannot be changed. In this study, career construction is defined as:

> Services and activities intended to assist individuals, of any age and at any point throughout their lives, to make educational, training, and occupational choices and to manage their careers. Such services may be found in schools, universities and colleges in training institutions, in public employment services, in the workplace, in the voluntary or community sector and the private sector. The activities may take place on an individual or group basis and may be face-to-face or at a distance (including help lines and web-based services). They include career information provision (in print, ICT-based and other forms), assessment and self-assessment tools, counselling interviews, career education programmes (to help individuals develop their self-awareness, opportunity awareness, and career management skills), taster programmes (to sample options before choosing them), work search programmes, and transition services (Watts & Fretwell, 2004:2-3).

This definition seems to suggest that individuals are expected to build their careers at any stage in their lives and maintain them. Those who take the initiative to achieve their potential are supported with lifelong services and activities rendered by the government through policies. Career construction also seeks to improve education, and the economy of countries to uplift the standard of living of individuals including their communities (OECD, 2004). Adding to this idea of fulfilling an individual's prospects in terms of career choices, the World Bank (2013) also acknowledges that career construction enhances the chances of individuals and groups so that they reach their capabilities within their societies.

It is worth mentioning that South Africa has accepted the same definition of career construction as defined by establishments such as the OECD, European communities, and first-world countries (Policy for an Integrated Career Development System for South Africa; 2017*)*. While the South African government has conceptualised relevant legislation and policies, career construction is also of national importance, linked to the Constitution regarding learning, labour market and socio-cultural matters. This notion of linking career construction to the Constitution was implemented, among other things, to redress the imbalances of the past, where in South Africa, everything, including education, was provided along racial lines (Policy for an Integrated Career Development System for South Africa, 2017). In this regard, the teaching of

career construction and the opportunities offered to the learners were not the same between black Africans, coloureds, Indians, and whites. For instance, during the teaching of career guidance, white learners were provided with services such as career counselling and would have officials from the then Department of Manpower, which is now the Department of Employment and Labour, while other races lacked those privileges (Dovey, 1983; Watts, 2009; SAQA, 2012). In all of this, it is also important to mention that after 1994, the teaching of career construction which is tasked to redress the legacy of apartheid is embedded in a subject called LO. However, the subject is viewed as inferior in most schools, and this will be discussed in depth in the literature review chapter.

In this study, admittedly, the aforementioned thoughts are plausible, that career construction is intended to promote an individual's opportunities to the fullest when building and managing careers. However, these positive affirmations also raise some concerns. For example, McMahon (2002) argues that the account of an individual's career construction is not as simple as one's potential or the ability of an individual to pursue a career; sometimes careers are constructed by serendipity or accidentally. Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997) and Colley (2006) also highlight that the building of careers is constructed and constrained by society. This implies that the opportunities offered by an environment can shape one's career decision and or limit that decision. For example, a learner who has no interest in a particular career field may come across an advert in a newspaper or on social media that offers a bursary to learners who study Physical Science together with Maths. If that learner makes use of that presented opportunity, applies and obtains the scholarship, the career pursued in that case may be largely attributed to an opportunity.

The notion that careers are built by individuals for themselves to benefit society is contested too. For instance, Young (1990) teaches us that sometimes when individuals construct careers, the decisions undertaken are independent and only serve the interest of a person rather than the community's needs. This view is supported by Hooley and Sultana (2016) who argue that what actualises in the career pursuits of an individual may contradict the demands of society. In a similar vein, da Silva et al (2016) caution us that trying to enable people to actualise

themselves through careers may not be possible, as privileged and underprivileged people do not have the same means to access opportunities to build and manage careers at every stage. Another factor that is contested in the definition of career construction regarding helping individuals build and manage careers is that people are not the same. There are differences regarding ethnicity, gender, age, and sexual orientation; so, their needs to reach their capabilities when constructing careers will be different (Young, 2009). Furthermore, Nussbaum (2011) contests that human development consists of many capabilities such as life, thoughts and interests that need to be considered. However, these capabilities for human development are not the same in individuals. Therefore, providing chances for different people when building career ranges is not always possible.

The foregoing opinions are a reminder that there are varying positions regarding how career construction should be viewed to add value to individuals and society. Furthermore, the contestations regarding how career construction is applied to open possibilities to assist people when creating careers are not unique to the South African context. What makes these contestations about career construction different and challenging in the South African context are the imbalances of the past. For example, as is well known, citizens in apartheid South Africa were treated differently according to their race. This differentiation was also adopted and used in the provision of career guidance and services to various racial groups (Dovey, 1983; Flederman, 2009).

When it comes to career development services, they are defined as a range of different stakeholders such as ministries, agencies and private organisations that are supposed to provide programmes and activities for the proper discharge of career construction (Watts & Fretwell, 2004). These services and exercises that support individuals when building careers are scattered and offered by different institutions such as schools, higher learning and private sectors. Although they are found in different places, they are intended to work coherently as a system through policies (Watts, 2008). The career services and activities that are key when careers are constructed will be further discussed in the literature review chapter.

Watts (1998), Savickas (2005), Patton (2019) and Lent and Brown (2020) supports that the rigid notion of matching individuals to a fixed career is no longer fitting as it used to be. This is related to the evolution of the job market to produce new career directions that were not previously available. For instance, as the world embraces the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), new careers that integrate Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into many facets of life may become the order of the day. Schwab (2016:43) made the following observation:

> It is almost inevitable that the fourth industrial revolution [4IR] will have a major impact on labour markets and workplaces around the world… the fusion of digital, physical, and biological technologies driving the current changes will serve to enhance human labour and cognition, meaning that leaders need to prepare workforces and develop education models to work with, and alongside, increasingly capable, connected and intelligent machines.

In the same breadth, the report of the WEF (2016) titled, *The Future of Jobs: Employment, Skills, and Workforce Strategy for the Fourth Industrial Revolution* cautions that:

> In many industries and countries, the most in-demand occupations or specialities did not exist 10 or even five years ago, and the pace of change is set to accelerate. By one popular estimate, 65% of children entering primary school today will ultimately end up working in completely new job types that don't yet exist. In such a rapidly evolving employment landscape, the ability to anticipate and prepare for future skills requirements, job content and the aggregate effect on employment is increasingly critical for businesses, governments, and individuals to fully seize the opportunities presented by these trends and to mitigate undesirable outcomes.

These realities of the 4IR are pertinent to the learners' career construction choices, aspirations and decisions. For example, the 4IR new technologies such as the internet and smartphones at schools may assist in accessing worldwide digital forums. These electronic devices may be used by LO teachers and youth for research and career information when the youth build their careers. Therefore, having access to technology, careers such as coding which are regarded as high-

skill jobs, may be built by the youth. These careers are often known to open new markets and give rise to economic growth. Furthermore, socially, the quality of life may improve. For instance, where individuals who do not wish to go for shopping may order products online and call an Uber for convenience and enjoyment of a better lifestyle. In these kinds of situations, Schwab (2016) maintains that although 4IR may be viewed as displacing people, it also can create a market both for high-skilled and low-skilled or low-paid jobs. For instance, the delivery of mail orders or e-hailing services does not require high levels of skill and therefore, an opportunity for some low-skilled individuals.

In this study, a commitment by the South Africa government, SMT, LO teachers & subject teachers and family members is needed to keep learners well-informed regarding career choices, career paths and career decision-making. At the same time, learners must be prepared to explore these possibilities with the assistance of LO teachers and take up these opportunities. This seems possible if the focus is shifted to constructing a career while continuing to match individuals to career opportunities that fit them as they develop. It is also becoming common knowledge that many jobs are not permanent (Savickas, 2012). In this regard, learners should, therefore, be guided when building careers by, LO teachers, subject teachers and other relevant career construction services and stakeholders such as people in the world of work to expose young people to various career paths.

Field et al (2014) argue that teachers who deliver career construction to learners are not required to possess only content understanding, experience and skills in their field of training, but they should be able to know how to impart the knowledge and skills associated with their profession. Furthermore, the teacher's knowledge and skills should be constantly updated to be able to respond to the ever-changing labour practices and technology. In addition, LO teachers also need to be proficient in group facilitation skills, individual and group assessment skills, labour market knowledge and knowledge of career development theory (Kay & Fretwell, 2003; Sefotho, 2017; Hay, 2018). In all these requirements in teachers for the proper delivery of career construction, the status of LO teachers in South Africa does not seem to enhance the recognised competencies. The 4IR

knowledge and skills will be discussed in the literature review chapter.

1.2 CONTEXT

In most countries, when learners are guided in career construction, teachers and career counsellors are regarded as the 'engine' and 'pillars' of the education system. This interaction between career guidance teachers and career counsellors plays a vital role in the delivery of proper career construction (Watts, 1998). In this regard, Hooley (2015) clarifies this collaboration and maintains that the role of teachers is to convey pedagogic knowledge, while professional career counsellors assist with the theory and knowledge of the labour market, integrating career teaching with theory and the world of work. Furthermore, Crawford Solberg, Diener, Wirtz, Lucas & Oishi (2002) and Wong, Yuen and Chen (2020) also accentuate that when subject teachers including LO teachers work in collaboration with career counsellors, learners are exposed to various career paths and programmes. While this is the case, in most countries, career guidance teachers collaborate with parents, community members and employers where they are supported in the teaching of careers by career programmes that expose learners to several roles from which they would learn when building careers (Glaze, 2016). For instance, Andrews and Hooley (2018) enable us to understand that school career programmes that work hand in hand with various career stakeholders yield better results in the construction of careers. All these partnerships are expected to be well-planned and implemented by the SMT.

In the South African context, career construction is embedded in LO. Career construction is a structured programme that spreads over six years from Grade 7 to Grade 12 (Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa, 2016). When it comes to its delivery, the curriculum of the LO Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) document regards career construction as a main output in the LO subject and is covered under the topic *Careers and Career Choices* (Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa, 2016). It is also important to highlight that in the South African education system, Grade 9 which is the focus of this study, is one of the key transitional phases that contribute to the lives of learners career-wise. In this regard, when learners pass Grade 9 in South Africa, they are supposed to

have selected subjects they will study in Grade 10. Those subjects are expected to be in line with their intended career paths (DoE, 2011). In this study, these preparations regarding career construction in the Grade 9 learners require efficient guidance from the LO teachers to lay a solid foundation so that learners leave school with a career path.

1.3 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The South African education system has a history that goes back to the late 1970s and early 1980s of incoherent and poor coordination of career construction in schools (Dovey, 1983; Flederman, 2009). The delivery of education was political in South Africa before the 1994 elections and laws were passed that excluded career development for certain races (Naidoo et al, 2017). For instance, schools for white learners were required to employ trained guidance teachers. As far back as in the late 70s and early 80s, the teaching of career guidance received support from the Department of Education (DoE) and the Department of Manpower now called the Department of Employment and Labour (DEL). This support must have influenced the subjects that were taught in schools. Learners on their part must also have been advised and guided accordingly (Dove, 1983; Walters, Watts & Flederman, 2009; Walton, 2011; Stead & Watson, 2017). In contrast, the racial disparities determined that black schools would not receive the same support.

The differences in the teaching of career guidance had far-reaching consequences because the teaching of career guidance in some black schools was undermined and ignored. For example, career guidance periods were used as ‘catch-up’ periods for lost time (Flederman, 2011). Seemingly, there was not a strong and embedded conception of the consequences of teaching learners about their future careers. Moreover, career guidance teachers in most black schools were ill-prepared and they did not have sufficient knowledge and material they could use to teach career guidance effectively (Watts, 2009). This is evident in my own experiences when I was still a learner trying to grapple with career prospects and a teacher as I was trying to teach career guidance to the best of my ability. I shared these experiences in Chapter Four. To correct these

disparities in 1977, the University of the Western Cape conducted research and found that there was very little career information available to all races except white schools. Then Careers Research and Information Centre (CRIC) was established to offer career guidance in schools irrespective of colour, creed and race (SAQA, 2009; Walters, et al, 2009; Naidoo, Pretorious, & Nicholas, 2017).

Post-1994, there was a deliberate intention to reposition the education system, and this had implications for career guidance. A new subject LO was introduced. LO is a compulsory subject that learners are expected to take from Grade 3 to Grade 12 (Watts & Fretwell, 2004; Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa, 2016). LO is made up of five themes such as the development of the self in society; health, social and environmental responsibility; constitutional rights and responsibilities; physical education and the world of work. This study focuses on career construction, and career construction is a small part, nested in the world of work theme (DoE, 2011).

This study identifies career construction as an essential part of teaching and learning in South Africa, particularly in Grade 9, which is the focus of this study. If learners are exposed to the process of career construction, they stand a chance to make informed decisions about the careers they wish to pursue. Furthermore, while learners are still at school, they can learn about education and the world of work (Hooley, Matheson & Watts, 2014). In this way, when learners get into higher learning institutions, they can pursue their career aspirations, which are likely to land them to appropriate jobs and meet the interests that learners have studied for (Watts, 2009). At the time of writing this thesis, the 2022 South Africa unemployment rate in the 4th Quarterly Labour Force Survey was 32.7% nationally, and in the Gauteng Province where the study was conducted, the unemployment rate was 43.0% (Stats South Africa, 2023). It is concerning that Gauteng's provincial unemployment rate is greater than the national average. The following graphs are infographic representations of young people who were unemployed in South Africa. Even though the graphs shown are not part of this study, they indicate that young people might not have been exposed to career construction processes from a young age.

Unemployed youth (15-35 years) representations in South Africa and the Gauteng province from 2018 to 2021

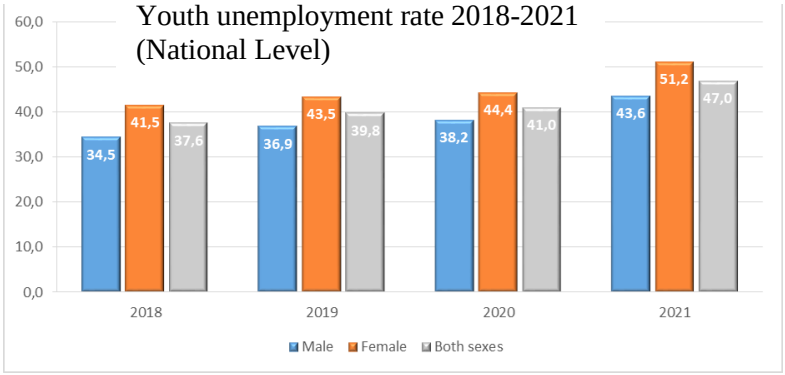

Figure 1.1: Unemployed youth (15-35 years) at the national level in South Africa from 2019 to 2021

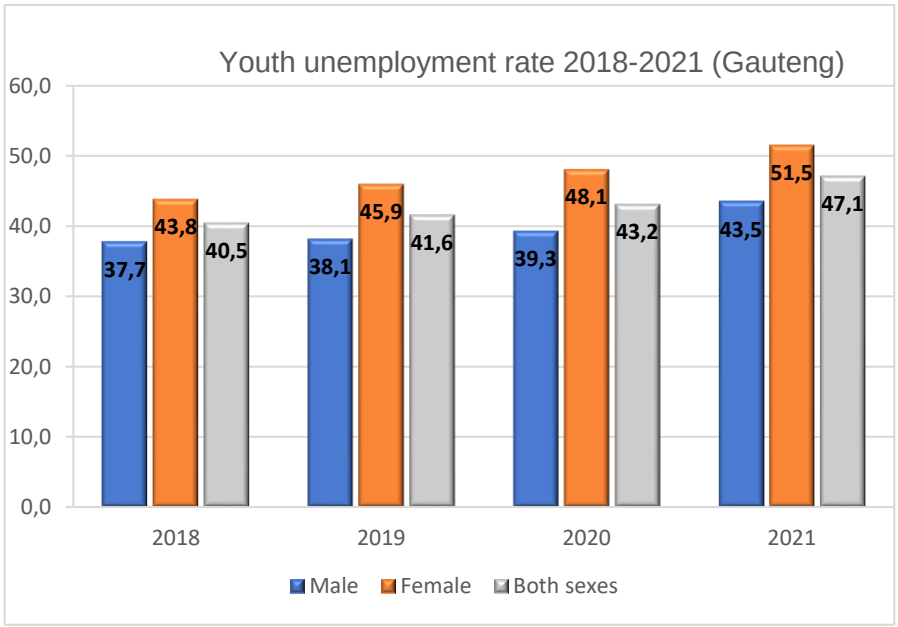

Figure 1.2: Unemployed youth (15-35 years) in Gauteng Province

Both figures 1.1 and 1.2 are not part of the study as already discussed. However, they paint a picture of the dire situation in the country. This concern is particularly in the Gauteng Province, where the 15- to 35-year-old age youth range, which includes the 15- to 17-year-olds are still at school and the target group of this study. Gauteng Province is regarded as the economic hub of South Africa, contributing more than a third to South Africa's economy. In this regard, the main contributors to the province's economy are finance, real estate and business services, followed by general government services and manufacturing (Stats

South Africa, 2021). When trends are up in these economic growth entities, usually the gross domestic product (GDP) increases, and this becomes a positive sign for the economy of a country. GDP is defined as the monetary value of all goods and services produced in a certain period (GDP, 2017). In the context of this study, an upward trend in economic growth and an increase in the GDP assist in the proper provision of career construction. How the GDP contributes to career construction will be discussed in the literature review chapter under the labour market objectives.

As shown in both figures, for the past four years in South Africa, the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) unemployment percentages in youth depicted disturbing data. Gauteng's records are higher than the average of the country (Stats South Africa, 2018-2021). For example, nationally in 2018, the figures of unemployed young people, of both sexes sat at 37,6%. In 2019 these figures increased by 2.2 % to 39,8%. In 2020, there was an increase of 1.2% to 41,0%. In 2021, a mounting increase of 6% of unemployed youth to 47,0% was recorded. However, what is more concerning regarding these extremely, seemingly uncontrollable figures are Gauteng's percentages, which is the financial heart of the country and the focus of the study. For example, in Gauteng Province in 2018, 40,5% of both sexes' youth were unemployed. An average percentage had increased by 2.9% when compared to the 37.6% of the country. In 2019, Gauteng Province registered 41.6%; figures that again increased the average percentage by 1.8% more than the 39.8% of the country. The same trend happened in 2020, where the province recorded 43.2% and continued the average rise by 2.2 % as compared to 41.0% of the country. It is worth highlighting that in 2021, the youth's unemployment rate was extremely high both nationally and in this province; Gauteng was at 47.1%, an average increase of 0.1 % to the 47,0 % of the country. It is also vital to acknowledge that this increase in Gauteng occurred once in 2021 since 2018 when averages were higher than those of the country. While these figures are already huge, they may likely increase in the coming years owing to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Scholars such as Letseka (2009) and Oosthuizen and Cassim (2016) argue that the high unemployment rate in South Africa is persistent and associated with poor and or lack of career construction in schools. This argument is further attributed not only to poor or insufficient proper career guides at schools but to multiple theories that are advanced by Bhorat and Oosthuizen (2005), Kraak (2006) and Oosthuizen and Cassim, (2016) relating to the labour market and socio-cultural factors, which will be unpacked in detail later in this thesis. In all these huge unemployment figures in the country and particularly in the province where the study is conducted, Watts (2009) asserts that schools are one of the places for reaching people in great numbers. It is, therefore, my belief and the rationale of this study that, if career construction is done properly at schools and LO teachers are supported fully, the picture in Figure 1.2 would drastically change for the better.

1.4 CAREER CONSTRUCTION POLICIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

Career construction in South Africa is a national priority joined to the education policies that flow from the right to education in the Constitution. SAQA (2012), DBE (2011) and the National Policy for an Integrated Career Development System for South Africa (2017) prioritise career construction to address aspects such as rife unemployment and socio-cultural matters in the country. In line with this thought, Hooley and Dodd (2015) enable us to understand that through policies and commitments, career construction provides substantial socio-economic benefits for society. In the same vein, the South African government has used educational legislation and partnerships to tackle issues of historical and socio-political constraints caused by the apartheid at schools. For instance, South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996, mandates the LO subject from Grade 3 to Grade 12 to be compulsory for all learners (South African Schools Act (SASA),1996). This regulation further specifies the section on careers and career choices in the LO curriculum as fundamental to the teaching of career construction. Another piece of legislation that upholds the proper delivery of career construction in schools is the Skills Development Act of 1998, which strives to advance the skills of teachers including the LO teachers (SAQA, 2012). In addition to these Acts, there are stakeholders such as the Education, Training

and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDPSETA), the DEL and the Career Development Services (CDS) whose role among other things is to assist schools with career exhibitions, the offering of career-related workshops both to the LO teachers and learners. The CDS provides labour market information and career counselling. These stakeholders will be further discussed in the literature review chapter.

Another key commitment that highlights the importance of career construction in schools is the Human Development Strategy for South Africa (HRDSA) 2010-2030 and the Commitment Strategy Three of the South African National Development Plan (NDP) 2030. These documents pledge to offer opportunities to young people and increase employment and growth in the economy of the country by ensuring that all youth from Grade 8 to Grade 12 are provided with career guidance teaching. All these mentioned key policies, stakeholders and undertakings, if they work as a system, may contribute to the role of LO teachers who have a responsibility to adequately prepare learners for the world of work. Furthermore, these school laws and commitments were sought among other things to help the labour market intentions of creating jobs (Bhorat & Oosthuizen 2005; Reddy, 2016) and to encourage partnerships between schools and career-related stakeholders in the construction of careers (Sefotho, 2017; Jonck & Swanepoel, 2019). However, in all this support rendered by these policies and commitments to view the importance of career construction in the country, it is also key in highlighting that the 2016 Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa which is one of the fundamental documents in the teaching of careers, states:

> It is also important to mention that LO educators are not specialist career development practitioners. It is also important to mention that many educators who offer LO are not trained as LO educators (Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa, 2016:62-63).

This 2016 Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa, a Government Gazette further explains:

> The majority of schools in the country do not appoint a permanent person responsible for career development. The existing system by-and-large will identify an educator to teach LO (the subject wherein Career Development resides). This educator may, in the next year, be re-assigned a new teaching role and another educator may be assigned the role of teaching LO (Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa, 2016:62).

The afore-mentioned 2016 Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa document seems not to view the importance associated with career construction as often the replaced teachers are novices, who in most cases need guidance themselves. It is also concerning that with this kind of arrangement where LO educators are not sufficient to teach careers and subject selection, this 2016 Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa appears not to give direction on career counselling except acknowledging that:

> It is worthwhile noting that certain schools (mostly private) may have an educational or counselling psychologist on their staff, who may take on the responsibility of providing career guidance to learners. These interventions are, however, not usually related to the curriculum but are stand-alone interventions offered at the grade 9 level for subject choice and grade 12 level for career choice and they would usually include some form of psychometric assessment and counselling (Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa, 2016: 63).

In this study, all the afore-mentioned directives are convincing in the delivery of proper teaching of career construction at schools. However, there seems to be a contradiction in this 2016 Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa document, as it seeks to support the adequate teaching of career construction but allows the appointment of LO teachers who are not qualified in LO. In this case, as this will be further discussed in the literature review chapter, how are learners expected to be guided adequately when constructing careers if LO teachers are not trained as LO teachers or Career Development Practitioners (CDP)?

1.5 PROBLEM STATEMENT

This study argues that learners, particularly in Grade 9 experience several systemic challenges that prevent them from making informed decisions about the careers they wish to pursue. The problems that LO teachers and Grade 9 learners seem to experience in the career construction process are multi-layered. One of these problems is that teachers who teach LO are not trained as LO teachers or CDP. These teachers are often ill-prepared because the supporting structures that could enable them to teach career construction, a topic embedded in an LO subject, are either not often available to them or are not utilised effectively in various schools. Moreover, the allocation of LO to teachers is sometimes erratic, and usually not properly planned for. For example, LO teachers after receiving the in-service training are changed frequently and not given sufficient time to teach the subject to gain the much-needed knowledge and experiences of the subject. LO is a compulsory subject; the problem is, it does not receive the attention it deserves.

Another problem is that the Grade 9 LO CAPS document allocates only three hours annually to the teaching of careers and subject choices. To support the teaching of these topics, that are expected to be covered in only three hours, the CAPS teaching plan lists textbooks, resources on careers and career guidance and counselling as the recommended resources (DBE, 2011). However, it looks like career counselling is not done to address the changing needs of learners. CAPS also seems not to give provision to test learners who do to know their interests and personality groupings when constructing a career, as the education system uses Holland's Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprise and Conventional (RIASEC) personality groupings theory (Hay, 2018). This becomes a problem when learners do not know their personality type. In addition to these mentioned problems which appear to prevent the proper teaching of career construction, the LO subject itself is often viewed as an inferior subject. Some of the LO teachers see themselves as inferior when allocated to teach LO. All these mentioned problems may affect the needed support of the LO teachers who are expected to properly guide learners when constructing careers. These identified

problems also indicate that the teaching of career construction at schools might not be realised. This has a far-reaching consequences for learners who are on the verge of constructing their career choices, especially the Grade 9 learners who have to select subjects in Grade 10 that are relevant to their career paths.

1.6 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The rationale of this study was influenced by my experiences as a then-career guidance school learner and a professional teacher who also taught LO at a stage. Therefore, I found my experiences with my informants similar to the context of the career construction process. This usage of self-experiences could potentially have suggestions for the LO teachers, learners from Grade 8 to Grade 12 and the School Management Team (SMT) at the school where this research was carried out (Starr, 2010). Looking back to when I was in Grade 9, myself as a young person then, I could relate to the experiences of Grade 9 learners who were participants in this study. I can vividly reminisce the experience of struggling to construct a career and I was not getting support from the career guidance teacher and the school to construct a career. I could also relate to the LO teachers' informants as I used to teach career guidance before 1994 and LO after 1994. LO appears similar to a subject that was called career guidance. Most of the time, career guidance was also not taken seriously. It was often used in some schools as a ‘fill up’ subject or to make the required minimum teaching load (Flederman, 2011). It looks like not much has changed because a similar treatment today is given to the LO teachers in some schools. LO is still used as a ‘fill up’ subject and LO teachers do not stay long enough to impart the skills and knowledge received from the in-service training. This random change process in the various schools does not consider that LO teachers receive in-service training in teaching LO. These trained LO teachers, therefore, need to spend much time teaching the subject to enable them to gain much knowledge and experience. Instead, teachers are moved around subjects after the in-service training of LO or after teaching the subject for only one year. Teaching the subject for only one year is not enough to ground a teacher in the subject knowledge. This becomes a problem as discussed in section 1.5.

This study, therefore, preferred to adopt a qualitative research methodology and, more importantly, to follow an ethnographic design strategy. Wall (2006) argues that ethnography promotes an understanding where researchers can use their personal experiences to better understand a societal occurrence or a studied phenomenon. Furthermore, as shown earlier, autoethnography enabled me to share my experiences when I interacted with the LO DBE officials; people who can influence a change in policies regarding the teaching of LO particularly, career construction in schools.

It was also important for me to conduct an empirical study and actively become part of the research process. I witnessed the wastage of talent of the learners who dropped out of school and were unable to realise their aspirations of being productive citizens because of the inability or lack of opportunities to be employed or become employers. I also came across learners who passed Grade 12, sometimes with more than four distinctions out of seven or eight subjects but did not know what career to pursue. It seems as if these learners have been failed by society as schools have a responsibility to ensure that learners are properly guided and pass formal schooling having adequate knowledge that will enable them to construct a career (Coiffait, 2013; Andrews & Hooley, 2019). I then made a promise to myself that someday I would try to be a part of a corrective effort through research for this inadequacy in our education system. In all of this, I am fortunate to have conducted this study which sought to make a difference to the learners and LO teachers during the teaching of careers and subject choices.

1.7 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1.7.1 Aim of the study

This study aimed to find ways to support the LO teachers to be able to guide Grade 9 learners to make informed decisions about careers they wish to pursue.

1.7.2 Objectives

1.7.2.1 Primary objective

- To understand how Grade 9 LO teachers guide learners in career construction and create an environment that enables learners to gain knowledge on their career choices.

1.7.2.2 Secondary research objectives

- To analyse how the 2016 Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa and the Grade 9 LO Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) contribute to the construction of careers.
- To explore career-related activities and services that enhance the Grade 9 learners in their career construction process.
- To understand the experiences of Grade 9 learners in the process of constructing a career.
- To develop a framework that may support LO teachers in the career construction implementation in schools.

1.8 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.8.1 Primary research question

- How do Grade 9 LO teachers guide learners in career construction and create an environment that enables learners to gain knowledge on their career choices?

1.8.2 Secondary research questions

- How the 2016 Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa and the Grade 9 LO Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) contribute towards career construction?
- What activities and services should Grade 9 learners engage in to enhance their career construction process?
- How do Grade 9 youth experience career construction?
- What framework can support the career construction process at schools?

1.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a detailed discussion of the introduction focusing on the importance of investigating the need for Grade 9 learners to make rational career decisions and construct careers that are in line with their subject choices. It also presented a brief history of careers and discussed Parson, the founder of career

construction, perception and views on the importance of exposing and highlighting the notion of careers at the school level. Furthermore, the theories of Holland and Savickas also provide in-depth insights into the value of career construction at the school level. In addition, it addressed the context and the background of the study as well as the career construction policies in South Africa. The problem statement, rationale of the study, aim and objectives and the research questions were also provided.

In this study, the role of LO teachers in understanding and outlining what adequate provision of career construction entails is questioned because often the LO teachers tend to have very little or no training in LO and are not CDP. Of concern is that currently schools are tasked with the responsibility of ensuring that before learners complete their schooling, they should have chosen a specific career path while considering the realities of the 4IR including the construction of a career. The next chapter will explore career construction literature and its models and frameworks, paying particular attention to the different ways that LO teachers can guide learners to construct their intended careers and choose relevant subjects for the pursued career.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of reviewing the literature is to scrutinise what has been previously investigated, identifying gaps that highlight what exists and what needs to be known regarding the studied phenomenon (Hart, 1998). The documents both from the old and current literature enlightened me to gain insights into the study and eventually to make way for the investigated problem (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). This literature review could not cover all the work done on the pedagogy of career construction. However, it has tried to include the international and national discourses and trends on the topic of research and aligned them to this research study. In this regard, this literature has, therefore, examined the contributions of career construction globally, in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region, the 2063 African Union Commission and tried to focus on the South African context.

In this chapter key aspects that could play an important role in the career construction process will be discussed. These aspects include sections that will discuss the LO subject, LO teachers, Grade 9 learners, parental support, career-related activities and services, exploration of the career construction models and frameworks and gaps in the career construction field will be identified.

Figure 2.1 assists the reader in understanding the arrangement of the literature review and its flow. It starts from the bottom left-hand side to the right-hand side.

The infographic represents a literature review of this chapter:

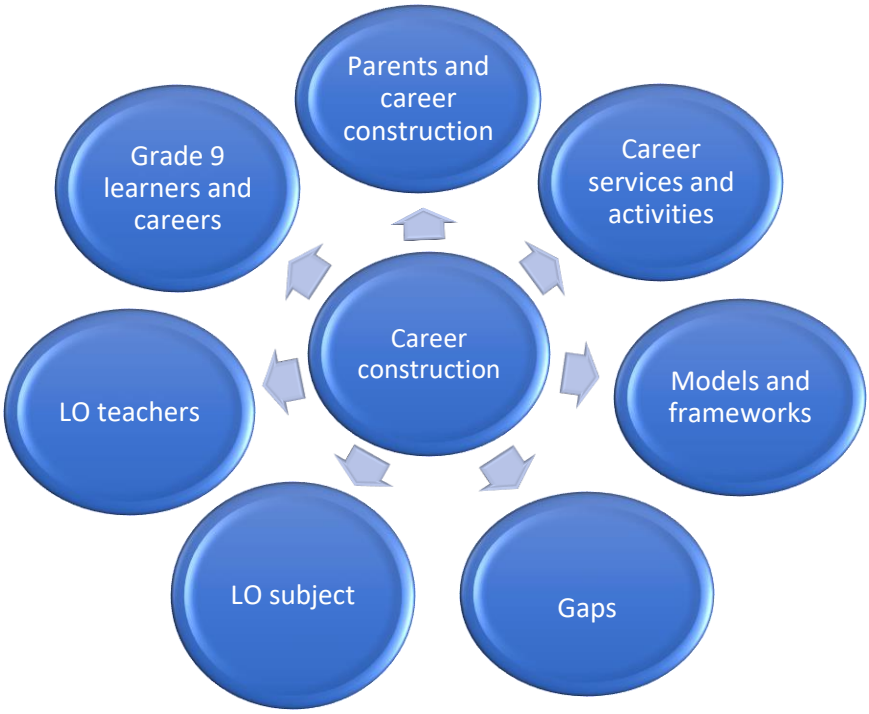

Figure 2.1: Summary of the key aspects of this study's reviewed literature

2.2 ALIGNMENT OF THE STUDY TO THE INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE

Internationally, career construction as discussed in Chapter One seems to suggest that individuals are expected to oversee their careers with the help of lifelong services rendered by the government through policies. Furthermore, although career construction is directive, it cannot stand alone as it is drawn from the relationship of aspects such as public policies, professionalisation, economy and politics of a country (Watts & Kidd 2000). South Africa has aligned itself with international dialogues about career construction and its meaning to the country (National Policy for Integrated Career Development System for South Africa, 2017). The next section discusses this study's literature review of the key aspects that are associated with the proper delivery of career construction.

2.3 CAREER CONSTRUCTION AND THE WORLDWIDE 2030 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were established in 2015 by the United Nations. The SDGs represent a global consensus and comprise 17

intertwined objectives that provide a common outline to maintain peace, and uplift people, the planet currently and the desired future (Nations, 2016). In this study, the 2030 SDGs that seem relevant to the LO teachers, in particular the Grade 9 learners in their career construction process are SDGs 4, 8 and 11. For instance, SDG 4 commits to providing children and youth with quality and easy access to education and learning opportunities. It states that all learners and adolescents will complete primary and secondary education, and that learners will acquire knowledge and valuable skills before they finish secondary school. SDG8 pledges to uphold decent work and improve economic growth worldwide. To achieve this goal, it targets economic productivity, promotion of innovation and enhancement of the technological capabilities of people. Furthermore, it aims to reduce the number of youths who are Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETS) by the end of 2030. SDG11 focuses on sustaining cities and communities. One of its goals is to reduce slums and enhance social inclusion. In this study, all the aforementioned 2030 SDGs that pertain to the career construction process of the youth are addressed. They are also supportive of LO teachers who guide learners in their career construction. However, there are concerns raised by the 2023 Sustainable Development Goals Report on the Special Edition Towards a Rescue Plan for People and Planet, on the already discussed 2030 SDGs. For example, this report observed that in SDG 4, in 2015 and 2021 in the sub-Saharan Africa tables, although primary and secondary school completion in learners were rising, the pace was far too slow. Another example is that in sub-Saharan Africa, between 2015 and 2021 completion rates in Grades 7 to 9 were approximately 41% in 2015 and 43-45 %. This was against the worldwide rate which rose from 74 to 77 % (Nations, Special Report, 2023).

In this study, which focuses on Grade 9 learners, these foregoing SDGs are key, in particular SDG 4 which pledges to provide children and youth with quality and easy access to education and learning opportunities. In South Africa, this pledge raises concerns. For example, in October 2023, Stats South Africa revealed in the 2022 census results that 26.6% of young South Africans, aged 5 to 24, an age group that includes the 14- to 15-year-olds involved in the study were not attending any schooling (Stats South Africa, 2023). This suggests that learners who have dropped out of school may not have been properly guided to construct

careers and this may be attributed to the increase in the number of the youth in the NEETS category. Another concern that is key in this study is SDG8, which is about working conditions and economic growth. The report on decent work and economic growth noted a worldwide decline in the employment rate of the youth, where young people's unemployment rate was more than adults' unemployment rate. Furthermore, this report noted ongoing difficulties in employment opportunities for the youth. When it came to sub-Saharan Africa, the report noted the lowest percentage of trained teachers in secondary education, which amounts to 61% among all regions (Nations Special Report, 2023).

2.3.1 Career construction in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region and African Union Commission 2063

The SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020-2030 and the African Union Commission 2063 commitments support the career construction process in Africa and are individually discussed in the next section.

The SADC region consists of 16 countries in Southern and Central Africa. SADC member states in southern Africa include countries such as Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and South Africa (Omena & Onyango, 2020). The regional body is aimed at advancing the political, socio-economic and security aspects in Southern and Central Africa, and at promoting unity at a regional level, stability, peace and economic growth. The relevance of SADC in this study is that SADC has the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020-2030 which has four pillars with strategic objectives, outcomes and key intervention. These mentioned aspects among other things seek to promote economic growth, improve the quality of life in individuals, assist in self-actualisation and support social cohesion through career construction. The SADC 2020-2030 agenda is guided by the UN's 2030 SDGs. The RISPD pillars are built on the foundation of Peace, Security and Good Governance and are anchored in three pillars. Pillar one is about Industrial Development and Market Integration. Pillar two is on Infrastructure Development in Support of Regional Integration, while Pillar three is about Social and Human Capital Development.

In this study, the focus will be on SADC 2020- 2030 agenda pillar three, Social and Human Capital Development, which is interlinked with Gender, Youth, Environment and Climate Change, and Disaster Risk Management as cross-cutting issues as the study sought to find ways to support LO teachers when guiding youth in career construction. The focus will be on the aspects that speak to young people in their career construction process. As mentioned earlier, each pillar is guided by the strategic objectives, outcomes and key interventions. The strategic objective of the pillar that is concerned with social and human development in youth seeks to improve young people's empowerment and their participation including those with disabilities in all aspects of socio-economic development and to enhance the welfare of senior citizens. The relevant outcome to this strategic objective concerning the youth and their career construction process commits to producing skilled young people who will participate in and be able to drive socio-economic development. Furthermore, the key intervention for this outcome is driven by SADC's efforts to strengthen the youth forum to shape the development of policies and other agendas with a specific focus on young people, empowering youth through targeting economic, social and technological development initiatives. All these SADC 2020-2023 plans are vital in the career construction process as they can be used to support LO teachers to guide the youth properly in the career construction process in South Africa and to enhance the youth's prospects of being employed or employ people in the SADC countries, in Africa and beyond the continent.

2.3.2 The 2063 African Union Commission (AUC)

Another document that was reviewed and is relevant to this study is the 2063 AUC. The African Union (AU) focuses on regions and the idea that the AU is supposed to represent Africa in all its vastness, complexity and diversity.

The AU is rooted in Pan-Africanism, an ideology that people of African descent are purpose-driven and can rely on themselves in opposition to the contention by white supremacy that black people are reliant and dependent on the "benevolence" of white people to make progress. One of the founding fathers of Pan-Africanism was WEB Du Bois, who was a sociologist, a historian and a civil

rights activist. Du Bois was born and educated in the United States of America (USA). While visiting Ghana, Du Bois spoke with Ghanaian President, Kwame Nkrumah, about the creation of a new encyclopaedia of the African diaspora. Du Bois relocated to Ghana to begin work on the encyclopaedia and after the United States refused to renew his passport, Du Bois became a Ghanaian citizen as a symbolic gesture. Du Bois' health declined during his stay in Ghana, and he passed two years after he arrived in Ghana and was buried at Osu Castle in Accra, which was the then seat of government. In one of Du Bois' books, *Africa, Its Geography, People and Products and Africa - Its Place in Modern History*, he states,

> In every branch of human endeavour Africa made an advance in agriculture and irrigation; in the domestication of animals; and particularly in the use of iron and mining of metals; in the manufacturing of cloth and utensils; in the building of temples; in the organisation of family, clan, nation and empire; in military organisation and genius, and the great civilizations of the Nile and the Niger; and the lesser but notable cultures of the East and West Coast and the Congo Valley. In all these ways and places the work was done by black people (Du Bois, 1977: 11-12).

In this study, these positive aspects expressed by Du Bois that Africans are capable of developing themselves in various spheres and can rely on their potential to actualise themselves, especially the youth, are important in the career construction process. In addition, the contributions of the 2063 African Union Commission are also relevant to this study. For example, this 2063 AUC's objective seeks to:

> Support young people as drivers of Africa's renaissance, through investment in their health, education and access to technology, opportunities and capital, and concerted strategies to combat youth unemployment and underemployment. Ensure faster movement on the harmonization of continental admissions, curricula, standards, programmes, and qualifications and raise the standards of higher education to enhance the mobility of African youth and talent across the continent (African Union Commission, 2015:17).

The AUC 2063 outcomes that are relevant to this study are, one, Africa shall socially, economically, politically, and educationally empower youth through the full implementation of the African Youth Charter (AYC). For example, when it comes to education, the AYC, out of 31 articles, article number 13's objective relates to 'Education and Skills Development'. This 13th article's objective on education and the development of skills outlines that every youth shall have the right to education and quality education. Additionally, the youth shall also be exposed to all forms of education including formal, informal, non-formal, life life-long learning and these forms of education are to meet the different needs of youth. All these forms of education in this study are vital in the career construction process. For instance, in this study, formal education, which is organised and structured, administered by policies such as the Government Gazettes and CAPS, the curriculum objectives, methodology, and content counts. Furthermore, in formal education, the interaction that includes the LO teachers and subject teachers when careers are constructed, the LO teachers are expected to interact with the LO department officials such as the LO subject advisors for workshops and to keep up with the new information in the curriculum are all key. However, Watts (2009) argues that learning entwines not only formal education and training but informal learning also gained in the workplace and elsewhere. For example, in this study, informal education encompasses daily life activities and learning that involves collaborations and interactions with the wider society members such as career counsellors, family members and the world of work people (Greenhowa & Lewin, 2016; Hidayat, Fitri & Al-falathi, 2018). When it comes to non-formal education, Colardyn and Bjornavold (2004) enable us to understand that non-formal education consists of activities that are not marked as learning, although these activities contain important learning aspects. For example, in the career construction process, activities such as the chores that learners were exposed to in their upbringing may become life experiences and point to a career path.

Secondly, the 2063 AUC also commits that youth's talents and interests in the African continent will be advanced, rewarded and protected for the well-being of the society. This, for instance, suggests the nurturing of young people's interests and talents so that the youth is prepared to meet the challenges of the adolescent stage. In this study, the issue of interests and talents in young people plays an

important role as these aspects enable the learners to align with a particular career choice congruent with their personality grouping (Holland, 1997). The issue of 2063 AUC commitment where youth's advancement through careers is supported is also addressed in this study. For example, young people with their careers can tackle the socio-economic challenges in the country by being encouraged to become entrepreneurs and employ other society members.

Thirdly, the 2063 AUC's end product that is directly talking to this study looks at young African men and women they will be the path breakers of the African knowledge society and will contribute significantly to innovation and entrepreneurship. In all of these, young people will be creative, energetic, and innovative to be the driving force behind the continent's political, socio-cultural and economic transformation (AUC, 2015). These outcomes are valid and support career construction in learners. However, in all of these discussed 2030 SDGs, SADC and 2063 AUC that are part of the career construction process, it is key that LO teachers are also fully supported. For example, after the in-service training, LO teachers are changed to the following year to teach other subjects and be replaced by teachers who have not taught LO before.

2.4 LIFE ORIENTATION (LO) SUBJECT

LO is similar to a subject that used to be called career guidance before the South African 1994 democratic elections. Post 1994**,** the South African Schools Act (SASA) 84 of 1996, accentuates LO as a core subject which must be taught from Grade 3 to Grade 12. This subject is described by CAPS as a learning area that guides and prepares learners for life and its possibilities (DBE, 2011). This CAPS ideology or ideal is in line with Savickas' philosophy of interventions seeking to assist individuals in adapting to the life challenges that are also encountered in the world of work; one of the theories used in this study. CAPS also regards LO as a subject that guides learners to develop their full potential and provides them with opportunities to make informed choices regarding personal and study opportunities and future careers (DBE, 2011). Building on the CAPS principles, the Competency Framework for CDP in South Africa (2016) document mandates that by the end of Grade 9, learners are expected to have chosen their careers,

which is often not the case owing to structural and environmental problems that prevail in the education system. Although following similar philosophies as South Africa, some countries have found better success at crafting career construction interventions probably because of how the interventions are couched.

2.4.1 LO in South America

LO is also a subject that forms part of the school curriculum in South American countries like Columbia and Brazil. In South America, it seems as if LO is associated with personal resource concepts such as optimism, hope and adaptation. For example, using the concept of optimism, in South American countries such as Columbia and Brazil, optimism is viewed as a belief that good things happen in life and the ability of an individual to be overall positively satisfied with life (Zenger, Finck, Zanon, Jimenez, Singer & Hinz, 2013; Hutz, Midgett, Pacico, Bastianello & Zanon, 2014; Dellazzana-Zanon, Zanon, Tudge & Freitas, 2021). In turn, this positive belief presents correlations with qualities such as self-esteem and hope in others (Zanon, et al, 2014). In the world of work, optimism is interlinked with personal resources. Personal resources in the world of work are the techniques and skills individuals use to express their physical, emotional, social, psychological, and vocational behaviours to try and reduce efforts or adapt to the job demands (Zenger et al, 2013). In this study, personal resources may assist the Grade 9 learners as they construct careers to adapt to the school and life demands.

South American researchers such as Zenger et al (2013), Zanon et al (2014) and Dellazzana-Zanon et al (2021) seem to find a connection between optimism and psychological adjustments regarding stressful life events. In addition, optimism is connected to adaptation and active coping skills. These positive aspects such as vocational behaviours, life experiences and adaptation drawn from Savickas are important in this study and will be used as part of the framework that will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

Optimism is linked to physical and mental health, social support, healthy behaviour and even healing after surgery. In adolescents, the age group focus of

this study, the development of optimism is traced to childhood and is associated with personality factors and traced back to family relations and parental styles (Zanon et al, 2014). This suggests that the type of interactions the children are exposed to and involved in within families have an impact on their world view which shapes expectations of the future and indeed the career choices they make. This view is supported by Dellazzana-Zanon et al (2021) who argue that optimism is important in adolescents at this stage as a good deal of their thinking and interests are about life purpose and mostly focus on their studies, careers and family. In this study, all these discussed South American views about the importance of optimism which involve among other things, the individual's self-concept, health and social issues, careers and the world of work are important in the career construction process. These key aspects such as optimism, hope and the ability to adapt that seem important in South America are embedded in the LO subject in South Africa and discussed in the next section.

2.4.2 The LO curriculum in South Africa

There seems to be different disciplines in the LO curriculum and each discipline has its curriculum. The LO CAPS curriculum refers to these disciplines as themes. They are the Development of the Self in Society; Health, Social and Environmental Responsibility; Constitutional Rights and Responsibilities; Physical Education; and the World of Work. Career construction is a topic that falls under the world of work theme.

There are also different topics under the aforementioned five LO themes. For example, the world of the work theme which is part of career construction is part of consists of various topics such as teaching about time management skills, knowledge of the world of work and teaching about careers and subject choice. In this arrangement where the LO curriculum appears to have five disciples, there are five specific aims and one of the specific aims that appears to be aligned with the construction will be discussed in the next section. Although these five themes that constitute the LO subject are different, they are connected and regarded to be of equal importance (DBE, 2011). However, it is important to mention that the 2016 Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South

Africa mentions that CAPS includes career construction as a key deliverable in the LO subject. In the Grade 9 LO CAPS document, the construction of careers, which is a topic for this study as mentioned earlier, is taught during the 3rd term, which is around August and September.

Watts (2009) explains that countries vary in the manner they deliver career construction. For example, according to Watts (2009), career construction can be a stand-alone programme that is run as a separate course. Career construction can also have programmes that can be comprehensive and address the personal, health and social studies aspects. These career construction comprehensive programmes are found in countries such as Malta and Austria. At times, career construction programmes in countries such as Sweden and the Czech Republic can be infused within all subjects across the curriculum. While in countries such as France, career construction programmes can be provided outside the formal curriculum (Watts, 2005). In South Africa, it seems as if career construction is comprehensive and encapsulated within LO as explained earlier. This arrangement where one subject has multiple disciplines sometimes causes challenges. These challenges will be discussed in the next two sections.

2.4.2.1 The aim of LO

One of the specific aims of LO is to teach learners how to discover and nurture their interests and abilities while they are still learning at school. This aim is talking directly to this study, that is exploring how LO teachers guide Grade 9 learners in the career construction process. The nurturing of interests and abilities as pointed out in the LO subject are likely to influence the learner's future careers and subject choice (DBE, 2011). In this study, interests and abilities are Holland's key interpersonal attributes that group individuals according to the RIASEC personality groupings; a theory used in this study. There are other policy documents that talk about the LO aims that are aligned with the construction of careers at schools. For instance, SAQA (2012) also stipulates that LO aims to guide learners to align their subject choices and make sound career decisions. However, all these aforementioned aims seek to highlight the importance of the teaching of careers and subject choice in South Africa. In this regard, the

informants such as the LO teachers and the LO subject advisors shared with me during the interviews that most universities seem not to recognise LO in the Admission Point Score (APS). This seems to affect the importance of the LO subject, a subject unfortunately of which career construction is part.

2.4.2.2 The time allocated to LO

The time allocated to the teaching of LO from Grade 7 to Grade 9 is 80 hours a year. Out of those 80 hours, career construction is allocated 11 hours while only three hours are distributed for teaching careers, subject choices and counselling (DBE, 2011). In this regard, Maree (2009) notes that the time that is allocated to career construction might not be sufficient. I support this view of insufficient time given to the teaching of career construction. For example, when I reflect as a former LO teacher, I can relate to the teaching of careers and subject choices taken simply and not given the importance this topic deserves because of the time factor. In this study, the LO department officials, SMT, LO teachers and even the Grade 9 learners pointed out that the time allocated to the teaching of careers and subject choice was not enough.

2.4.2.3 Who gets to teach the LO subject?

Most schools do not have permanent teacher posts for the LO subject (Watts & Fretwell, 2004; Hay, 2018). Teachers who are tasked to guide learners when constructing careers are also not trained as LO teachers or CDP (Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa, 2016). In some cases, LO is allocated to novice teachers. This looks like the turnaround time of teachers who teach LO is not enough to give those teachers a fair command of the subject. Although LO is given a high status by the various policies and the Constitution as discussed in Chapter One, the teaching of careers, subject selection including career counselling within the LO curriculum looks like it is not given the support it deserves, as it is taught by the LO teachers who are neither LO specialists nor CDP. Furthermore, the Grade 9 LO CAPS syllabus recommends career counselling as an intervention when careers and subject choices are taught. However, there is no directive on how this mediation should

be done; hence, often career counselling is not rendered in most schools. In this study, all these aspects as pointed out might further constrain the delivery of career construction which forms part of LO.

2.4.2.4 The challenge of embedding career construction in an LO subject

Collins and Barnes (2017) argue that when there is a combination of different disciplines in a subject, there is a possibility of content overload. These authors also contend that one of the disciplines will have a limited time in the curriculum. An example of this content overload can be seen in the LO subject as discussed earlier that the LO subject consists of five different disciplines or themes. It was also discussed that in one of these themes which is the world of work, there are various topics such as the teaching of career construction.

In South Africa, embedding career construction in an LO subject that has multiple disciples seems to create challenges. For example, as mentioned in Chapter One, LO teachers are not trained as LO teachers or CDP. What happens at schools is that teachers are selected to teach LO and undergo in-service training. In this arrangement, the Competency Framework for CDP in South Africa (2016) allows the trained teachers to be removed in the next year and replaced with teachers who in most cases need training. When LO teachers are trained and then removed the next year, this may become a challenge to teach career construction which is part of an LO subject that has many disciplines. Some of the LO teachers might even find it difficult to relate to the connectedness of the different curricula that are in one subject. The LO teachers may also have difficulties understanding some disciplinary concepts they are not familiar with.

A similar study that sought to investigate the training needs or preparedness of LO teachers to effectively teach career guidance focused at two rural secondary schools in Limpopo was conducted by Modiba and Sefotho in 2019. In their study, Modiba and Sefotho (2019) also found that embedding career construction in an LO subject causes challenges which include uncertainty in LO teachers when teaching career construction and even sheer inability to teach the LO subject.

This finding is in line with the observation of this study that LO teachers are not adequately prepared for their tasks. They are, therefore, in need of training and support to effectively discharge their responsibilities to assist learners in their career construction process. Without this needed support, the aims of the career construction effort are unlikely to be achieved adequately. For example, the LO teachers pointed out that it makes it difficult to teach career construction properly as ‘there is too much to be done’ in the LO subject.

The second aspect raised by Collins and Barnes (2017) is that when there are multiple disciplines in one subject, there is a possibility that one of the curriculum disciplines may not have sufficient attention. For instance, when it came to the teaching of career construction which appears as careers and subject choice in the LO subject, almost all the informants such as the LO department officials, the SMT, LO teachers and the Grade 9 learners complained that the time allocated to the teaching of careers and career choice was not enough. In this study, these discussed aspects of content overload in an LO subject and the insufficient time allocated to it seem to affect the teaching of career construction in the Grade 9 learners negatively.

Another challenge of embedding career construction in an LO subject in this study was that because the LO subject seems not taken seriously and is sometimes viewed as inferior. These negative perceptions are easily carried into the teaching of careers and subject choice. On the issue that the LO subject is not taken seriously, the LO teachers at the selected school revealed that the LO in Grade 12 is the only subject that is not marked externally, but internally by the LO school teachers. This kind of arrangement has some drawbacks as compared to externally marked subjects. For instance, with the externally marked subjects, there seems to be more objectivity that is brought by the independent external examiners.

As a former teacher, I also marked the Grade 12 papers. On the day we arrived at the marking centre, which was usually on Sundays, we would meet in the evening with the subject advisors and the team leaders who were called senior markers to discuss the paper and the memorandum. We would as subject

teachers discuss how to approach or teach certain sections in a subject; how certain sections are connected to other subjects and how to better assess learners in various topics. These discussions sometimes continued while we were marking or during breaks. In this study, unfortunately, these learning experiences and knowledge sharing are unlikely to happen in LO teachers as the subject is marked by its teachers and at their schools.

2.5 LO TEACHERS

Watts (1998) argues that the interaction between career guidance teachers and career counsellors plays a vital role in the delivery of proper career construction. To enable learners to have a solid foundation and build careers of their choice, Hooley (2015) clarifies this collaboration and explains that the role of teachers is to convey pedagogic knowledge, while career counsellors assist with theory and knowledge of the labour market and link the two with the world of work. A better understanding of teachers who guide learners in career construction claims as follows:

> … they not only need to have knowledge and experience of the diverse package of skills required in professions, but they also need to know how to convey those skills to others [including learners]. On top of this, they need to continuously update their knowledge in response to changes in technology and working practices (Field et al, 2014: 60).

LO teachers also need to be proficient in group facilitation skills, individual and group assessment skills, labour market knowledge, knowledge of the content and how to teach LO and career development theory used in the curriculum (Kay & Fretwell, 2003; Hay, 2018; Modiba & Sefotho, 2019; Seherrie & Mawela, 2022). Above all, the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Goal number 4, which is about quality education "…calls that at the end of secondary education, young people should be able to excel in subject-related knowledge and possess personal and social skills" (UN, 2016:8). In this study, these requirements of the LO teachers to possess aspects such as knowledge of how to teach career construction properly and interact with the career-related stakeholders is key.

In South Africa, as discussed in Chapter One, LO teachers who are responsible for the proper delivery of career construction are not trained as LO teachers or CDP. To elaborate on this point, when it comes to the teacher's qualifications in South Africa, the 2016 Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners requires teachers to have spent at least four years in post-school higher education institutions to teach at the Foundation, Intermediate or Senior Phase. As part of these qualifications, the LO teachers are expected to have taken LO as an academic subject. However, most higher learning institutions do not offer LO as a course. To empower LO teachers to be well-equipped to provide a certain level of career construction, LO teachers attend in-service training. These in-service workshops are offered for instance by the DBE where LO teachers are assisted with career-related matters. This includes information such as how to facilitate curriculum interpretation, advising and visiting schools when needed and planning the careers' day with schools (Watts & Fretwell, 2004).

In South Africa, LO teachers are also supported by organisations such as the Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDPSETA) and the Professional Body for Career Education (PACE). The ETDPSETA assists with schools' career exhibitions, career workbooks and the identification of the skills that are required in various careers, while PACE supports LO teachers and government policymakers with career guidance programmes (Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa, 2016). Other relevant interventions are meant to advance the teaching of career construction at schools. For instance, CAPS 2011 mentions stakeholders such as the National Youth Development Association (NYDA), non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the assistance of private companies. Stakeholders such as the NYDA assist with the fostering and acquisition of occupational skills in youth (NYDA Portal, 2021). NGOs and private companies are often used for career-related activities such as 'take a girl to work' which aid in voluntary work experience (DBE, 2011).

The aforementioned measures that seek to advance LO teachers are valid. However, what is puzzling is that the very 2016 Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa document which acknowledges

that most teachers who teach LO are neither trained as LO teachers nor CDP, and thereafter empowers those LO teachers with in-service training, is the same document that states, “This educator [teachers] may, in the next year, be reassigned to a new teaching role and another educator [teacher] may be assigned” (Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa, 2016:52). Literature also reveals that LO teachers are unable to lay a solid foundation in learners when careers are constructed as they do not have enough knowledge of the career development theories to teach it and changed frequently (Pillay, 2012; Hay, 2018; Modiba & Sefotho, 2019; Seherrie & Mawela, 2022). Regarding the lack of training in LO teachers, it is important to mention the survey on one of the latest Career Development Activities conducted by the DHET in 2013/2014. This report tabled that LO teachers need training when guiding learners in career construction. While I agree with this observation, I think as shared in the interviews by the LO coordinator, LO teachers after receiving training, should be retained at least for five years before they are changed so that proper guidance is received by the learners.

2.6 GRADE 9 LEARNERS AND CAREER CONSTRUCTION

In South Africa, Grade 9 learners are between 14 and 15 years old and are sometimes referred to as youth or school-going youth. During this stage, Modecki, Zimmer-Gembeck and Guerra (2017) argue that some learners often have challenges associated with the adolescent stage such as the ability to manage emotions and decision-making. These Grade 9 learners also go through a process of understanding their interests, what they want to do, exploring various career options and career decision-making (Hodkinson, 2009; Porfeli & Lee, 2012; Rojewski, 2021). The recognition of interests when careers are constructed is one of the frameworks underpinning this study where interests and identification of skills in a particular career field are key in career construction to match the world of work (Holland,1977;1985). Additionally, when learners are exposed to various career fields, chances are they can arrive at rational career decisions in their intended career paths (Rayman,1993; Mitchell & Rost-Banik, 2018). Furthermore, Stead and Watson (2017) argue that when learners are taught about career decisions, they are also granted opportunities to grasp other

skills such as how to conduct job searches and employment-related matters. All these skills that are learnt by learners when constructing careers can be applied generally in their studies when searching for career information and beyond school (Maguire, 2004).

Literature also enables us to understand that career construction is a holistic approach, which comprises interactions with various people and environments (McMahon & Patton, 2016). This includes the learners' experiences and the influence of parents, siblings, community members, and teachers (Super, 1981; Ferry, 2006, Ritchie & Ord; 2017). In this study, these interactions need to be coordinated by the LO teachers to assist learners to form their identities and construct careers that suit their needs in preparation for the world of work. This interaction will be further discussed in Chapter Four and the framework developed by this study in Chapter Seven. Literature also reveals that interactions that orientate learners to the world of work while still at school may enable them to adapt and cope with their career planning and future uncertainties (Gulsen, et al, 2021; Cabras & Mondo, 2018). Assisting learners to adapt and cope with the changing world forms part of Savickas' career construction theory which is used as additional theoretical framework in this study. It is during these engagements that learners can figure out the skills that are needed in the world of work. Being enlightened about the desired career choices may have a positive impact on career decision-making (Hallam et al, 2015). During the construction of careers, all these aspects are done by learners under the guidance of teachers. While this is the case, the literature also points out that while departmental policies focus on the achievement of content knowledge, the changing world of work requires teachers to pay attention to certain types of skills taught in the classroom and outside the school, which are gained through volunteering (Curry, Burholt & Hennessy, 2014). Patton and McMahon (2016) also note that at times it may not be easy for learners to construct careers as they may be faced with identity challenges. Furthermore, learners may experience career indecision which might be temporal (Creed, Patton & Prideaux, 2006) or result in continual career indecisiveness (Fuqua & Hartman,1983; Swanson & D'Achhiardi, 2005). Career indecisiveness in learners is associated with personal qualities such as a lack of career information, low self-esteem, perfectionism, and high levels of

anxiety (Di Fabio et al, 2013). In this study, all these already discussed aspects that may face learners when constructing careers put LO teachers, services and activities at the forefront for proper guidance.

2.7 PARENTAL SUPPORT AND CAREER CONSTRUCTION

Parental support is needed very early on in their children's vocational development. Parents influence their children's vocational development and career choices (Ginevra, Nota, & Ferrari, 2015). They may also support the relationship between career decision-making, career commitment and comprehensive career exploration (Zhang, Yuen & Chen, 2021). On certain occasions, parents may support their children to use smart mobile devices to search for career-related information.

In this study, there are those parents who also assisted their Grade 9 learners with their career construction. For instance, during the interviews, many learners intimated that their career choices were influenced by their parents. Some of them were taken by their parents for job shadowing at their parents' workplaces. Accounts were also given that parents arranged with uncles and friends to assist with volunteering. My husband and I also supported our twins' career construction while they were still at school. For instance, my daughter who is currently a Candidate Legal Practitioner (formerly known as a Candidate Attorney), had an interest in attending debate sessions at school and during the school holiday breaks. We used to take her to Johannesburg to attend Model United Nations debating programmes. These programmes she attended mimicked the United Nations and its various bodies and assisted learners in thinking about strategy in addition to making a case for the country they have been allocated. When they were in Grade 11, I took them to a career counsellor at the University of South Africa (Unisa) to be assisted with the careers they wanted to pursue. It brought joy to me to see them pursuing those careers. A study conducted in Italy by Ginevra, Nota and Ferrari in 2015 investigated the parental support, of both mothers and fathers and the adolescent's vocational development which influences career choices.

The findings suggested that both parents play an important part in supporting the intended career choice of their children. This study also noted that it is important for parents to be involved in their children's occupational development.

Another study that is relevant to this study was conducted by Zhang, et al (2021) in China. In this study by Zhang, et al (2021), relationships among career-related parental support, vocational identity and career adaptability in college students' interrelationships and gender differences were investigated. The findings noted that on the positive side, there was a strong relationship between career-related parental support and students' career adaptability that affects career decision-making, career commitment and comprehensive career exploration. However, on the negative side, findings showed a strong relationship where male students identified themselves more to their male parents, while female students identified themselves less to their male parents. A study conducted in Greece regarding parental involvement and their positive attitude toward mobile usage is important to note. Although the study was conducted on toddlers, it may affect the usage of technology in the construction of careers. The belief is that if children have experience using technology for education purposes, they may use that skill when constructing careers at their later stage of development.

In this study, the foregoing studies may help both parents and LO teachers to understand the different roles they may play in supporting learners in constructing careers. In addition to the literature cited, I think parents may also support learners at home through activities such as games that can help children to know their interests. For example, both my husband and I used to play a game with our twins on some Fridays in the evening and over the weekends. For instance, we would first identify one positive interest in each of them. After that, the four of us including them would point out one positive aspect about each family member. The twins were also given a chance on some Saturdays and Sunday evenings to share for a few minutes any story they have listened to or read from the books, new papers or magazines that are at home or accessed on their smartphones. These activities may assist children to be aware of what they are good at and develop positive attitudes that can help them in the career construction process. Positive attitudes may assist learners to try and adapt to the challenges and ever-

changing conditions of life. However, it should not be downplayed that because of aspects such as the socio-economic background and the level of education of parents, not all homes may be able to support children to be able to construct a career. It is for this reason that LO teachers should be equipped so that learners whose parents are unable to support them may not be doomed for life.

2.8 CAREER CONSTRUCTION CAREER-RELATED SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES GLOBALLY

2.8.1 Career construction services internationally

Worldwide career construction-related services are significant as they help individuals at various stages of their lives to build and manage careers (OECD, 2004; Pillay, 2020). Career construction-related services are offered by a group of different stakeholders such as ministries, agencies and other career-oriented partners (Watts, 1996; Hooley, 2015). These services may be rendered in various institutions such as schools, higher learning institutions and in public employment or private sectors (OECD, 2004). They may also be dispensed on a one-on-one basis or to groups; in person or at a distance and accessed telephonically or through technology such as the internet or email; delivered in print or electronically. Furthermore, they include intervention techniques such as self-assessment tools, career management programmes and individual or group counselling (Watts & Fretwell, 2004; Cook & Maree, 2016). Although these various groups of services are scattered and offered by different organisations, they need to work coherently through policies (Watts, 2009). In career construction, Watts and Fretwell (2004), Higginbotham and Hughes (2006), Hooley (2015) and Borbely-Pecze, Hlouskova and Sprlak (2021) promote an understanding that services promote better education and enhance economic growth that enables people to live better lives.

At schools, Hodgetts (2009) and Andrews (2011) highlight that career-related services need to be implemented to assist learners to arrive at knowledgeable decisions that link learners to programmes that meet their needs. Hooley (2015) further advocates that schools are expected to encompass services that render a stable careers programme that puts careers at the centre. For example, the

chosen career programme by a school is supposed to enable all the learners to have access to a wide range of career-related information and options. This chosen career programme may also be incorporated into the school's vision as a commitment concerning the teaching of careers (Andrews & Hooley, 2018). Additional examples of good career services also embrace the support rendered by the SMT, where the school's leadership connects external experts such as the world of work to the school. More importantly, subject teachers also need to be involved and taking a team approach when careers are taught to linking the curriculum learning to various careers to benefit learners to access and use careers-related information (Gatsby Benchmarks, 2014).

The aforementioned career construction-related services are valid as they seek to render opportunities for learners to explore career options, arrive at rational decisions and assist in understanding the world of work expectations. While this is the case, literature also reveals that career construction-related services are scattered all over the country even though they are linked to policies. Chances are, when they are not found in place, the users may experience problems accessing them (Higginbotham & Hughes, 2006). Some of these problems may hinder the career construction process.

Another challenge that faces career construction-related services is that although the information received online may be easily accessible and helpful, scholars such as Hasan and Abuelrub (2011) are concerned about aspects such as the quality of the information received through websites. Examples in this regard include the frequency of updating the career information, particularly the Labour Market Information (LMI) which changes constantly. Hooley (2012) also contests that sometimes the online information does not provide the appropriate level of details required by the users and there may be no links given for follow-ups. Chen and Jang (2010) further argue that the information provided by developed countries when careers are created may be irrelevant for developing countries as contexts are not the same. Sultana (2017argues that many countries are under the influence of globalisation, which promotes homogeneity, yet the delivery of lifelong services is affected mostly by the political format, the level of economic development and socio-cultural factors that are experienced differently by

countries. For instance, the government may desire to offer the best quality of career construction services to the citizens, but if the country is poor, no government would be expected to spend funds on career facilities and let the citizens starve.

Other service delivery issues faced by countries even if there is economic growth include challenges such as corruption and mismanagement of government funds. In all of this, Roberts (2005) argues that career construction even if it is attached to policies, on its own is poorly equipped to boost the economy of a country and correct social injustice. Within this articulation of disputing that career construction by itself cannot address the socio-economic ills, Rice (2018) warns that legislation and policies in the education system are not enough to address unemployment through career construction on the basis that the teaching of careers at schools has limited time and is a relatively small part of what is taking place in a country.

2.8.2 Career construction services in South Africa

In South Africa, career-related services are also distributed to various stakeholders and linked through policies as it is done globally (National Policy for an Integrated Career Development System for South Africa, 2017). Furthermore, in 2014, the South African government housed these services under the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and referred to them as the Career Development Services (CDS).

In the DBE, career services are coordinated by the Special Learning and Educational Support Unit [SLES], which is expected to liaise with DHET in rendering proper services to the LO teachers and learners (National Policy for an Integrated Career Development system for South Africa, 2017). In addition, services such as career-related workshops are rendered to the LO teachers by the district's LO subject advisors as mentioned in section 2.5 that discussed the LO teachers. Furthermore, career-related partnerships in South Africa that support schools, include organisations such as ETDPSETA, the CDS and the DEL, whose role among other things is to assist learners with aspects such as

career exhibitions and career programmes. Literature supports these partnerships and advocates that teachers on their own, including the LO teachers, are unable to render proper career information, advice and career counselling on their own (Andrews & Hooley, 2018; Modiba & Sefotho, 2019).

The aforementioned programmes and collaborations that seek to reinforce the provision of career-related services in South Africa are impressive. However, in this study, almost all the informants which included the LO department officials, the LO Head of the Department, LO teachers and most learners seemed unaware that career counselling can be provided by the DCS at DHET and by the CDP who are based at the South African Career Development Association (SACDA).

As discussed earlier, the provision of career-related services is often affected by the growth of the GDP in a country. For example, in South Africa, for the past five years, the GDP for the government's general services has been unsatisfactory. For instance, in 2017, the government general services sat at 1.4%. In 2018, these services registered 1,9% with an increase of 0.5%. In contrast, 2019's recording was at 1,4 %, with a slight decline of 0.5% from 2018. In 2020 and 2021 there were respective huge declines. For instance, in 2020, the government general services dropped from 1.4% to 0.7%. In 2021, there was a massive decrease from 0.7% achieved in 2020 to 0.1% (Stats South Africa, 2021).

In this study, these past five years' GDP's unstable figures on one hand directly or indirectly affect the quality of career construction delivered at schools. On the contrary, they require the government to try new initiatives of growth where for example learners are encouraged to construct careers that may make them become entrepreneurs.

2.8.3 Career construction activities globally

Globally, career construction-related activities are viewed as exercises given to individuals regarding the building and maintenance of careers. Career construction activities sometimes overlap with career construction services (Watts & Fretwell, 2004; Sultana, 2017). Career construction-related activities

just like career construction services are also done individually or in groups; carried out in person or remotely and performed through helplines and websites. These exercises consist of operations taken such as self-assessment practices, career search information and participating in counselling interviews (OECD, 2004; EC, 2004). At schools, career construction activities are recognised as a vehicle for better involvement when learners build careers (Hodgetts, 2009). However, countries seem to vary in the provision of these career construction-related exercises. For instance, in most countries, career-related activities may be integrated into the curriculum while in other countries these engagements may be separate and not form part of the curriculum (Andrews, 2011). Nonetheless, in both approaches, the delivery of career construction-related activities is viewed as effective (Hooley et al, 2012).

Career construction-related exercises also include information such as teaching about subject choices, working on career paths, paying attention to the latest labour-associated information and visitation of career websites (Watts, 2013). Other recommended activities that enhance the teaching of construction careers encompass undertakings such as volunteering. Volunteering enables learners among other things to gain experience and learn practical skills that add value when pursuing career paths at tertiary institutions (Baron, Bates & O'Donovan, 2019). This might benefit a volunteer when introduced later to that career prospect and prepare a learner for the world of work (Mackenzie et al, 2015). Literature also notes other examples of career construction-related activities such as collaborations of subject teachers with parents, community members and employers where information is shared (Glaze, 2016). Career construction-related activities may include a variety of people such as specialists, local agencies and educational institutions that may be brought to the school to talk about careers (Rusch et al, 2009). In this study, all these engagements when careers are constructed seem to have a positive impact on building networks and strengthening learners' career path decisions.

Literature also reveals that career construction-related activities allow learners to make well-informed decisions on career fields and subject selection (Furbish & Reid, 2013; Sefotho, 2017). These include activities where learners have

engagements with mentors and visit workplaces for job shadowing to gain experience. Activities that link curriculum learning to careers where learners are asked to write CVs, for instance, are encouraged (Andrews & Hooley, 2018). Furthermore, activities where subject teachers are given opportunities to talk about their teaching subjects and give information on careers that could be pursued from the subjects they teach, are also supported (Hodgetts, 2009). However, all these mentioned career construction activities sound valid, but as a former teacher, I have witnessed learners who have engaged themselves in activities of a particular career path then later develop no interest in that field or because of inability to find work end up working in a different career field altogether.

2.8.4 Career construction activities in South Africa

The 2016 Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa mandates the DBE to support schools with activities such as attending career exhibitions, engaging in exercises of career booklets, watching career videos, attending learners' and parents' career evenings, participating in non-standardised self-exploration questionnaires during the teaching of careers and subject choices. In complying with these stipulated requirements, the DBE through CAPS, assists the LO teachers with lesson plans which are prepared by the department officials such as the LO district subject advisors and the provincial coordinator. In addition to these mandated activities and support given to LO teachers, the Grade 9 CAPS syllabus, among other things, mandates LO teachers to conduct activities such as a pre-test when careers and subject choices are taught (DBE, 2011). The Grade 9 CAPS syllabus also requires LO teachers to give exercises where learners are required to write all the subjects in which they excel and those at which they are weak. This activity where Grade 9 learners focus on their abilities and interests in the career construction process seems to be in line with Holland's theory. A theory used in this study pays more attention to the interests of learners when careers are constructed.

Other relevant activities are stipulated in the Grade 9 LO CAPS document. For instance, the Grade 9 learners are required to have an activity where learners are

expected to prepare a poster regarding a career they are going to pursue. Thereafter, they should list all the subjects that are required for that intended career. Furthermore, after learners are taught about volunteering, they are given the undertaking to arrange and visit places that are linked to their intended careers to gain experience (DBE, 2011). This activity of volunteering may be linked to Savickas' career construction, one of the theories used in this study. Savickas (2005), among other things, encourages individuals to be prepared to adapt to the world of work conditions when constructing careers. In this regard, those learners who have to visit workplaces to gain experience in the career they intend to pursue may have to change their schedules and adapt to the new conditions as they construct careers.

The literature also notes that both career-related activities and services are poor in South African schools. For instance, the report on the survey of Career Development Activities released in 2014 tabled a poor career service provision by the DBE where there were "no career booklets guides, no resources, no career videos and no provision of careers advice" (DHET, 2014: 12). In the same report, the career linked stakeholders are described as experiencing challenges such as lack of clear negotiated duties and responsibilities. Now if the South African government fails to render adequate career construction at schools, whose services reach people in vast numbers (Watts, 2009), all the efforts these identified career-related services and activities may limit the discharge of proper career construction in the country.

In this study, some of these career-related activities specified by the Grade 9 CAPS syllabus such as listing all the relevant subjects for the intended career and volunteering were done by some of the learners. However, I observed that the activity that involves pre-tests was not done during the time I collected data.

There is also an element that career construction is reformulated along with life-long learning that is interconnected to the learning objectives, labour market and social inclusion objectives (Sultana, 2004) as briefly discussed in the next section.

2.9 CAREER CONSTRUCTION AND THE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

2.9.1 Learning Objectives Internationally

Watts (2006) claims that learning objectives relate to aspects where learners are well-informed and assisted in constructing careers that suit their interests; supported to manage career paths. Learning objectives also include encouragement given to the learners to be aware of themselves. For example, where there is a need for help, learners are supported to arrive at rational career decisions and to take responsibility for their chosen career paths (Watts & Sultana, 2004; Andrews, 2011). Learning goals that support career construction include improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the education systems (participation, engagement, retention performance and progression) and improving the interface between education and the labour market (McCarthy & Borbely-Perze, 2021). This refers to the ability of the education system to support and prepare learners for the world of work to find employment or become entrepreneurs.

Recent research reveals that learning objectives include thinking about skills for work, experiences of life, learning to adapt to life difficulties and exposure to the world of work experiences that is enriched by employers (Savickas, 2012; Spencer & Lucas, 2021; Schleicher, 2022). When it comes to career construction, in 2003, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) proposed that through the learning objectives, career construction can improve the quality of education and training systems. In this regard, quality education is viewed to enhance an individual's well-being through a career. It also enables critical thinking and imaginative understanding that contributes to economic growth and enhances a society to pull together (Nussbaum, 2000). All these aforementioned aspects about learning objectives are learnt and seem to play a key role in the career construction process.

Hearne and Neary (2021) note that in high schools, through the learning objectives, learners are equipped with career-related information, subject choices and the required skills for various career fields and jobs. Du Toit (2005) adds that

learning objectives contribute positively to the growth of human resources and enhance a match between education and the labour market. All these points are convincing in the career construction process. However, Bimrose (2008) argues that even though learning objectives are attended to, there are aspects such as gender inequalities in women that still exist in schools when it comes to career choices. In the same vein, UNESCO (2015) also contests that women's interests and educational achievements in most countries are sometimes developed through learning objectives while still at school. For example, women's interests are often restricted by certain career choices such as electricians and plumbers that favour men.

Bimrose et al, (2017) further explain that although most countries have tried to close the gap and support women at schools to study subjects such as Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), which are no longer restricted to men, nevertheless, young women still do not study these subjects.

Even those women who have studied the STEM subjects related courses at tertiary institutions, however when they join the workforce, they are not likely to work in the science domains (Bimrose et al, 2017). These gender inequalities where science-related subjects are learnt mostly by men than women may have an impact on the learning objectives which benefit career construction. In all of this, an attempt to solve these gender inequalities may be linked to the aim of this study, which is to find ways to support LO teachers to guide learners properly to construct careers of their interests and choose relevant subjects for those career paths.

2.9.2 Learning Objectives in South Africa

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, South Africa has adopted the same learning objectives as endorsed by the OECD countries (National Policy for an Integrated Career Development System for South Africa, 2017). In line with the already discussed global learning objectives, where career construction is viewed to enhance an individual's well-being through learning, South Africa too has policies that support the learning objectives through career construction.

For instance, the South African Constitution Section 29 of Clause 1 declares that every individual has a right to basic education. In the South African context, this implies that learning is compulsory for all children aged 7 to 15 years old. In this study, the 14 to 15-year-old cohort includes the Grade 9 learners who are expected to be guided properly by the teachers when constructing careers so that in Grade 10 they learn subjects that are required by their career choices.

Another important legislation that seems to support career construction through learning objectives is the SASA 84 of 1996, which among other things combined schools irrespective of race into public government schools and private schools (Presidency, 1996). In this regard, the South African education system introduced, from Grade 8 to Grade 12, LO as a compulsory subject where career construction teaching is part. Although the LO subject will be discussed in depth in this chapter later, one of the learning objectives of the Grade 9 LO CAPS also commits to guide learners to make informed and responsible decisions about subject choices, further studies and careers (DoE, 2011).

The learning of career construction in South Africa is also supported by the HRDSA 2010-2030. Strategy Three of this document undertakes to ensure that career construction is accessed by all the learners from Grade 8 to Grade 12. Furthermore, the SAQA 2012 policy document also commits that the teaching of career construction supports that the learning objectives have the potential to allow learners to choose careers of their choice and enrol in programmes that suit their needs. In this study, all these policies are talking directly to this research that seeks to find ways to support LO teachers when guiding learners to make informed decisions about careers they wish to pursue.

The aforementioned South African learning objectives set to be attainable through career construction may not be achieved. One, during the apartheid era, which is from the late 1940s to 1994, the teaching and provision of career construction and counselling varied between black, Coloured, Indian and white learners (Stead & Watson, 2017). Learning in subjects such as career guidance, which then dealt with career construction and counselling in black schools was particularly underdeveloped. This was used to sustain apartheid where learners were excluded from participating in the economy of the country and designed for

cheap labour, while in the schooling of a white race, young people were prepared to contribute to the economy of the country (Dovey, 1983; Flederman, 2009). For instance, the teaching of career construction section in white schools among other things involved services such as the appointment of permanent guidance teachers who worked hand in hand with the officials from the Department of Manpower (currently known as the DEL) so that learners were aware of the skills and careers that were in surplus and demand (Stead & Watson, 2017). However, this advanced support that sought to render sufficient career construction was minimal and or lacking in black schools.

Post-1994, to attain the learning objectives, new legislation and policies were put in place as discussed earlier to try and reverse racism that was entrenched in the education system, particularly in the provision of career construction delivery (Walters et al, 2009). However, with all these measures that are in place after the apartheid era, this study has noted challenges that may negatively affect the attainment of learning objectives through career construction. For instance, as mentioned in this section, SAQA's (2012) policy commits to supporting learners to select careers of their choice and register courses that will spur them to their desired career paths. In this study, this poses a challenge. For example, the recent DHET 2013/2014 report on career development activities observed that learners are challenged at schools when they must align subject choices for their career paths because of the limited choice of subjects offered at their schools (DHET, 2013/2014). In addition, sometimes schools are concerned with the Grade 12 good pass rate and deprive learners of the opportunities to select the subjects they want to study, that are in line with their desired careers. These schools without considering the learners' career ambitions often channelled them to subjects such as Mathematics Literacy and Biblical Studies. These subjects are taken by most learners and may negatively affect the supply and demand mechanism in the job market, contributing to the high unemployment rate of learners after leaving school. In addition, recent literature reveals that the over decades' challenges where inferior quality in learning and in the delivery of career construction, which was meted to non-whites, particularly to black learners, still has a profound impact in aspects such as the quality of education and the labour force objectives (Pillay, 2021).

2.10 CAREER CONSTRUCTION AND LABOUR MARKET

2.10.1 Labour Market Objectives Globally

Labour market objectives globally relate to aspects such as improvement of the match between market demands and supply, ways that seek to increase economic growth and the generation of employment in a country (OECD, 2004). These goals are affected by the economy of a country, the acquisition of skills, policies, politics, the education system, and the individual's career choices (Ellison & Van Berkel, 2014; The Economic Times, 2022). In line with these thoughts, scholars such as Hughes et al (2002), Field et al (2014) and Hooley and Dood (2015) enable us to understand that career construction can contribute to achieving these already-mentioned labour force objectives through career choices. For instance, if learners while constructing careers become aware of which career fields are undersupplied and oversupplied, then pursue the undersupplied careers, the labour market objectives can be attained. In addition, Watts (1996) and Field et al (2014) argue that if learners are properly taught by teachers and assisted by career-related people with information that relates to the learners' interests, they are likely to be motivated and become more productive in their jobs. By so doing, Fiske and Ladd (2004) advocate that when relevant workforce information and personal career goals are considered by the learning institutions, the economy of a country is boosted. Furthermore, recent literature argues that in the rapidly changing labour market world, career construction helps to recognise the factors that change the supply and demand curves for employment purposes and take into consideration the causes of those falls (Sultana, 2017; Hooley & Rice, 2019). In this regard, this suggests that when those falls or slopes are detected, proper provision of career construction can contribute to lessening them and reduce any of the factors that may make labour force objectives not obtainable.

One of the key aspects that seem important to accomplish the labour market objectives is the creation of a legislation and policy framework like the LMI to make the environment conducive for the labour market objectives to be achievable. LMI is defined by Jones (1990) and Sparreboom (1999) as any

information which may be qualitative or quantitative regarding the labour force world, that assists individuals in career decisions. Furthermore, LMI helps in the formulation of labour market policies and regulations to solve problems and open opportunities for employment-related aspirations (Esbrogeo & Melo-Silva, 2012). For instance, one of the career construction theorists John Holland used in this study relied on the significance of the LMI. Holland (1973) argues that a person's career ambitions are influenced by the LMI and one's interests. Along the same lines, literature seems to still teach us that the LMI is key to the labour force objectives, the opportunities presented by the world of occupations and relevant to the individual's interests. However, it should be noted that research also makes us aware that LMI at times is not interpreted correctly both by the users and the institutions that are associated with the labour objectives (Mollerup, 1995; Plant, 2004).

Schleicher (2022) asserts that labour market objectives can be achieved at schools when learners interact with the labour force world and form partnerships. In line with this view, Hooley and Dood (2015) concur that when learners construct careers, the information received from these engagements helps them to find jobs that utilise and fulfil their career interests. During these engagements, learners are supported to navigate the transitions between education and employment across their lifespan (Savickas, 2013). Furthermore, South Africa became a member of the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) with the objective of economic development and expansion of market access (Tian, Sarkis et al, 2020). These aspects are positive benefits of labour market objectives that are associated with the proper teaching of career construction while learners are still at school. However, recent literature warns that the global current problems such as instability in the labour market establishments, the changes in career patterns and the high unemployment rate, particularly in youth, may impede the labour market goals (Hughes & Borbely-Pecze, 2021). These worldwide challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, may affect the teaching of career construction, which often contributes to the attainment of the labour force objectives as explained in this section.

2.10.2 Labour Market Objectives in South Africa

In the South African context, labour market objectives are viewed in the same way as in developed countries (National Policy for an Integrated Career Development System for South Africa, 2017). For example, SAQA claims “Career guidance [or career construction] can contribute to several labour market objectives, such as improving the match between demand and supply, improving labour market mobility, improving labour supply, addressing skills shortages, and preventing unemployment" (SAQA, 2012:25). The latest LO CAPS also pledges to “Develop learners’ skills to respond to challenges and play an active and responsible role in the economy and society” (DBE, 2011:8). Furthermore, the South African government also commits to redress past injustices caused by apartheid through education (National Policy for an Integrated Career Development System for South Africa, 2017).

The aforementioned South African commitments to address the labour force objectives, which also seek to redress the racial discrimination that happened during the apartheid era, are plausible. However, it seems as if the South African government expects career construction to help and achieve labour force objectives, yet in the past, career development was used as a political tool to perpetuate racial discrimination between white and non-white citizens (Dovey, 1983). For example, during the apartheid period, the education system implemented in 1948 by the then-ruling National Party through legislation and policies in education, systematically excluded African, Coloured and Asian learners from contributing to the country’s economy. This exclusion of certain races was endorsed by the Bantu Education Act of 1953 based on the decision by the Minister of Native Affairs of that time, Mr Hendrick Verwoerd, that non-whites were to remain unskilled and be left out from competing in the labour market (Naidoo et al, 2017). The aim was to perpetually relegate Africans to rendering cheap labour services by ensuring that they could only work on farms, in mining companies and as domestic workers for the white race (Fiske & Ladd, 2004). In this way, the adequate teaching of career construction which is instrumental in obtaining the labour market objectives as already discussed deprived the non-white learners of the knowledge and skills needed to compete

in the labour force occupations of the country in a meaningful way.

Yes, after 1994, the South African government played a key role and tried to pay attention to the apartheid legacy and set up various policies and commitments that sought to redress the injustices of the past (Bhorat & Oosthuizen, 2005; Reddy, 2016).

For instance, around 2005 and 2006, the government introduced programmes such as the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (AsgiSA), the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) and Umsobomvu Youth Fund. These programmes aimed to accelerate economic growth through skills development and promotion of innovation to try to reduce unemployment in adult and youth populations and poverty levels (McGrath & Akoojee, 2007). Furthermore, at schools, the government established mechanisms or structures to support the teaching of career construction to try and attain the labour force objectives. For example, the government established skills development bodies such as ETDPSETA. This organisation, among other things, focuses on the development of career workbooks and the provision of career-related workshops for both teachers and youth. Another important institution in South Africa that is designated to assist schools in attaining the labour force objectives when careers are built is the DEL. For instance, the DEL's five-year Strategic Plan from 2020 to 2025 intends to pay attention to the programmes and strategies that regulate the labour market and create employment. The DEL also monitors a surplus of unskilled people in the labour market and strives among other things to up-skill them to boost investment in education and training (DEL Strategic Plan, 2020/21 to 2024/25). This commitment is particularly relevant to the subject teachers and LO teachers who are expected to be relied on when learners are guided when constructing careers.

There is also South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), a body that oversees and regulates the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) operations, which is tasked with skills development, among others, in South Africa as explained earlier. SAQA seems to help with the attainment of labour force objectives by aligning qualifications with skills requirements to create economic growth and

reduce unemployment. Additionally, the SAQA document assists the labour market goals by articulating the objectives of the NQF, which states that the personal and economic development of the youth, of which learners are a part, will be advanced by facilitating access to information and employment opportunities. Furthermore, the South African 2030 NDP Vision and Education 2030 Framework for Action refer to skills development to improve chances of employment. In particular, Goal number 4 pledges that "By 2030, [to] substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship" (Education 2030: 21). This pledge also directly talks to the labour market objectives that view career construction as a field that contributes to the achievement of labour force objectives.

Another career-related stakeholder that is identified as promoting the labour force objectives through career construction in South Africa is the CDS. This statutory body is responsible for, among other things, the provision of LMI, which is key when careers are constructed (National Policy for an Integrated Career Development System for South Africa, 2017). The CDS is also mandated to render career construction-related services at schools such as career exhibitions and career counselling services (www.careerhelp.org.za).

All the aforementioned policies and career-related stakeholders are put in place by the South African government to promote the labour market objectives. While I agree with these efforts that are made by the government, it is also important to note that relying on career construction to attain labour force objectives and reverse what happened during the apartheid era seems to be a huge task. Firstly, Sefotho (2017) argues that in South Africa, career construction is normally discharged and taught by teachers who cannot keep up with the constant changes in the labour market. It was also mentioned earlier that LO teachers are not qualified to teach LO as they need training (Modiba & Sefotho, 2019). Even though they undertake service training, the following year, government policy allows them to be reassigned to other duties (Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa, 2016). When this happens, most schools replace the trained teachers with novices or teachers who usually need

training. This practice defeats the very purpose of empowering them with the relevant skills needed when teaching about careers, subject choices and career decision-making.

Secondly, Bimrose et al (2017) argue that even in the post-apartheid period in South Africa, the implementation of gender and ethnic equality has been reported to be slow in the South African labour market. For example, many companies are led by men who are mostly white (Fiske & Ladd, 2004). Furthermore, even when the constructed careers are aligned with the labour force objectives when it comes to being employed, Africans, females, poorly educated, and young people are the most discriminated against and experience inequality (Bhorat & Oosthuizen, 2005), which do not lend support to the ideals of the government.

Thirdly, Kraak (2006) elucidates that for the achievement of labour force objectives, a country must expand its economic growth. Economic growth is the ability of a country to increase the production of goods and services over time (Rammbuda, 2022). Factors of production such as land, labour, capital, and entrepreneurship are used to produce the goods and services to build the economy. While this is the case, the level of economic growth influences the growth of the gross domestic product (GDP), which is the monetary value of all goods and services produced in a period (GDP, 2017). Economic growth is also instrumental in promoting skills utilisation and human resource management (Kadletz, Kettunen, Moreno da Fonseca & Vuorinen, 2021). On the basis that these factors generate funds which can be used to grow the economy and create employment opportunities, they, therefore, support career construction which is key in the attainment of labour market objectives. Currently, in the South African context, economic growth is not looking good. For example, the GDP for general government productions dropped from 0.7 % in 2020 to 0.1% in 2021. In the same years, the production for agriculture and fishing which also generates funds was 14.9% in 2020 and dropped to 8.8% in 2021 (Stats South Africa, 2018-2021). What is more worrying is, for the past four years, the average statistics of skilled youth in South Africa appear to have little improvement. For example, in 2018 the working youth who were low-skilled was estimated at 18.3%, and in 2019, the average reading sat at 18.5%. In 2010, the low-skilled youth recordings were still

at 18.5 %, and in 2020, the statistics increased to 20.5% (Stats South Africa, 2018-2021). While these economic productivity figures do not tell the full story and are cyclical, they should be taken into cognisance in career construction exercises. It is not prudent for learners to register for a course without prior knowledge of the needs of the job market for which that course prepares him or her. As a former secondary teacher, I often meet learners I have taught before, who have post-matric qualifications but are not employable. Some of these former learners have completed a course that the market does not require or already has too many people with the same qualifications.

While the efforts of the government to establish legislative and policy frameworks to improve the employability chances of the young population are appreciated, the country's history, the prevailing environment in the education system and the economy make it difficult for those ideals to be reached. Economic fortunes of countries fluctuate, and it may be argued that as such those of South Africa may change for the better before long. South Africa needs to take stock of its interventions to prepare a labour force that is aligned with the socio-economic needs of the country, to adjust or amend those interventions that have not been useful. Such an exercise will also reveal what new interventions need to be introduced and what old interventions need to be abandoned. Without one of the interventions such as the retaining of the LO teachers for successive years after receiving training, because this seems to defeat the aims sought by entities like SAQA (2012) and the LO CAPS, which seek to improve the labour supply, prevent unemployment and develop learners' skills so that learners may respond to the labour market through career construction. In short, when these labour market objectives are not obtained, society may be affected negatively.

2.11 CAREER CONSTRUCTION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

2.11.1 Social Inclusion Objectives Globally

Social inclusion objectives are globally defined as processes that seek to enhance opportunities for individuals and groups of people who are marginalised so that they are supported to uplift themselves and their societies (World Bank,

2013). In the same vein, UNESCO (2019-2025) regards social inclusion objectives as techniques that attempt to address issues that are related to unfairness, human rights, poverty eradication and gender equality. A broader perspective of social inclusion objectives has been adopted by the Commission of the European Communities (CEC, 2003). This comprehensive perspective undertakes to ensure that even those individuals who are in danger of being impoverished and excluded from their societies are assisted in gaining the chances and means so that they contribute meaningfully to the social, political, economic, and cultural aspects of the societies in which they are part. All these social inclusion objectives definitions imply that an individual's potential in life can be actualised, and societies can be held together, irrespective of background and race, with the assistance of career construction.

Watts and Sultana (2004) argue that career construction can be used as an approach to attain social inclusion objectives. This is done by inspiring learners who are underperforming, not interested in education and on the verge of giving up. Career construction also aids in decreasing the dropout rate in learners by encouraging them to understand and work on their career paths to live meaningful lives (Letseka, 2009; Camilleri & Camilleri; 2016; Fejes et al, 2021). This is done through programmes where teachers can support learners' interests and career ambitions (Hodgetts, 2009; Andrews 2011). For example, Reed (2006) explains that learners' opportunities when building careers can be enhanced through social networks. These social networks include the world of work people where partnerships can be formed with schools to help learners understand the kind of skills that are needed in various occupations or to aspire to become entrepreneurs. The social inclusion objectives consider even those learners who are excluded from their communities. When these learners are supported adequately through career construction, they can re-visit their career aspirations and adapt to life challenges. In this study, the willingness of learners to adapt to life's challenges and their preparedness to learn to adapt to the world of work when constructing careers talks to Savickas' theory that will be discussed in Chapter Three and the developed framework for schools in Chapter Seven.

Literature also reveals that career construction can enhance social inclusion objectives by promoting the aspirations of learners and supporting them in gaining access to opportunities and careers which were confined to a particular race (Watts, 2009; Sultana, 2014). In this study, this is relevant as mentioned earlier that in South Africa during the apartheid era, as certain careers were reserved for the white race. The literature further reveals that proper teaching of career construction enables learners to achieve their full potential in life and build careers of their choice irrespective of their background (Young, 2004). All these assertions about the ability of career construction to improve and obtain social inclusion objectives are compelling and often require proper guidance from teachers. However, Roberts (2005) cautions us that social inclusion objectives may not be addressed through career construction as opportunities that are sought to assist an individual may contradict what is needed by society. For instance, we often see individuals who were assisted by the government through scholarships after completing their studies looking after themselves and not contributing to uplifting their communities. More studies also argue that career construction on its own is ill-equipped to redress social injustices as countries are informed by policies, economic growth and political discourses (Irving, 2010; Sleeter, 2014; Qvortrup & Qvortrup, 2018).

Literature lately contests that on the basis that the gap between the ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’ is widening, coupled with labour markets that are also unstable, the career construction landscape is expected to move away from individualism and collectivism to social justice for the alleviation of poverty in communities (Hooley & Sultana, 2016). Furthermore, Irving (2009) explains that the term social justice does not merely assist individuals, but it includes a sense of correcting a wrong and bringing about a fairer society. In this case, social networks and collaborations are viewed as a lens of resilience to endure under liberalism to attain the social inclusion objectives (Hall & Lamont, 2013). In all of this, literature seems to suggest that to address the social inclusion objectives, the career construction field should incorporate social justice to attain the social inclusion objectives.

2.11.2 Social Inclusion Objectives in South Africa

In the South African context, the social inclusion objectives are understood in the same way as viewed globally (National Policy for an Integrated Career Development System for South Africa, 2017) and already explained in this section. In addition to these global social inclusion intentions, the South African government has programmes that seek to redress past injustices and among other things alleviate poverty. For example, the 1994 Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), reiterated in the 2012 NDP, that no political democracy can survive and thrive when most citizens remain in poverty (DHET, 2017). The NDP (2030), which is the most guiding framework for development, is anchored on two objectives: One is the reduction of poverty and the eradication of inequality. Two, the 2012 SAQA, regards career construction in South Africa as a phenomenon that seeks to ensure that all South Africans regardless of their background, sexual orientation and race are assisted to their best abilities to construct careers and maintain them (NDP, 2030). The success of these mentioned plans of the RDP, NDP and SAQA is measured by the extent to which the lives and opportunities of the poorest South Africans are transformed and sustained through career construction (National Policy for Integrated Career Development System for South Africa, 2017). Within such articulations, the African National Congress (ANC) which governed after the 1994 democratic elections, in trying to alleviate poverty and promote social cohesion, formed an agency called the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) in 2005 which is under the Department of Social Development (DSD). SASSA, among other things, supports disadvantaged and needy learners with social grants (Maqungo, 2022).

It should be noted that although grants are given to all the population groups, this study has focused on the social grants provided to the learners. For instance, the South African government provides a monthly R450 support grant to 7 to 17-year-olds in lower-income households. This age cohort includes learners from Grade 1 to Grade 12 learners, of which Grade 9 learners are part of this study. In the same school age group of 7 to 17 years, parents who foster learners of this age receive R1 060.00 a month. There is also a dependency grant of R1 990.00

offered to caregivers of disabled learners and those who have chronic conditions. Furthermore, during the COVID-19 period, an amount of R350.00 for a social relief distress grant was given to 18 to 59-year-olds. These R350 grants benefit households whose incomes are below R400 a month (Maqungo, 2022). In this case, the Grade 9 learners also benefit. All these efforts done by the ANC to eradicate and prevent those in danger of being impoverished are plausible and seem in line with the South African social inclusion objectives, which seek, among other things, to assist people who are in danger of being impoverished. Table 2.1 shows the number of learners from Grade 8 to Grade 12 by the population who were on a social grant from 2019 to 2021.

Table 2.1: Source: Statistics South Africa, 7- 17-year-old social grant beneficiaries in South Africa

School attendance	2019				
	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Total
Attending	98,7	95,2	82,9	89,9	**98,3**
	2020				
Attending	98,0	96,1	100,0	78,2	**97,8**
	2021				
Attending	98,0	98,9	100,0	100,0	**98,1**

Table 2.1 suggests that the South African government is doing its best to reduce poverty to improve the quality of life irrespective of colour and creed. For instance, from 2019 to 2021, the total average percentage of grants spent on black, Coloured, Indian, and white learners from Grade 1 to Grade 12 was above 97.5 % annually, at an average of 98 % (Stats South Africa, 2021). In this study, these high percentages where the government assists all races of learners with social grants are important. Citizens at a school-going age who are likely or in poverty are assisted to go to school and among other things learn about career construction. Furthermore, this social grant drive supports the importance of career construction which is used as a vehicle to address the social inclusion objectives. However, sustaining this assistance in an endeavour to meet the social inclusion objectives is arguable as South Africa is often ranked as one of the most unequal countries in the world that also represents both characteristics

of a developed and a developing country (McKeever, 2017; Sefotho, 2017). For example, Levisha (2015) in her master's thesis on the effectiveness of poverty reduction strategy in post-apartheid South Africa, notes that although many poverty strategies have been implemented and billions of rands were spent in response to poverty, many people are still poor. These failed strategies included the RDP, Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR), AsgiSA, NDP and the Social Assistance System. Some of these strategies that seem not to alleviate poverty were implemented way back in 1994. In this study, all these poverty alleviation programmes are also talking about the social inclusion objectives, which are associated with the proper teaching of career construction. Another example that paints a different picture from common policies of the RDP, NDP and SAQA that are meant to change the lives of all poor South Africans, through careers, is the South African indication of poverty line by population in Table 2.2:

Table 2.2: Source: Statistics South Africa, Poverty Trends in South Africa, Report No. 03-10-06

Money-metric 2 poverty using a lower bound poverty line of R647 per person per month in 2015 prices by population group[1]

National Population Group & Province Name	Number of Poor Persons (in Millions)	Headcount Poverty Rate (%)
Black/African	20,7	47,1
Coloured	1,1	23,3
Indian	0,017	1,2
White	0,020	0,4
Gauteng	2,5	19,0
RSA	21,9	40,0

Table 2.2 depicts the 2015 South African poverty lines by population. A poverty line is the minimum amount of money a person needs to buy the basic needs of life such as shelter and food (Africa, 2017). South Africa uses three poverty lines that are explained in the footnote. According to Table 2.2, South Africans who monthly lived less than R647 per person were at 40%. Out of this 40% population in the country, 19% was the population of Gauteng. This province is highlighted because it is where the study was conducted. However, it is alarming that the headcount poverty rate of black people in South Africa who lived below R647 per

[1] **Money-metric poverty** – is a measure of poverty in money terms that permits the distinction between the poor and the non-poor.

Statistics South Africa compiles and publishes three poverty lines, i.e., Food Poverty Line, Lower Bound Poverty Line and the Upper Bound Poverty Line.

Definitions of the three poverty lines:

Food Poverty line is a food poverty line expressed in rand amount that an individual need to purchase food to consume for the required energy intake monthly. The food poverty rand amount was R441 per person per month expressed in 2015 prices.

Lower Bound Poverty Line is a poverty line expressed in rand amount; below this threshold, South Africans must choose between purchasing food and important non-food items. The lower-bound poverty line rand amount was R647 per person per month in 2015 prices.

Upper Bound Poverty Line is a poverty line expressed in rand amount; below this threshold, people cannot afford the minimum desired lifestyle lived by most South Africans. The upper-bound poverty line rand amount was R992 per person per month in 2015 prices.

month was 47%, more than 40% of the country. Furthermore, this report notes that females, children aged 17 and younger, and people living in rural areas, particularly in Limpopo and Eastern Cape are the most vulnerable to poverty (Stats South Africa, 2017). This is another challenge in the fulfilment of social inclusion objectives whose aim among other things seeks to uplift individuals, eradicate poverty and gender equality as discussed earlier. In this study, these aspects are important as career construction is viewed to assist in making the lives of people better.

Literature also reveals that the attempts of the South Africa government to alleviate poverty in the fulfilment of social inclusion objectives seem impossible. For instance, Kraak (2006) explains that after 1994, the integration of the often-incompetent homelands or Bantustans and the dissolvement of the four provinces that were maladministered may further delay the attainment of social inclusion objectives. For example, the poverty levels of the people in those former homelands varied; so, the provision of opportunities to uplift them together with the rest of the people might take many years to achieve the social inclusion objectives.

All these challenges that prevent the attainment of social inclusion objectives through career construction become worse when career construction services are meant to be sustained throughout life; yet the economy is growing at a small pace. For instance, the South African annual economy from 2018 to 2019 grew by 4.2%. From 2020 to 2021, it increased by 4,8%. While this is the case, the middle-income economy grew by 0.6 % in South Africa in 2021 meanwhile economies of comparable countries such as India and Brazil increased by 9.2% and 4.6% respectively (Stats South Africa, 2021). This suggests that South Africa is currently trapped in an economic recession while Brazil and India’s fortunes are improving. In this scenario, there is a challenge for the South African government to attain social inclusion objectives when economic growth is unstable.

In summary, the contributions of career construction in attaining the learning, labour market and social inclusion objectives have been discussed. Globally and

in the South African context, it has been argued that career construction on its own is not enough to be relied upon to fulfil these objectives. In this study, even after democracy in South Africa, the introduction of LO will be discussed in the next section, as well as policies and commitments that seek to redress the past and bring better education, improve the labour force market and bring social reforms; learners seem to be still struggling to construct meaningful careers.

2.12 THE CAREER CONSTRUCTION FRAMEWORKS AND MODELS

This study has identified the following five relevant career construction frameworks and models:

2.12.1 Andrews and Hooley's career guidance framework

Hooley's career guidance framework views career construction as personal. It is supposed to be driven by the SMT, starting with the vision of the school. It also seeks to meet the various needs of each learner while still at school.

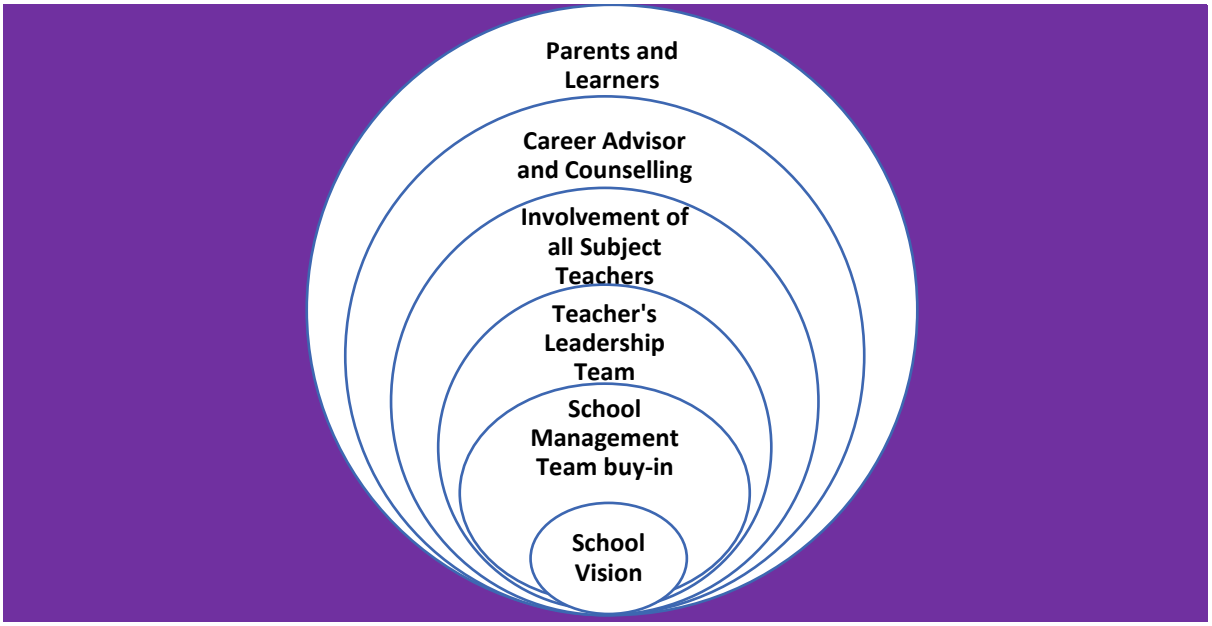

Figure 2.2: Career guidance framework from Andrews and Hooley's 2018 Careers Leader Handbook

Understanding of the sketch starts from bottom to top as discussed in the next section.

2.12.1.1 School vision

Hooley (2015) argues that careers are supposed to form part of the school's vision. In this regard, schools are expected to make careers a key component of their vision statement. For instance, in this study, the school vision can commit to support learners to finish school with at least one career path. In support of this model, Watts (2008) accentuates that through the leadership's vision and investment in good career practices and programmes, learners can be assisted when constructing careers.

2.12.1.2 School Management Team (SMT) buy-in

According to this framework, although the principal may not be directly involved in the day-to-day career programmes, the SMT can drive the rationale for the provision of career-related matters. The SMT as the school's leadership can prepare and implement a career development plan, monitor it and coordinate the career-related services that assist the school. The SMT can also make agreements with a network of career-related stakeholders that can help with career construction at the school.

2.12.1.3 Senior Teacher's Leadership Team

In this framework, the senior teacher's leadership team which comprises teachers who have an interest in careers are led by the vice-principal. The responsibility of this team includes the delivery of the school's programme and interaction with the external world of work people regarding career construction. Tasks also include planning, implementing and monitoring aspects that work and those that do not work for the school. In this study, the vice-principal or the LO Head of the Department may lead this team which might consist of LO and subject teachers who have a passion for careers, including other heads of departments at the school.

2.12.1.4 Involvement of all subject teachers

This framework argues that schools have a responsibility to ensure that learners

leave school with at least one career to pursue. This is often attainable when all the subject teachers are involved and support learners when they construct careers. For instance, subject teachers will be familiar with careers that could be pursued with the subjects they teach, skills offered by the subject and the institutions that offer those careers. In this study, the involvement of all subject teachers may support the learners when constructing careers in terms of knowing which careers may be pursued in the subjects they teach. This may support both the learners and the LO teachers as mentioned in Chapter One that LO teachers are not LO specialists nor CDP. In this regard, LO teachers may not know all the careers and subject choices for such careers.

2.12.1.5 Career counsellors

Hooley's framework posits that career counsellors are expected to be based at the school for the proper provision of career construction. These specialists, according to this blueprint, can interpret the LMI and link it to determine careers that can be accessed or those that are in shortage. In support of this framework that encourages career counsellors to be based at schools, reviewed literature also points out that these guidance counsellors can assist learners to identify and learn the skills by which they can be more effective in planning for making suitable transitions and adjustments in work-related matters (Herr, 2001). In South Africa, two or three neighbourhood schools can share one career counsellor or a CDP. CDPs provide aspects such as information and skills to employers including the DBE, practitioners, qualification developers, and professional bodies (DHET, 2015).

2.12.1.6 Parents and learners

Hooley's career guidance framework views the involvement of parents and learners in school career programmes as a good practice (Andrews & Holey, 2018). In support of this blueprint, Ritchie and Ord (2017) assert that parents' and learners' experiences can assist in arriving at rational career paths. If learners still struggle with career decisions, career counsellors can then assist. In this study, the involvement of parents and learners in the career construction process

was expressed by the Grade 9 learners who suggested that the SMT of the identified schools and the LO teachers should have a gathering on Saturdays where parents are invited to share their experiences on their respective careers.

2.12.2 The Gatsby Benchmark Career Guidance Framework

The Gatsby Benchmark Career Guidance Framework is associated with Professor Sir John Holman who developed it in 2013. It is a framework that organises the delivery of career construction at schools and colleges where career programmes provide comprehensive career guidance to the learners individually (Holman, 2014). This framework is supported by scholars such as Coiffait (2013) and Watts (2014) who contest that schools must ensure that every learner finishes school having constructed a career. The Gatsby Benchmark Career Guidance Framework is shown in Table 2.4:

Table 2.3: The Gatsby Benchmarks Career Guidance Framework

Source: The Gatsby Charitable Foundation.

1. A stable careers programme	Schools are encouraged to establish career construction programmes that are understood by learners, teachers and parents.
2 Learning from career and labour market information	Learners with their parents are provided with good quality information about their desired career paths and labour market opportunities. These sessions include information rendered by professional career advisors so that learners are well-informed as to make proper career choices and well-informed decisions.
3. Address the needs of each learner	This framework explains that learners have different career needs at different stages. In this regard, opportunities for advice and support need to suit the needs of each learner. In this study, learners who need career advice can be assisted individually or as a group.
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers	Schools are encouraged to link curriculum learning with careers. In this regard, subject teachers play an important role as they can highlight career paths that could be pursued in their respective subjects.
5. Encounters with employers and employees	This blueprint encourages learners to have the opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and skills that are needed in the workplace. A range of activities is also encouraged throughout the year where the world of work people are invited to the school and interact with the learners.
6. Experiences in workplaces	First-hand experience in the workplace through work visits and job shadowing is promoted. This assists learners in career opportunities and expands their networks.
7. Encounters with further and higher education	While learners are still at school, this model supports the engagements and partnerships formed between TVET colleges and higher learning institutions. This helps learners to understand the full range of learning opportunities and career options that are available to them.
8. Personal guidance	Personal guidance includes the opportunity for learners to access individual advice and guidance from professional career advisors or qualified career practitioners. This can be provided face-to-face, in groups or over the phone.

2.12.3 The Career Development Institute (CDI) Framework

The Career Development Institute (CDI) has established a career development framework that sets out what learners should know and be able to do by the time they leave school (CDI, 2021). This framework describes six career development skills that are needed when careers are constructed. The diagram is presented as Figure 3.2.

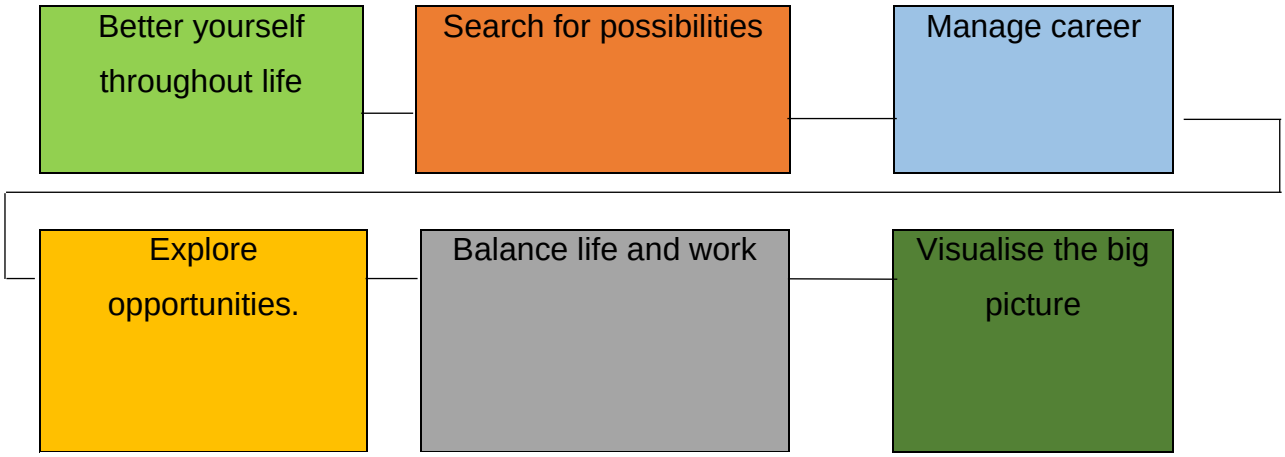

Figure 2.3: The CDI Framework on career construction

Source: The Career Development Institute

The CDI Career Development Framework (2021) stipulates that personal and career growth are key for learners while they are still in secondary school. Personal and career growth involves aspects such as learning about skills and qualifications for an intended career, being aware of interests and willingness to try new things to enable growth. To grow as learners and construct careers, they are expected to explore possibilities regarding careers. When a career decision has been made, learners can manage their careers by identifying their long-term goals. Furthermore, plans can be made, new skills learnt and adjustments made where possible in this study. Grade 9 learners can select subjects that are relevant to the intended career and be aware of the institutions that offer that qualification.

As part of managing a career, learners may create opportunities on the intended career path by building positive relationships with others and engaging in voluntary work. It is also important that learners balance life with work; for

instance, setting study plans for a week and staying focused on the tasks at hand. When careers are created, learners are advised to visualise the big picture paying attention to how aspects such as the economy, politics and society connect with the learner's life and the intended career.

2.12.4 The DOTS Career Development Model

The Decision learning, Opportunity awareness, Transition learning and Self-awareness (DOTS) model was developed in 1977 and reviewed in 1996 by Bill Law and Tony Watts for learners who are constructing careers and still at school. The DOTS model approaches career construction from a labour force or employment point of view. It also enables us to understand that when careers are constructed, four basic elements are learnt and need to be managed. They are decision learning, opportunity alertness, self-awareness, and transition learning which lead to employability (Law & Watts, 1977; 1996). The DOTS Career Development Model is briefly explained in the next section:

2.12.4.1 Decision Learning

Law and Watts (1977;1996) aver that decision learning exposes learners to a range of skills that assist in understanding the many ways in which sound decisions can be made. Learning how to make decisions also enables learners to take responsibility for the outcomes they have arrived at and the ability to adjust those decisions when it is necessary. Decisions made in career construction also serve as guiding principles in learning how to cope when faced with difficult changes at work.

2.12.4.2 Opportunity Awareness

While learners are still at school, they are expected to be given opportunities and be aware of the requirements for and knowledge of the world of work. This helps them to be cognisant of the demands of the world of work and the opportunities it offers. This includes aspects such as learning to be proactive, being willing to work in partnerships and being open to challenges and career opportunities that

arise. All these aspects learnt at school can be beneficial skills in the world of work.

2.12.4.3 Transition Learning

Learners seem to undergo various transitions during their schooling. They may transmit learning from primary to secondary school, then from secondary school transit learning to tertiary institutions. Transition learning encompasses skills that assist in understanding the job markets and how to better manage the transitions that may constantly occur at workplaces. For example, learners while at school should be able to know the skills that are required for the preparations for an interview, how to fill in application forms and learn to cope with transition demands. Transition learning also includes valuing soft skills such as teamwork, time management and problem-solving which are essential at school as well as in the world of work. In this study, the involvement of the environment or community members such as teachers, department officials and the world of work people are vital in creating the meaning of the social world and for learners.

2.12.4.4 Self Awareness

Law and Watts (1996) argue that the ability of individuals to know who they are requires knowledge and understanding of the self. Self-awareness also enables learners to know their values, interests, abilities, and personal qualities. In this study, the recognition of interests is one of the key aspects needed in career construction. Interests in career construction can be associated with Holland's RIASEC personality groupings theory used in this study and will be discussed in the next chapter. Furthermore, the DOTS model encourages learners to be assisted through learning about what matters in their lives to be able to identify and articulate skills they possess when building a career or applying for a job.

2.12.5 The O* NET online model on career construction

The Occupational, Information Network (O*NET) online model is a global online occupational information network meant to understand the world of work aspects

such as interpersonal skills requirements and working conditions or physical demands of jobs (O*NET Date Collection: Administration, 2005). This model is also viewed as the best network of products, databases, tasks, and services that seek to enhance the availability and usability of career information. Its content enables the reader to know about job aspects such as the required education or training, skills that are required, interests and abilities needed, and personal characteristics such as the adaptability capabilities of a person (Handel, 2016). The O*NET online model, although it is produced by the United States Department of Labour, is also used by a wide range of individuals and organisations including teachers, learners and career counsellors worldwide (Handel, 2016; http://www.mynextmove.org). These online career tools that allow learners to gather information whenever needed to build careers and career paths are encouraged by scholars such as Hooley (2013; 2015) and Staunton (2016), where the internet helps learners to explore career information and interact with employers and the wider world when constructing careers. However, some researchers such as Peterson, et al. (2001) and Bimrose et al. (2015) argue that online tools for career-related matters do not substitute or omit the involvement of qualified career guidance practitioners and teachers. All these aspects such as the importance of the O* NET online model, which among other things, focuses on the interests and adaptability of learners and the proper guidance of teachers, are regarded as the pillars in the construction of careers. In this study, this model is similar to the National Career Development Service discussed under the career services in South Africa in section 2.3.2.

2.13 GAPS IDENTIFIED FROM THE REVIEWED LITERATURE

The following aspects were identified as gaps and are significant in this study:

a. LO teachers who guide learners in career construction are neither trained as LO teachers nor CDP

The 2016 Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa acknowledges that LO teachers who guide learners in career construction are not trained as LO teachers or CDP. To address this gap, the

2016 Competency Framework Government Gazette gave a directive to try and support LO teachers, by stipulating in-service training for those teachers who are assigned to teach LO. Furthermore, the same 2016 Competency Framework Government Gazette also specifies that these trained LO teachers can be changed the following year and be replaced by other teachers. In this case, there is a gap because schools often replace the trained LO teachers with teachers who are novices or teachers who have never received LO training before. Allowing career construction, such an important topic to be taught by teachers who are not specialists, changed after receiving the needed support through in-service training may create a problem that some learners may pass Grade 12 without a career path. This also affects even those learners who might have created their careers but have chosen subjects that are not in line with their intended career choices.

b. Lack of a career construction framework in the Grade 9 LO CAPS

The Grade 9 LO CAPS appears to lack a framework that could be followed by LO teachers so that even a novice or a teacher who has never received in-service training can be supported to enable learners to construct an intended career choice. Indeed, there is a syllabus to be followed, but in addition to the syllabus, a framework is needed to support these frequently changed LO teachers. In this case, there seems to be a problem here of not providing a career construction framework. As mentioned earlier, these LO teachers do not have any LO qualifications and are not specialist CDP. To make matters worse, the trained LO teachers are often changed each year after receiving in-service training. In all of this, CAPS seems not to have a framework to further help LO teachers. This lack of a framework for the proper teaching of career construction was noted by a review conducted on the delivery of Career Development in South Africa (Walters, et al, 2009). These authors recommended a framework for the teaching of careers, and subject choice including career counselling at schools. However, 15 years on, it seems as though the framework has still not been developed.

c. Insufficient coordination of the career-related services at the selected school

In South Africa, there seems to be an improvement in supporting LO teachers with the teaching of career construction. For instance, the country has set up the CDS, which gives free quality career information, advice and counselling services (National Policy for Integrated Career Development System for South Africa, 2017). However, at the selected school, it appeared that the CDS were not used. There was also minimal interaction and a lack of partnerships between the selected school and the relevant career-related stakeholders such as the parents, communities and the world of work.

The aforementioned gaps are pertinent in the career construction landscape. They are viewed as not supporting LO teachers who are expected to guide learners' understanding of the career construction process. These gaps if not attended to may affect the proper teaching of careers, career choice and career counselling even in the South African schools.

2.15 CONCLUSION

This literature review chapter has examined the contributions of career construction globally, paid attention to the 2030 SDGs, in particular Goal number 4, the SADC region commitment, the 2063 AUC that focuses on education, LO in Latin American countries and focused on the South African context. In this study, aspects that are viewed as key to the delivery of proper career construction were discussed. This included aspects such, as LO subject, LO teachers and subject teachers, and the Grade 9 learners in the career construction process. This chapter also provided the value of parents, siblings, friends, and society when careers are constructed. It further examined the career construction models and frameworks identified the gaps and provided a framework called the School Career Construction Framework (SCCF) for this study. The next chapter will discuss the two theories that strengthen this research.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the theoretical framework, that is, the structure that supports the theory of my research and will develop a framework for this study. According to Silverman (2005), there is no research undertaken without a theory. Theories are viewed as "… an organised body of concepts and principles intended to explain a particular phenomenon" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015:39). They are also a preferred way of understanding reality, accumulating knowledge and collecting information about the world (Tracy, 2013). These definitions articulate the important role of a theory in understanding reality and improving the quality of research. In trying to understand the phenomenon under study, which is to explore the role of LO teachers when guiding the Grade 9 learners in career construction. This study draws on John Lewis Holland and Mark Luke Savickas' work. These theorists pay much attention to careers and how careers might be developed, chosen or even constructed. The focus of Holland's personality grouping theory is on the importance of interests when careers are chosen. In addition, Savickas' career construction domains such as vocational personalities, life themes and career adaptability are used as a second theory. These two theories will be explained first, and then the combined philosophical position of Holland's personality groupings and Savickas' career construction theory will be applied to this study. The following section considers Holland's six personality groupings theory, focusing on interests.

3.2 HOLLAND'S PERSONALITY GROUPINGS THEORY

John Lewis Holland (1959;1997) promotes an understanding that people pursue careers that are congruent with their personalities and interests. In the world of work, people with similar personalities develop similar interests and prefer careers that are in line with their interests to create homogeneity in occupations (Holland, 1997). Career interests are the "expression of personality in work, hobbies, recreational activities, and preferences" (Holland,1966:3). How

personalities develop was not investigated by Holland. However, he regarded personalities and interests as an outcome of a complex engagement with “a variety of cultural and personal forces including peers, biological heredity, parents, social class, culture, and the physical environment” (Holland, 1997:2). After these engagements, Holland noticed that individuals tend to prefer certain activities and enjoy participating in those activities which become strong interests and areas of capabilities. Interests are still considered important when careers are constructed (Harrington & Long, 2013; van Vuuren, Rabie & Naidoo, 2022). Even today, a better understanding of interests enhances an individual’s chances to match a theory to the potential work environment (Nauta, 2021) and equips individuals with the world of work information (Naidoo et al, 2017).

Holland grouped careers focusing on interests into six types of personalities namely, Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprise and Conventional known as the RIASEC (Holland, 1959; 1997). He believed that an individual does not represent one personality, but an amalgamation of at least three personality types. These personality groupings could be in any combination, such as S-E-C or R-I-A or any amalgamation of three letters from the concept RIASEC used to represent a broad indication of an individual’s interests, that points to various career groupings.

The RIASEC, also called Holland’s hexagon, presents qualities and skills that are dominant in each career grouping. Furthermore, these characteristics also serve as an outline to determine other career-relevant concepts and activities such as interests, competencies and experiences (Holland,1973; 1985; 1997). Although Holland’s theory does not explore how the RIASEC develop, the theory nonetheless suggests that interpersonal attributes such as interests, which are psychological, result from a range of complex interactions with parents, teachers and the environment (Holland,1997). Based on these interactions and experiences, people are attracted to or have interests in particular activities of the world of occupations that meet their desires. These interests enable people to exercise their skills and abilities and provide them with satisfaction regarding career-related matters and work enjoyment (Coetzee et al, 2016). Holland’s RIASEC personality groupings are discussed in the next section:

3.2.1 Holland's Realistic Personality Group

Holland (1959; 1988; 1997) explains that people who fall into the realistic personality group have more interest in working with their hands. This means the personality group that is viewed as realistic have interests in and enjoys manipulating, constructing and using the tools and machinery in their workspace. Occupations for these realistic personality groupings include farmers, builders, engineers, computer technologists and sportspersons. Subjects that are needed in the realistic personality group include interests in English, Maths, Science, Agriculture, Horticulture, and Physical Education. Case, Marshall, McKenna, and Mogashana (2018) explain in their book titled, "*Going to University*" related stories of young university students who pursued their career choices because of the subjects they were interested in at school. They also discuss subjects that afforded them to register for courses that were relevant to their career choices. However, Case, et al (2018) acknowledge that some students, especially those who come from poor schooling backgrounds did not receive in-depth teaching of the subjects in which they were interested. Others did not receive sufficient career information to enable them to register for courses that would be relevant to their career choices.

It is also interesting to note that Holland's (1997) realistic personality groupings might be valid in the South African context. Mintram, Morgan and de Bruin (2019) conducted research that was based on Holland's realistic personality grouping in South Africa. Although Mintram, et al (2019) focused on gender differences, their findings show that learners in South Africa, especially males, were also interested in careers that demonstrated the realistic personality types. While Antony (1998) supports Holland's realistic personality group definition, he argues that people in this personality group might not have an interest in interacting with others effectively. Antony's argument also suggests that career construction efforts in schools could include the development of social skills that learners might need to develop.

In the context of this study, LO teachers may group learners who lack interaction skills and give activities that develop an interest in the related social skills to promote social interaction skills. These activities might include exercises where

learners would talk about themselves and their interests to the group members, be given open-ended questions and be encouraged to read books about social skills.

3.2.2 Holland's Investigative Personality Group

The second personality grouping that Holland suggests is the investigative personality group. People who fall under the investigative personality grouping tend to have more interest in analysing life and work situations. The skills that are dominant in Holland's investigative personality group are analytical, logical thinking and calculating. Careers for the investigating personality grouping include medical and health occupations, people who work in the laboratories and investigators. In the same vein, Pike (2006) concurs that investigative people tend to have interests in activities that include prediction and exploration. Furthermore, Pike (2006) found that "students' college expectations play a role in the process of initially selecting a major. If expectations play a role in students selecting majors that are consistent with their personality types, it is reasonable to presume that students' expectations will be logically consistent with their personality types" (Pike, 2006:607). There is a possibility that many researchers in various fields fall under the investigative personality grouping. One of the roles that researchers play is to contribute to knowledge through an interest in writing books, contributing to book chapters and publishing.

The relevant school subjects, especially in Grade 9, for investigative personality grouping, include English and second languages, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, and various computing languages. When learners get to Grade 10, their subject choice becomes more specific. For example, if learners are interested and choose Mathematics, Physical Science and Life Science, there is a good chance that they may be beginning to construct careers that their Grade 10 subject choice can support. Hoff, Sif Einarsdottir, Hanna, and Rounds (2022) conducted a 12-year longitudinal study which examined the stability of young people's career outcomes from the adolescent stage to adulthood. Their study found that the participants' career interests which they had from adolescence influenced their career choices and the participant's career interests

sustained their careers over ten years. Hoff et al (2022) further suggest that the levels of interest in careers from a young age largely influence the career choices that participants make.

These investigative personality groups of people are also viewed by Holland's personality grouping theory to be interested in tasks that engage critical thinking and writing well. To give an analogy, my daughter is doing her second year of law articles at one of the law firms in South Africa. She wanted to be a lawyer and her career construction matched her interests. She participated in school debates. One of her requirements as a candidate requires that, among others, she writes court orders and litigations. In 2022, my daughter was identified as the best writer in her career as a Candidate Attorney. Drawing on Holland's investigative personality grouping, my daughter's narrative and her career choice indicate that the interests of young people who want to learn to become lawyers need to be analytic investigative and ultimately interpret the law through writing the language of law effectively.

In this study, drawing from Pike (2006), Smart et al (2006) and Hoffman et al's (2022) research, LO teachers are required to lay a solid foundation when school-going youth begin to construct their careers), as this was discussed in Chapter Two.

3.2.3 Holland's Artistic Personality Grouping

The third personality grouping considers people with artistic personalities. People with artistic personality grouping are interested in forms of art and innovations. This personality grouping is also intuitive and generally interested in aesthetic aspects.

Holland (1997) teaches us that artistic personalities grouping usually express themselves in words, music or drama, art and forms of design. The interests of these artistic people channel them to places of work that require them to fulfil artistic and design functions, like architecture, graphic design, fashion design, and advertising. Subjects that are associated with artistic interests include

English, Social Studies, Music, Drama, Art, Graphic Design, Computing, Business Studies, and languages. For instance, John Kani is a South African respected actor who has written numerous theatre productions. John Kani is also known as the best director and playwright. In addition, when the FIFA World Cup came to South Africa in 2010, there were new stadiums that were built that portrayed the South African Arts and culture.

In this study, the following pictures are stadiums that seem to show the dominant interests of people who fall under Holland's artistic personality grouping.

Figure 3.1: The DHL or Cape Town 2010 FIFA World Cup stadium in the Western Cape Province is similarly associated with Holland's artistic personality grouping

The Daisey, Hillblom and Lynn (DHL) stadium was formerly known as the Green Point stadium and is based in Cape Town. DHL is a German logistics company that provides services such as couriers, express mail and package deliveries. The DHL Stadium hosts mainly soccer and rugby matches in Cape Town. The DHL Stadium is on Fritz Sonnenberg Road in Green Point (Cape Town). In this

study, the interests shown in designing the DHL stadium are similarly associated with Holland's artistic personality grouping. Learners in the career construction process may be interested and motivated in pursuing careers that involve artistic work such as paintings by looking at this stadium.

Figure 3.2: FNB Stadium in Johannesburg in the Gauteng Province is designed to look like a calabash similar to Holland's artistic personality grouping

First National Bank (FNB) Stadium is also known as the Soccer City Stadium. The FNB Stadium, like the DHL stadium in Cape Town, is also associated with football and rugby. The stadium is on Soccer City Avenue in Nasrec in Johannesburg. Although the stadium was built between 1986 and 1989, it was upgraded in 2009 for the 2010 FIFA World Cup games. The architecture is associated with Populousa, a United States company that designs sports facilities and convention centres. The shape of this stadium resembles a calabash. In the African society, a calabash is used to store and serve water and milk. Calabashes are generally known to be used as spiritual and magical containers.

In this study, skills shown in calabashes and pottery can encourage learners to pursue artistic and innovative related careers which are associated with Holland's artistic personality grouping. Learners may be motivated to draw something similar or different. Furthermore, FNB Stadium in Soweto, Johannesburg is in one of the largest townships, where Two Nobel Prize winners, the late former South Africa President, Nelson Rholihlahla Mandela and the late Anglican Bishop Desmond Tutu resided in Vilakazi Street. Still on the designs of these artistic stadiums, as mentioned earlier, FNB Stadium in Soweto resembles a calabash, while the soccer stadiums in Cape Town and Durban are not known for any cultural significance other than the interests and artistic abilities of people who fall under Holland's artistic personality grouping.

The subjects' choices in Holland's artistic grouping include interest and choosing English and second languages, Drama, Graphic Design, Social Studies, Structural Engineering, and Art. Armstrong, et al (2008) support Holland's theory that when careers are constructed, it is vital to understand one's interests and link the dominant interests to one's intended career choice. In the same vein, the importance of interests when choosing a career is promoted by scholars such as Mathiesen and Gunnarsdottir (2022) who promote that it is best to guide learners according to their interests. Turner, Conkel, Starkey et al (2008) who researched the gender differences in Holland's vocational personality groupings found that more women learners showed interest in occupations that are classified as artistic and social, while male learners demonstrated interest in careers such as realistic and investigative. However, Turner, et al (2008) further observe that to help male learners engage in artistic activities and to help them develop interests in artistic occupations, exercises such as drawing, acting and painting should be encouraged. It is worth mentioning that the former South African Member of the Executive (MEC) of Education in Gauteng, Mr Phanyasa Lesufi, on 26 July 2022, changed Tembisa High School to a commercial school. According to Lesufi, Tembisa Commercial High School will assist in the development of skills in Gauteng and the country, as South Africa is in dire need of growing its economy. In his speech, Lesufi also mentioned that skills-driven schools help in the reduction of the high unemployment rate and that schools cannot continue to produce learners who are unemployed. The MEC further said that opening

commercial schools such as Tembisa High School, which offer subjects such as tourism and hospitality prepares learners to be interested in becoming entrepreneurs. This is the 28th skills development school in Gauteng Province that seeks to link schools with industries for skills development and reduction of the high unemployment in the country (SABC News, Channel 404, 26 July 2022). In this study, which was also conducted in Gauteng, these schools that are particularly interested in developing skills and careers-driven, will benefit both LO teachers and the Grade 9 learners when constructing careers.

3.2.4 Holland's Social Personality Group

Holland's (1997) fourth social personality grouping regards people who are classified under the social personality group as 'helpers.' These people tend to be interested in tasks that involve engagements with other people. During these interactions, the social personality group persons, in many cases, form close relationships with the people they assist. The commonly known occupations in Holland's social personality grouping include teachers, social workers, nurses, customer service officers, waiters, secretaries, and librarians. Skills that are associated with Holland's social personality group include caring, persuasion, coaching, and training. Subjects that are viewed to develop the skills needed in Holland's social personality group include interest and choosing English, Social Studies, and Business Studies. Smart et al (2006) concur with Holland that the social personality group people are interested in activities that seek to inform, train and cure other people. Furthermore, Armstrong et al (2008) also point out that social people are empathic and their interests are more on helping other people. The importance of interests in Holland's theory is also noted by Case et al (2018) who observe that each child in a family is described around the interests and enthusiasm they show. In the South African context, it is important to note that under Holland's social personality grouping, Mintram et al (2019) observed that South African male learners scored higher than female learners. While this is the case, where women learners are known to score more than men learners, Armstrong et al (2008) note that in Holland's social personality grouping, usually, both genders do not have an interest in engaging with occupations that mostly work with tools and machines.

In this study, LO teachers when guiding the Grade 9 learners in career construction need to be aware of Holland's social personality grouping regarding interests, occupations and subject choices that are relevant to the intended learners' career ambitions.

3.2.5 Holland's Enterprising Personality Group

The fifth group in Holland's (1997) enterprising personality group consists of people with effective communication skills. Such people have abilities to persuade and direct others towards particular interests and decision-making (Rabie, 2017). Occupations under Holland's enterprising personality grouping include lawyers, travel agents, real estate agents, politicians, people in leadership positions, researchers, and entrepreneurs. With a particular focus on entrepreneurship, when LO teachers guide learners on career construction, they could consider the objectives of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) and the OECD. As discussed earlier, these bodies assess the entrepreneurial activities and aspirations in countries and promote entrepreneurial careers. These bodies may support the development of the material needed to guide learners who demonstrate enterprising personalities (Morris, 2016).

Morris (2016) and Scott, Brun, Gnilk et al. (2021) add that enterprising people are ambitious, friendly, impulsive, and self-confident. They have an interest and are also "active in the professional, social and family life". They made active decisions and were actively involved in taking control of their lives more than others (Vasile, 2018: 108). Furthermore, the enterprising personality grouping relies on competencies that enable them to convince others to take on particular ways of thinking, reasoning and making choices that serve a particular purpose. Ajayi, Moosa and Aloka (2022) support an understanding that people who fall under the enterprising personality grouping tend to be more powerful with strong negotiation skills. For instance, people in various sales positions can use their power to persuade others to venture into forms of business or develop an interest in products the business promotes. School subjects that can support learners who demonstrate enterprising personality qualities could consider careers that require them to take subjects such as languages, Mathematics, Accounting,

Drama, Business Studies, and Computing.

In this study, the exposure of learners to career information noted by Holland such as the ability to sell oneself or the product one wishes to sell, which may lead to enterprise careers, can make a difference in the construction of a career. All these aspects require LO teachers who know their role or can invite other people when guiding learners in the career construction process.

3.2.6 Holland's Conventional Personality Group

The sixth Holland's conventional personality grouping considers people who have an interest and are good at organising. This group of people prefer to work indoors. They are accurate, systematic and methodical, and enjoy working with numbers and data (Holland, 1985, 1997). In addition, Schreuder and Coetzee (2018) and Mintram et al (2020) explain that people who fall under the conventional personality grouping are predominantly interested in activities that involve following procedures and using logic to conclusions. Hurtado Rua, Stead and Poklar (2019) conducted a study in which they wanted to examine the relationship between the Five Factor Model (FFM) of personalities and Holland's RIASEC interests personality groupings. The FFM personality domains consist of traits such as neuroticism, extroversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. Neuroticism is associated with a person's normal experiences of distress. Extroversion is associated with a person's social life and the kinds of relationships to which they are interested and keep. Openness to experience is associated with a person's intellect, how curious they might be, their imagination and how flexible they might be in different circumstances. Agreeableness is associated with interpersonal behaviours, the ability to trust and cooperate and work with others. Conscientiousness is associated with a person's self-discipline, how organised they might be and self-control (Soto & Jacksons, 2020). Furthermore, Hurtado et al (2019) show that conscientiousness, one of the FFM personality traits, seems to overlap with Holland's conventional personality group. As discussed earlier, conventional people are organised, accurate, systematic, and methodical. People who are conscious of the FFM also tend to be technical, practical and organised and are

inclined to plan their lives. Table 3.1 demonstrates the overlaps between Holland's conventional personality type and conscientiousness as one of the FFM personality domains.

Table 3.1: Overlaps of Conventional and Conscientiousness personality types adopted from Hurtado Rua, et al's (2021), Holland's personality grouping.

Holland's conventional personality type	Conscientiousness FFM personality domain
Organised	Technical
Accurate	Practical
Systematic	Organised
Methodical	Plan full

The dominant skills in Holland's conventional personality grouping include an interest in making or keeping records, handling money, calculating and data manipulation (Stoll, Einarsdottir, Song, et al, 2020). These dominant skills can also be associated with conscientiousness – one of the FFM personality domains. In the context of this study, career construction might require a move towards careers such as bookkeeping, receptionists, machine operators, proof-readers, accountants, and chartered accountants. Such careers require a person who has an interest in paying attention to detail. One closest example I can use refers to my son who at the writing of this study was doing his articles as a Chartered Accountant. For example, he has an interest in paying attention to details. He picks up minute details on the television, that we are only able to verify when we rewind that scene on the television. If I borrow money from him, he enjoys reminding me to pay him back before the end of the month so that the bank can add interest to his balance.

The school subjects that might assist learners with the skills associated with conventional careers when constructing careers include interest and choosing English, Maths, Business Studies, Accounting, Economics, and Computing. Even though people who fall under the conventional personality grouping are

meticulous, they are likely to be rigid, inflexible and defensive (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2017).

In this understanding, it is important that when LO teachers guide learners with career construction, they consider exposing them to social experiences to help learners develop more holistic characters and personality traits. For example, a study conducted by Zainudin, Rong, Mohamad et al (2020) sought to investigate the similarity between Holland's theory and career decision-making. The findings of Zainudin et al (2020) noted a great similarity between Holland's career-related aspects such as strengths, interests and career decision-making. This is a similar finding to be noted in this study, where Grade 9 learners also understood their interests and made decisions that were linked to Holland's career groupings.

On the basis that a theory is rarely not scrutinised (Basit, 2010), and not faultless for a study (Jozkowski, 2017), Holland's theory is also often criticised because it does not explain how the RIASEC personality types develop (Nauta, 2021), which is key in knowing which grouping or groupings do people fall into when constructing careers. Furthermore, Jonck and Swanepoel (2015) and Coetzee et al (2016) also critique Holland's personality grouping in that it neglects the influence of the changing environments in both individuals and the world of work. In other words, Holland's theory seems to neglect that interests may change as individuals develop and work environments change. Owing to these limitations, this study also adopted a second theory, the career construction theory which is discussed in the next section.

3.3 CAREER CONSTRUCTION THEORY

The career construction theory is associated with Mark Luke Savickas. Savickas argues that individuals pursue careers that make sense and meaning to what is presented by the current experiences while looking at future goals. The career construction theory also provides a way of thinking about how individuals choose and use work. It is also a theory that promotes an understanding of the self which is expected to adapt to work and life transitions (Savickas,1977; 2005; 2013; Savickas et al, 2009). When careers are constructed, the career construction

theory addresses how individuals build careers through interpersonal and intrapersonal processes (Savickas, 2013). Intrapersonal processes are often influenced by society, while personalities, personal goals and interests usually influence interpersonal processes. Interests are relational (Savickas, 1977). This means interests are context-laden and influenced by culture and society (Savickas, 2005; 2021; Savickas et al, 2009). Interests are also enhanced by individuals as they develop and discover other interests (Savickas, 2013). In this regard, interests in the career construction theory seem to play a different role from Holland's personality grouping theory, which postulates that careers are chosen based on the individual's interests that seem stable.

Maggiori, Johnston, Krings, Massoudi and Rossier (2013) enable us to understand that Savickas's career construction theory is a model that was used to refine Super's (1957;1990) and Holland's (1997) philosophy of a career. A brief explanation of Super and Holland's work regarding careers is given. For instance, Super regarded a career as "a combination and sequence of roles played by a person during a lifetime. These roles include those of child, pupil, or student, leisurite, citizen, worker, spouse, homemaker, parent, and pensioner" (Super 1980: 282). This implies that as a person develops within a particular career line, he or she engages in a process of career construction. While this is the case, Holland's work as mentioned earlier fits people's personality types to their prospective careers focusing on interests. Overall, Savickas' career construction theory focuses on what people can become in doing work, not only on interests and what they are before they go to work or wait until they reach career maturation (Savickas, 2005).

In this regard, Savickas then conceptualised three domains of the career construction theory namely, vocational personalities, life experiences and career adaptability as discussed in the next section.

3.3.1 Vocational Personalities

Vocational personalities are defined by Savickas as all the responses used by individuals when they build, adjust and manage their career choices (Savickas,

2007; 2011). Vocational personalities include an individual's career-related aspects such as abilities, behaviour and interests (Savickas, 2005). These career-related aspects are formed and start to develop at home. This development is further supported by societies, and schools and eventually taken to the world of work. Vocational personalities are usually expressed through activities such as household chores, hobbies, reading, studying and career-related tasks encountered at work (Super,1980; Savickas, 2005; 2013).

The career construction theory postulates that vocational personalities are dynamic. They change when the need presents itself as individuals can try and resolve a challenge, adapt or drop the required vocational personalities driven by the situation (Savickas, 2005; Greenhaus & Callanan, 2006). To sum up, this suggests that in the career construction process, the responses used in one context may not be relevant in another context. Therefore, individuals are expected to try and adjust. In addition, the vocational personalities domain of the career construction theory argues that careers are resemblances of socially constructed clusters of attitudes and skills (Savickas, 2005; 2011; Savickas et al, 2009). They depend on the social constructions of time, place and culture that support them (Greenhaus & Callanan, 2006). For example, career paths change throughout life. A career path chosen while a learner is at school often changes after leaving school.

Lately, vocational personalities reflect not only on the construction and management of careers but on finding opportunities for people to live better lives despite challenges encountered (Savickas et al, 2009). In this regard, Vondracek, Ford and Porfeli (2014), Maree and Twigge (2016) and Spurk (2021) propose that vocational personalities in the 21st century require focusing on unpredictable challenges such as the economy and workplace realities so that individuals try to adapt easily to these challenges. It was inspiring listening to a 702 radio show hosted by Mr Clement Manyathela regarding the current guidelines to follow when learners construct a career. His guest, career coach, Ms Briony Liber, noted that when it comes to vocational personalities, people make discoveries about themselves and gain new preferences about their interests. She further urged learners to focus on the skills that are valuable now and, in the future, when

constructing careers. These current valuable careers include programming, coding skills, and soft skills such as relationship skills (Radio 702, 2023). All the vocational personalities discussed, and the current market demands are important when learners construct careers.

In the context of this study, it seems impossible for LO teachers to properly guide learners in career construction and create an environment where learners can construct careers of their choice as they lack some knowledge of career theories (Hay, 2018). In fact, the Grade 9 LO CAPS on the teaching of career choices and subject choices topic seems silent on the use of career development theory as discussed in Chapter Two.

3.3.2 Life Experiences

Life experiences are personal reflections on the needs and challenges that form a plan for a career journey (Savickas, 2001; 2011; Savickas et al, 2009). In other words, the different roles or chores that learners become active in as they grow become the life experiences or life themes. In addition to the vocational personalities, life experiences pay attention to the core aspects of work life when a career is constructed (Savickas, 2005). “Even when everything seems to change, the life theme [life experience] remains the same” (Savickas, 2013:165). Furthermore, Savickas (2012) asserts that the life experiences domain of the career construction theory is usually elicited through conversations and dialogues with an individual and other people. During these interactions when it comes to careers, Savickas (1993) and Greenhaus and Callanan (2006) note that careers are subjective and carry personal meaning constructed by people to understand the path of work and life. Furthermore, Watts (1998; 2013) and Maree and Twigge (2016) add that the world of work with its unstable economy requires individuals to regard careers as not a lifetime commitment to one employer, but as a continuation of services and skills that are sold to a series of employers. This often requires individuals to be lifelong learners, learn from their experiences, have a deeper self-awareness, be willing to interact with other people, and adapt quickly to changes.

Savickas (2012) and Duarte (2009) further argue that when people are guided and prepared for the world of work, a new paradigm that addresses the self and context through life experience is key. Furthermore, reflecting on the past enables individuals to move towards constructing a meaningful future (Savickas, et al, 2009; Savickas, 2011; Staunton, 2015). These mentioned aspects where individuals can relate to their past and sometimes tell stories to overcome their challenges seem important in career construction.

In the context of this study, although the usage of life experiences and stories is mostly used by career counsellors, this study has found life experiences relevant as an exercise that can also be used by LO teachers. For instance, during the teaching of careers and subject choices, LO teachers may give learners homework on topics that require them to think about their careers where they write a semi-structured autobiography, their beliefs and experiences about their lives, future career goals and what would learners do if their career plans change. This may support learners to manage career-related matters and challenges at school and throughout their lifespan.

3.3.3 Career Adaptability

Adaptability is one of the key concepts that Savickas uses in his theory of career construction to emphasise the interaction between the individual and the environment (Savickas, 1997; Savickas, 2005; Savickas et al, 2009; Savickas, 2013; Savickas). Adaptability comes from the Latin word adaptare, and the French word aduptare means ‘to fit.’ The root of the word adaptation is apt, meaning quick to learn or understand. Adaptation is also associated with the biological construct of maturation (Savickas, 1997). In this study, career adaptability is important as learners in the career construction process are expected to be encouraged to embrace change and adapt to new conditions. Learners too need to attach meaning to their careers. Furthermore, learning about adaptability and practising adaptability can prepare them to fit into the culture of the world of work.

When it comes to careers, adaptability focuses on four different domains. One is the individual's differences that pay attention to one's objective intentions of adaptive skills and styles as to fit self into a situation. Two, the subjective goals of adaptation where the self constructs a meaning as an individual subjectively writes a life story and strives to interact and engage with the world. Three, the maturation or developmental domain stresses the functions and processes of adaptation across the lifespan. Fourthly, the contextual domain focuses on the historical and cultural situation, with its current limitations and/or provisions offered, within which the individual must adapt and flourish. In this regard, Savickas (1997) believes that when career practitioners and career theorists combine the foregoing domains, the theory and practice become meaningful to comprehend and address what is at stake for an individual.

The career construction theory also regards adaptability as "The personal characteristic of flexibility or willingness to meet career tasks, transitions, and traumas with fitting responses" (Savickas, 2013: 157). Savickas' understanding of adaptability emerged from Donald Super's theory of career development which includes the concept of maturation. For instance, Super explains that career maturation occurs at the stages of adolescence when a learner is ready to make educational and more importantly, career choices. Super also promotes an understanding that within the process of career construction, especially during the stage of adolescence, career construction occurs as learners develop and gain a self-concept (Super, 1981). Moreover, the concept of maturation is relevant because this study focuses on Grade 9 learners who are ideally going through a process of career construction as discussed in Chapter One. As these learners are struggling to make more suitable (or congruent) by changing the situation, Savickas (1997) argues differently that maturity is not enough to help a learner construct and manage a career. Instead, Savickas promotes the idea that adaptability is "a single construct to parsimoniously explain development in children, adolescents and adults" (Savickas 1997: 254). For example, people in their lifetime go through multiple changes where particular socio-cultural practices, geo-politics history, context and the environment require them to change and adapt to these different environments.

Sometimes people interact with each other to bring new practices that are suitable for all of them at any point and time (Gee, 2004). People adapt to these multiple situations to make sense of where they are, how to operate and how to design artefacts or tools that can help them better manage their lives. Career construction carries the same principles of change and adaptability. For example, I wanted to become a social worker, but unfortunately, I could not become a social worker because my parents could not afford to pay for my university fees. I was mature enough to understand the financial circumstances that my parents found themselves in at that time. The government at that time offered bursaries to people who wanted to become teachers and I happened to be one of them. It was not easy to let go of the career I was interested in. I had to adapt to the situation at home and adapt to the career that would enable me to get a decent education. Fortunately, teaching became a meaningful career for me. Today, I am producing a thesis that considers how LO teachers can guide learners to start constructing their careers. The example that is given also suggests that people mature over time and find ways of adapting to the changing times and continue to make sense and make meaning of their immediate environments.

Savickas explains that adaptivity is “the quality of being able to change, without great difficulty, to fit new or changed circumstances” (Savickas, 1997:254). Savickas also argues that adaptability has the potential to make people ready and able to cope with changing circumstances that are beyond their control (Savickas 1997). Furthermore, Savickas (2005) teaches us that career adaptability is a psychosocial blueprint that includes the readiness to adapt and the resources that enable the process of adaptation. As discussed earlier, Coetzee and Harry (2014) explain that these resources include attitudes, beliefs and interests that people need to enable them to respond to sociocultural, geo-politics and economic changes and changing contexts in the world of work. When people have these resources, they are likely to adapt and prepare themselves to overcome demanding occupational tasks, unexpected career transitions and unexpected challenges as effectively as possible (Coetzee & Harry, 2014). All this was reason enough that encouraged Savickas to replace career maturity with career adaptability and made it one of the key theoretical elements in career construction (Savickas, 1997).

Career adaptability is further explained by Johnston (2018) as a resource that can support positive outcomes, especially in expected and unexpected career changes or developmental tasks. Career adaptability also encourages people to self-regulate in these changing circumstances. Career adaptability, therefore, is a moderator and its “aim is to enhance people’s psychological and social functioning, especially concerning the impact of their functioning on their career choices” (Maree, 2018:154). In other words, career adaptability represents the ‘how of vocational behaviour’ and ‘how a person constructs a career including how a person might identify how they might strengthen their careers (Savickas, 2005). In the world of work, as the Covid pandemic showed us, many aspects can affect productivity at work and make economies unstable.

All these aforementioned challenges met during the shutdown period owing to Covid-19 and still, prevail can translate to people losing their jobs or having to adapt to different work environments and technologies to suit the conditions of the time. In this understanding, it is important and necessary that people can adapt to their careers to participate meaningfully in changing society, changing economies and changing the world of work (Maggiori, et al, 2013).

Career adaptability is also a hierarchical construct that can be understood as adaptability which is made up of *concern*, *control*, *curiosity*, and *confidence* (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). For instance, the *concern* construct is understood as the ability to be aware that vocations have an imagined future and can require a change in vocational behaviour to make a stronger, more effective and relevant adaptation. *Control* is understood as having the power to change or adapt vocations to suit future purposes. *Control* also suggests that a person is responsible for his or her career. The *curiosity* construct suggests that a person needs to explore the work environment to discover other possibilities that might enhance and enable one to a career to adapt to various socio-cultural and economic contexts and possible selves and future scenarios. Finally, *confidence* is the self-confidence in one's ability to face and solve concrete vocational and career problems, for example by learning new skills and competencies (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Figure 3.3. is an infographic representation of these adaptabilities.

Savickas and Porfeli's Four Cs of Adaptabilities

Figure 3.3: The overview of Savickas *and* Savickas and Porfeli's representation of the Four Cs of Career Adaptabilities

As discussed earlier, Savickas' move from career maturity to career adaptability suggests that some interventions and activities are needed to enhance the process of adaptability. These interventions and activities are likely to help specific people who have already taken up careers to cope with sociocultural, geopolitics and economic changes that might require some changes or modifications or transformation in the place of work. Usually, transformation requires careers to also transform to meet the demands of the time. The concept of adaptability, therefore, is a necessary tool that can bring a smooth transition that the world of work might have on existing careers. Adaptability and maturity can be seen as complementing each other and both concepts work cyclically. Figure 3.9 is an infographic representation of adaptability and maturity and shows how the two concepts interact with each other.

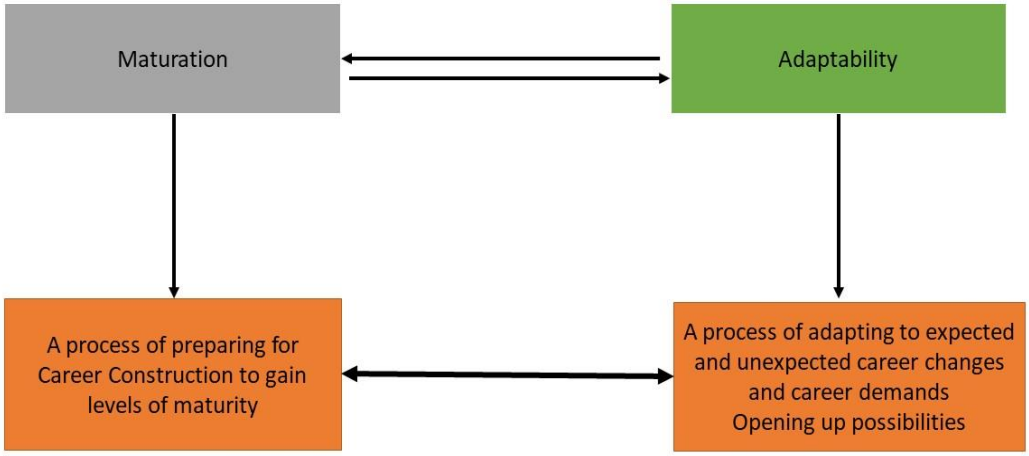

Figure 3.4: Connection between maturation and adaptability

Maturation and adaptation work in a continuous process as careers are constructed. Career construction is, therefore, not a once-off event in a person's life. Career construction resembles the principle of lifelong learning where people learn new things all the time. Furthermore, career construction needs a person who is mature enough to allow the process of adaptability to occur (Super & Knasel, 1981). In the context of this study, "career adaptability whether in adolescents or adults, involves planful attitudes [based on one's interests], self- and environmental exploration, and informed decision-making" (Savickas 1997: 254). In fact, in this study, adaptability and maturity in the career construction process can be seen as complementing each other and both concepts work cyclically. For instance, maturation seems to be a process of preparing learners for career construction so that they develop a level of maturity while adaptability seems to be a process of adapting to expected and unexpected career changes and demands. This is also viewed by Savickas who regards adaptation as a marked improvement in the biological construct of maturation (Savickas, 1997).

The application of career adaptability in the South African context is seen in the study of Rabie, Visser, Naidoo, van den Berg, and Morgan (2021). This study was also conducted on Grade 9 learners. The aim was to try and improve career

adaptability and career decision-making and help in making subject choices of their intended career choices. A workshop in a group format was conducted. The findings noted an enhanced career adaptability and there was an improvement in the way they sought information on the choice of subjects and the world of work requirements.

Another study was also conducted in South Africa by Cook and Maree (2016). This study sought to examine an intervention programme that focused on learners' career adaptability and integrated into the LO syllabus. The aim was to examine the magnitude of self-awareness and career construction in assisting learners from two different contexts regarding career adaptability and managing career-related transitions. In Cook and Maree's (2016) study, two groups of Grade 11 learners were selected from diverse challenging contexts. One group was chosen from an independent school and the other group was from a disadvantaged school. Results showed that both learners from these different contexts were able to manage their career-related transitions. In addition, both groups of learners displayed improved career adaptability after they took part in the intervention programme. Although this study was conducted among Grade 11 learners, these interventions in the LO subject speak directly to the teaching of careers needed in South Africa to assist both LO teachers and Grade 9 learners.

In the context of this study, all that has been discussed about vocational personalities, life experiences, career adaptability, and career maturation seems important for career construction. However, LO teachers as discussed in the previous chapters seem unable to support learners sufficiently to guide them properly when careers are constructed.

3.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the theories of Holland and Savickas were discussed and found to be relevant to this study. These two theories appear to support learners and to recognise key aspects such as interests, particular skills and behaviours that are needed in the world of work, happenings in the learners' lives and how learners

can try and manage life challenges in the construction of careers. First, the chapter discussed Holland's theory and the grouping of individuals into six types of personalities, that is, RIASEC which are based on learners' interests. But as indicated in this chapter, while this is the case, interests are likely to change as learners develop and their work environments change. Second, the chapter also discussed Savickas' career construction theory as it promotes a better understanding of the self where individuals attach meaning to a career and where possible become optimistic and use life experiences to adapt to work challenges and life transitions. In this study, the key concepts, such as interests, vocational behaviour, life experiences, and career adaptability that emanate from Holland and Savickas's theories were adopted to develop a framework that will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines how this study was conducted. It encompasses all the steps that were undertaken from the relevant literature to make an appropriate methodology choice (Rouse, Glatthorn & Joyner, 2013; Snyder, 2019). The different components that make up this methodology chapter enabled me and the reader to gain an understanding of how it was arranged (Verdinelli & Scagnoli, 2013). The arrangement begins from the top and starts from left to right in each of the rows.

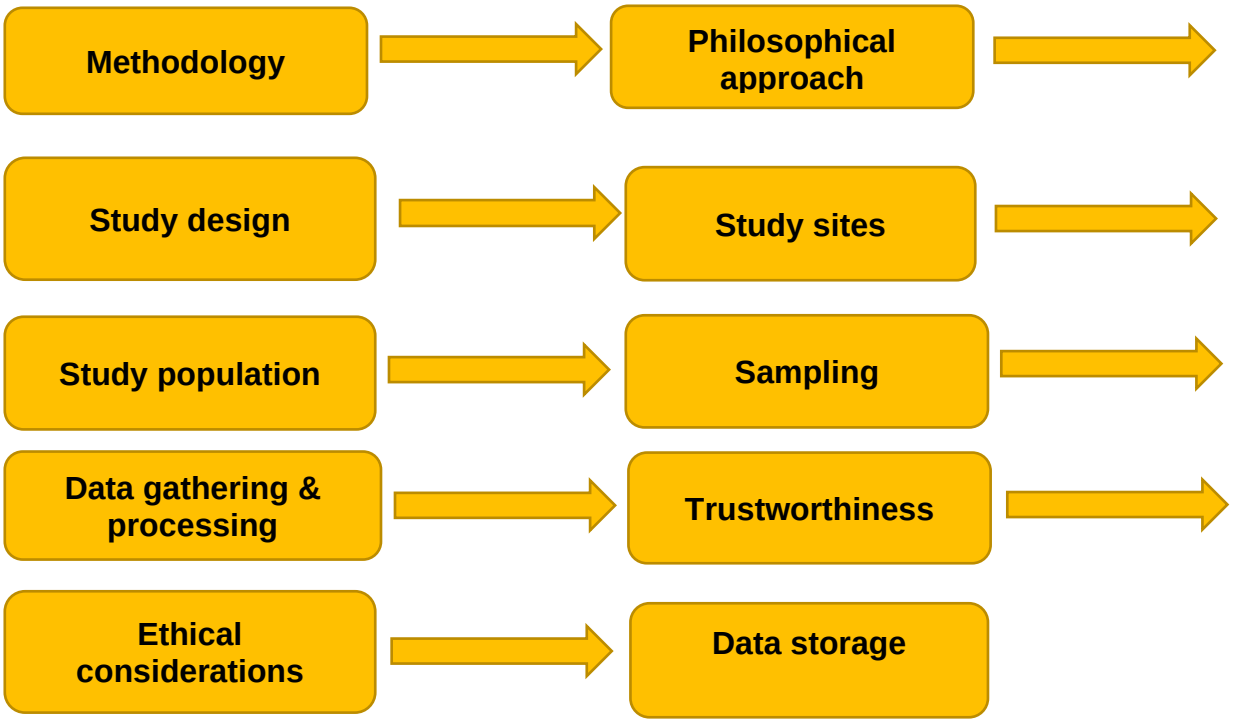

Figure 4.1: An overview of the components relating to the Methodology chapter

4.2 METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is a particular plan that describes the overall approach taken, and the methods or techniques used for gathering and analysing data

(Jackson, 2013; Bertram & Christiansen, 2017; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). It also aligns with a researcher's philosophy or worldview about the phenomenon studied (Tracy, 2020). This research embodies a qualitative approach that adopted the constructivist view. The latter assumes that reality is constructed socially by what people daily do and say in their world (Jackson, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Therefore, my focus was to explore the worldviews of LO teachers and the Grade 9 learners in the career construction process. Furthermore, I gathered information from the LO provincial coordinator, two districts' LO subject advisors and parents.

One of the attributes of a qualitative approach is that it enables the researchers to discover and explain in detail human beings' experiences and what they do in the situation to construct the meaning of their world (Hammersley, 2017; Erickson, 2018). For example, this study sought to understand in depth the world of LO teachers who are expected to guide learners when constructing careers and whether an environment that enabled the learners to gain knowledge of different careers was created. However, the qualitative research methodology also has challenges, such as the difficulties encountered by researchers to separate their impressions from the interpretations that emerge from the data gathered (Borman et al, 2012), as researchers often gather and analyse data themselves (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). To minimise these shortcomings in this study, I have addressed them under trustworthiness in section 4.11, which is towards the end of this chapter.

4.3 PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH

Sefotho (2019) teaches us that philosophy is a science and an activity that helps people and researchers to get to the bottom of things to explore their meaning. It is also the experience of asking basic questions with an understanding that those meanings are constructed from different perspectives. In research, when it comes to the ways of understanding those various meanings, abstract ideas and beliefs are used to reinforce the study (Sefotho, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018). These philosophical concepts or structures, therefore, strengthen research (Jackson, 2013) and help to put the research problem in perspective (Denzin & Lincoln,

2018). Furthermore, Sefotho (2015) argues that positionality encompassed by the philosophy, paradigm, ontology, epistemology, and the design of the study helps the researcher to explain and understand the dynamics at play in seeking answers to the study questions.

In this ethnographic study, my positionality is that I taught career guidance and the LO subject while I was a secondary school teacher. Reflecting on those years, it seems as if when learners are not guided adequately in the career construction process, this may have an impact on choosing career-related subjects and leaving school without a career path. The infographic representation of the methodological approach or the plan followed to explore the meaning of this study is presented next:

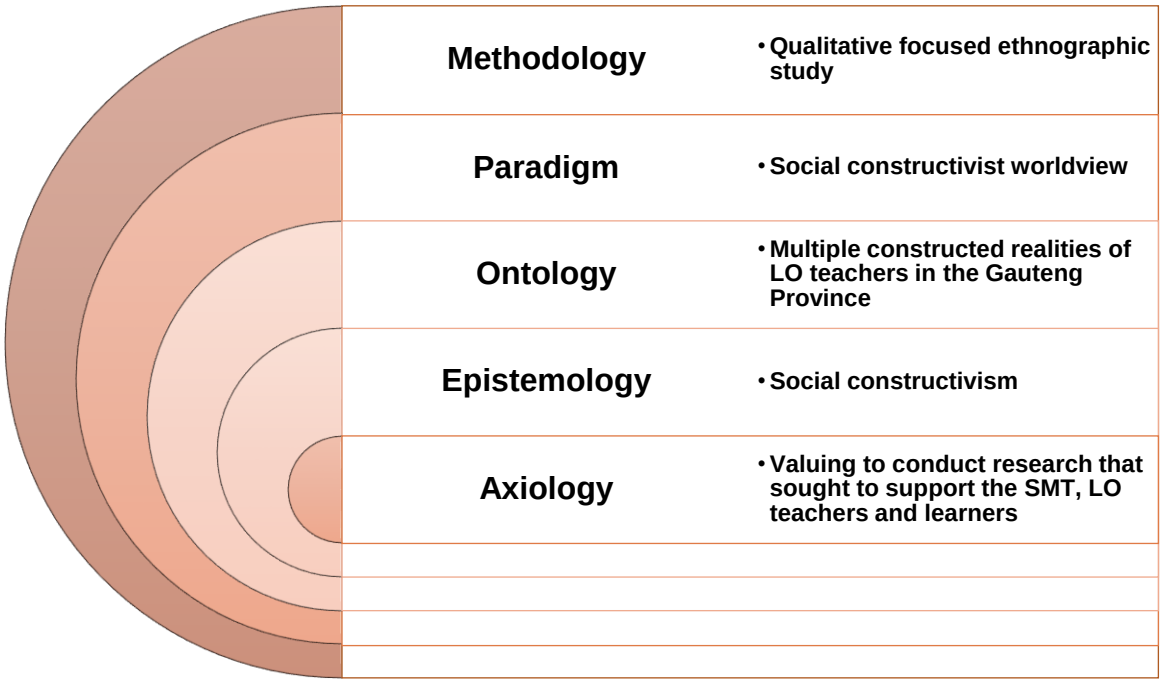

Figure 4.2: A summary of the depiction of the methodological approach of this study

4.3.1 Paradigm

A paradigm emerges from philosophy. It is also a worldview or a set of

assumptions about how things work regarding a researched phenomenon (Bertram & Christiansen, 2017). Thomas Kuhn claims, "The study of paradigms …is what mainly prepares the student for membership in the particular scientific community with which he will later practice" (Kuhn, 1996: 10-11). He also claims that "Men whose research is based on shared paradigms are committed to the same rules and standards for scientific practice. That commitment and the apparent consensus it produces are prerequisites for normal science, i.e., for the genesis and continuation of a particular research tradition" (Kuhn,1996:11). Kuhn also teaches us that a paradigm is a "universally recognized scientific achievement that for a time provides model problems and solutions to a community of practitioners" (Kuhn 1996: X). Overall, Kuhn argues that "the paradigm forces scientists to investigate some part of nature in a detail and depth that would otherwise be unimaginable" (Kuhn 1996:24).

Scholars such as Guba and Lincoln (2005:107) also write that "a paradigm may be viewed as a set of basic beliefs (or metaphysics) that deals with ultimates or first principles. It represents a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the "world," the individual's place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts, as, for example, cosmologies and theologies do." Furthermore, Hammersley (2012) simplifies a paradigm as a preferred way of understanding reality, building knowledge and gathering information about the world, indicating what is already known and containing 'puzzles' that require further work. Therefore, a paradigm is a collection of discourses that make up the philosophical assumptions that ground one's point of view based on the researcher's ontology, epistemology and axiology (Tracy, 2020).

In this study, a particular worldview, which is social constructivism, was followed which became the paradigm of this study (Sefotho, 2015). My role as the researcher was to interact with the informants such as the LO department officials made up of the LO provincial coordinator and the two LO subject advisors from two different districts, the SMT, the Grade 8 to Grade 12 LO teachers, the Grade 9 learners and parents. Interaction with these informants enabled me to understand their worldview of lived experiences. In the process of understanding their point of view regarding career construction, I then aligned their activities and

expressed words with the relevant theories, methodology and research practices to build knowledge that supports the teaching of career construction at schools (Walsh, Bohme & Wamsler, 2021).

4.3.2 Ontology

A French philosopher Dale Jacquette through his book *Being and Nothingness* argues:

> … ontology deals with such questions as what is meant by the concept of being, why there exists something rather than nothing, and why there exists exactly one logically contingent actual world. Ontology is the branch of philosophy that studies concepts such as existence, being, becoming, and reality. It includes the questions of how entities are grouped into basic categories and which of these entities exist on the most fundamental level (Jacquette 2002: xii).

Ontology is also what a researcher believes about the nature of reality regarding the investigated phenomenon (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012; Nieuwenhuis, 2014). It is the starting point of research (Grix, 2002). For example, the ontology of this study embraces several realities, where I noticed that the LO teachers in South Africa are tasked to efficiently guide learners in a career construction process. While this is the case, LO teachers are not qualified to teach LO but are supported through workshops on teaching LO. The very next year, the trained LO teacher may be removed from teaching LO and be replaced with a teacher who needs training. This nature of reality which is the absence of detailed knowledge about the studied phenomenon as indicated by Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) was recognised as the problem. As a result, I had a quest to investigate the processes and practices of the education system when these LO teachers who are not trained as LO teachers are allocated to teach LO and when eventually given service training, the 2016 Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa seems to allow them to be changed the next year. In this regard, how are the LO teachers expected to lay a solid foundation when guiding the Grade 9 learners in a career construction process? As there are many realities out there (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), I then decided to investigate the

reality of this unusual occurrence based on my personal experiences on how I was taught career construction. The nature of this kind of reality had to be explored by the informants mentioned earlier in the paradigm section.

4.3.3 Epistemology

Epistemology is viewed as what is regarded as knowledge and how claims of knowledge about reality are acquired (Wagner, Kawulich, & Garner, 2012; Creswell & Path, 2018). Knowledge about reality is also viewed as subjective (Nieuwenhuis, 2014). In this research, the epistemology adopted was social constructivism, which is associated with Piaget, Bruner and Vygotsky who argue that people make sense, make meaning and solve problems by interacting with each other in various social, historical and cultural environments (Blustein, Schultheiss, & Flum, 2004; Patton, 2008; Young & Popadiuk, 2012). Social constructivism as an epistemology offers the acquisition of knowledge through approaches such as 'verste-hen' or understanding, and hermeneutics that seek to try and interpret the social world through the eyes of the informants (Cohen, et al, 2018; Romm, 2018). In this process of understanding, uncovering and interpreting meanings, the researchers interact with the informants rather than seeing them as outsiders (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For example, in this study, the knowledge of how LO teachers guided learners in career construction was acquired from multiple in-depth understandings of views such as the literature, and I interacted with the informants to co-construct my understanding. At times, there was a need for me to further reflect on the different meanings expressed. During and after these interactions at times, I needed to contact the informants for a better understanding of what was done and expressed (Romm, 2018).

The social constructivism epistemology also promotes an understanding that as people interact with each other, they gain knowledge and learn from each other's experiences (Powell & Kalina, 2009; Mclleveen, 2012). To make this knowledge and experiences meaningful, there are socio-cultural activities that people engage in where there are processes of teaching, explaining, interpreting, and reflecting on social and historical events, and cultural practices to solve problems that affect their lives (Savickas,1997, 2005; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016;

Nieuwenhuis, 2016).

In this study, most of Holland's personality groupings seem relevant to social constructivism. For example, the investigative personality grouping requires learners who want to pursue a career in journalism to have an interest and engage in various activities. These activities may require learners to interact with people as they search for knowledge about the reality of an investigated matter, collect information, promote the research activity or report on a particular event. Learners who fall under Holland's enterprising personality grouping also enjoy activities that involve interaction with people to persuade them. These examples show that social constructivism can easily enable learners to construct careers of their choice through social interaction to gain knowledge.

As discussed under the career adaptation section, in 3.3.3. the unfortunate emergence of Covid-19 created multiple problems for people worldwide. Many people lost their lives and some companies had to close down. This further increased the unemployment rates. Covid-19 demanded that people rethink how they might continue to live and work in a world that had become dangerous to their lives. Although many people could not go to their workplaces or offices, technology tools and on-demand technologies such as TikTok and Microsoft Teams platforms created opportunities that enabled some people to continue working remotely to earn a living as long as they are willing to adapt. These on-demand technology changes created new prospects that changed some careers significantly. They also suggest that careers are not stable and might change all the time and people, therefore, need to interact with each other constantly and engage in activities in socially constructed settings to manage and adapt to these changes (Blustein et al, 2004; Mclleveen, 2012; Ahmed, 2020).

In the context of this study, LO teachers who are supposed to be more knowledgeable than learners in the career construction process need to expose learners to career-building activities such as life themes. Life themes can support learners to make sense and make meaning of the careers they wish to pursue. Even though learners might engage in career-building activities while they are still at school, it is important to keep in mind that careers are subject to change.

Therefore, learners also need to be exposed to how economic demands, geopolitics and advances a society makes can change careers. As discussed in Chapter One, LO teachers and other external relevant stakeholders can use the CAPS document that guides curriculum-based activities that might mimic the careers that learners wish to pursue in future (Young & Collin, 2004; Lent & Brown, 2013). These career construction-related activities can also help learners to understand their career interests, and career demands and make informed choices. In all of this, in this ethnographic study, the claims of knowledge about reality were gathered through participant and non-participant observations, field notes and interviews. These methods of data collection are discussed in this chapter in the 4.8 section.

4.3.4 Axiology

Wagner, et al (2012) posit that axiology is a philosophical branch of research that deals with the study of human values. Cohen, et al (2018) add that research should pursue facts and give rise to more quest for knowledge of reality than playing politics. Hammersley (2017) further explains that in social sciences, for example, learning institutions such as universities traditionally conducted research that emphasised the need for detachment and in the process missed connecting policies with what was needed in societies. However, lately, particularly in social sciences, there seems to be a call to researchers to continually conduct studies that have subjective evaluations, especially when implicit and unexamined.

In this study, as research was conducted matters of human values were observed. For instance, permission to conduct research was obtained from the informants and ethical considerations were adhered to as discussed in section 4.12, the last section of this chapter.

4.4 DESIGN AND RESEARCH METHODS

A research design is a specific plan or a recipe for studying the research problem (Hofste, 2015; Joyner, Rouse & Glatthorn, 2018). It moves from the philosophical

approach shown in Figure 4.11 to the selection of informants and the methods used for collecting data to how data will be analysed (Nieuwenhuis, 2014). My decision to use qualitative design in this study was influenced by Atieno's (2009) and Neuman's (2011) views who argue that people attach meaning to how they view their world and make sense of their daily lives and experiences. For example, the career construction process in this study is about the people, work and other life experiences that fulfil them. Sometimes, the career constructed uplifts the individual and the community in which one lives. Qualitative research design also consists of interpretive practices such as interviews, observations and recordings that make the world visible to the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Furthermore, there are various types of qualitative research designs such as action research, narrative research and case study (Creswell, 2013).

In this study, the ethnographic design was preferred because a career construction process can be viewed as a real-life concern where even after finishing school, learners are expected to start working and provide for themselves and their families. Therefore, I needed to choose ethnography as a design on the basis that it enabled me to holistically try and gain an understanding of the real-life experiences of the LO teachers, and Grade 9 learners expressed in words, descriptions, feelings, opinions, and practices (Hamilton,1999; Wolcott, 2012; Atkins & Wallace, 2012; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019). Furthermore, through this study, I was able to even hear and feel these real-life experiences about the career construction process from the department officials. This included the LO provincial coordinator, two different LO district officials and the selected school’s SMT and parents. In this whole process of an ethnographic qualitative research design, as it unfolded, I tried to keep in mind that this research embraced the meaning and interpretations brought by the informants about the researched problem and not by me (Creswell, 2014). However, in all of this, I then realised that the usage of a qualitative research design may not work well for my studies, as often qualitative research seems to be associated with matters of trustworthiness that are discussed in section 4.12. Although the usage of ethnography in education is sometimes contested and viewed as having

challenges, this design is used to study and understand real-life complex interactions from the insider's viewpoint (Gertner, et al, 2021).

4.4.1 Ethnography and its history

> "Ethnography is not always characterised through long-term engagement with other people's lives. Rather it involves intensive excursions into their lives, which use more interventional as well as observational methods to create contexts through which to delve into questions that will reveal what matters to those people in the context of what the researcher is seeking to find out" (Pink & Morgan, 2013: 2).

There is no standard definition of ethnography (Pink & Morgan, 2013). However, the word ethnography comes from two Greek words, 'ethos' which means people or tribe and 'graphein', to write and describe people and culture (Tracy, 2020). Culture is not defined only along ethnic or geographical lines (Mayan, 2016). It refers to values, beliefs and attitudes that demonstrate the behaviour pattern of a specific group of people (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In this study, culture refers to the manner of doing things in the career construction process, as schools have beliefs and own ways of delivering or executing the career construction process.

Martyn Hammersley in his book titled, *What's Wrong with Ethnography* argues "Ethnography is directed towards producing what is referred to as 'theoretical', 'analytical' or 'thick' descriptions (whether of societies, small communities, organisations, spatial locations or 'social worlds" (Hammersley, 1990:12). In this study, ethnography assisted me to gain the most credible detailed and holistic perspective in describing and analysing people's lives and experiences when it came to the construction of careers and selection of subjects (Fetterman, 2010; Hart, 2017).

Historically, ethnography has its origins in the anthropology and sociology disciplines (Hamilton, 1999; (Atkins & Wallace, 2012; Wolcott, 2012; Mills & Morton, 2013; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019). Ethnography was often associated with the first anthropologists such as Malinowski and Mead, who

immersed themselves in the field for long periods when they were conducting studies. However, lately, ethnography has been used by social scientists, teachers and students in disciplines such as Psychology and Education (Green & Bloome, 1997; Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). For instance, in this study, I have used ethnography in education to explore mainly the activities and the experiences of LO teachers and learners in the career construction process.

4.4.2 Usage of ethnography in education

Ethnography used to be conducted by social scientists such as anthropologists who stayed for long periods to study the informants' culture from an insider's point of view (Hoey, 2014). Its usage in education is promoted by Hamilton (1999), Hammersley (2006) and Atkinson (2013) who enable us to understand that ethnography is an educational and social research design that highlights the importance of researching first-hand information about what people say and do in a particular context. Green, Skukauskaite and Bake, (2012) and Andreassen, Christensen and Moller (2019) add that ethnography in education is conducted by researchers who are inside the academic field such as teachers and students. In this study, these roles apply to me as I was a career guidance teacher, LO teacher and currently a PhD student.

The usage of ethnography assisted me to have a better understanding when investigating aspects such as education policy effects and organisational ways of doing things to generate knowledge as promoted by Atkins and Wallace (2012). Additionally, Mills and Morton (2013) assert that researchers in education may use the ethnography's strength to explore the phenomenon in totality to focus on people and their lived experiences as ethnography is a pedagogical tool that studies educational texts and policies. Furthermore, the usage of ethnography in education is supported by Hammersley (2006) and Sirek (2016) who argue that this methodology when used in education assists the 'voiceless' to help and develop a more meaningful curriculum. These voices can bring change in the curriculum where reforms are needed (Lutzhoft, Nyce, & Styhr-Petersen, 2010; Fang & Garland, 2014). All these different aspects of the usage of ethnography in education as a methodology have strengthened this study. As a former teacher,

I managed to generate knowledge from the LO CAPS. I could also relate to the voiceless LO teachers who are employed without an LO qualification or knowledge about career development theories to support these teachers who receive in-service training in some schools while practising what they have learnt in guiding learners in career construction. Therefore, in this study, I needed to listen to different voices such as the LO teachers and Grade 9 learners. These included the voices of some of the LO department officials, the SMT and parents who seemed to blame the government for the poor delivery of proper career construction at the schools.

As there seem to be different types of ethnography, this study, preferred focused ethnography as it allows for the identification of a distinct problem in a specific context (Wall, 2015). Furthermore, focused ethnography helped me to study a phenomenon that takes place at a particular time (Knoblauch, 2005). For example, the teaching about careers and subject choices in the LO Grade 9 CAPS is taught at a specific time, from July to October (DBE, 2011). When ethnography is used in an education field, such as schools, it often becomes impossible for the researcher to stay for a long period on the site. This is owing to issues such as school holidays and syllabi that need to be adhered to at a particular time. However, all is not lost. In cases where the researcher might have to spend a shorter time on the site, Knoblauch (2005) suggests that the long periods in the field associated with ethnography are compensated by the usage of multiple data-collecting research methods.

In this study, in trying to meet this requirement of compensating for the three months I stayed at the selected school observing and interacting with the informants, I used multiple methods such as both non-participant and participant observations, interviews and field notes, which will be discussed in the data collection section. I had to be at the school during that time as the syllabus required and I could not stay longer than that. However, the issue of long stays on a site which is usually associated with ethnography was counteracted by a combination of various data-gathering techniques such as observation, interviews and document analyses (Pink & Morgan, 2013).

4.4.3 Approach to the study

The approach of this ethnographic study is aligned with that of Hammersley's (2018) together with Merriam and Tisdell's (2016) epistemology of constructivism. The philosophical assumption of this approach teaches us that there are multiple interpretations of a single event out there (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Therefore, the empirical claims gained in this research may not be treated as superior to the interpretations of the informants, a notion that also applies to the person reading this study (Hammersely, 2018). I needed to be a part of the daily activities to gain an in-depth understanding of the meaning of the studied group of people (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019), in this case, the LO teachers and Grade 9 learners. Furthermore, I also interacted with and interviewed the LO department officials, SMT and parents to better understand their views about career construction. On the basis that there is no 'objective' reality, interpretations are always deliberate and sometimes subconscious (Hoopwd, 2013). It was, therefore, important for me when I sought to construct reality to be in contact with and form relationships with the informants. This enabled me to understand how the informants performed their daily activities and their experiences with the studied phenomenon as portrayed by them (Mills & Morton, 2013). These interactions with the informants and the experience gained from these interactions led to a better understanding of the career construction process (Cohen, et al, 2018). In the process, I probed and shared realities between myself as a Grade 9 learner in the late seventies, a Guidance and LO teacher and an emerging researcher, assisted by the informants' deeds and utterances regarding the thick descriptions of the phenomenon in their daily lives emerged, as researched knowledge (Geertz, 1973). I then reflected on what was done and said by the informants and tried to arrive at an 'informed' decision (Miles & Huberman,1994) and this extended the understanding of new knowledge (Amineh & Asl, 2015).

4.4.4 The Positionality

What is happening to the teaching of career construction at schools?

I come from Gugulethu, one of the oldest townships in Cape Town. I still remember my primary school days when I went to Sokhanyo Lower Primary which was about a kilometre away from home, to do my Sub-Standard A, better known as Sub A, which currently is Grade 1. I stayed at Sokhanyo from Sub A to Standard 2. After I finished at Sokhanyo, four years later, a kilometre walk was reduced to half a kilometre when I joined Siviwe Higher Primary to do Standard 3. Higher primary schools in the Western Cape catered for Standards 3 to 6 (Grades 5 to Grade 8). I did not stay on to do Standard 6 at Siviwe because there was a school further away that had a better academic reputation than Siviwe, which my parents encouraged me to go to finish my higher primary schooling. I then committed to a daily four-kilometre walk to Vuyani Higher Primary School where I passed my Standard 6 (Grade 8). I then continued through the higher primary with that career story and proceeded to do my Standard 7 (Grade 9) at a secondary school which used to be called Sizamile (currently known as Oscar Mpetha), about two and a half kilometres away from home. It was at Sizamile that I first encountered a subject called Career Guidance. What I also remember is that the Career Guidance periods were ‘free periods’ where we wrote notes and took tests for other subjects. This is also noted by Walters, et al (2009) and the LO teachers in this study.

At that time, while I was in Grade 8, I wanted to become a social worker. The problem is that I do not remember what my career guidance teachers taught me or what I learnt from them during the career guidance periods. To make this experience worse, I do not remember if my teachers advised me or guided me through the process of career construction. The only vivid recollection is that I took an aptitude test, and I was told that the results of the test would give me an indication of a career that might be suitable for my personality to choose the career that I wanted to pursue. I never knew what my career options were. The aptitude test results never came back to me, and my social worker career story was not fulfilled or pursued either. Even though my social work story was not fulfilled, I managed to pursue a career in the teaching profession. I became a teacher for about 20 years; I taught in two secondary schools; one in the Western Cape and one in the Eastern Cape. The sad part is that I was allocated career guidance only to make up my teaching load. Unfortunately, this influenced me not

to pay attention to teaching career guidance too. I also used those periods for other reasons other things than teaching the learners and guiding them through the process of career guidance. I later became a Head of Department (HoD) in an Eastern Cape school, and I was involved in teaching LO for over ten years. In the course of that time, I enjoyed teaching LO as it teaches learners about who they are, how they can maintain their health, what to do to be good citizens, and how they can be prepared for the world of work.

In 2005, I relocated to the Gauteng Province, and I lived in Centurion in Pretoria. I was unemployed at that time. I then visited two primary schools and a secondary school at Olivenhoutbosch, a township outside Centurion. This gave me a chance to volunteer and made learners aware of various careers, subjects that are relevant to those careers and the tertiary institutions that offered those careers in the country. Owing to my vested interest in career construction, I requested two career consultants, one from the Tshwane University of Technology and another from the University of Witwatersrand (Wits) Counselling Careers and Development Unit to support me in this endeavour. These career consultants with more resources available to them further supported the learners on their career paths. For instance, learners were informed about the various careers offered at the Tshwane University of Technology and Wits, the requirements needed to pursue a particular career option that leads to various qualifications and the financial assistance offered by these two tertiary institutions. It is this profound interest in careers and my experience in teaching career guidance and the LO subject that inspired me to take on research on career construction within the field of education. I always had a vision to see learners, guided adequately when constructing careers and able to choose relevant subjects for their intended career paths.

4.5 THE STUDY SITE

The research site is the selected place where the researcher collected data on the problem being investigated (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006; Aveling, Parker, & Dixon-Woods, 2016).

In ethnographic studies, sites such as schools and universities may be used to describe the cultures that one can find within these sites (Carspecken, 2015). Culture in this regard refers to the activities and ways of doing things in a particular way as explained earlier in this chapter.

On the basis that Hammersely (2018) notes that a study site in ethnography provides a researcher with a holistic, thick description of the interactive processes for the discovery of the investigated problem. This study used one urban public school, conveniently selected as it was closer to my workplace. One public school was preferred so that I could immerse myself fully in what happened daily at the school and listen to the views of the informants when careers and subject choice were taught; for me to understand holistically the studied phenomenon (Hamilton, 1999; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). While this public school was used as the study site to obtain an in-depth understanding of the role played by the LO teachers in career construction, two LO subject advisors from two different districts and one LO provincial co-coordinator were involved in this study. For example, the involvement of these three LO department informants from various sites gave a better understanding of how the career construction process in Grade 9 learners was managed by the LO teachers at the selected school. This enabled me to explore how learners were guided to construct their intended career choices and choose relevant subjects for those career paths.

4.6 POPULATION

A population is a “Group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects or events that conform to specific criteria and to which we intend to generalise the results of the research” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:119). The population of this study consisted of nine provinces and informants were selected from one province. Gauteng Province consisted of 15 districts, and two LO subject advisors were selected from two districts. In these 15 districts, one district had 120 secondary schools and one school was selected. At the selected school, out of four SMT teachers, three were informants. There were ten LO teachers and six of those teachers taught LO from Grade 8 to Grade 12. In 2019, 220 Grade 9 learners enrolled for the first time and 28 learners took part in this study.

4.7 SAMPLING

Sampling is a portion drawn from the population, as a researcher cannot study the entire population (Vasileiou, Barnett, Thorpe, & Young, 2018). Sampling in qualitative research also refers to groups, individuals and settings that best exhibit the characteristics of the phenomenon under study (Maxwell, 2012; Wagner, et al, 2012; Nieuwenhuis, 2014). There are two main methods of sampling, namely, probability and non-probability samplings (Bertram & Christiansen, 2017). This study used the non-probability sampling method that selected informants based on the assumption that they were going to provide me with better insight to achieve the objectives of this study (Kumar, 2014; Cohen, et al, 2018). This non-probability sampling further consists of different types of samplings such as snowball and purposive samplings. Purposive sampling targets a particular group of informants who are viewed to possess specific knowledge and experience (Higginbottom, 2004; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). For example, this study used purposive sampling where particular informants such as the LO coordinator, the LO subject advisors, SMT, LO teachers, Grade 9 learners and parents were selected. These particular informants assisted me to gain holistic and rich information about what was happening and said in the career construction process. I also wanted to understand whether an environment was created that enabled the Grade 9 learners to construct careers of their choice. All these informants were selected voluntarily and agreed to participate in the study. Informants such as LO department officials, SMT, LO teachers and Grade 9 learners signed the consent forms. These learners were below 21 years, and their parents accordingly signed the consent forms. However, three parents of learners who participated in this study were asked verbally to participate in the study and interviewed individually on the careers and subject choice information session evening. The information received from these parents formed part of the field notes. In this study, sampling consisted of one Gauteng LO coordinator out of nine LO provincial coordinators in the country and two different LO subject advisors out of 15 districts in the Gauteng Province. One school out of 789 secondary public schools in the Gauteng Province was sampled. At the selected school three SMT teachers were sampled out of four members, six LO teachers were sampled from ten LO

teachers and 28 learners were sampled out of 220 Grade 9 learners.

Following is the infographic representation of the informants' samples used in this study:

Table 4.1: Sampling representation of this study

Informants	No. of informants	Gender	Experience	The language used during interviews
LO teachers Grade 8-12	6 out of 10 LO teachers in one school	(i) 5 females (ii) 1 male	1-30 years teaching LO	English
LO HoD	1	1 female	9 months as an LO HoD	English
School principal	1	1 female	25years	English
Vice Principal	1	1 male	15 years	English
Grade 9 learners	28 out of 220 Grade 9 Learners	(i) 13 females (ii) 15 males	All first time in Grade 9	English
LO coordinator in the province	1 out of 9 provinces In the country	1 female	11 years as a teacher & 14 years as a coordinator	English
LO district's subject advisors	2 out of 15 districts in the province	1 female 1 male	10 years as an LO advisor and 35 years as a teacher 11 months as an LO advisor and 11 years as a teacher	English
Parents		3 females		English

4.8 DATA GATHERING METHODS

Kawulich and Holland (2012) and Hofstee (2015) elucidate that data-gathering methods are the instruments or means that are used to collect data. In ethnographic studies, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) argue that data may be collected in any manner available that can give clarity to the emerging issues that contribute to the holistic comprehension of the studied phenomenon. It has been mentioned earlier under the design section that in ethnographic studies, short visits are compensated for by different data-gathering methods. This study, therefore, used different data-collecting methods such as observations, interviews, field notes and a tape recorder as discussed in the following section.

4.8.1 Observation

Observations are descriptions of events or objects notably important in ethnographic studies (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). When ethnography is used in the education system, observations can pick up occurrences that make sense more than the information shared in the syllabus and the interviews (Lutzhoft, Nyce, & Styhr-Petersen, 2010). In this study, I had so many opportunities to observe LO teachers while teaching about careers and subject choice. Creswell (2009) and Hart (2017) argue that researchers can use both roles of observation – becoming a non-participant observer and a participant observer.

In this study, I played both roles and started as a non-participant observer. As a non-participant observer, during the LO periods, learners used to come to the teachers' classrooms. I sat at the back of these classes, the natural settings to observe what happened during the teaching of careers and subject choice topic, which is the studied phenomenon. If I needed to understand what was said or explained about career construction while teaching took place, I would conduct interviews at the end of the period where I did not understand. I also observed the career information session about careers and subject choice held at the selected school, where the subject teachers made presentations to the Grade 9 learners and parents on the subjects they taught. I took notes which were reflected on when I was alone.

As a participant observer, the Grade 9 LO teachers used to ask for my input while they taught the section about careers and subject choice, the focus of this study. I remember being asked to explain to the Grade 9 learners the importance of volunteering when constructing a career. I also participated and issued the September reports to some of the Grade 9 learners and parents, where I managed to speak to the learners' parents and asked various questions such as whether they were aware of the intended career path of their children. Some of the issues I needed to pay attention to were raised in the interviews. This was first-hand information which became a 'brick and mortar' in this ethnographic study (Fetterman, 2010). All these interactions together with playing both roles, as a non-participant and a participant observer increased my chances of producing data that gave more accurate accounts of the researched phenomenon (Hammersley, 2017; Tracy, 2020).

4.8.2 Interviews

Interviews are conversations between researchers and informants (Bertram & Christiansen, 2017). Interviews, as suggested by Silverman (2008) and Nieuwenhuis (2014), expand insight into the studied phenomenon. In this study that sought to explore how LO teachers guided the Grade 9 learners in the career construction process, I used both individual and focus group interviews. These different forms of interviews were held during the day, and they took about 40 minutes. Individual interviews were conducted to give the informants space to express themselves freely, while focus group interviews were used to explore new perspectives within a shorter period (Gibbs, 1997). Combining focus groups and individual interviews enhanced the richness of data in this study (Lambert & Loiselle, 2008).

The term used in the interview questions was career development instead of career construction. This is because schools use career development, and I did not want to confuse the informants with the terminology concepts. Regarding the type of questions asked, in ethnographic studies, Atkins and Wallace (2012) and Hart (2017) suggest that semi-structured or open-ended questions are ideal as

they require informants to elaborate on the views given. In this study, these open-ended questions allowed me to make follow-ups and probe to comprehend the informant's responses (Fetterman, 2010). Closed questions were also used, although they often require yes or no answers (Bertram & Christiansen, 2017).

For example, closed questions were used where I had to ask the Grade 9 learners whether they had chosen a career. This was followed by further questions such as the type of career chosen and where, for instance, learners got the information regarding the career built. In all of this, both open-ended and closed questions allowed me to obtain more detailed information about the career construction process. I conducted 27 individual interviews in total and four focus group interviews. These types of interviews are each explained in the next section:

4.8.2.1 Individual Interviews for the learners

I started with individual face-to-face interviews, with 21 Grade 9 learners because I wanted to understand how they viewed a career construction process. There were ten females and 11 males. When these individual interviews were conducted, I used the LO's HoD's office. The school allowed me to use LO periods, where learners took turns and came to the office that I occupied. The duration of the period was about 40 minutes, which was the time allocated to the interviews. The individual interviews with the learners took about a week. There was no need for an interpreter because the school was an English medium school. Although the questions for these learners were the same, there were instances where different probing questions were made. This depended on how each informant understood the question and responded to the previous question (Basit, 2010). All this was done to gather the information that assisted me to obtain more elaborative and meaningful data. All these Grade 9 learners' interviews were recorded and transcribed later.

4.8.2.2 Interviews for the LO officials

In this study, three LO DBE officials were individually and facially interviewed. These included two LO subject advisors from different districts and one the LO

provincial coordinator. The purpose of conducting individual interviews was to understand valuable information such as policy-related matters. These individual LO department officials' interviews took place in their offices. One at the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) Head Office in Johannesburg and two at the districts' offices. Most of the interview questions that were prepared for the LO department officials were similar to the questions prepared for the SMT and the LO teachers. The interview questions were emailed a week before the set interview date. This idea suited me as I wished the informants to feel comfortable and better prepared (Tracy, 2020).

During these individual interviews, I observed different non-verbal reactions (Nieuwenhuis, 2016; Bertram & Christiansen, 2017). For example, when I asked the LO department officials about the challenges they encountered regarding the teaching of careers and subject choice, all of them seemed to complain about the 'vicious cycle' where they would train a teacher to teach LO, then the following year that trained teacher is moved to teach other subjects and replaced with a teacher that needs training. When they expressed this challenge, their tones changed and sounded breaking. Even today, when thinking about that, I still hear the brokenness in their voices and see the pain in their faces. All the interactions encountered by these influential informants through individual interviews enabled me to understand what the Grade 9 learners are going through in the career construction process. More importantly, these interviews were also voice-recorded and individually transcribed.

4.8.2.3 Parents' interviews

As Yanik (2017:114) argues, "Ethnographic research does not have a fixed and tested technical method. Rather, it involves a dynamic method that changes according to the context". In this study, when the research plans were made, parents were not going to be part of this study. However, at the selected school, while I was still collecting data, there was a career and subject choice information session for the Grade 9 parents and learners that was held in the evening. The September reports were also issued on that same day and learners had to bring their parents. As I participated and issued the reports on that day, I managed to

speak to some of the Grade 9 learners' parents. I then asked individually three parents verbally to play the role of informants in this study and they agreed. The questions and information received from the parents were written down and formed part of the field notes. These parents portrayed multiple realities (Creswell, 2013) concerning the teaching of careers and subject choice. Their views about the school and the LO teachers regarding the studied phenomenon formed part of the collected data.

4.8.3 Focus group interviews

Focus group interviews in educational studies are useful and are a practical method for gathering highly qualitative data (Romm, 2015). Focus groups also create a perspective of multiple realities within the group, building on one another's ideas (Lunt & Livingstone, 1996; Morgan, 1996; Kumar, 2014). This suggests that what is expressed by one informant in a group can remind other members to voice a similar or different view about the nature of the reality discussed. In this study, focus groups were important for the in-depth understanding of the current situation in the career construction process in the Grade 9 learners at the selected school. Krueger and Casey (2015) advocate that focus group interviews must be homogenous. In this study, there were four focus group interviews which were homogenous. For example, focus group interviews were held with the SMT, the LO teachers who taught LO in one school and two groups of learners who all studied Grade 9 for the first time in 2019. These focus group interviews are discussed separately in the next section.

4.8.3.1 Focus Group for the School Management Team (SMT)

The SMT focus group interviews could not be conducted during the same period with the LO teachers and the Grade 9 learners at the selected school. This was owing to the end-of-the-year examinations, as mentioned earlier. Nevertheless, I had to go back to the selected school about five months later. The purpose of holding interviews with the SMT was that they have a buy-in power at the school and are expected to approve the allocation of the subjects to the teachers. These SMT focus group interviews were held at the principal's office. Although prior

arrangements were made to interview all four SMT teachers at the selected school, however, on the day of the interviews I interviewed three SMT members as the fourth member had to attend to other matters. These three SMT teachers consisted of the school principal, the vice-principal and the LO Head of Department. Three members in a focus group are acceptable as argued by Vasileiou, et al (2018) that sample size in qualitative research is an area of debate and practicality. This applied to this study as it was impractical to interview all four SMT members.

Morgan (2010) notes that the interaction in the focus group interviews might bring agreements or disagreements which indicates that a high level of thinking is key for the attainment of a project or a goal. In this study, the attainment of a goal was the proper delivery of the career construction process. There was consensus among the SMT and the LO teachers that the LO subject and the teaching of careers, which is embedded in an LO subject was important. In these SMT focus group interviews, the SMT even shared their agreed plans to move the Grade 9 learners' and parents' career information session that was held in the evening to a Saturday, to give more time to the event. In addition, the SMT also agreed to invite different career-related stakeholders on that Saturday event planned for the Grade 9 learners when constructing careers. In this study, all this information which is part of the data was recorded and transcribed.

4.8.3.2 Focus group for LO teachers

I conducted focus group interviews with the LO teachers from Grade 8 to Grade 12 to have an idea of how careers and career choice is taught in all grades at the school. The LO teachers' focus group interviews took place after school for about an hour. I provided refreshments as the informants were going to remain at the selected school for the interviews. These LO teachers taught LO from Grade 8 to Grade 12 and other subjects such as Business Economics, Geography and Mathematics. Both LO teachers that I observed and participated in some of their classes were part of this focus group discussion. The informants' experiences as LO teachers ranged from a year to 30 years as shown in Table 4.6. Out of the six LO teachers who participated in this study, only two teachers studied the career

guidance course in their training to become teachers.

Romm (2015) argues that conducting focus groups in South Africa with schoolteachers considers and links the processes of different people collectively. In this study, the accounts given by LO teachers in this interview appeared to approach the teaching of careers differently. Therefore, conducting this focus group enabled me to construct information from their different personal understandings and experiences which collectively gave me a better understanding of the researched phenomenon.

Morgan (1996) and Kidd and Parshall (2000) further note that focus group discussions give a voice to a group that feels marginalised. In this study, this view of feeling less significant came up in the focus group interviews. For instance, most LO teachers felt that the LO subject was not taken seriously and not given the same treatment as other subjects such as Mathematics and Physical Science. For example, LO teachers shared that it is the only subject in Grade 12 that is marked internally, while other subjects in Grade 12 are marked externally. However, in this study, this same sentiment where LO teachers in these focus group interviews seemed to feel marginalised together with the LO subject neglected at the selected school, was also expressed by the LO department officials. These experiences expressed by the informants in both individual and focus group interviews including my experience as a former LO teacher brought credibility to what is still happening at schools in the career construction process. These discussions were recorded and transcribed later.

4.8.3.3 Focus groups for learners

In this study, there were two sets of focus group interviews with the Grade 9 learners. These two groups of focus group interviews were used to triangulate data by testing one source of data against another (Romm, 2018). The Grade 9 learners' focus group interviews took place on the same day during tuition time. Arrangements were that on the day of the interviews, learners may be excused from their classes to be part of these interviews. They were made up of 14 informants and each group consisted of seven informants. These sets of focus

groups also comprised eight males and six females. In each group, there were four males and three females. Out of the 14 informants, seven informants participated only in the focus group, while the other seven informants participated in both the individual and focus group interviews. What was shared in these interviews was recorded and transcribed individually later.

4.8.4 Field notes

Field notes are recordings of the actions and observations of what happened in the field during data collection (Tracy, 2020). In ethnographic studies, field notes are more than a diary as they provide researchers with the opportunity to record information as they go along (Atkins & Wallace, 2012). In this study, field notes were written daily and mostly written at the sight. For instance, during data collection, as mentioned before under the observation section, I used to sit at the back of the Grade 9 LO classes and observe what happened in class and take notes during the teaching of careers and subject choice.

The selected school had a career information session in September in the evening where Grade 9 learners and parents were invited to the school as mentioned before. Before the session started, I spoke generally about careers to some of the Grade 9 parents who came to the selected school. In particular, on that evening I verbally interviewed three Grade 9 learners' parents and took notes. Furthermore, I used to take notes of whatever incident that is related to the career construction process. For instance, when I visited the library of the school, I also took notes. Later in the day, I would refresh my memory to reflect on what happened during the day regarding the researched phenomenon (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). These notes taken from the day-to-day interactions and observations assisted me to have a better insight during data analysis (Fetterman, 2010).

4.8.5 Audio recorder

Audio recorders are more useful in capturing large volumes of detailed records of what people said about the studied phenomenon (Cohen, et al, 2018). An audio

recorder also guards against memory loss (Vemuri, Schmandt, Bender, Tellex, & Lassey, 2004). In this study, an audio recorder helped me to capture both the individual and focus group interviews on how Grade 9 learners were guided by the LO teachers in a career construction process and enabled the learners to construct careers of their choice. All 43 informants were audio recorded except the three parents, whose information was added as field notes. These recorded interviews allowed me to listen to the actual words as expressed by the informants. Whenever I need to refer to the actual words said by the informants, even after data transcription, I could play the audio recorder again for better insight into what was expressed during the interviews (Vemuri, et al, 2004; McGrath, Palmgren & Liljedahl, 2019).

4.9 DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative data analysis is a process of making sense of the data to answer the research questions. The data analysis of this study suggested that I needed to understand how the informants understood, made sense and how they made meaning of the career construction process. The data analysis process required that I understand the depth of knowledge that informants had on career construction. Data analysis also required that I delve into the informants' experiences of how the process of career construction might be executed (Wagner, et al, 2012; Bertram & Christiansen, 2017).

The process of career construction is not a once-off practice; it has multiple layers to it. For instance, the LO teachers, the parents and the learners had different ways of understanding the career construction process. As a qualitative researcher, I needed to interpret these different understandings. While qualitative data analysis is not straightforward, it requires checking and rechecking, a back-and-forth process; I then chose to follow a thematic analysis approach (Nieuwenhuis, 2014).

Thematic analysis is a data analysis method that can be used in large data to help emerging researchers produce rich, detailed and organised final reports (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moule 2017). For example, as an emerging researcher,

I had large data that included 43 interviews, and field notes from the observations as discussed in the data collection section. The thematic analysis helped me to follow a data analysis process where I managed to identify codes, group the codes into categories and themes emerged out of those categories.

It was important for me to familiarise myself with the data (Nowell, et al, 2017). I immersed myself in the data by manually transcribing the data word for word. I listened to the tape recording repeatedly so that I could identify the spoken and the unspoken words, the informant's associated emotions, and tonal and facial expressions. I could connect all these to the relevant parts of the transcript. Some of the informant's voices and facial expressions are still visible in my mind and sight. I also made field notes from all the observations. Moreover, the whole process of immersing myself in the data enabled me to understand how the informants understood the concept of career construction (Kelly, 2012; Seidman, 2013).

Qualitative data analysis is a process of identifying particular data sections with relevant codes. The process of immersing myself in the data enabled me to enter into the phase of coding. Coding is the process of dividing data into units and segments that make sense to me and that eventually enabled me to achieve thematic analysis (Saldana, 2016). I adopted the traditional way of coding by colour-coding my data. In this way, I could see the patterns. At times I used verbatim quotes to extend the text with short narratives as this study is ethnographic. These patterns led me to group the codes into categories because "codes enable you to continue to make discoveries about deeper realities in the data that is referenced by the codes" (Nieuwenhuis, 2014: 105).

In this study, I tried as far as I possibly could to apply inductive thinking to understand the interpretive data following the process I discussed earlier. In that sense, from the process of coding and organised codes into categories, the following themes emerged:

- The influence of the 2016 Competency Framework for Career

Development Practitioners in South Africa and the Grade 9 LO CAPS in career construction for Grade 9 learners.

- Activities and services that are related to career construction.
- The experiences of the Grade 9 learners in the career construction process.

4.10 DATA TRIANGULATION

Data triangulation refers to the usage of various sources when data is collected. Triangulation of data is important in research as it recognises that there are many different accounts of a researched phenomenon (Bertram & Christiansen, 2017). In this qualitative study, which aimed to support LO teachers to be able to guide Grade 9 learners to pursue their intended career choices, data were collected through different sources, such as non-participant and participant observations, field notes and interviews. In this way, one form that enhances trustworthiness was followed (Babbie, Mouton, Vorster & Prozesky, 2010). Issues of trustworthiness are further discussed in the next section.

4.11 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness in a study refers to the ability to persuade both the person(s) who conducted the research and the readers that the research findings are worthy of attention (Nowell, et al, 2017). The nature of qualitative research necessitates researchers to adopt philosophical approaches such as paradigms, ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies. These foundations of research in qualitative studies are often associated with assumptions made by the researcher when data are collected and analysed (Borman, LeCompte & Goetz, 2012; Wolcott, 2012; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019). When qualitative researchers analyse data, they may easily become subjective (Wagner, et al, 2012; Ravitch & Riggan, 2014; Bertram & Christiansen, 2017) which may lead to biasness (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). All these mentioned aspects, therefore, require qualitative researchers to be cautious and to constantly keep in mind procedures that assist in obtaining trustworthiness in their research (Maxwell, 2012; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). To try and establish trustworthiness aspects such as credibility, transferability,

dependability, and confirmability were considered (Guba & Lincoln, 1985) and addressed in the next section.

4.11.1 Credibility

Credibility relates to aspects where the findings of a study undertaken reflect the reality and lived experiences of the informants (Bertram & Christiansen, 2017; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). To try and maintain the credibility of this study, I followed guidelines by Guba and Lincoln (1985) and Moon, Brewer, Januchowski-Hartley, Adams, and Blackman (2016) who buttress that to improve the credibility of a study, researchers can share any part of their study with colleagues or in conferences. These platforms are viewed to offer additional views and the current reality of the studied phenomenon.

In this study, I ensured that credibility was established by sharing the preliminary findings on International Careers Day in March 2022 (see Appendix O). On that day, I discussed on Microsoft Teams this study's findings with the LO provincial coordinator who participated in this study and the districts' LO subject advisors. The LO subject advisors included other LO subject advisors who did not take part in this study. The study was also presented at two local master's and doctoral conferences at Unisa which were held in June 2018 and 2019.

4.11.2 Dependability

Dependability refers to the extent to which the evaluation of the findings and recommendations of a study conducted can obtain similar findings when applied to another study (Kumar, 2014). In the same vein, constructivists such as Lincoln and Guba (1985) note that often no other research will come to the same interpretations when a study is repeated. One of the reasons is that human beings may not be the same because of unforeseen circumstances such as retrenchment or death (Nieuwenhuis, 2014).

In this study, I have kept in mind the foregoing aspects of dependability and I am also aware that someone in future may want to repeat this study. Therefore, in trying to ensure its dependability, I followed Nowell, et al's (2017) suggestion,

which notes that the dependability of a study can be established by keeping a record of the path followed by researchers throughout the study. In so doing, I have kept a record of the research procedures taken in this study so that whoever may want to repeat this study can look over the data collected and arrive at findings that may be similar to the findings of this study (Babbie & Mouton, 2010).

4.11.3 Transferability

Transferability relates to the extent to which findings of one study can be transferred to similar contexts or situations (Twycross & Shields, 2005; Bertram & Christiansen, 2017). It is unlikely to replicate the study and have the same findings. In that sense, Carcary (2020) notes that issues of transferability may be improved by keeping a record that involves aspects such as theories, methodology, analytical decisions and how the researcher's thinking evolved throughout the study.

In this study, I have adhered to the transferability strategies aspects that assist to reduce the challenges of transferability in qualitative research. Although parts of this study may not be transferred to other contexts, the SCCF this study proposes can be transferred and used in other public schools across South Africa to inform the career construction process.

4.11.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the degree to which the findings of the study could be confirmed or corroborated by others for trustworthiness purposes (Kumar, 2014; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). In qualitative studies, confirmability is often questioned as researchers are both filters for and interpreters of the data (Borman, LeCompte & Goetz, 2012). In this regard, Guba and Lincoln (1989) offer that confirmability is established when credibility, transferability and dependability are all achieved.

In trying to establish the confirmability of this study, I have followed Cohen, et al's (2018) suggestion of peer-reviewing the study. For instance, I presented certain aspects of this research at an international conference in Denmark in 2019. The

theme of the conference was Critical Perspectives and Social Justice in Transition and Career Development (see Appendix N). The theme of this conference was relevant to this study as it intended to address the topical issues such as social justice and interdisciplinary and critical approaches that may be tackled through career construction.

4.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics are generally considered to deal with beliefs about what is right or wrong, proper, or improper, and good, or bad. This becomes more important with qualitative research because the researcher mainly deals with people. Researchers are, therefore, required to be ethically sensible and responsible when dealing with the informants (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019). This is in the best interest of everyone involved with the study so that no one is harmed (Fleming & Zegwaar, 2018).

In this qualitative research, permission was granted by Unisa College of Education Research Ethics Committee (see Appendix A). All the required documents were submitted to the Unisa College of Education Ethics Committee, which included documents such as the proposal, the informed assent and consent forms (see Appendices E and F). I also asked for permission from the GDE to go and collect data at the school that was part of this research. Thereafter, I requested permission, which was granted by the DBE and the selected school.

All the informants were informed about the study and written consent forms were requested from all informants. When I met with the informants before this study commenced, I advised the informants that their participation in the study was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any stage if they did not want to be part of the study any longer. The informants in this study were between 15 and 16 years old. In this regard, the assent from the learners was requested and permission was obtained. I also requested permission to collect data from their parents and their parents permitted me. I also informed them that all the interviews were going to be recorded and transcribed. In addition, I requested

verbal permission from my twins to be part of this study; they agreed, and their conversations were not recorded, but after I wrote their contributions, they read those sections.

As part of ethical considerations, I explained the purpose of this study in writing and verbally to all the informants listed in Table 4.6. As this study is classified as a medium risk, the informants were treated with respect. The relationship is still maintained with the school and the LO department officials. While the identified school and all the informants' details were kept confidential and private, the results of the study were discussed with the LO department officials as mentioned under trustworthiness.

4.13 DATA STORAGE

Electronic and hardcopy data must be kept safely in their original form for about for future reference (Kawulich & Holland, 2012). Furthermore, the generated data can be kept, and used for further research activities and its life can be extended (Corti, Van den Eynden, Bishop & Woollard, 2019). In this study, I have kept the electronic and hard copy data that is made up of the field notes, interview records and transcripts in my locked office. The computer has a password, and no one has access to it except me. Informants' names were kept secret. More importantly, codes were used for the anonymity and confidentiality of the informants. Storage of data may also assist when this study might be repeated by another researcher and in matters related to trustworthiness as discussed in the next section.

4.14 CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the methodology which included the philosophy, paradigm, ontology, epistemology, and axiology underlying this study. It also presented the design and methods adopted in this research study, as well as the study site, population and sampling. The data gathering methods, data analysis, data storage, trustworthiness and ethical matters were also discussed and addressed. For example, this study embodied a qualitative-focused ethnographic

approach that adopted the constructivist view, where reality in the career construction process is formed through experiences and engagements with various people. For instance, career construction involves on one hand the learner's interaction and performance of different activities that may lead to experiences. These experiences gained from career-related activities usually lead to or may form the learner's interests. On the other hand, the interaction of learners and LO teachers also requires collaboration with several people such as subject teachers, family and friends to learn about aspects such as the labour market, work-related skills, and acceptable behaviour at work people to acclimatise with the work conditions. Furthermore, the data gathering methods, data analysis and data triangulation were outlined and various aspects including trustworthiness comprising credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were described. Finally, the chapter also addressed issues of trust ethical consideration and data storage. The next chapter will present the findings.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this section, I present the findings on the focus group interviews held with the SMT, the LO teachers and two groups of Grade 9 learners. In addition to these focus group interviews, the findings on the individual interviews that were held with the LO department officials, parents and the Grade 9 learners are also presented. This study aimed to find ways to support the LO teachers to be able to guide Grade 9 learners to make informed decisions about careers they wish to pursue. The findings are aligned with the four secondary research questions:

- Secondary Research Question 1: How the 2016 Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa and the Grade 9 LO CAPS contribute towards career construction for Grade 9 learners?
- Secondary Research Question 2: What activities and services should Grade 9 learners engage in the career construction process?
- Secondary Research Question 3: How do Grade 9 youth experience career construction?
- Secondary Research Question 4: What framework can support the career construction process at schools?

5.2 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTION 1

How the 2016 Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa and the Grade 9 LO CAPS contribute towards career construction for Grade 9 learners?

The findings on this question that focused on the 2016 Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa, and the Grade 9 LO CAPS highlighted three findings:

- The 2016 Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa allows LO teachers who are neither trained as LO teachers nor CDP to teach LO and rely on in-service training;

- CAPS insufficient time dedicated to the teaching of careers, subject choice and career counselling; and
- The joy of teaching careers and subject choice.

5.2.1 The Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa allows LO teachers to be employed without an LO qualification and relies on in-service training

The 2016 Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa states that:

> "…The majority of schools in the country do not appoint a permanent person responsible for career development. The existing system by and large will identify an educator to teach LO (the subject wherein career construction resides). This educator may, in the next year, be reassigned to a new teaching role and another educator may be assigned the role of teaching LO.
>
> …It is important to mention that LO educators are not specialist career development practitioners. It is also important to mention that many educators who offer LO are not trained as LO educators" (DHET, 2016, 52-53).

This framework suggests that any teacher can be appointed to teach LO even though a teacher was not trained in LO. Instead, the district LO officials support these teachers by giving them in-service training to enable them to teach LO effectively. The problem is, as discussed in Chapter Two, these teachers do not get sufficient chance to gain much experience in teaching LO. They are frequently allocated to teach LO across the grades within a school. In three years, for instance, a teacher can teach LO in three different grades. The problem becomes deeper because these teachers do not gain much experience in teaching career construction which is embedded in the LO curriculum. In this light, this training appears inadequate as teachers after receiving training are not retained. In response to the secondary research question 1 which sought to analyse how CAPS contributes towards the teaching of career construction, the department official Manzi echoed the 2016 Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa's stipulation and said:

> “A teacher is not given training; instead, he or she is told LO is just about life, you will be able to teach LO. Many teachers you know say this demoralises them…So as a teacher [who is allocated LO without training] what will you do? You will just accept it because you do not want to be taken out of the system.”

The foregoing statement demonstrates a rather superficial level of understanding of the purpose of LO in general and career construction in particular.

The LO department official Manzi further explained as follows:

> “You know sometimes LO is a ‘fill up’ subject in most schools, so they [School Management Team] change teachers. If a teacher is not doing well sometimes in a subject, the teacher will be taken down to LO…Some schools do not hold subject choice meetings because LO is a ‘fill up’ subject. In most schools, the SMT changes teachers frequently.”

Regarding the in-service training that is given by the LO provincial coordinators subject advisors, LO department official Mlilo explained as follows:

> “The biggest challenge we are facing is that Life Orientation because of the lack of qualified teachers with formal qualifications from the technikons and universities. What we now experience is that it becomes a dumping ground for teachers who do not have exposure to Life Orientation itself as a subject, knowledge-wise. [Regarding the frequent change of teachers] …next year your developed teachers are taken away, then another year comes in, again you have the same problem of teachers who need training. What are you left with? You are left with the problem that there is no continuance. It’s a vicious cycle of non-continuance, which becomes a challenge in terms of the delivery of the subject content.”

Adding to the lack of continuity in retaining the trained LO teachers, LO department official, Manzi, appeared to paint a picture of the situation at some schools regarding the in-service training and said:

> “I have developed teachers; my subject advisors have developed several teachers too. You know but as soon as they become aware that this teacher is doing well… they [School Management Team (SMT)] take the teacher back to Maths [or to any other subject].”

This attitude seems to reveal the lack of regard that LO is held by the SMTs. Similarly, the learners' responses reflect what looks like a lack of information in LO teachers during the teaching of careers and subject choices. One Grade 9 learner, Sethu, sounded frustrated and shared as follows:

> “They [LO teachers] do not tell us exactly what is happening. Sometimes, they just say Life Science can help you to be a doctor, and it ends there, they do not go further to explain what happens [when you choose a career to be a doctor].”

Another learner, Princess, echoed a similar view and said:

> “I wish the school could bring a few professionals that are doing different careers to share with us all the information that they know.”

The prevailing practices reflected in statements like those made by the LO department official, the LO teachers and learners seem to indicate a challenge for the schools in how they approach LO. For example, the Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners (2016) document clearly states that “the minimum requirements for Teachers' Education Qualifications, as a revised 2014” (DHET, 2015) shows that a structure is in place to allow for the development of a specialised career development qualification that educators may select at a further specialisation (Policy on the minimum requirements for teacher education qualifications as revised 2014, Figure 123, Page 17”). However, it seems as if the implementation of this policy stipulation that enables teachers to obtain a qualification for teaching LO is not always put into practice. What seems to happen is that those teachers appointed by the school to teach LO are given in-service training in which the LO department officials such as the LO subject advisors and the LO HoD at schools are tasked to support LO

teachers through various workshops and interventions. Even this in-service training route appears not to be followed regularly. For instance, I asked one of the LO teachers how often they attended LO workshops related to the teaching of careers and subject choice. LO teacher, Bacon, said:

> "Yhoo, you are the first person to talk about careers at this school [most of them laughed]."

Another LO teacher, Sweet, supported this view and added as follows:

> "There were no workshops conducted at the school and outside the school."

These statements reveal another contradiction between policy stipulations, SMT and LO teachers. It sounded as if the in-service training which is expected to be conducted by the LO department officials at the selected school involves only other teachers and not LO subject advisors sometimes. For instance, SMT Rainbow stated,

> "They [LO teachers] do so much training with the LO HoD and other senior staff members [at the school]."

SMT Sun was in support of the sentiment expressed and added to this contradiction and said:

> "Ms Y [one of the LO teachers] has been teaching LO all along; she assists me when I do not know something."

The findings also noted what sounded like complaints on how the LO subject is treated by the SMT. For instance, LO departmental official Mvula expressed her unhappiness as follows:

> "I would develop a teacher in such a way that teacher is confident and competent and passionate and when they see that this teacher has changed because they are teaching LO, you know they started preparing

> because we have, you know, skilled that teacher we have instilled that, you know, that passion, then they take the teacher away from LO because they think only Maths is good enough to have such teachers… the SMT really does not come to the party in a far as LO allocation is concerned."

Further sentiments on how the LO subject was treated came from the LO teachers themselves. For instance, LO teacher Candy said:

> "I have the feeling that at times the management feels like LO is just a subject [voices behind said 'Yes!'] I have spoken to the other teachers as well; the feeling is the same. They do not see the value of Life Orientation, they only see the value of Maths, and that is why, when you are a Life Orientation teacher they can just 'patch you 'if there is a space, there are not enough teachers, they will just take whatever teacher. They [SMT] see it as a less important subject."

The blame seemed to be levelled against the DBE. For example, LO teacher Candy alleged as follows:

> " I feel it's also, the fault of the Department of Education because, they say the subject is important, but at the same time, they are the same people who undermine it. They are the ones who undermine it in the sense that it does not count in all universities. The Admission Point Score of Life Orientation does not count some universities, while other universities count it as a half mark."

There were findings on the LO CAPS as discussed in the next sub-section:

5.2.2 CAPS insufficient time dedicated to the teaching of careers, and subject choice including career counselling

As discussed in Chapter Two, CAPS prescribes 11 hours for the teaching of the world of work topic, yet only three hours are dedicated to the teaching of careers

and subject choices including career counselling. Findings showed that three hours is not enough for what seemed to be an important part of the career construction process. For instance, LO teacher, Candy, said:

> "The problem is the content of LO; there is so much to be done…there is no time."

SMT Rainbow seemed to support what sounded like the lack of time when careers and subject choice are taught and remarked as follows:

> "The Grade 9 learners need more time because they are choosing careers, if they can have more time in careers, it could be better."

The issue of time in the CAPS document on careers and subject choice was noted by the learners as well. One learner, Sizwe, commented,

> "When we are having the career guidance periods, they [LO teachers] should, like make the syllabus longer so that we understand in detail what other careers are, beyond what we know."

Another learner, Ayanda added as follows:

> "I feel, there is not enough time given to the teaching of careers. I also feel like everyone has a different career choice; so, if we do not have enough time and get individual attention on our careers. We have a few LO lessons in a week."

In addition to the insufficient three-hour time Grade 9 LO CAPS allocates to the teaching of careers and subject choice including career counselling, other findings emerged, and they could not be ignored as they talk directly about career construction. For example, the South African education system appears to use Holland's RIASEC personality groupings theory. As discussed in Chapter Three, Holland grouped careers focusing on interests into six personality types, the RIASEC personality groupings. At schools, following Holland's theory that is

used, the teaching plan requires learners to be tested so that they know their three dominant personality types. The findings on how career counselling was done at the selected school, were revealed when LO teacher, Sweet said:

> "They [learners] actually do not say anything. Is when you pick it up maybe during an LO lesson. You know if you happen to ask, what you want to be or what you are interested in; that's the only time you can be able to assist."

Another LO teacher, Smartie commented as follows:

> "No attention is given to learners who do not have career choices because of the curriculum demands."

In trying to explain how career counselling was conducted, a third LO teacher, Bacon further contended as follows:

> "The problem is the content of LO. There is so much to be done, and we are not teaching careers only, we have other topics that we are expected to cover. so, it's not like a topic on its own. It's just a subsection, so it's not given that attention. You only do it when it is its time and then you move on."

As findings reveal, the personality grouping testing which is part of counselling seems not done in the selected school and in most public schools. Giving more clarity on the personality grouping test, LO teacher, Lollipop

LO department official, Mvula giving more clarity on the personality grouping tests at schools said:

> "We have psychologists, but psychometric tests are not done."

The LO department official, Mlilo also explained as follows:

> “We have collaborations with the guidance counsellors and psychologists because we may not organise career exhibitions. They do them; in that way, we are into meet somewhere in common things that Emmhmm make us be able to support the teachers and ultimately the learners, so is the result in our case as LO facilitators [or advisors] are concerned with the teachers and support them.”

Commenting on what looks like a need to intervene in the educational, psychological and societal challenges in learners LO department official, Manzi, said:

> “I would like to see career guidance counsellors and social workers designated per school so that we have more resources that will cater for our learners. In that way, I think we will be able to win the battle especially the battle of our kids who have disciplinary problems coming from the background of unstable families; so that when teachers report certain behaviours displayed by the learners could be dealt with at that point when it happens. So, if we can be able to have such a system that each school will have a career guidance counsellor designated to the school and a social worker designated to the school, I think we can be able to change our school system greatly because discipline is a major, major, major problem.”

The aforementioned findings indicate dissatisfaction regarding CAPS allocation of only three hours yearly to such important topics, as the teaching of careers, subject choice and career counselling. The findings also note a need for social workers and career counsellors to support the learners in the career construction process with career counselling. Further findings on the learners’ views on career counselling will be discussed in section 5.4.

5.2.3 The joy of teaching careers and subject choice

There is hope regarding how the CAPS document and other related resources might support the teaching of LO, particularly career construction. In this regard,

LO department officials appear to want to assist the LO teachers when it comes to the teaching of career construction as the department official, Mlilo, said:

> "As [LO] subject advisors of Gauteng, we sat down and developed lesson plans for the teachers. We also developed material for them. Right now, we are busy with the career booklet. We are always busy as bees trying and help our teachers and we are also trying to refine the policy document, the CAPS document. We want to leave out some of the topics just to reduce the content so that topics like careers, you know, and drug abuse, teachers spend a lot of time on them."

Even though it seems as if the CAPS document does not support the teaching of career construction when it comes to the time allocated for this topic, some teachers seem to find joy in teaching LO. For instance, LO teacher, Sweet, said:

> "So, you like Ooh! Ja! This is very interesting… I think for me that is the joy of it [teaching about careers and subject choice]. I feel it is my contribution in waking them up to be ready to take up the career that they want to take."

It is not all bad in the career construction lessons as some learners enjoy the exercise and look forward to lessons that are dedicated to it. For instance, Lizo, a Grade 9 learner added as follows:

> "I am excited because Ma'am I feel like careers are like a major part of our life, so it is not something we get into just like in a rush, we have to think it through. So, I feel excited when I go to LO [period] to do career path."

Another learner informant, Table, commented as follows:

> "So, when it's guidance period, I look forward to finding out what could suit me because I am an artistic person, but I am also a political and social person because of my mom and dad. I look forward … to what could best help me with the current mindset I have now, to find a career that could

benefit not only myself but the country, the whole world, my family, my future kids and future grandchildren so that I can choose a career that leaves a mark for my name."

These findings suggest that, firstly, at the selected school there is no attempt to allocate teachers who are properly prepared or grounded to teach career construction. Secondly, even though teachers may receive in-service training that is meant to enhance their ability to discharge their career guidance duties, there is very little attempt to ensure that the teachers that receive the in-service training teach the subject for several successive years to be grounded in the training received. As mentioned in Chapters One and Two; after receiving training, the 2016 Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa allows them to be changed the next year.

Thirdly, although the government policies make provision for teachers to improve their qualifications and their ability to provide good career construction guidance to learners, these policies are seldom implemented, as LO teachers are changed frequently by the SMT. In this regard, both the SMT and the LO department officials have a responsibility to intervene in this state of affairs and implement government policies. This seems to seldom happen.

Fourthly, the short length of time dedicated to the teaching of careers, subject choice and career counselling is a challenge that seems to hinder the proper discharge of a career construction process. In all of this, career construction in South Africa is prioritised by the 2017 National Policy for an Integrated Career Development System for South Africa to address aspects such as rife unemployment and social inclusion aspects in the country.

These findings also show that the DBE seems not to always honour its responsibilities and intervene when LO teachers are changed frequently. The lack of these activities which will be discussed in the next chapter may not support the learners in the career construction process.

Some findings noted the LO subject was taken not seriously and viewed as inferior and often used as a ‘fill-in’ subject. For example:

The inferior status of the LO subject

The following testimonies suggest that the LO subject is sometimes viewed as inferior at the identified school as compared to other subjects. LO teacher Bron shared an impression that is common to other LO teachers as follows:

> “I have the feeling that at times the management feels like LO is just a subject. I have spoken to the other teachers as well; the feeling is the same. The School Management Team does not see the value of LO. They see the value of Maths.”

This notion where LO is viewed as less important than other subjects such as Maths and Sciences was corroborated by the LO departmental official Mvula who lamented as follows:

> “… the emphasis is on Maths and languages. The principals are focusing mostly on these two subjects, followed by Technology and Sciences; so there is this crazy, I do not know. There is this crazy about Science, Maths, Technology and languages and so most of the teachers are allocated in those subjects. The best teachers will be allocated in Maths, languages, Technology and Sciences and then the worse ones; the ones that are always absent are allocated to the LO subject.”

These findings also provided insight into the frustrations experienced by the LO teachers from the youth this time who seem to regard LO periods as leisure time. LO teacher, Lollipop explained as follows:

> “During the LO periods, learners do not participate in the discussions. They feel like you know it is an ‘off period’. They do not really take it seriously.”

Another LO teacher, Candy also blaming young people as follows:

> "Learners are not committed [with an emphatic tone] because they think it is a 'stokvel' [period]. What do you call it? That's my personal experience."

A third LO teacher, Sweet in support of the foregoing sentiments that youth do not care when they have to be taught LO said:

> "…my experience is that learners feel like you know it is an 'off period'. They really do not take it seriously. So, it is quite difficult to motivate them..."

Surprisingly on this issue where the LO subject is perceived as inferior or a 'free period', there were two similar and conflicting discourses that emerged. For instance, the LO departmental official, Manzi, supported the LO teachers, and both accused the principals of treating LO as unimportant. While this may be the case, the LO teachers also blamed the DBE for not taking the subject seriously and claimed:

> "Even the Life Orientation teachers, are not taken seriously. In other subjects, for instance, they [teachers] will go and mark at the end of the year; with the LO teachers, there is always no budget for LO teachers to go and mark; like there is this fight all the time, and it is just tiring. It also demotivates. Why should I put all the effort into something that is not valued? Why do you have to go the extra mile on something that is not valued because the same department does not take it seriously? They do not take it seriously. Why must we spend sleepless nights and then the child gets a distinction, and that mark does not count for [Admission Point Score] APS."

LO as a 'fill-in' subject

A common understanding among the respondents was that not only is the LO subject considered to be unimportant where teachers are trained and thereafter tasked to teach other subjects; but the LO subject is also used as a 'fill-in' subject. For instance, the LO HoD explained as follows:

> "We have teachers that are specialists, or they studied LO, but it is a

challenge in the department. Now we are ten teachers teaching LO because each learner in the school has to take LO. It is difficult in the sense that we have to 'fill in' teachers in the timetable because we do not have enough LO teachers. Some teachers are not necessarily only giving LO; they studied Maths for instance I have Maths but have remedial so I can teach LO."

This notion of LO, which is often used as a subject to add to the minimum duty load of teachers was corroborated by an LO departmental official, Mvula who said:

> "You know sometimes Life Orientation is a 'fill-up' subject in most schools; so they [SMT] change teachers. If a teacher is not doing well in a subject such as Mathematics, they get someone who is doing well in Mathematics… even if you have never done Life Orientation, or an old teacher you never did guidance. They will tell you just Life Orientation is just about the life you will be able to teach Life Orientation because you cannot do well in Maths."

An LO district subject advisor, Manzi, in support of this common habit in schools said:

> "You know the worse teachers will be allocated to LO …When that teacher gets to familiarise himself or herself with content, then they will start changing… For me, LO needs a person who is passionate and knowledgeable because you have to have information."

Another LO district subject advisor, Mvula, giving an account where LO is often used to make up the required teacher's minimum duty load and, in most cases, taught by teachers without the subject knowledge elaborated as follows:

> "The LO subject has become a 'dumping ground' of teachers who do not have exposure to Life Orientation itself as a subject, knowledge-wise. For instance, when learners become fewer in subjects such as Maths, EMS and Accounting, teachers become accessible. What does the school do

with such challenges they are experiencing? Preferably, they take those teachers. Knowledge base, content is not there. It is left to the facilitator to develop. The challenge comes when the next cycle comes in as in a new year, then the numbers of Maths or Accounting have increased the developed teachers by the facilitator are taken again to the very same subject LO."

These findings, which mainly suggest LO as inferior and a 'fill-in' subject, are not surprising considering that the South Africa government appoints LO teachers without qualification with a view of training them to teach the LO subject. This systemic practice is disappointing and self-defeating because after the LO teachers have received training, the same government allows them the next year to be removed from teaching LO and be assigned to other subjects (Competency Framework for Career Development document, 2016). The findings for the second theme are presented in the next section.

5.3 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTION 2: ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES THAT ENHANCE THE GRADE 9 LEARNERS IN THEIR CAREER CONSTRUCTION PROCESS

It was discussed in Chapter Two, that the 2016 Competency Framework for Career Development document mandates schools to undertake activities such as attending career exhibitions, engaging in exercises that are in the career booklets, watching career videos and attending Grade 9 learners' and parents' career information evenings during the teaching of careers and subject choices.

In addition to the career activities, stipulated above, the Grade 9 CAPS curriculum in particular expects the LO teachers to give activities to the learners. These activities require learners to write the subjects they are good at and those that they are weak at, prepare a poster for an intended career and undertake voluntary work during the teaching of careers and subject choices. These career-related activities that are in the findings that follow are likely to support the Grade 9 learners during a career construction process particularly those that occur in class.

The findings show that some LO teachers begin with these activities very early in the year as LO teacher, Smartie, said:

> “Teachers go around and bring prospectuses and posters to the learners.”

LO teacher, Candy, was more specific about what happened in class during the careers and subject choice period and shared as follows:

> “At the beginning of the year I have a questionnaire, [and say] introduce yourself; who are you; who are your friends; what primary school are you from; what are your favourite subjects; what is your field of interest; what type of music you like listening to etc.? then at the end, I ask the intended career.”

If both LO and subject teachers can expose learners to a wide range of available careers from which learners can choose, learners might be better informed as Bulumko said:

> “Maybe if they give us information in term 1 or 2, we will have at least time to decide after doing more research and we will know each subject.”

It seems as if some learners were not impressed with the learning activities that were given in class, as LO teacher, Bacon, indicated as follows:

> “When we teach about careers and subject choice, there are learners who do not care about all these things and choosing a career while in Grade 9, there are ones that are generally demotivated.”

The findings show that other learners were excited about the lesson on the careers and subject choice that is likely to determine their career paths. For instance, Alice said:

> “I am excited because I want to know more about the careers that I can choose and take part in and learn more about a career I would like to pursue.”

Gugulethu also said:

> “I am excited because Ma’am I feel like careers are like a major part of our life. So, I feel excited when I have to learn about a career path**.**”

The learners even expressed the parts of the lessons and activities they enjoy because Bhongo said:

> “I like the fact that we talk about interests and abilities and focus on them during career guidance. I think that is very good.”

During the collection of data, I also witnessed the Grade 9 learners, given an activity in class, and those who could not finish in the class were asked to finish it at home. This activity required the learners to write all the subjects that were offered at the school in Grade 10. In addition, the homework asked the learners to indicate the subjects they were good at and those that they were weak at. For another homework activity, the Grade 9 learners were asked to prepare a poster about a career they wished to pursue as mentioned earlier.

It is obvious that the teaching and learning activities did not only end in class. The teachers also gave the learners opportunities to go outside the classroom to practice some of the careers they might be passionate about through volunteer work. One of the learners, Luzuko, said:

> “They [LO teachers] tell us to do a project based on volunteering; so, we had to go somewhere and do volunteer that helps us in our careers.”

It is evident going out of the premises of the classroom to get first-hand experiences in what happens in the world of work benefited the learners in meaningful ways. Learner, Princess, shared this experience when she said:

> “When we do the volunteering project. It was very insightful as we went to organisations, and we had to research them. We gained a lot of insight about what people are doing there and the different careers in that organisation.”

Unfortunately, the learner, Siziba, did not share the same sentiment and did not seem inspired and looked desperate when he said:

> “I am going to be honest with you; there are a few activities that can give you ideas of what and where this [career and subject choice teaching] could take you.”

Some learners, however, expressed a need for their teachers to give them more activities that can lead the way to the careers the learners might want to pursue. Learner, Aloe, expressed this need when she said:

> “I feel that they [LO teachers] are telling us too late about subjects we are supposed to choose the following year. They give us the forms, then within that week, we have to return them. We did not really reflect on what we have learnt and what is going on regarding the different subjects and which careers to choose. They are given maybe on Thursday, then the following week before Friday, they want them back.”

Lizo, from the Grade 9 focus group 2 argued as follows:

> “They [LO teachers] should show us the subjects earlier in the year. It will not be late. Like they give us enough time to decide. Maybe if they give us in term 2 or 1 we would at least have time to decide, like do more research and we will know each subject is better than the other one.” [While the learner expressed her sentiments, voices of other learners at the back were heard saying ‘Yes’].

Echoing what was expressed by a learner from focus group 2, Alice from focus group 1 said:

> “I think the school does not bring the professionals that are doing that certain careers to come and talk to us what is needed for you to do that particular career, what type of personalities, what skills are needed for you to pursue that type of a career.”

In this regard, LO teacher, Candy, went the extra mile to prepare the learners for admission to higher learning institutions and she explained as follows:

> “You know, last year I brought some booklets from TUKS [University of Pretoria] and I showed the learners, especially my register class which is now in Grade 12. I showed them the APS [Admission Point Score] for the different courses. You must remember that everyone has got this matric certificate, everyone is now in line for that and if they can only take 12 000, the one with the highest APS is the one that’s going to be accepted.”

The effort that LO teacher, Candy, took to explain about the APS did not go unnoticed because learner, Lizo, proudly said:

> “It is when they give us subject choices, they also get into details about different subjects and which careers are available in that subject. They tell us about the APS and the admission requirements at universities. The other one is during our LO periods when we do the volunteering project. It was very insightful as we went to organisations, and we had to do research about them. We gained a lot of insight about what people are doing there and the different careers in that organisation.”

Findings also revealed the career-related services that appeared good in the Grade 9 classroom when careers and the subject choice topic were taught. This was pointed out by LO teacher, Lollipop, who said:

> “We organise universities to come where learners can learn more and ask questions.”

Another learner, Lusizo, also seemed impressed with a career-related service delivered in the classroom during the teaching of careers and subject choice, which also included the services of subject teachers, said:

> “Mhh they [subject teachers] explain to you what the career is all about. What subjects you can take, and they give you a tour of the classes and show you what they do exactly and then you get to choose from there.”

This time, unfortunately, the findings showed otherwise. For instance, the Grade 9 LO teachers seemed to have brought prospectuses and posters to the classrooms, but not all of the learners were likely to use that information, as learners sometimes do not return the borrowed prospectuses. Expressing her frustration, LO teacher, Lollipop, said:

> “We went around asking for prospectuses and posters. But learners say, ‘Please lend me. Let me just go and check,’ but it never comes back for other learners.”

The SMT also gave an account of the school’s career activity where the Grade 9 learners together with their parents are helped with information on the careers and subject choice. SMT, Wind, further explained as follows:

> “A parent and Grade 9 learners meeting is called where the teachers that teach in the senior phase make presentations and share information on subject choices, careers that are offered in the subjects that are offered at the school.”

These inspiring career activities expressed by the LO teachers and the SMT which sought to assist the LO teachers in the career construction process were also shared by the LO department officials. For example, LO department official, Mvula, explained as follows:

> “Plans are in the pipeline to be able to train LO teachers regarding career guidance. [this includes] Collaboration with the universities to train

> teachers. Learners too are part of that; they can have exposure to what is happening out there."

In support of these career services suggested by the SMT, LO teachers and the Grade 9 learners that seem to give a good impression, the findings from the LO department official officials also highlighted other plausible career services rendered this time to the LO teachers at the district's cluster meetings. LO department official, Manzi, claimed as follows:

> "We do invite the practitioners to come and give a few lectures to the LO teachers during our cluster district meetings, and they too invite us to bring learners to them. During the subject choices meeting, in some schools, presentations regarding the vocational and the academic field are presented."

Echoing what was said by the LO departmental official, Manzi, on what seemed as favourable career services in her district, another LO departmental official showed another career service that seemed to extend the understanding of the teaching of careers and subject choice. This service appeared to be extended to the parents as well. LO department official, Mvula, said:

> "The Grade 9 learners, LO teachers and subject teachers are called once a year where parents have to be taken through of what is happening with the subject choice."

Another Grade 9 LO teacher, Smartie, added to what seemed like an unfortunate career-related service that occurs in the classroom during the teaching of careers and complained:

> "Ms X [one of the Grade 9 LO teachers] organises universities to come and provide information to the learners. But the time allocated to those people is not enough where learners can learn more and ask questions."

These findings also revealed what appears reasonable from the DBE to support both LO teachers and learners in the career construction process. For example, in the two districts, some schools were provided with special people who sought to help LO teachers and learners in the career construction process. In this regard, LO departmental Manzi said:

> "There are Career Development Practitioners [CDP] in this district that assist with career development. These CDPs sometimes stay for three years in one school."

LO department official, Manzi, however, also pointed out what seemed unimpressive in this plausible service of placing CDP at schools and said:

> "But they [CPD] are given other subjects to teach. However, in some schools, these CDPs are given LO classes to go and teach LO, but they must do career counselling."

Findings on one hand revealed parents praising the services of the school and on the other blaming the school for a lack of guidance in career construction in their children. One parent speaking positively about the school said:

> "Both [the LO teachers and the school] have played an important role in my daughter's career choice because, with the LO teachers, she has learnt about many career choices there are and how each one is suited to one's personality. The school gave her experience of working with other people doing different assignments to broaden out her career choice."

On the contrary, another parent also attended the same evening meeting where Grade 9 parents and learners were invited to the school for careers and subject choice information. Reflecting on this meeting, the parent sounded negative and said:

> "The school did not do in-depth discussions on the subjects according to career preferences. They just mentioned that they [learners] must choose

subjects according to their career preferences but did not invite experts that can come and talk to the children."

Findings also noted the experiences of the Grade 9 learners in the career construction process as presented in the next section.

5.4 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTION 3: HOW DO GRADE 9 YOUTH EXPERIENCE CAREER CONSTRUCTION?

As data were collected, it became more interesting for this study to understand how Grade 9 learners experienced career construction which entails many facets. The findings showed both positive and negative experiences that are encountered by the Grade 9 learners in a career construction process. It was positive that out of 28 Grade 9 learners who participated in this study, 23 learners seemed to have constructed their careers with at least the required subject choices for their future careers. Furthermore, four Grade 9 learners seemed to have each managed to construct at least two different career paths.

The process of career construction as the findings show is sometimes driven by the ability of learners to think for themselves, knowing what their future might look like, being independent and consequently making informed decisions for themselves. Banzi, for instance, demonstrated what seems to be positive qualities when she mentioned the following:

> "[When constructing a career] Look what interests you, what influences you and what motivates you. If you think you could be the best at what you want to be, [for instance if you want] to be a businessman and believe that you can be the best businessman you can, then that's motivation, you already are motivated. Influence if you were growing up around business-minded people, if were growing up around artistic people, then you think you can do all those things and all of what those people are doing the sure go ahead. Nothing is stopping you."

Another learner, Television, said:

> “I think it’s the things I am passionate about. That is what influenced my career, rather than choosing what other people would pick for me...”

Career constriction is also influenced by the ability to introspect and understand one’s self-knowledge, feelings and interests. Bulumko clearly knows herself and can think for herself when she said:

> “When you choose a career, you are told to always follow your personality, to choose a career that is going to complement your personality, your attitude and most definitely when choosing a career, you should know whether you are an extrovert or an introvert. So, I feel like that highlights everything for me because it is easier to choose a career in that and they say that the second thing is your abilities because you cannot choose a career that you are not able to do.”

The construction of a career is sometimes driven by the sense of responsibility that people have towards others. This sense of responsibility is motivated by the empathy individuals feel towards others and the need to care for other people. Anathi’s career constriction process began when she experienced feelings of empathy towards others and decided to pursue a career that would allow her to provide care for others. Her career construction emerged when she shared this experience:

> “I went to an old age home. It was very emotional because I saw a lot of old people who were suffering and some of them did not even have families to visit them. Ja, it was kind of interesting because they fight every day of their lives and even though they are going through [sickness], they still put smiles on their faces and make people happy.”

Bhongo’s compassion for others also helped to influence her career choice when she said:

> “I like helping people. I have always seen people struggling and you see I am a young child now I cannot do anything to help them. So, I wanted to study so that I can help them when I grow old.”

Learners in general discovered the subjects that they were good at very early. They became aware of their competencies and appeared to have the skills and knowledge to search for a career that matched their abilities. Their report cards are also indicators of the subjects they are good at. Sizwe showed his capabilities and said:

> “I found out that I am very good when it comes to working with numbers. So, I googled a career that mostly works with numbers; so, the Chartered Accountant was the best choice.”

In other cases, a career construction process begins when people discover abilities they did not know they had. For example, Mpho went with her mother to work, and this is what she discovered about herself:

> “I went with my mom to the defence force. What I learnt on that day was about accounting and typing because I could not type until I went with my mom to her workplace; that is when I learnt how to type. My mom kept telling me that I am great at typing and that I should do accounting. [However], I told her, No it’s not my choice.”

In other instances, parents seemed to be a source of knowledge and were able to support the decisions of their children to follow particular career paths in particular ways. For instance, Nolwazi’s mother went out of her way to research career options to help her children make the right career choice and Nolwazi said:

> “Like my mom because she is a person who likes to research. For instance, If I say, Ok, I love this, then she checks up on it.”

Themba found his career by helping his father. He explained:

> “I went with my father to a dent lab assistant; I was helping him with his work. I felt inspired because now I know if I want to do it again, I can go there and do the job. I am happy I went to my dad’s place.”

Nuts chose to be an architect because he and his cousin observed their uncle who built houses. Nuts and his cousin found the process of building and making plans fascinating. This is what he said:

> “Mhhmmm. This career I saw from my uncle. So, the way he built the houses. Houses he showed me and my cousin and the drawings, he did. So, I like that ‘cause most people in South Africa have nice houses so we can make for them.”

On the contrary, the careers that parents do can enable their children to change their career decisions for the one that suits their children better. Ntandokazi’s father is a lawyer, and she shared her experience of witnessing her father at work, which made her comfortable with the change. Ntandokazi said:

> “I went with my dad [who is a lawyer] to work … in a courtroom and I enjoyed it and felt like engineering was not for me anymore. Debating and speaking to people was for me. I am happy I went to my dad’s law firm.”

Another learner whose career decision was influenced by a parent’s observation of his strength is Gugulethu. He gave his account of how his mother helped him to change a career decision he had made and accepted that change and said:

> “When I was talking to my mother who is also an LO teacher in Grade 12, I asked which subjects are best suited for me. She told me that from what she saw from me, I work great using numbers. So, at first, I chose Chartered Accountant but then since she saw that I was getting over

> 80% in Maths, she directed me to Actuarial Science and showed me what they do. So, it is when I became interested in it.

Turning now to the experience gained from volunteering or observation which may strengthen career-related decisions, Mpho whose mother works with different professionals, including doctors and pilots, took her to her workplace. Explaining the experience received, Mpho said:

> "I went with my mom to work, and she works with the doctors and a lot of pilots and things… I became more and more interested in the career path that she [the doctor Mpho shadowed] has followed and heeded in her life. I have gained a lot of experience… I would do it again. It is the career path that I am following in the future."

This account is a good example of how volunteering or shadowing can assist with career decision-making at school and prepare learners for the world of work ahead. Giving an account of how volunteering has assisted in career decision-making at school, which was learnt through volunteering, it seems that volunteering assisted some of the learners to make informed career decisions at school and prepared them beyond school. Mpho this time shared how volunteering has generally assisted her to improve her decision-making which is often needed when learners are part of the world of work. Mpho further said:

> "I think my decision-making has improved and later in the future when I have a career that I am following and [when] I have a job, I will be able to make better decisions."

Turning to the findings that suggested the role that may be played by subject teachers when learners construct careers. Khakhani narrated that,

> "My teacher [in Grade 7] used to tell me all the time that I was the only one in the class who could draw, although I struggled with the drawing myself. I look at the artists and say these people were not just legends; they were real people as well. They also had their struggles. They were

> humans. They had struggles with paintings and in general. I love using my hands to create something that has never been created before. To bring to life something [is] so beautiful."

When the Grade 9 learners who participated in a focus group were asked, 'If a learner who has not built a career comes to you, how would you support that learner?' Sharing her experience, Sindingo said:

> "I would say that they must look at their interests, strengths, meaning, what they are good at and what they are not good at. What they are currently achieving in those subjects they are doing."

Nyanga added as follows:

> "First you must know your interests, your abilities, things like that then, you must have passion. Do not take the career for the money; take it for your passion because you do not want to be stuck in a job you do not love."

These findings suggest that the Grade 9 learners seem to be aware that when constructing a career, money should not be the only factor considered. Lisa sounded as if giving a bit of advice and she said:

> "Follow your heart because what is the point of making money when you are not happy? So, I would advise learners to choose something that they love doing and makes them happy."

Themba thinks playing to one strength by choosing subjects that one is good at, as well as developing a positive attitude, are the first port of call for learners who are struggling to construct a career. Expressing that understanding he said:

> "Firstly, I would tell them to choose the subjects they are interested in; then don't have negative thoughts, always be positive."

Another Sifiso added to the advantage of understanding oneself and said:

> “They must look at their strengths; meaning, what they are good at and what they are not good at and what they are currently achieving in the subjects they are doing.”

Sadly, at times, some learners may not be aware of their interests, or they may not know after being taught about careers how to build a career. While this may be the case, CAPS requires a pre-test done on learners. In this regard, when I asked the LO teachers how they assisted those who struggle to build careers, LO teacher Lollipop explained:

> “They [learners] do not say anything. It is when you pick it up maybe during an LO lesson. You know if you happen to ask, ‘What do you want to be or what are you interested in?’ That is the only time you can be able to assist. But other than that, they are on their own.”

The notion that learners were *‘*on their own’ was supported by LO teacher Bron who said:

> “No attention is given to learners [in the classroom] who do not have career choices because of the curriculum demands.”

In explaining why career counselling appears not done, LO teacher Smartie said:

> “There is so much to be done, and we are not teaching careers only. We have other topics that we are expected to cover; so, it is not like a topic on its own. It is just a sub-section; so, it is not given that attention. You only do it when it is its time and then you move on.”

The SMT teacher, Rainbow, also commented on how career counselling is provided at the school and said:

> “It is difficult to have individual career counselling with learners. We do not necessarily have enough time and resources to do it. But if they specifically

want to speak, [we] will assist them as much as possible. They either speak to me or xx [one of the LO teachers]; we can help them search for them on the internet and things like that. In the classes, we give them information. But it is difficult, particularly with someone who has social problems, and we have to hire someone but with subject choices, we have a meeting, and we give them information such as what careers they could do, with the relevant subjects. All the teachers that teach in the senior phase are in that careers and subject choice meeting so that the parents can come and ask the teachers. After that information session meeting, they [learners] fill in the form and those who are not sure can ask somebody to assist."

Contrary to what was expressed by the LO teachers and the SMT, regarding career counselling at the selected school, Grade 9 learner, Vuyo said:

"… I would like us to do personality tests so that we can discover what type of people we are. I would like us to discuss in more detail different careers and different career fields so that we know and also be able to understand what they entail because, in the LO period when we were doing the career section, we only talked about interests and abilities, the different fields, then we only tapped into two careers in each field, we did not go into details about the careers. So, I think we should have enough time so that we can go into details with the careers and all that."

This wish for a personality test was also shared by a second learner, Alice:

"I would like them [LO teachers] to do a personality test because if you do a personality test, it comes with what kind of careers you can take in the future and then if they are not comfortable with those careers, they can try to figure out what type of a person you are who deal with a career choice you want to do... As teenagers, we often lose ourselves and the type of person we are and we are changing, so it [personality tests] will help."

Noting an implication of either a pre-test or career counselling in some learners, Lizo summed up what seemed to be a need for an intervention in some learners in the career construction process and explained:

> “I feel a test should be given to see what subjects you are good at, and a list of subjects be given where we can choose from and what career field it will take us to. This might help us and open our eyes to other career opportunities.”

The findings regarding many Grade 9 learners who participated in this study and constructed careers, also imply that learners understood that in their career processes, there are life challenges which are part of human nature that can change their career decisions and require them to adapt to those changes. The aforementioned findings are similar to a study conducted on South African Grade 9 learners. Rabie, et al (2021) intervened by conducting a workshop session on the choice of subjects and the world of work requirements for Grade 9 learners. Rabie, et al’s (2021) findings revealed improved career adaptability and career decision-making of those learners.

Some findings pointed to a lack of and poor career counselling at the selected school and in the schools supervised by the two DBE LO districts' subject advisors who participated in this study. These findings are supported by Maree (2009) and Hughes, et al (2017) who observed that in many disadvantaged rural, townships and urban schools in South Africa, learners often receive inadequate career counselling. This sub-minimal career counselling usually has a negative impact on students in fulfilling their career goals when they are studying in higher learning institutions such as colleges and universities. However, Stead and Subich (2017) seem to focus on the counselling approach in trying to put theory into practice.

5.5 SUMMARY OF THE OBJECTIVES THAT ARE ALIGNED WITH THE FINDINGS AND SHOWING KEY ISSUES IN THE CAREER CONSTRUCTION PROCESS

Table 5.1: Summary of some of the objectives that are aligned with the presented findings and showing some key issues in the career construction process

Objectives	Findings	Key Issues
1.To analyse how the 2016 Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa and the Grade 9 LO Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) contribute to the construction of careers.	The 2016 Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa Government Gazette and the Grade 9 LO CAPS appear not to support the career construction process.	• Employing LO teachers without a qualification undertaking that they will receive in-service training. The next year these trained LO teachers are replaced with other teachers who often require training seems to defeat the continuity and stability of the attempt to discharge proper career construction efforts in learners. • The nesting of career construction in an LO subject, which is perceived as inferior by the DBE itself and many schools seems to defeat the purpose of teaching career fields and subject choices at schools.
	CAPS insufficient time dedicated to the teaching of careers, subject choice and career counselling.	• The allocation of only three hours a year to the teaching of such an important aspect of career construction seems to counteract CAPS' objective of preparing learners so that they make informed decisions about their careers, subject choices, and further studies.
	CAPS appears to use Holland's theory in the career construction process. This theory supports learners and enables them to be aware of their interpersonal attributes such as interests, strengths and weaknesses.	• Holland's RIASEC personality theory looks like is not implemented fully at the selected school because this theory classifies individuals into six personality groupings the RIASEC that is based on their interests. Thereafter, the individual's interests determine the various occupations that best suit them. Knowledge of the personality grouping in most cases requires career counsellors which seems to be lacking or is not done properly at the identified school.

Objectives	Findings	Key Issues
	Career information, career advice and counselling are keys in career construction, entrusting them to LO teachers who are unqualified may not yield one of the aims of the LO CAPS, which is to assist learners to be well-informed when they construct their desired career fields and select appropriate subjects while still at school.	
2. To explore career-related activities and services that enhance the Grade 9 learners in their career construction process.	Activities that involve subject teachers, where for instance, career information on their teaching subjects and aligning them to various careers were provided once a year. This activity was also done as late as September.	• The involvement of subject teachers was not done adequately. This may affect subject choice in Grade 10 where learners may select subjects 10 that are not in line with their intended careers.
	There was insufficient interaction between the Grade 9 learners and the specialists or the world of work when career paths were constructed.	• Minimal or lack of activities that involve specialists, entrepreneurs and the world of work may deprive the school to form partnerships. These partnerships often support learners to respond positively to the building of careers, being aware of the skills that are required by particular careers, knowledge of challenges that are faced at work and how to just to those challenges, and management of a career.
	Lack of career activities such as career exhibitions, and inability to access the latest career information from the school library, smartphone and internet were pre-testing.	• The inadequacy of the school to provide career-related activities such as career exhibitions, current information at the library, access to the internet and smartphones may not enhance career construction.

Objectives	Findings	Key Issues
3. To understand the experiences of Grade 9 learners when building careers.	Learners viewed LO teachers as lacking career information and career advice and relied more on their parents, relatives and the internet when constructing careers. Lack of full application of Holland's RIASEC theory. Pre-testing and career counselling appeared not done in Grade 9 learners.	• Learners without the support of LO teachers sounded able to construct careers and also capable of supporting other young people to construct their careers. • The inability of some of the Grade 9 to construct careers.

5.6 SUMMARY OF SOME OF THE FINDINGS AND THEIR ALIGNMENT TO THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

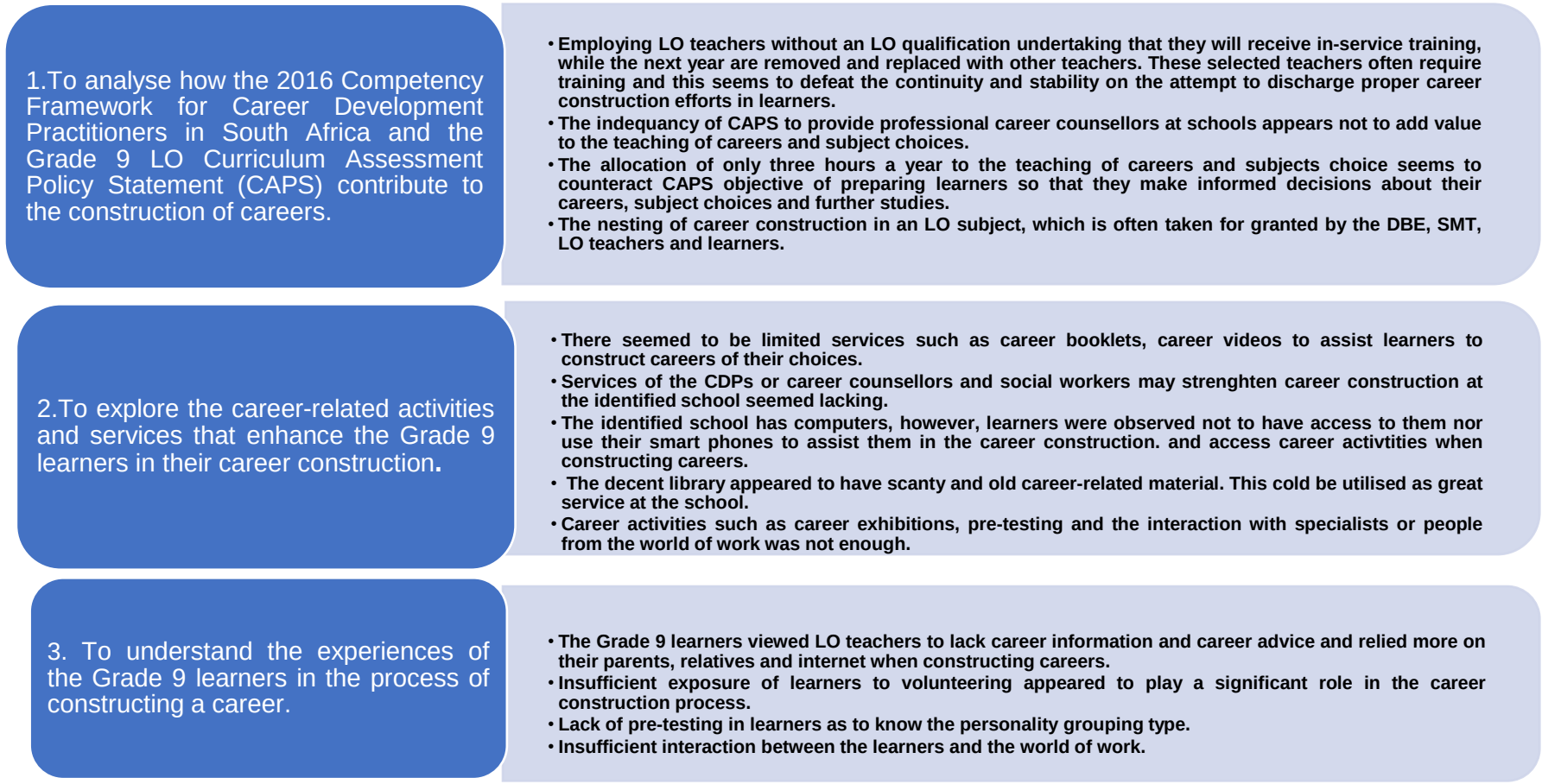

Figure 5.2 The overview of the summary of the findings and their alignment to the three objectives of this study

5.7 THE FINDINGS REVEALED CONCERNS THAT MAY AFFECT THE PROPER DELIVERY OF CAREER CONSTRUCTION AT THE SELECTED SCHOOL AND IN SOUTH AFRICA

Table 5.2: Concerns that have a negative impact and could hinder the proper delivery of career construction at the identified school and in South Africa

CONCERNS THAT MAY AFFECT PROPER DELIVERY OF CAREER CONSTRUCTION AT THE IDENTIFIED SCHOOL AND IN SOUTH AFRICA		
Government	**DBE / CAPS**	**Identified School**
• Employment of LO teachers without an LO qualification. • Lack or poor alignment of higher education and training where for instance LO seems not to be offered by most South African universities. • Absence of professional career counsellors and social workers at schools. • Lack of placement of CDP in some schools which may strengthen the career construction process. • A Career Development Services unit under the Department of Higher Education that is still based only at the national level. • Absence of career centres at provincial levels. • Failure of the system including schools to address the career needs of every learner so that learners construct careers while they are still at school.	• Career construction services and activities are distributed to various ministries and departments and supported by policies. However, these policies appear not to be monitored by the DBE's LO officials to achieve the intended goals. • LO is viewed as critical and a compulsory subject, yet most universities in South Africa do not offer it as a course nor include it in their Admission Point Scores. • Careers and subject choice are being taught by LO teachers only, yet it seems impossible for one teacher to know all the careers in the world as they keep changing. • Lack or poor programmes that enable learners to acquire sufficient preparations and skills that respond to the labour market.	• There seems to be inadequate support from the SMT to provide a solid foundation when careers are constructed. • Lack of a stable career programme. • The inability of LO teachers to guide learners adequately in career construction. • Poor maintenance of partnerships between the school and external career-related stakeholders. • LO that was headed by a Maths HoD. This may add to the stigma often attached to the LO, that it is not important. • The library appeared to have not enough current career information. • Limited usage of computers by the learners and their inability to use their smart phones when careers were taught. • Failure to involve all the subject teachers and lack of involvement of the career-related stakeholders throughout the year. • Lack or inadequate career information or posters in the LO teacher's classes notice boards.

5.8 THE NEEDS OF ALL THE INFORMANTS AT THE SELECTED SCHOOL ON WHAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO SEE HAPPENING IN THE CAREER CONSTRUCTION FIELD.

The findings at the selected school pointed out the needs of SMT, the LO teachers, the Grade 9 learners and the parents. These needs in the next section were expressed to enhance the teaching of career construction:

The School Management Team

- Parents need to be encouraged to allow their children to construct careers that mainly focus on the learners' interests and abilities. This will reduce the temptation, where parents to choose careers for their children, without taking into consideration what is best for them.
- Parents need to be supported to motivate their children to see the value of constructing career paths that will lead them to further studies at the TVET colleges; instead of viewing the universities as more important than technical colleges.
- The need for schools to expose learners to various career choices as the 4IR supports learners to become entrepreneurs. This will assist the labour force markets and boost the economy of the country.
- Schools need to have career counsellors and social workers designated at the schools to support the teaching of career construction.

LO teachers

- LO teachers need more workshops that will support them in the career construction process.
- The LO teachers need the intervention of TVET colleges when careers and subject choice are taught. Inviting these colleges to the selected school will

  “make learners aware about the skills on the qualification they[colleges] offer.”
- Learners need to be made aware that they do not need to study Maths and Physical Science to be successful in life. “There are other careers in the field of arts, some learners are very artistic, some can sing, they can go to varsity and study music so we shouldn’t limit our learners to be a

doctor."

LEARNERS

- The learners expressed a need to have a career day at the selected school where other people from other institutions are called. "People from the jobs to come and share with us in more detail what they are doing. Like there are tents at the field where they demonstrate their workplaces, and we go there as exhibition and see what is going on."
- Learners requested their parents to come to the selected school where there will be interactions on the parents' careers and the subjects that are needed for those career paths.
- Learners requested career counselling. One learner taking into consideration other Grade 9 learners for the proper delivery of career construction shared "I would like us to have personality tests so that we can discover what type of people we are."

In this study, the aforementioned needs from all the informants interviewed indicated a need for a framework that will be discussed in Chapter 7, the recommendation chapter.

PARENTS

- The school needs to invite career-related stakeholders to the school so that learners can arrive at informed career decisions. The "LO teachers need to have workshops etc. on Career Development."
- The "schools should take a more personalised approach to career guidance by stipulating and or formulating essays that reveal what the children want and other role-playing methodologies."
- "I would also like to see learners receive basic career resources at schools such as computers to research a topic so that they can research their career choice and not just limited to a textbook."

In addition to the selected school' needs the LO department officials such as the provincial coordinator and the two district officials shared that,

- The LO Departmental officials require the DBE to review the 2016 Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa where LO teachers after receiving the in-service training are given enough time to establish them in the teaching of career construction.
- At schools, the teaching of LO is allocated to a pool of teachers who have a passion for teaching the LO subject. Those selected teachers after receiving the in-service training are expected to teach LO for five years, from Grade 8 to Grade 12, where they are not replaced by other teachers.
- The SMT assists the LO teachers and forms partnerships with external career-related stakeholders, such as the world of work and organisations such as the South African Career Development Services. These interventions will support both the LO teachers and learners in the career construction initiatives.

The Grade 9 LO teachers at schools work in partnerships with professionals such as career counsellors and social workers will continually assist the learners in the career construction process. More time needs to be dedicated to the teaching of career construction.

5.9 ENCOURAGING ASPECTS IN THE CAREER CONSTRUCTION LANDSCAPE THAT EMERGED BUT WERE NOT ALIGNED WITH THE OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY

There were encouraging findings that came from the LO department officials and the SMT which suggested that the South African government is paying attention to the new interventions in the career construction field. These encouraging aspects included:

- The placement of CDP at schools to more schools to assist both LO teachers and learners with career construction.
- Plans by the DBE to admit learners at FET colleges to pursue careers after passing Grade 9.

- Collaborations between the government statutory bodies such as the national South African Career Services, South African Career Development Association, ETDPSETA and the DEL are available to support the LO teachers and learners in the career construction process.
- The E3 (Entrepreneurship, Employability and Education) initiative where the government will pilot schools and use project-based learning methodologies to unlock entrepreneurial minds and develop 21st-century learning skills and competencies to enhance the teaching of careers and subject choice.
- Careers and subject choice meetings are to be held over the weekends where the department officials, Grade 9 learners, LO and subject teachers, the world of work and parents will have enough time to talk about career-related matters.
- The school where the data were collected plans to strengthen the teaching of careers by appointing a teacher who will assist in career counselling. The school also has a social worker who attends to socio-related problems.

5.10 CONCLUSION

The first section of this chapter presented the findings in line with the four secondary research questions. Summarising the presented findings, the first secondary research question focused on how the 2016 Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa and the Grade 9 LO CAPS contribute towards career construction for Grade 9 learners; one key finding highlighted that the three-hour time allocated annually to the teaching of careers, subject choice and career counselling was not enough. In addition to this inadequate three-hour time allocated yearly to these mentioned topics, CAPS seems not clear on how career counselling can be handled by the LO teachers. Career counselling is part of Holland's RIASEC personality groupings that support learners to match their interests with a particular career. Even the second secondary research question, which focused on career services and activities; one of the key findings pointed out that the school offered minimal career-related services and activities. Regarding the third secondary research question, which

sought to understand how Grade 9 learners experience career construction, one of the key findings noted that learners and parents viewed LO teachers as lacking information and were not exposing learners to various careers.

The last section of this chapter provided the infographic representations on the summary of some of the findings that are aligned to the four objectives of this study, the presentation of some of the presented objectives aligned to the findings and key issues, the infographic representation was also on the concerns that may affect the adequate proper delivery of career construction at the selected school and in South Africa. The needs and the encouraging aspects that are in the career construction field related to these findings were also presented. For example, the LO department officials shared that the DBE plans to remove specific topics from the LO so that the teaching of careers and subject choice may be afforded more time.

In summary, most of these presented findings are not encouraging as they appear to suggest that LO teachers are unable to guide learners properly and create a conducive environment that enables the learners to gain knowledge on the careers they intend to pursue. In line with objective four, which proposes to develop a framework for career construction implementation in schools, the study found that a framework like this one is needed. Hence, this study will recommend the development of such a framework.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the discussion of the key findings of this study as presented in the previous chapter. The study aimed to support the LO teachers and enable them to guide Grade 9 learners to make informed decisions when constructing careers. These key findings will be discussed in terms of meaning, significance and implications to the following secondary research questions:

6.2 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTION 1: HOW THE 2016 COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONERS IN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE GRADE 9 LO CAPS CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS CAREER CONSTRUCTION FOR GRADE 9 LEARNERS?

The findings on the first secondary research question observed two key aspects that seem not to support the proper delivery of career construction at the selected school. One is on the 2016 Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa, which seems to allow teachers to teach LO without an appropriate qualification and rely on capacitation of the in-service training offered by the LO subjects advisors. The finding concerning this 2016 Competency Framework that allows LO who are not LO specialists nor Career Development Practitioners to teach LO, including career construction, the focus of this study, was that, at the selected school, the LO teachers rarely attended the in-service training that is supposed to be offered by the LO subject advisors to capacitate the LO teachers. These LO teachers were not even aware they were expected to attend the in-service training conducted in their district by the LO subject advisors. Instead, for capacitation, they appeared to rely more on the support given by other LO and subject teachers including the LO HoDs. While there is nothing wrong when LO teachers are supported by the school's LO and subject teachers, including the LO HoD, there might be a danger that these LO teachers who were not aware of the in-service training might miss the DBE in-

service training support meant to enhance their skill sets as to effectively address the career-related matters they experience when teaching about career construction. These LO teachers who do not attend the in-service might also miss the interactions with the LO subject advisor and other LO-experienced teachers who can support them to teach particularly the careers and subject choice topics effectively. The importance of this finding in this research is that the LO teachers at the selected may miss shared information during the in-service training meant to support them to the detriment of the learners since they are not specialists in LO. The implication is that at the selected school, the LO teachers are not fit enough to guide the Grade 9 learners when constructing careers as they do not have sufficient grounding in career construction and do not receive the in-service training given by the DBE that is meant to increase their knowledge base and ability to teach career construction more effectively. In all of this, LO teachers at the selected school therefore need to be provided with alternative support mechanisms or a conscious effort be made for them to attend the provided in-service training to give them a good chance to guide learners appropriately in the career construction process. This challenge further suggests to the DBE that allowing LO teachers who are neither LO specialists nor CDP to teach LO and career construction which is part of the LO curriculum and rely on the in-service training might not yield the expected results to empower LO teachers with the competency skills that are required for effective discharge of career construction teaching. It is not only the finding of this study that LO teachers at the selected school were not fit enough to guide learners adequately when constructing careers as it has been observed before and elsewhere. Dabula and Makura (2013) and Jonck and Swanepoel (2015) who researched the competency of LO teachers in other schools in South Africa made similar observations and concluded that LO teachers who have no background knowledge in the career construction field are not helpful with the information needed by learners when constructing careers. Furthermore, in a recent Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Information and Education Innovations, Shukla, Nirban and Dosaya (2018) argue that high school teachers need to possess both academic and professional training in a subject to properly support learners when constructing a career path.

Another key finding seemed to point to a discrepancy with this 2016 Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa that allows the LO teachers to be changed and deployed to teach other subjects in subsequent years after all the in-service training investment made to empower them to be better prepared to teach LO. This failure of the 2016 Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa to retain the empowered LO teachers is usually misinterpreted by the SMT who allocate subjects to the teachers. To make the situation even worse, when these empowered LO teachers are given other subjects to teach, they are usually substituted by teachers who are novices or teachers who need training. In this study, if the skills and experiences gained from the in-service workshops are not imparted to and effectively utilised by the learners in the career construction process there may be dire consequences for the learners. For example, learners may select irrelevant subjects for a career path or choose inappropriate careers which may lead to dissatisfaction or even unsuccessful careers which do not add value to the economy or add to the efforts of social inclusion. The result of this is that the very education system that has spent resources on the training of LO teachers to contribute to economic growth may inadvertently yield citizens who are unable to look after themselves and help grow the economy of the country that has spent resources on its citizens. These failures may also affect other policies mentioned in Chapter One that support the teaching of careers and subject choices at schools because the government may not easily identify the failures of its intervention and look elsewhere for policy intervention when existing policies or interventions are failing.

The second key finding on policy matters was on the Grade 9 LO CAPS. For instance, findings noted that the Grade 9 LO CAPS seems to use Holland's RIASEC personality groupings theory when career choices are taught. This theory requires learners to be aware of their interests because they are matched to various careers which Holland classifies according to the RIASEC personality groupings. While learners are expected to construct careers that match their interests, it appears that LO teachers are not guided on what to do when it comes to the testing of learners who are not aware of their interests for career purposes. This lack of guidance includes processes that involve testing and are a crucial

part of career counselling. Consequently, the inability of the CAPS syllabus to guide LO teachers on what to do regarding the testing of interests to match them to Holland's RIASEC personality groupings means that learners may not enjoy the work they do because they might choose careers that are not in congruence with their personalities. The implication of this mismatch on learners that is associated with career counselling will be discussed under section 6.4, a section that will discuss the key findings on the experiences of the Grade 9 learners when constructing careers.

The third key finding on policy matters also highlighted that Grade 9 LO CAPS emerged as not supporting the proper delivery of career construction by allocating only three hours a year to the teaching of careers and subject choice. This finding is supported by Maree (2013) who also notes in another study in South Africa that the three-hour time given to the teaching of careers and subject choice is not enough. Furthermore, McMahon (1992) in a study conducted in Australia also warns that the inadequate time given to the teaching of careers and subject choice can cause these topics to be overgeneralised and not taught properly. The meaning of this finding in this study is that although the 2016 Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa regards career construction or career guidance in CAPS as a key deliverable, CAPS allocation of only three hours to a topic that deals with career guidance that has so much importance in building the skills base of a country means both LO teachers and learners are not given enough time to understand the learning tasks and how to adequately engage with this topic. The implications of this insufficient time spent on career construction are far-reaching. For example, the ability of learners to reflect properly on their interests, connecting life experiences to a career choice, and how to adequately prepare for them by choosing appropriate subjects for their career ambitions may be impeded. Learners may also not be aware of the career paths that best suit them. Learners may even not understand how to cope with life challenges that may confront them later in life. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter One, South Africa has policies and Government Gazettes that give directives and statutory bodies that are meant to strengthen and support the efforts of teaching career guidance at school, which may be impacted by not dedicating enough time and effort to the application of these policies and

imperatives. This includes SAQA, a body that seeks to maintain quality education in South Africa, and SASA of 1996. In particular, the SASA of 1996 mandates LO as a compulsory subject from Grade 8 to Grade 12. Because of this inadequate time and effort dedicated to the application and expression of these policies and imperatives, one of the aims of the LO CAPS seeks to guide and develop learners to realise their full potential by providing them with opportunities to make informed choices of study opportunities and future careers may not be realised.

6.3 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTION 2: WHAT ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES SHOULD GRADE 9 LEARNERS ENGAGE IN TO ENHANCE THEIR CAREER CONSTRUCTION PROCESS?

In this section, three key findings are discussed. The first one which is a key positive finding emerged that most of the SMT played an important role in organising the Grade 9 learners' and learners' careers and subject choice information sessions. Even after the information sessions, the SMT helped the learners who could not select subjects appropriate for their intended careers. This view is also attested to by most of the learners and parents. The learners were satisfied with the information sessions provided and were impressed by the type of information about career possibilities that was made available. The level of satisfaction is also reflected in the sentiment expressed by both parents and the Grade 9 learners that such information-sharing sessions need to take place more often and much earlier in the year. These career interventions including school information sessions with parents are recommended, as parents have an impact on shaping the aspirations and career choices of their children (Zahra, Bibi, Malik, & Sikandar, 2023). These positive sentiments were also corroborated by the two district LO subject advisors who participated in this study. Although the findings from these LO department officials expressed satisfaction with these parents' and learners' information sessions, the LO department officials also indicated that the SMTs of some of the schools appear not to organise the Grade 9 learner's career exhibitions regularly. I also observed this inadequate career-related service at the selected school. In this study, the lack of organising these career exhibitions at school or taking learners to various places where career exhibitions are held means the Grade 9 learners were not adequately exposed to career exhibitions.

The significance of exposing learners to career exhibitions provides interaction between learners and recruiters or higher learning institution representatives or an environment where learners may hold discussions to get valuable information regarding their intended career paths. Not having enough exposure to career exhibitions or other interactive sessions with external career-related services or prospective employers or representatives from institutions of higher learning may deprive learners of personal career guidance tailored to their interests from the trained personnel. This sentiment is supported by the findings of research conducted by Makola, Saliwe, Dube, Tabane and Mudau in South Africa (2021) whose aim was to explore the benefits of career talks to high school learners when constructing careers. Makola et al's (2021) findings observed that information received by LO learners from career exhibitions greatly supports them in their intended career choices.

The second key finding of this study noted that at the selected school, career-related services such as career booklets and career videos were not widely available. However, this is not a new finding as many schools experience similar challenges when it comes to the provision of career services and activities and enhancement or support materials. For instance, the 2014 report on the survey of Career Development Activities found a poor career services support environment by the DBE, where career-related activities such as career booklet guides, resources and career videos were not provided to some schools (DHET, 2013/2014). Unfortunately, for close to a decade the findings of this report regarding these listed career-related activities have not been rectified as attested to by the findings of this study. This suboptimal support noted by the findings of this study means there are still considerable limitations that the learners have to contend with in their efforts to construct careers at school. The significance of career-related services, materials and activities is advocated by Keele, Swann and Davie-Smythe (2020) who contend that career services and activities tailored to suit the needs of learners equip learners with the skills that will support them to make career decisions even after they have left school.

The third finding of this study suggested a recurrent theme which was repeatedly reflected in the interview responses of the informants interviewed that people

from the world of work were not invited to the selected school during career sessions or any other time. The meaning of this finding is that the needed interaction between the Grade 9 learners and the world of work is missing. The significance of this missing interaction between the learners and the world of work in the career construction process suggests that learners may not get a full understanding of the skills that are needed by their intended career paths. The paradigm of this study holds that it is during these interactions or constructivism that knowledge is understood to be constructed through interaction with other people. When these interactions take place, learners are afforded opportunities to also network with prospective employers and have a place where they have an opportunity to explore undertake voluntary work or secure future employment for themselves. This view of interacting with the world of work is encouraged by Schleicher (2022) who elucidates that exposing learners to the world of work experiences enhances their career decisions. Social interactions may also teach learners about life experiences at work, which may support them to arrive at informed career decisions. Furthermore, during these interactions with people from the world of work, learners can learn about and develop an interest in pursuing relatively uncommon or unfamiliar careers to redress the legacy of the apartheid which provided different career opportunities for the different racial groups in the country. This also enhances social inclusion objectives, where learners are supported to build careers that were confined to a particular race before democracy in South Africa. The implications of all these key findings discussed in this section such as the selected schools not providing enough exposure of learners to career exhibitions, lack of career booklets and career videos and lack of involvement in the world of work means both LO teachers and learners need additional support in the career construction process.

6.4 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTION 3: HOW DO GRADE 9 YOUTH EXPERIENCE CAREER CONSTRUCTION?

In this section, two key findings are significant for this study. One, there was an impression that most Grade 9 learners constructed their intended career paths and chose the relevant subjects without the support of LO teachers. While this was the unfortunate case, the findings also noted that there were also learners

who could not construct their intended career paths, yet the following year when in Grade 10 they were expected to study subjects that were relevant to their career paths. The second key finding of this study was briefly mentioned in section 6.1, the policy section and noted to be discussed in this section. This finding is about Holland's RIASEC personality grouping theory that is used in the LO CAPS syllabus where Holland's RIASEC personality grouping theory seemed not to be done in its entirety. For example, at the selected school, learners complained that the testing part where they are made aware of their Holland's RIASEC personality groupings appeared not to be done including career counselling. I also observed this lack of testing including career counselling. This poor career counselling was also supported by two LO district subject advisors in the Gauteng Province who took part in this study. Discussing these key findings is important in career construction.

One of the key findings in this study is that most learners seemed to have constructed their career paths without the guidance of LO teachers. This finding implies that some Grade 9 learners understood their interests and various aspects such as strengths, connecting their volunteering activities with the intended career; hence, they reached career decisions. The implication of this finding in this study where learners seemed to construct careers without their LO teachers and received support from subject teachers, parents, siblings, relatives, interaction with the world of work, community members, life experiences and the usage of technology such as online information, suggests that LO teachers are unable to create an environment where learners gain knowledge regarding their career choices. Therefore, LO teachers need support when they guide learners in the career construction process. This study's finding where learners at the adolescent stage seemed to put aside their challenges and construct careers is in contrast with Modecki, Zimmer-Gembeck, and Guerra (2017) who found that learners at the teenage stage have challenges that are associated with a lack of understanding of themselves and decision-making which also affect their ability to arrive at career decisions. The same finding where a few learners were unable to construct careers means that these learners need support. The significance of this finding in this study indicates that support is needed for both LO teachers and learners at the selected school in the career construction process so that all

learners may pass Grade 12 with at least one career path. The implication of this finding points to a need for a framework where other factors can also be considered when career construction is taught. These factors might include the experiences of learners that could be considered when careers are constructed. For instance, in the career construction process, LO teachers and learners need to create opportunities and make use of them, application of positivity at life challenges which are part of human nature that can change the learner's career decisions and encourage adaptability to those changes.

The second key finding pointed to what seemed to be a lack of testing in learners in Holland's RIASEC personality groupings theory and a lack of career counselling. These two aspects that are vital in career construction were experienced at the selected school and in the schools supervised by the two DBE LO districts' subject advisors who participated in this study. The findings that learners are not fully supported when it comes to career counselling are also supported by Maree (2009) and Stead and Subich (2017) who observed that in many disadvantaged rural, township and urban schools in South Africa, learners often receive inadequate career counselling. In this study, the meaning of this sub-minimal career counselling finding implies that even if learners pass Grade 12, if they are not properly guided while at school, they may not fulfil their career goals even if they further their studies at higher learning institutions. The implication of this poor career counselling in South Africa is a cause for concern particularly when the youth unemployment rate seems to increase yearly. For instance, as discussed in Chapter One, the annual unemployment rates of youth between 15 to 34 years old in Gauteng from 2018 to 202, during the writing of the thesis the Gauteng's youth's unemployment rates were higher than the national unemployment rates. These shocking annual unemployment rates have not dropped. Hence in 2022 still the unemployment rate in Gauteng for young people between 15 to 34 years was high. For instance, in 2022, the 15 to 34-year-old unemployment rate in Gauteng was 48.5 % while 46.3% was recorded at the national level. Furthermore, in 2023, this higher annual Gauteng's unemployment rate at the national level of youth between 15 to 34 still did not drop. Hence in Gauteng, the unemployment rate of young people between 15 to 34 was recorded at 47.% while it was 44,9% at the national level. These figures are important in

this study as they include the Grade 9 learners who are mostly 15 years old and whose career choices can make a difference in the economy of South Africa and possibly reduce the unemployment rates both in Gauteng and in the whole country.

This lack of poor career counselling in South African schools is not a new phenomenon. For instance, the 2003 World Bank Report on Public Policies and Career Development: Framework for the Design of Career Information, Guidance and Counselling Services in Developing Countries revealed extremely poor counselling provisions, where about 150 schools are serviced by one psychologist (Kay & Fretwell, 2003). It looks like this problem is escalating. For instance, in Gauteng Province, there are 15 districts and one career counsellor who must attend more than 311 schools. The school where this research was conducted is in a district where the career counsellor must serve 120 secondary schools (LO department official, Mvula, 2019). This is too many to be handled by one official. Even if the official was to visit one school per day, there would be not enough school days in a year to visit all the schools in the district. Unfortunately, LO teachers at the selected school when teaching about careers and subject choices including career counselling were not supported by organisations such as SACDA and CDS which can assist with free counselling as discussed in Chapter Two, the literature review chapter. Career counsellors are expected to analyse and interpret the labour market information and predict careers that may be scarce or in need in the near future. The knowledge career counsellors possess may encourage learners during the individual or group sessions to seize opportunities in informal economies so that after finishing school they will not be job seekers, but seek avenues of becoming self-employed and if possible, employ other people. The implication of this poor career counselling in South Africa is even more worrying as it may result in uniformed career decisions, which may affect the unemployment rate in the country. These aspects are critical during this time when worldwide labour markets seem unstable.

6.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the key findings regarding the three secondary research questions such as one, the contributions of policies such as the 2016 Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa and the Grade 9 LO CAPS; two, the activities and services that can enhance the teaching of careers and subject choice including career counselling; three, the understanding of how Grade 9 learners experienced career construction; the discussions pointed to the inability of the LO teachers to guide learners properly and create an environment that enables learners to gain knowledge on their career choices.

The inability of LO teachers to guide learners properly in the career construction process is more worrying. It might affect the key various policies and commitments in South Africa and those aligned worldwide in the career construction discipline. For example, as discussed in Chapter Two, the importance and teaching of career construction is supported by the 2010- 2030 Human Development Strategy for South Africa commitment three, which pledges to increase employment and economic growth where all youth from Grade 8 to Grade 12 are provided with proper career construction. Another important pledge adopted by South Africa that is talking to career construction is the SADAC 2020-2030 which commits to produce skilled young people who will be able to drive the socio-economic development. The 2030 SDGs also focus on quality education and the improvement of lifelong learning; adolescent to finish secondary school having acquired knowledge and skills in their career paths, which will enable them to boost the economic growth of their countries through proper career construction. Furthermore, South Africa aligns with the AUC 2063 objectives that commit to exposing youth to all forms of education that are vital in career construction such as informal, non-formal, formal and life learning. Support for young people as drivers of African Renaissance through aspects such as proper teaching of career construction education and advancement in careers such as Agriculture, veterinary and architecture was Du Bois' (1977) vision.

In all of this, although most of the Grade 9 learners who participated in this study seemed able to construct their career choices, a few learners could not construct their career paths and might leave school without a career choice. These anomalies from the key findings should be rectified as they seem to be hindering the effective discharge of career construction. This study, therefore, provided SCCF which can be used by both the LO teachers and all the learners in particular the Grade 9 learners. This SCCF is drawn from the two theories discussed in Chapter Three and will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7
LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the limitations, recommendations and conclusion of this study. Some of the recommendations this study makes are inspired by the findings in Chapter Five and the discussions in Chapter Six. Thereafter, a School Career Construction Framework (SCCF) is suggested as a recommendation for the adequate teaching of careers and subject choice including career counselling. The teaching of careers and subject choice including career counselling in this study as discussed in various parts in the previous chapters are necessary components that can support learners as they embark on the process of career construction. These components are needed to enable the learners to construct careers they wish to pursue.

As discussed in Chapter One, this study aimed to find ways to support the LO teachers to be able to guide Grade 9 learners to make informed decisions about careers they wish to pursue. The main question sought to understand how LO teachers guided Grade 9 learners in career construction and created an environment that enabled learners to gain knowledge on their career choices.

The objectives of this study as discussed in Chapter One were:

- To understand how Grade 9 LO teachers guide learners in career construction and create an environment that enables learners to gain knowledge on their career choices?
- To analyse how the 2016 Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa and the Grade 9 LO CAPS contribute to the construction of careers.
- To explore the career-related activities and services that Grade 9 learners could engage in to enhance their career construction process.
- To understand the experiences of Grade 9 learners in the process of constructing a career.

- To develop a framework for career construction implementation in schools.

Even though this study surveyed the literature, applied the theoretical frameworks and followed the methodological strategies as far as possible, there are limitations this study identified. These limitations are discussed in the next section.

7.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Limitations are occurrences or matters in a study that are out of a researcher's control (Leedy & Ormrod 2015). These matters limit the extensity of a study and sometimes affect the findings and conclusions drawn about research (Simon & Goes, 2013; Hofstee, 2015). In this study, a limitation is identified and thereafter a mitigation is given as a way of trying to minimise the impact.

One of the limitations of this study is that one school in the Gauteng Province was selected and not all the Grade 9 learners were the informants. To mitigate this limitation in this study that aimed to support LO teachers when guiding the learners to construct careers, LO teachers were also selected from Grade 8 to Grade 12 as informants. This selection involving all the LO teachers from Grade 8 to Grade 12 was to strengthen the findings. However, these findings cannot be generalised to all the LO teachers and the Grade 9 learners in the province or other parts of the country.

Another limitation was the usage of ethnography as a methodology in education. In this case, focused ethnography was the most suitable design as explained in Chapter Four. It enabled me to explore holistically the studied phenomenon, provided me with a thick description and also allowed me to focus on the teaching of careers and subject choice in the curriculum. In all of this, ethnography with its thick description, allowed me to also pay attention to the first-hand information of what people said, did and experienced in the carer construction process. While this is the case, it is noteworthy to mention that most researchers still associate ethnography with anthropology and expect researchers to spend long periods in the research site (Hammersley, 2006; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019). In this

study, the limitation might be that I spent about three months in the field. However, to compensate for this limitation of time, I used various data-gathering instruments as suggested by Pink and Morgan (2013) and discussed in Chapter Four, the methodology chapter.

The next section first proposes recommendations for policy, and practice which in this case is the SCCF, which emanated from object four and proposes a recommendation for further research.

7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY, PRACTICE AND FURTHER RESEARCH

7.3.1 Recommendation for Policy

This research noted that the 2016 Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa permits LO to be taught by teachers who are not trained as LO teachers or CDP. This is an irregularity or a disadvantage of the subject, particularly for the effective teaching of careers and subject choices.

To mitigate this irregularity or disadvantage, in-service training should be provided to support the teachers who have not been trained as LO teachers or CDP. Even though the LO teachers might receive in-service training that is meant to enhance their ability to discharge their career guidance duties, there is insufficient evidence that the intervention is effective. For example, this research's findings noted that there is very little attempt to ensure that the trained LO teachers teach the subject for several successive years to gain experience and benefit the learners, particularly the Grade 9 youth. Another key finding was that the Grade 8 to Grade 9 LO CAPS syllabus appears to use Holland's RIASEC personality grouping theory when learners construct their careers. Yet, there seems to be no personality testing conducted to enable the learners to be aware of their interests, which can guide them to understand and relate to the three dominant career-related personality groupings that might be relevant for them. In this study that aimed to find ways to support the LO teachers to be able to guide Grade 9 learners to make well-informed decisions when constructing careers, the

following recommendations are proposed:

Recommendation 1: Curriculum implementation

This study proposes that the 2016 Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa might have to be revised to include the time that LO teachers need to spend teaching LO to strengthen their knowledge of the subject. It takes resources to train the teachers and to allow them to be redeployed elsewhere before a return on the investment is made from training them is a futile exercise. A good return on the investment is only realisable after they have been given ample opportunity to practice what they had learnt in the in-service training programme for several years. Five years, which was suggested by one of the DBE LO officials, is recommended as the minimum number of years that the trained LO teachers should plough back into teaching LO after the in-service training.

7.3.2 Recommendation for Practice

When careers are constructed, the LO teachers need to create an environment where learners can construct careers of their choice and choose subjects that are relevant to their intended career paths. The findings revealed that at the selected school and the schools represented by the LO subject advisors, the environment was not conducive for effective career construction to take place. Hence for practice purposes the School Career Construction Framework is visually presented and discussed in the next sub-section:

The School Career Construction Framework (SCCF)

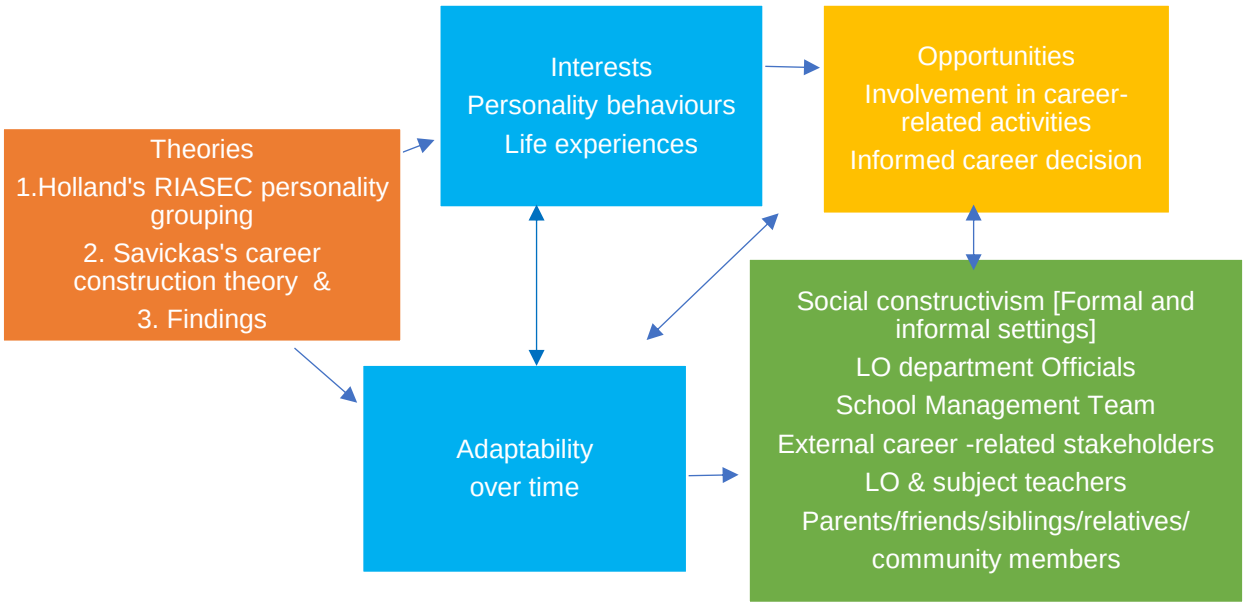

Figure 7.1: The School Career Construction Framework (SCCF)

The SCCF is inspired by Holland's RIASEC personality grouping, Savickas' career construction theory and the findings of this study. The key concepts that underpin this framework are interests, personality behaviours, life experiences, adaptability, opportunities, involvement in career-related activities, informed career decisions and social constructivism. These concepts are discussed in Chapters Three, Four and Six. These aforementioned concepts are important because they bring meaning to both the LO teachers and the learners in the career construction process (see Holland,1959;1997; Harrington & Long, 2013; van Vuuren, Rabie & Naidoo, 2022; McMahon, 2002; Andrews & Hooley, 2018; CDI, 2021). The SCCF can be used as an additional blueprint to support career construction and intervention in all the grades in public schools in South Africa.

This School Career Construction Framework proposes that during the teaching of careers and subject choice, LO teachers need to combine two theories: Holland's RIASEC personality groupings theory and Savickas's career construction theory. Applying Holland's theory, LO teachers need to support learners to identify or develop interests through activities. These activities may include attending career exhibitions or engaging learners in CAPS exercises

where they can develop a poster for the envisioned career path. Concerning Savickas' theory, the LO teachers may ask learners to use the identified interests. For instance, learners may undertake voluntary work that can expose them to the personality behaviours that are needed in a particular career. These may include activities on the internet or in the world of work. Alternatively, the learner may use life experiences to construct a career. As opportunities are created through career activities that expose learners to various careers, informed career decisions may be made. In line with Savickas' career construction theory, as a learner grows and is exposed to a myriad of career opportunities, interests may change. In this regard, LO teachers need to make learners aware that as their interests change, they are likely to adapt and make alternative career choices.

As Savickas further contends, in Chapter Three, career adaptability has been discussed as a crucial area that needs to be developed and nurtured in the process of preparing learners to take charge of their meaningful career construction journey that starts early in their schooling lives and may endure throughout their lives. LO teachers need to make learners aware of the importance of learning to adapt and practise adaptability for them to fit into the culture of the world of work at any point in their lives. Adaptability in career construction also involves a lifelong learning aspect. Lifelong learning in career construction equips learners to properly respond to the labour market or career interest changes to maintain the country's economic competitiveness and the socio-economic well-being of its citizens. LO teachers need to make learners aware that few careers will remain as we know them in the next few decades, which calls for the learners to be prepared for these uncertainties and be able to adapt to whatever changes they may experience. Savickas' theory on adaptability claims that there is interaction between a learner and the environment.

Drawing on social constructivism thinking as a paradigm for this study, the interaction between career stakeholders, the teaching of careers, and the process of subject choice, including career counselling, could address how learners might adapt to other careers without making major shifts that can move them away from their initial career interests. For example, the interactions between the LO department officials such as the LO subject advisors through

workshops may support the LO teachers. The interaction between the LO teachers and the external career-related stakeholders, led by the SMT, may strengthen the formation of partnerships between the South African Career Development Association (SACDA) and the Career Development Services (CDS) to provide interventions such as free career counselling as well as interactions between the LO and subject teachers, parents, siblings, relatives, and community members. These interactions and sharing of career-related information may create a conducive environment and support learners to be properly guided and arrive at informed career decisions when constructing careers.

7.3.3 Recommendations: Future research

This study has identified for lifelong learning as an important area for future research. In the career construction process, lifelong learning appears to embrace not only formal education and training but also informal learning which may occur in places such as homes, workplaces and other places. In this regard, lifelong learning is crucial to equip individuals to properly respond to the labour market or career interest changes to maintain the country's economic competitiveness and the socio-economic well-being of its citizens. Few careers will remain as we know them in the next few decades, which calls for learners to be prepared to always learn and adapt to these uncertainties and whatever changes they may bring.

7.4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the limitations of this study were discussed, and the recommendations were provided. In concluding this study, LO teachers were understood to not be able to create an environment that enables learners to gain knowledge on their career choices. In the process of constructing a career, the DBE, the SMT, the LO teachers, and the Grade 9 learners were found to be ill-prepared for the roles that they were supposed to play. For instance, the 2016 Competency Framework for Career Development Practitioners in South Africa and the Grade 9 LO CAPS were analysed and appeared not to effectively

contribute to the construction of careers. Secondly, career-related activities and services that Grade 9 learners engage in to enhance their career construction process were observed to be minimal. Thirdly, although most Grade 9 learners' experiences supported them in arriving at career decisions, a few learners could not construct careers. Hence, the SCCF is proposed as a recommendation for all the youth still at school so that when they pass Grade 12, they should at least have selected one career path. Above all, to construct and maintain careers, lifelong learning in career construction is needed more today than before as new careers in areas like the 4IR are developing at a faster rate than higher learning institutions can produce individuals who can fill them.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A: UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA'S ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

UNISA university of south africa

UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2022/04/14

Ref: **2022/04/13/90089723/33/AM**
Name: Mrs B Magadlela
Staff No.:90089723

Dear Mrs B Magadlela

Decision: Ethics Approval from 2022/04/13 to 2025/04/13

Researcher(s): Name: Mrs B Magadlela
E-mail address: magadb@unisa.ac.za
Telephone: 082 200 3477

Title of research:

Life Orientation(LO) Teachers and Career Construction for Youth at School

Qualification: Non-degree

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2022/04/13 to 2025/04/13.

*The **medium risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2022/04/13 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached.
2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
3. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.

University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
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4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
5. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
6. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
7. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
8. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2025/04/13**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number **2022/04/13/90089723/33/AM** *should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,

Prof AT Motlhabane
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APPENDIX B: GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESEARCH REQUEST FORM

For admin.

GAUTENG PROVINCE
EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

GDE RESEARCH REQUEST FORM

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN INSTITUTIONS AND/OR OFFICES OF THE GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

1. PARTICULARS OF THE RESEARCHER

1.1	**Details of the Researcher**
Surname and Initials:	Magadlela
First Name/s:	Bomkazi
Title (Prof / Dr / Mr / Mrs / Ms):	Mrs
Student Number (if relevant):	5334837
South Africa ID Number:	6408120670087
Work permit no. (If not South Africa citizen)	

1.2	**Private Contact Details**
Home Address	***Postal Address (if different)***
87 Stansted Street	P.O. Box 67630
Highveld	Highveld
Centurion	Centurion
Postal Code: 0157	***Postal Code:*** 0169
Tel: 012 6654006	***Cell: 082 200 3477***
Fax:	***E-mail: magadb@unisa.ac.za***

PURPOSE & DETAILS OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

2.1	***Purpose of the Research (Place cross where appropriate)***	
Undergraduate Study – Self		
Postgraduate Study – Self		
Private Company/Agency – Commissioned by Provincial Government or Department		
Private Research by Independent Researcher		
Non-Governmental Organisation		
National Department of Education		X
Commissions and Committees		
Independent Research Agencies		
Statutory Research Agencies		
Higher Education Institutions only		
2.2	***Full title of Thesis / Dissertation / Research Project***	
The Role of LO (LO) Teachers in Career Construction for Youth in Gauteng-South Africa		
2.3	**Value of the Research to Education (Attach Research Proposal)**	
See the attachment of the proposal		
2.4		**Date**
***Envisaged date of* completion of research in GDE Institutions**		November 2019 Data will be collected in intervals
***Envisaged date of* submission of Research Report and Research Summary to GDE:**		**2022**
2.5	**Student and Postgraduate Enrolment Particulars**	
Name of institution where enrolled:		University of South Africa
Degree / Qualification:		PhD
Faculty and Discipline / Area of Study:		College of Education- Curriculum Studies
Name of Supervisor / Promoter:		Prof. Moeketsi Letseka

2.6	**Employer**
Name of Organisation:	University of South Africa
Position in Organisation:	Lecturer
Head of Organisation:	Prof. Dichaba
Street Address:	Justice Mahomed Street UNISA,00-014 Building 10
	Sunnyside
Postal Code:	0003
Telephone Number (Code + Ext):	012 481 2727
Fax Number:	
E-mail:	dichamm@unisa.ac.za

2.7	**PERSONAL Number (GDE employees only) N/A**

2. PROPOSED RESEARCH METHOD/S

(Please indicate by placing a cross in the appropriate block whether the following modes would be adopted)

2.1 *Questionnaire/s (If Yes, supply copies of each to be used)*

YES		**NO**	**X**

2.2 *Interview/s (If Yes, provide copies of each schedule)*

YES	**X**	**NO**	

2.3 *Use of official documents*

YES	**X**	**NO**	
- ***If yes, please specify the document/s:*** Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) (2012) for Grades 7-9,			

Incidents reporting documents, safety and security policies, learner's code of conduct, disciplinary hearing minutes and school policies/documents related to violence in schools

2.4 ***Workshop/s / Group Discussions (If Yes, Supply details)***

YES		**NO**	**X**

2.5 ***Standardised Tests (e.g. Psychometric Tests)***

YES		**NO**	**X**
If Yes, please specify the test/s to be used and provide a copy/ies			

3. INSTITUTIONS TO BE INVOLVED IN THE RESEARCH

3.1 ***Type and NUMBER of Institutions (Please indicate by placing a cross alongside all types of institutions to be researched)***

INSTITUTIONS	**Write NUMBER here**
Primary Schools	
Secondary Schools	1
ABET Centres	
ECD Sites	
LSEN Schools	
Further Education & Training Institutions	
Districts and/or Head Office	2

3.2 Name/s of institutions to be researched (Please complete on a separate sheet if space is found to be insufficient)

Name/s of Institution/s
Voortrekkerhoogte High School

3.3 District/s where the study is to be conducted. ***(Please indicate by placing a cross alongside the relevant district/s)***

District/s			
Ekurhuleni North		Ekurhuleni South	
Gauteng East		***Gauteng North***	
Gauteng West		***Johannesburg Central***	
Johannesburg East		***Johannesburg North***	
Johannesburg South		***Johannesburg West***	
Sedibeng East		***Sedibeng West***	
Tshwane North		***Tshwane South***	**X**
Tshwane West			

If Head Office/s (Please indicate Directorate/s)

3.4 *Number of learners to be involved per school (Please indicate the number by gender)*

Grade	1		2		3		4		5		6	
Gender	*B*	*G*	*B*	*G*	*B*	*G*	*B*	*G*	*B*	*G*	*B*	*G*
Number												

Grade	7		8		9		10		11		12	
Gender	*B*	*G*	*B*	*G*	*B*	*G*	*B*	*G*	*B*	*G*	*B*	*G*
Number					*11*	*10*						

3.5 *Number of educators/officials involved in the study (Please indicate the number in the relevant column)*

Type of staff	Educators	HODs	Deputy Principals	Principal	Lecturers	Office Based Officials
Number	*6*	*2*				

3.6 *Are the participants to be involved in groups or individually?*

Groups	*X*	*Individually*	**X**

3.7 *The average time each participant will be involved in the test or other research activities (Please indicate time in minutes)*

Participant/s	Activity	Time
LO teachers	**Interviews**	**45 min**
Grade 9 learners	**Focus group interviews**	45 min

3.8 *Time of day that you propose to conduct your research.*

During school hours (for limited observation only)	**X**	After School Hours (mostly)		

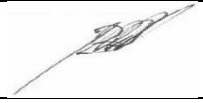
3.9 *School term/s during which the research would be undertaken*

First Term		Second Term		Third Term	*X*

CONDITIONS FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN GDE

Permission may be granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met and permission may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted:

1. *The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned, the Principal/s and the chairperson/s of the School Governing Body (SGB.) must be presented with a copy of this letter.*
2. *The Researcher will make every effort to obtain the goodwill and cooperation of the GDE District officials, principals, SGBs, teachers, parents and learners involved. Participation is voluntary and additional remuneration will not be paid.*
3. *Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The principal and/or Director must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.*
4. *Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded by the end of the THIRD quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.*
5. *Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.*
6. *It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written consent from the SGB/s; principal/s, educator/s, parents, and learners, as applicable, before commencing with research.*
7. *The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilizing his/her research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes, and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institution/s, staff and/or the office/s visited for supplying such resources.*
8. *The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers, and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research title, report or summary.*
9. *On completion of the study, the researcher must supply the Director: of Education Research and Knowledge Management, with electronic copies of the Research Report, Thesis, Dissertation as well as a Research Summary (on the GDE Summary template).*
10. *The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings, and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.*
11. *Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director/s and school/s concerned must also be supplied with a summary of the purpose, findings, and recommendations of the research study.*

DECLARATION BY THE RESEARCHER	
1. I declare that all statements made by myself in this application are true and accurate.	
2. I accept the conditions associated with the granting of approval to conduct research and undertake to abide by them.	
Signature:	
Date:	*04.07. 2019*
DECLARATION BY SUPERVISOR / PROMOTER / LECTURER	
I declare that: (Name of Researcher) …….	
1. is enrolled at the institution / employed by the organisation to which the undersigned is attached.	
2. The questionnaires / structured interviews/tests meet the criteria of: • Educational Accountability. • Proper Research Design. • Sensitivity towards Participants. • Correct Content and Terminology. • Acceptable Grammar. • Absence of Non-essential / Superfluous items. • Ethical clearance	
3. I will ensure that after the successful completion of the degree / project an electronic copy of the Research Report / Thesis / Dissertation and a Research Summary (on the GDE template) will be sent by the researcher to the GDE.	
Surname:	***Magadlela***
First Name/s:	***Bomkazi***
Institution / Organisation:	***University of South Africa***
Faculty / Department (where relevant):	***ABET & Youth Development***
Telephone:	***012 481 2921***
E-mail:	***magadb@unisa.ac.za***
Signature:	
Date:	***04.07. 2019***

APPENDIX C: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR GROUP RESEARCH

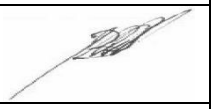
This information must be completed by **every** researcher/ student who will be visiting GDE Institutions for research purposes.

By signing this declaration, the researcher/student accepts the conditions associated with the granting of approval to conduct research in GDE Institutions and undertakes to abide by them.

Supervisor/ Promoter / Lecturer's Surname and Name

Professors M. Letseka and MM Sefotho

DECLARATION BY RESEARCHER:

Surname & Initials	Name	Tel	Cell	Email address	Signature
Magadlela B.	Bomkazi	012 481 2921	082 200 3477	magadb@unisa.ac.za	

N.B. This form (and all other relevant documentation where available) may be completed and forwarded electronically to Gumani.mukatuni@gauteng.gov.za and please copy (cc) ResearchInfo@gauteng.gov.za. The last 2 pages of this document must however have the original signatures of both the researcher and his/her supervisor or promoter. It should be scanned and emailed, posted or hand delivered (in a sealed envelope) to Gumani Mukatuni, 7th Floor, 6 Hollard Building, Main and Simmonds Streets, Johannesburg. All enquiries pertaining to the status of research requests can be directed to Gumani Mukatuni on tel. no. 011 355 0775

APPENDIX D: GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

GAUTENG PROVINCE

Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

814141112

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	08 July 2019
Validity of Research Approval:	04 February 2019 — 30 September 2019 2019/138
Name of Researcher:	Magadlela B
Address of Researcher:	87 Stansted Street
	Highveld
	Centurion, 0157
Telephone Number:	082 200 3477
Email address:	magadb@unisa.ac.za
Research Topic:	The Role of LO (LO) Teachers in Career Construction for Youth in Gauteng-South Africa.
Type of qualification	PhD
Number and type of schools:	One Secondary School
District] s /HO	Tshwane South

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved in conducting the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the school (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has en granted for the research to be conducted. The following conditions apply to GDE rc. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

7th Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001
Tel.' (01 1) 355 0488
Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

1. Letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
2. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.
3. A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s has been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
4. A letter/ document that outlines the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.
5. The Researcher will make every effort to obtain the goodwill and cooperation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.
6. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.
7. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.
8. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.
9. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent from all learners that are expected to participate in the study.
10. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes, and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
11. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.

12 On completion of the study the researcher/s must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and an electronic copy of the research.

13. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.
14. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards

Mr Gurnani Mukatuni
Acting CES: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 10/07/2019

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management
7th Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001
Tel: (01 1) 355 0488
Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

APPENDIX E: PARTICIPATION LETTER

Date: 04.09.2019

Title: The Role of LO (LO) Teachers in Career Construction for Youth in Gauteng- South Africa

DEAR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT

My name is Mrs Bomkazi Magadlela, and I am doing research under the supervision of Professor Moeketsi Letseka in the Department of Educational Foundations, working towards a PhD in Education degree at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled The Role of LO Teachers in Career Construction/Career Development for Youth in Gauteng South Africa.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

The study seeks to identify gaps or inefficiencies within the country's career guidance efforts as they are currently nested in LO and later propose means of addressing the gaps or inefficiencies for a proper career construction/career development path. To that end, the researcher will interrogate the LO environment, including LO teachers, learners and the LO syllabus. That exercise will help the researcher understand the gaps or inefficiencies of the LO system concerning career guidance. Ways of addressing those gaps or inefficiencies will be proposed to better empower the LO teachers when guiding youth learners to construct their careers. Additionally, the researcher hopes that career construction through revelations of this study will be a focal point, rather than a valueless exercise at schools and in the country. However, it should be mentioned that the study does not guarantee employability but seeks to assist LO teachers so that individuals can put food on the table or become entrepreneurs irrespective of the careers constructed.

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

You are invited because you have valuable experience as an LO teacher, and it is in the best interests of this study to include your contributions which could better equip or help other LO teachers when they guide youth/ learners on how to build careers and select subjects that are in line with their career aspirations. Your contact details were obtained from your school.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

Your role is to share your valuable experience as an LO teacher and as such a valuable resource to help the youth make well-informed decisions about career choices and subject choices. Guiding the youth to match subject choices with career aspirations is an essential ingredient in proper career construction, which may lead to job or career satisfaction, reduce unemployment and contribute to social cohesion.

The study will make use of observations, semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Several open-ended questions on how LO teachers guide youth when they construct their careers will be asked. The time needed for an interview might be an hour.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

The researcher hopes the study will reveal and identify structural gaps in the career guidance-oriented subjects and/or activities in the schooling system, which when corrected will help to better empower the LO teachers when they guide youth in career construction, paying attention to the services and activities. Additionally, the researcher hopes that the results of the study will help to propel career construction to a higher position in the hierarchy of subject offerings and to be a focal point of discussion/debate at schools and in the country.

ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

The participants may be inconvenienced during the study period, however, at the end of the study, the participants and other LO teachers may be better empowered when guiding youth in careers and subject selection. Currently, the researcher envisages no risk or harm nevertheless, if something happens the researcher shall inform the supervisor as soon as possible and appropriate steps will be taken.

WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

You have the right to insist that your name should not be recorded anywhere and that no one, apart from the researcher and identified members of the research team, will know about your involvement in this research **OR** Your name will not be recorded anywhere, and no one will be able to connect you

to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a code number or a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet in the researcher's office at UNISA for future research or academic purposes. Information will be stored on a password-protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. After five years, hard copies of the research material will be torn, and electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer using a relevant software programme.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

There are no incentives or rewards offered for the participation. However, your treasured contribution will be acknowledged.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL?

Yes

HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Bomkazi Magadlela on 082 200 3477 or email magadb@unisa.ac.za. The findings are accessible for the study to be completed.

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Mrs Bomkazi Magadlela at 012 481 2921 or magadb@unisa.ac.za

Should you have concerns about how the research has been conducted, you may contact Professor Moeketsi Letseka on 012 429 8507 or Letsem@unisa.ac.za

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you.

Mrs. B. Magadlela

APPENDIX F: LETTER REQUESTING CONSENT

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return slip)

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the interview session.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname (please print)

_____

_____ _____

Participant Signature Date

Researcher's Name & Surname (please print)

_____

_____ _____

Researcher's signature Date

APPENDIX G: TURNITIN RECEIPT AND SIMILARITY INDEX

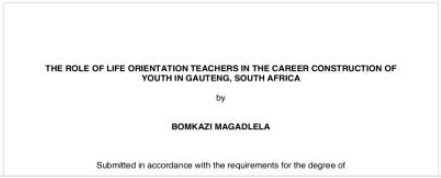
turnitin

Digital Receipt

This receipt acknowledges that Turnitin received your paper. Below you will find the receipt information regarding your submission.

The first page of your submissions is displayed below.

Submission author:	Bomkazi Magadlela
Assignment title:	Proposal FINAL
Submission title:	Submitted for Magadlela B Thesis
File name:	20231226_The_role_of_life_orientation_teachers_Final_Thesis...
File size:	2.75M
Page count:	265
Word count:	74,989
Character count:	407,834
Submission date:	26-Dec-2023 10:16AM (UTC+0200)
Submission ID:	2264863367



THE ROLE OF LIFE ORIENTATION TEACHERS IN THE CAREER CONSTRUCTION OF YOUTH IN GAUTENG, SOUTH AFRICA

by

BOMKAZI MAGADLELA

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

APPENDIX H: LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE

EDITING AND PROOFREADING CERTIFICATE

22 Osche Street

The Reeds

Centurion

0157

19 June 2024

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This certificate serves to confirm that I have edited B Magadlela's thesis titled, **"The role of life orientation teachers in the career construction of youth in Gauteng, South Africa."**

I found the work easy and intriguing to read. Much of my editing basically dealt with obstructionist technical aspects of language, which could have otherwise compromised smooth reading as well as the sense of the information being conveyed. I hope that the work will be found to be of an acceptable standard. I am a member of Professional Editors' Guild.

Hereunder are my contact details:

Jack Chokwe (PhD – University of Leicester (United Kingdom)

Contact numbers: 072 214 5489

jackchokwe@gmail.com

Professional EDITORS Guild

APPENDIX I: PARTICIPATION LETTER FOR THE LEARNERS

The Role of LO (LO) Teachers in Career Construction (Career Development for Youth in Gauteng in South Africa

Dear Youth/ Learner Date: 04.09.2019

I Mrs Bomkazi Magadlela, am doing a study on how LO teachers can guide you when building a career as part of my studies at the University of South Africa. Your principal has permitted me to do this study in your school. I would like to invite you to be a very special part of my study. The study aims to find ways to assist you in addition to what is taught by your LO teacher so that you may be guided properly when you build a career. This includes among other aspects the selection of subjects that are in line with your career aspirations. This may help you and many other learners of your age in different schools.

This letter is to explain to you what I would like you to do. There may be some words you do not know in this letter. You may ask me or any other adult to explain any of these words that you do not know or understand. You may take a copy of this letter home to think about my invitation and talk to your parents about this before you decide if you want to be in this study.

I would like to ask you a few questions that are related to building a career. Answering the discussion questions will not be longer than an hour. I may come back to you for clarity at a later stage for you to verify captured responses or conversations. Your rights will not be infringed.

write a report on the study, but I will not use your name in the report or say anything that will let other people know who you are. Participation is voluntary and you do not have to be part of this study if you don't want to take part. If you choose to be in the study, you may stop taking part at any time without penalty. You may tell me if you do not wish to answer any of my questions. No one will blame or criticise you. When I am finished with my study, I shall return to your school to give a short talk about some of the helpful and interesting things I found out in my study. I shall invite you to come and listen to my talk.

The benefit of this study is to have a platform where you can express your views concerning your future career. In so doing you will bring about the possible prospects and challenges associated with constructing a career, which you may have not been aware of. It should be indicated that the study does not guarantee employability but seeks to better empower LO teachers when they guide you and many other learners when they build their careers.
There are no potential risks involved in this study.

You will not be reimbursed or receive any incentives for your participation in the research.

If you decide to be part of my study, you will be asked to sign the form on the next page. If you have any other questions about this study, you can talk to me or you can have your parent or another adult call me at 082 200 3477. Do not sign the form until you have all your questions answered and understand what I would like you to do.

Researcher: Mrs Bomkazi Magadlela Phone number: 082 200 3477

Do not sign the written assent form if you have any questions. Ask your questions first and ensure that someone answers those questions.

WRITTEN ASSENT

I have read this letter which asks me to be part of a study at my school. I have understood the information about my study, and I know what I will be asked to do. I am willing to be in the study.

_____ _____ _____
Learner's name (print): Learner's signature: Date:

_____ _____ _____
Witness's name (print) Witness's signature Date:

(The witness is over 18 years old and present when signed.)

_____ _____
_____
Parent/guardian's name (print) Parent/guardian's signature: Date:

APPENDIX J: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS – LO PROVINCIAL COORDINATOR

Title: The Role of LO Teachers in Career Development for Youth in Gauteng-South Africa

Name and Surname:
Province:
No. of Districts in the Province:
Number of schools in the District:
No. of years as an LO coordinator in the Province:
Teaching Experience in LO/ Career Guidance:
Qualifications:
Gender:

Interview Questions:

1. Often LO is regarded as a 'fill-in' subject and allocated to novice teachers. Do you have such experiences when you meet your Gauteng LO facilitators? If you do how do you assist the schools regarding this matter?

   Statement

   The Grade 9 LO teachers feel there is a lot that is needed to prepare learners for careers and subject choices. This does not help the LO teachers when the department allocates 11 hours a year to the world of work section and out of those 11 hours, 3 hours is allocated to the teaching of careers and career choices. In your opinion what could be done to assist these teachers to make use of the 'limited time' to teach learners about careers and career choices?
2. What kind of activities do you recommend to the Grade 9 LO facilitators when assisting them with career development?
3. Please share with me, what can be done by the LO teachers to create an environment that capacitates LO teachers to gain knowledge on different careers.
4. In your opinion what is lacking in the school system regarding careers and career counselling?
5. What would you like to see happening in the school system to assist the great work you are doing?

APPENDIX K: INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS- DISTRICTS LO SUBJECT ADVISORS

Title: The Role of LO Teachers in Career Construction (Career Development) for Youth in Gauteng-South Africa

Name and Surname:
Name of the District:
No. of cluster schools in the District:
No. of years as an LO advisor in the District:
Teaching Experience in LO/ Career Guidance:
Qualifications:
Gender:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. What are your key responsibilities regarding career development in your district?
2. Often LO is regarded as a 'fill up' subject and allocated to novice teachers. Do you have such experiences when you meet your Gauteng LO teachers? If you do how do you assist the schools regarding this matter?
   Statement
   The Grade 9 LO teachers feel there is a lot that is needed to prepare learners for careers and subject choices. This does not help the LO teachers when the department allocates 11 hours a year to the world of work section and out of those 11 hours, 3 hours is allocated to the teaching of careers and career choices. In your opinion what could be done to assist these teachers to make use of the 'limited time' to teach learners about careers and career choices?
3. What kind of activities do you recommend to the Grade 9 LO teachers when assisting them with career development?
4. Please share with me, what can be done by the LO teachers to create an environment that capacitates LO teachers to enable the grade 9 learners to gain knowledge on different careers.
5. How do you support the LO teachers to be able to guide the grade 9 learners in career development?
6. In your opinion what is lacking in the school system regarding careers and career counselling?
7. What would you like to see happening in the school system to assist the great work you are doing?

B. Magadlela
Researcher's name (print) Researcher's signature: Date: 04.09.2019

APPENDIX L: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE – LO TEACHERS FROM GRADE 8 – 12

Title: The Role of LO Teachers in Career Construction (Career Development) for Youth in Gauteng-South Africa

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. How does it feel to be an LO teacher in the school?
2. Please share with me the joys and challenges you have experienced or are experiencing as an LO teacher regarding career development.
3. Reflecting on the syllabus, what would you like to see added or removed when you guide your learners in career development?
4. What is your view on the belief that LO teachers have a responsibility to see to it that every learner should pass Grade 12 with at least one career option to pursue?
5. In addition to what is in the syllabus, what activities and services would you recommend being added to the syllabus when you teach career development?
6. Please share with me, how you create an environment during the career development periods where learners are enabled towards gaining knowledge on different careers.

APPENDIX M: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM

1. Please share with me, does the school see the need for teaching LO?
2. What is the school's wish regarding career development?
3. How is LO allocated to the teachers?
4. Please share with me, what is done by the school if anything to create an environment that enables the LO teachers to gain knowledge on different careers.
5. Are there any expenses from the library budget that are allocated for career development resources?
6. A lot of schools do not offer career counselling to the learners. Are you experiencing such a lack?
   If yes, please share with me how is that done.
   If No. How are you addressing that lack?

Statement:

When I was around in August, I observed a remarkable event where a knowledgeable person in career counselling addressed both parents and learners. In addition to this, subject teachers made presentations on careers and subject choices.

7. Please share with me how often you have such events.
8. In your opinion what is lacking in the education system regarding careers and career counselling?
9. What would you like to see happening or what would you like me to do in the school to assist the great work you are doing?

APPENDIX N: GRADE 9 INDIVIDUAL LEARNERS INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Please share with me, are you excited when it is an LO period- the careers section? Why?

2. Have you chosen a career yet? If you have identified it, what career it is?

3. Do you know which subjects you should take in Grade 10 for your intended career?

4. Where did you get the information about that career?

5. Please share with me, what has influenced your career decision (media, family, socio-economic status, geographical location, educational institution, history of the country.

6. Have you been involved in programmes like taking a girl/ child to work/ job shadowing? If so, what was your experience? Would you like to be involved in such a programme again?

7. What are the best practices about career guidance at your school?

8. In your opinion what is lacking at your school regarding career guidance?

9. What would you say to a Grade 9 learner who wants to be assisted in building a career?

10. In your opinion what is important when a learner builds a career?

11. What more would you wish to learn during the career guidance periods?

12. Is there anything you would like to add to what you have shared with me regarding the guidance of LO teachers when you build careers?

APPENDIX O: GRADE 9 LEARNERS FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What does the word ‘career’ mean to you?
2. Have you chosen your career? If Yes
3. Which tools did you use to find information when you were building a career?
4. What are the best practices for career guidance at your school?
5. In your opinion what is lacking at your school regarding career guidance?
6. Do you think you have gained skills during your career guidance periods that will help
7. you to have an idea about what is happening in the world of work?
8. Have you been involved in programmes like taking a girl/ child to work/ job shadowing? If so, what was your experience? Would you like to be involved in that programme again?
9. Have you heard about ‘Khetha’ the national careers services that help everybody in South Africa?
10. What would you say to a grade 9 learner who has not chosen a career?
11. In your opinion what is important when a learner builds a career?
12. In addition to what is taught by your LO teachers, what more can they do to assist you during the career guidance periods?

APPENDIX P: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: PARENTS

1. Please share with me, as a parent do you think the LO teacher or the school has played a role in your child's career choice? Please elaborate on your given answer; how does this make you feel?

2. In your opinion what is good and bad at your child's school regarding career guidance? Two points for each aspect is fine

3. As a parent, what more would you like to see happening at schools when it comes to the building of careers?

Parent # 1

1. No, neither the LO teacher nor the school played any role in my daughter's career choice. Her choice has been influenced by electronic media, i.e., television and Instagram.
School programs are simply not interesting enough and fail to capture children's imaginations.
2. According to Enathi, there is no career guidance in Grade 9 or if it is there, it is not individualised, nor are children exposed to physical role models in their career choice spheres.
3. Schools should take a more personalised approach to career guidance. Ideally, they should determine efficient points of entry into the children's imaginary worlds e.g., by stipulating and or formulating essays that reveal what the children want and other role-playing methodologies.

Parent # 2

a. Answer 1: No, because they did not do in-depth discussions on the subjects according to the career preferences [fields].

b. Answer 2: They just mentioned that they must choose subjects according to their career preference, but did not invite experts, who can come and talk to the children.

c. Answer 3: They need to invite Lecturers from Universities and experts on career choices who can come and talk to the children. They need to

have workshops etc. on Career development.

Parent # 3

Yes, both have played an important role in my daughter's career choice because, with the LO teachers, she has learnt about how many career choices there are and how each one is suited to one's personality. The school gave her experience of working with other people doing different assignments to broaden her career choice.
2. Good: There are different subjects that they have, that are suited with her career choice. As well as teachers assisting learners with career choice and helping them achieve it
Bad: They lack basic resources in the library that could have made a different impact on my daughter's career choice, such as computers to research a topic. They also lack certain apparatus in the science department and that causes the learners not to learn to the best of their ability.
3. I would like to see a career day at High schools each year because due to peer pressure, all learners want to become something that their friends suggest, with the career day, learners could get more valuable information and that could help them with career guidance. I would also like to see learners receive basic career resources at schools such as computers to research a topic so that they can research their career choice and not just be limited to a textbook.

APPENDIX Q: CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

NoRNet
Transitions, Career and Guidance
Nordic Research Network

DANISH SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
AARHUS UNIVERSITY

Critical perspectives on agency and social justice in transitions and career development

Program

Copenhagen 23-24 October 2019

Day 1: Wednesday, 23 October

8.30 **Registration, coffee and tea (Aula)** – Registration remains open throughout the conference.

9.30 – 10.00 **Welcome by Rie Thomsen (A220)**, Professor MSO of Career Guidance, DPU – Danish School of Education, Aarhus University and Professor II, University of South Eastern Norway, USN.

10.00 – 10.30 **Opening Event**

Two young people, Leika and Christian from C:NTACT will talk about challenges in their upbringing, youth and education including how they have struggled to find their own way in life and in the welfare system. C:NTACT works with culture and art as a key to change. The stories of Leika and Christina illuminate basic human feelings of powerlessness and mistrust, and hopefully they can help break down prejudices, facilitate understanding and reduce gaps between people from different social groups and cultural backgrounds.

10.30 – 11.15 **Keynote: *Riding the social justice wave: Where next for policy, practice and theory in career guidance?***

Professor Tristram Hooley, Chief Research Officer, Institute of Student Employers, Professor of Career Education, University of Derby and Professor II at the Inland

12.15 – 13.15 **Lunch, coffee and tea (Aula)**

13.15 – 15.15 **Parallel sessions**

7. Situatedness, Geography and Place (A414) ***Chair: Rie Thomsen***	**8. Round table discussion and paper (A220)** ***Chair: Helle Nordentoft***
Organisation of adult education for immigrants in rural areas - support for career development? **Presenter:** Per-Åke Rosvall, Umeå University **Co-presenter:** Sara Carlbaum, Umeå University.	Going Green **Presenter:** Peter Plant, University of South-Eastern Norway.
Situated inequality in career guidance in schools **Presenter:** Randi Boelskifte Skovhus, VIA University College.	*The Role of Life Orientation Teachers in Career Construction for Youth in Gauteng, South Africa* **Presenter:** **Bomkazi Magadlela, Universtity of South Africa.**
'I feel that I could go anywhere now, anywhere in the world…' – mobility and agency in graduate career paths **Presenter:** Rosie Alexander, University of Derby & University of the Highlands and Islands.	*"Moving forward or not? 'Bias Aware Teaching and Learning' in a Danish university"* **Presenter:** Donna Hurford University of Southern Denmark
Education, Immigration and Migration: Policy, Leadership and Praxis for a Changing World **Presenter:**	

APPENDIX R: DISCUSSION MEETING ON THE FINDINGS WITH THE LO DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS ON THE INTERNATIONAL CAREERS' DAY

1. Summary

Meeting title: Discussion on the study findings: The Role of LO (LO) Teachers in Career Construction for Youth in Gauteng-South Africa.

Attended participants 13

Start time 4/08/22, 4:22:00 PM

End time 4/08/22, 5:59:41 PM

Meeting duration 1h 37m 41s

Average attendance time 1h 1m 38s

2. Participants

Name	First Join	Last Leave	In-Meeting Duration	Email	Participant ID (UPN)	Role
Magadlela, Bomkazi	4/08/22, 4:29:34 PM	4/08/22, 5:58:50 PM	1h 23m 23s	magadb@unisa.ac.za	magadb@unisa.ac.za	Organiser and preenter
Tshephe, Pinagase	4/08/22, 4:29:09 PM	4/08/22, 5:58:51 PM	1h 29m 42s	tshepgp@unisa.ac.za	tshepgp@unisa.ac.za	Programme Director