

**CAREER CHOICE: A CHALLENGE FOR HIGH SCHOOL  
STUDENTS**

*A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS  
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**BY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis investigates career choice from an industrial-psychological perspective in Namibia. The research question aimed to investigate whether Namibian youth are aware of the need to make career choice and whether they do make conscious career decisions. To assess career development and choice of students, Super's Career Development Theory was employed as the theoretical framework for this study. Only students in Grade 12 from two previous disadvantaged schools in Windhoek were selected by means of the convenience sampling method (total sample was  $N = 101$ ). The study employed a quantitative research approach. Findings revealed that respondents who would like to study further were ready to choose a career. The findings showed a significant correlation ( $r = 0.40$ ;  $p \leq 0.001$ ) between respondents who would like to study further in order to obtain their future goals and the readiness to make a career choice. However, respondents felt that they needed more information about themselves, their abilities and capabilities, weaknesses and strengths, as well as information about who they are in order to make conscious career decisions. Findings also revealed that there is a correlation ( $r = 0.31$ ;  $p \leq 0.04$ ) between age and how the respondents carry out their responsibilities at present. The younger respondents felt less sure about their capability in carrying out their responsibilities. The study also found a correlation ( $r = 0.40$ ;  $p \leq 0.001$ ) between satisfaction in carrying out responsibilities and having confidence in carrying out future career related tasks.

Findings also revealed that there is a correlation ( $r = 0.30$ ;  $p = 0.35$ ) between self-awareness and awareness of own strength and weakness.

The findings of the study indicated that career guidance should be deemed as a necessity and not as a luxury for the benefit of the youth. Schools, students, parents, government, public and private sectors should recognise the importance of career guidance and education, if change in our working environment is desired, in order to reduce unemployment in the country and promote expectation of high quality of life for every individual and as a nation. Only then will our people's potential be useful to the development of Namibia.

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## **DEDICATION**

To my children, Ndjila, Ndunge, Suama and Kauzanenua and to the youth of Namibia. May God guide you in your journey.

## **DECLARATIONS**

I, Sarah Vetjimpa Mbware, hereby declare that this study is a true reflection of my own research, and that this work, or part thereof has not been submitted for a degree in any other institution of higher learning.

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

The development of a country depends on the developmental level of its people. At present, Namibia has a high unemployment rate, currently standing at 33.8%. On top of that, according to the Ministry of Labour's survey in 2001, most of the unemployed people in Namibia are young (Ministry of Labour, 2002). Many of these young people fail to find a job after completing their schooling despite having passed Grade 10 or even Grade 12 with good marks. Unfortunately, they find themselves sitting at home doing nothing. They fail to both find work or to make plans to further their studies. The Ministry of Labour confirmed that the unemployment rate in the age group 15 – 24 years stands at between 46 – 65 %. This age group consists of adolescents and young adults. This is a very alarming rate for any country. According to Gonzo & Plattner (2003), unemployment does contribute to poverty, which in turn contributes to many other psychological effects on individuals who are unemployed. The question is, what contributes to the high unemployment rate in Namibia, especially amongst the youth? Also, what can Namibian people do in order to help alleviate the high unemployment among our youth?

There may be many reasons, which contribute to unemployment. One reason could be that the country's economy is unable to offer enough employment to all young people who may need it. Another reason could be that there are not enough funds available for those who wish to study further. Unemployment could also be attributed to the fact that the youth of Namibia may not be motivated to find a job. There are many examples of young people who even after passing Grade 12 with good marks and having much

potential for the future, seem to wait for jobs to find them. Some may be idle for years. Long periods of waiting and idleness can take a psychological toll on people. According to Gonzo & Plattner (2003), remaining jobless for long periods makes people's hope fade away, which in turn, increases depression. To improve the employment situation of our youth, and the country at large, changes need to be effected. Today's students are tomorrow's employees and employers (Jacobs, van Jaarsveld, & van Mollendorf, 1991). Therefore, proper development of current and future students is of great importance.

Literature shows that high youth unemployment could also be attributed to a lack of effective career guidance in schools. Career guidance is supposed to guide the youth into better decision-making regarding their future careers and other life expectations (Stead & Watson, 1999; Osipow, 1983; Sharf, 2002; Hayes & Hopson, 1977).

In Namibia, during the apartheid era, career guidance was not seen as an important subject, especially in previously disadvantaged schools. This was also the case in South Africa, which went through the same rule of apartheid (HSRC, 1981). In both Namibia and South Africa career guidance was neglected. According to Stead and Watson (1999), the negligence of the previous dispensation to provide career guidance in former disadvantaged schools in South Africa was observed in a study done with first year students at universities in the Cape. Students from disadvantaged schools in Cape Town were found unable to choose study directions at university level. This attitude regarding the status of career guidance in schools has not changed to date. The result is that most South Africans and Namibians were never made aware of the

importance of choosing a career through career guidance at schools and, therefore, were never afforded the opportunity to make informed choices about careers. The situation is still the same today, especially in rural schools. Young people do not have all the information they need to make informed decisions about their future careers.

Brown, Brooks, & Associates (1996) argued that career choice is an act, which reflects people's motivation. This action will motivate them to work towards their goals in order to achieve them. The implementation of career guidance at schools, could promote self-awareness as well as on awareness of work opportunities (Sharf, 2002; Hayes & Hopson, 1977; Brown et al., 1996). Brown et al. (1996) assumed that people who are informed about possible career choices and about their abilities have a better chance of choosing careers, are more prepared to achieve their goals and enter careers that fit their personalities. Therefore, it is important to offer career guidance and career counselling in schools as early as Primary School (Gladding, 1996; Hayes & Hopson, 1977).

Ginzberg (1951) and Super (1957) conceptualised vocational choice as a developmental process, which takes place over the years in someone's lifetime (Crites, 1969). Ginzberg (1951, as quoted by Gothard, 1985) also states that career choice or occupational choice is a process that takes place over years. This means that choosing a career does not happen at a certain period in life, but is a process, which starts in early childhood through fantasy about certain jobs and continues through to adulthood when a person retires. As the person becomes older, the occupational development also expands as the person gets more information about him/herself as well as the

requirements of a specific job. This is why career education or guidance has to start as early as possible in order to facilitate the development process. Wahl & Blockburst (2000) emphasise that the need to prepare students for changing social and economic conditions through career guidance, should not be limited to high school years only, but should be part of the whole school career.

Politicians, economists, employers, teachers and even the President of Namibia are calling for students to take more demanding subjects, e.g. Mathematics and Sciences, however, without emphasising the importance of exposure to career guidance and its role in decision-making. Different schools are also requesting the Ministry of Education to provide them with more qualified Mathematics and Science subject teachers. This is done without demanding a career guidance teacher, who could prepare the students in the daunting task of choosing careers in specific directions. Students, on the other hand, have this fear of failing the Mathematics and Science subjects, because they never learned to be confident in their abilities. Most of them are not even aware of their abilities and interests and their relationship to career choice. Jacobs et al (1991) stress that the young people should be made aware of the personal requirements essential for success in any occupation – which are self-confidence, sober habits, self-assertiveness, responsibility, tact, hard work, etc. Without students knowing and having most of these characteristics, it will be difficult for them to see themselves succeed in something they perceive as difficult as Mathematics and Science subjects. They might end up not choosing the needed subjects for developing the country, as they do not realise the importance of such subjects for their future.

If students are also not aware of university or college requirements and the reasons for the requirements, they will not choose such directions of study during school. The usual result of this is students leaving school with no idea as to what their options are and waiting for some divine force to rescue them from unemployment.

**The objectives for the study** were twofold. Firstly, this study attempted to find out whether young Namibians who were still at school were aware of the need to make preparations regarding career choices. It also wanted to find out whether the youth are aware of the responsibilities that arise from making career decisions.

**The general research questions** posed in the study were:

- a) *Are young Namibians aware of the need to make career choices?*
- b) *Do young Namibians, in fact, make conscious career choices?*

The theoretical framework within which the study was done was based on the **Career Development Theory of Super** (1993, 1996). This theory will be presented under chapter 2.

Chapter 3 will give an overview about the literature available on career choice, career guidance, career counselling and research conducted in these fields. In chapter 4, the empirical conceptualisation of the study will be presented referring to the methods used in this research, the sample, data generation and data evaluation. Chapter 5 will present the outcome of the study and the analysis of the data thereof, while chapter 6, will cover the discussion and conclusion.

## **CHAPTER 2: SUPER'S CAREER DEVELOPMENT THEORY**

### **2.1 Historical background of Super's Theory**

The practice of matching people with certain kind of work was derived from Frank Parson (1909) who tried to match individuals' abilities and interests with vocational opportunity. Parson's important contribution to the development of career theories was the idea that interests and abilities do influence careers. Someone will, thus, choose a career that matches his or her interests, abilities and personality.

Ginzberg (1951, in Crites, 1969) emphasized that occupational choice is not an event, but is a process that takes place and develops over a period of time. According to Crites (1969), Ginzberg assumed two main propositions on which he based his career development theory. One of the propositions was that the process of decision-making in career choice would be *irreversible*. According to Ginzberg (Crites, 1969), once a person has made a career decision, then he or she will be restricted to it. The person may find it difficult to change his/her career goals and the decision taken might restrict that person from making other decisions concerning his or her career development because the person might have already made efforts regarding the chosen career and committed him or herself to it. The other proposition assumed by Ginzberg suggests that career choices will depend on *compromises* between what the person needs and what is available (Crites, 1969).

These propositions made by Ginzberg contributed to Donald E. Super's "Career Development Theory".

Super's theory did not arise at one time and stop there, but it developed itself over a long period of time. Different constructs were added and adjustments were made since 1953 until the 1990's. Career development and self-concept were core concepts in Super's theory in 1953 (Stead & Watson, 1999; Brown, Brooks & Associates, 1996).

Career Development Theory was an elaboration of Ginzberg's assumptions as indicated above, but also included many other theorists' ideas, such as those of Thorndike, Hull, Bandura, Freud, Jung, Adler, Murray, Maslow, Allport and Rogers (Crites, 1969). From all these theorists' work, Super, developed a comprehensive theory that covered many aspects of life.

Super's theory sees career choice as a life-long process that happens throughout someone's life, from childhood to adulthood (Langley, 1999). According to Super, career choice is based on matching the individuals' abilities and interests with the work, and is influenced by economic, social, environmental and physical factors. Changes in these factors may have an impact on individuals' career development and choice.

Super's theory is comprised of different developmental stages during which career choices are made. During these developmental stages, the individual develops skills and acquires a level of maturity to adopt in his or her career choice.

In 1953, Super's theory (as referred to by Sharf, 2002), consists of three original constructs. These are career development, self-concept and career maturity (Sharf, 2002). Other constructs of Super's theory were expanded from the original ones, through further studies by Super himself and other researchers, over the years.

These are the constructs of values, life roles and cultural context (Sharf, 2002; Osipow, 1983; Brown, et al, 1996; Super, Sverko & Super, 1995).

Some of the constructs will be presented below to give a better understanding of Super's Career Development Theory and why this theory is an appropriate theoretical framework for this study on career choice and guidance in Namibia.

## **2.2 Concept of Career Development**

In 1953 (as referred to by Sharf, 2002), Super constructed the concept of career development as a process. Super's theory is referred to as a life-span-life-space approach (Brown, et al., 1996) Life-space approach refers to social situations the individuals have to go through, while the life-span addresses the life stages and focuses on individuals intra-personal aspects, such as values, self-concept, life roles and culture, which have enriched Super's theory (Walsh & Osipow, 1986; Gladding, 1996; Stead & Watson, 1999). The life span consists of different stages and sub-stages associated with various ages. It focuses on developmental stages and the skills, which were learned and developed during the different stages.

Career Development Theory comprises of five developmental stages. The first stage is *growth*, which occurs between the age of four and the age of 13 years. The second is *exploration* stage, which occurs between the ages of 14 until the age of 24 years. The third one is the *establishment* stage, which happens between the age of 25 years and the age of 44 years. The fourth is the *maintenance* stage, which starts from the age of 45 until the age of 65 years. The fifth and last stage is the disengagement stage, which occurs from the ages of 65 years and above (Stead & Watson, 1999).

These stages are further divided into sub-stages or tasks. The sub-stages in the growth stage are curiosity, fantasies, interests and capacities. The growth stage happens during childhood and curiosity is one of the basic needs or drives observable in infants and young children (Sharf, 2002). It refers to the desire for new knowledge and the child learns to find information in order to satisfy his or her needs. Through curiosity and fantasy a child develops his or her interests and abilities, which could be useful for future career development (Sharf, 2002). He or she learns to differentiate him or herself from others and, thus build his or her self-concept. During the growth stage the child becomes concerned about his or her future as he or she grows older and learns to take control of his or her own life.

The next stage is *exploratory stage*, which occurs between the ages 14 to 24 years. This stage is very important for this study, because it represents the sample group of the study, which is 15 – 24 years of age. The sub-stages of the exploratory stage are crystallising, specifying and the implementing of a career choice (Stead & Watson, 1999).

During the *crystallisation sub-stage* of the exploration stage, a person starts to form a better idea of his or her vocational preferences. He or she also starts to formulate ideas of work that seem appropriate for him or her. The person, thus, transforms his or her early tentative vocational choices into a vocational choice by following a certain direction at school level, for example by choosing certain school subjects.

During the *specification sub-stage* the person narrows down his or her tentative vocational choices to a specific one, by making a career choice (Osipow, 1983). In the *implementation sub-stage*, the person is older and more aware of who he or she is. He or she could use different information regarding careers, and select what is appropriate for him or her. Based on available information, he or she will formulate a plan in order to achieve goals, interests, values and occupational preferences. In the last sub-stage of exploration, the person takes the necessary steps to **implement the choice**, such as complete the necessary training and find a job (Osipow, 1983; Sharf, 2002; Stead & Watson, 1999).

The next, is the *establishment stage*, which is between the ages **25 – 44 years**. Its sub-stages or tasks are stabilising, consolidating and advancing (Sharf, 2002; Osipow, 1983; Stead & Watson, 1999). During the *stabilising sub-stage*, the individual settles down in the chosen field of career. He or she could start using his or her talents and skills learned in various prior developmental stages. Stabilising in career usually occurs between the ages of 25 and 35 (Osipow, 1983). In the *consolidating sub-stage*, the individual consolidates skills, talents, and interests gained through the other prior stages and their sub-stages. The last sub-stage is

*advancing* up the ladder in the world of work until the age of 44. The person has established his or her name and a status in the work place and in community.

The next stage according to Super's Theory is the *maintenance* of the career, which transpires between the ages of 45 and 65. The sub-stages in this stage are that the person will try to *hold on the career*, and *keep up* their good name.

The person will also use *innovative* ideas in his or her work, such as starting his or her own company or changing jobs. The person will also need to make some *adjustments* in his or her new venture or career.

The last stage in career development is the **decline or disengagement stage**. The person is old and leaves the world of work. He or she retires and spends most of his or her time engaged in other activities or roles other than the work role, which do not require much energy to perform (Osipow, 1983). According to Super's theory, development stages do recycle. This means that a person could experience any of the life stages and sub-stages during any of the developmental stages. The stages and the sub-stages are not static and do not follow each other chronologically, though certain tasks are expected to be successfully achieved at certain developmental stages in one's life.

### 2.3 Self-Concept

The Self-concept was one of the original constructs of Super's Career Development Theory in 1953 (Sharf, 2002; Brown et al, 1996). ). According to him, Self-Concept refers to how individuals view themselves and their situations (Osipow, 1983; Stead & Watson, 1999). Huitt (1998, p.1) refers to Self-Concept as *"the totality of complex, organized and dynamic system of learned beliefs, attitudes and opinions that each person holds to be true about his or her personal existence"*. According to Sharf (2002:154), Super explained that vocational choice is a *"process of developing and implementing a self-concept"*. Individuals do imagine themselves in some roles, situations or positions performing some set of functions, or getting involved in some web of relationships (Stead & Watson, 1999). The imaginary jobs fit with their individual self-concepts.

Self-concept is someone's view about self. It involves how someone feels about him or herself in relation to others, his or her views about how other people perceive him or her, his or her feelings about his or her abilities to perform certain tasks in life and the confidence he or she has about his or her life in general.

According to Robinson (2003), self-concept develops as the individual grows older. Individuals' vocational self-concept develops through role-playing, and by imagining themselves doing work they are interested in or by watching adults working. Self-concept changes as the individual matures and becomes more sophisticated through

life experiences in order to reflect reality. Career decisions made by individuals, should be consistent with their self-concepts (Brown, et al., 1996).

## **2.4 Vocational Maturity**

Vocational maturity or career maturity refers to the ability of a person to master a task or behaviour as expected of such an individual at a certain developmental stage. It assesses the maturity level of the individual's development with respect to careers (Osipow, 1983). Vocational maturity should include "*the readiness to make appropriate career decisions*" (Kerka, 1998: p. 2). Therefore, there has to be a balance between the individual's vocational behaviour regarding a certain task and expected vocational behaviour (task) at the person's current age. The assumption is that the older the person, the more appropriate vocational behaviour he or she is expected to exhibit (Kerka, 1998).

The level of vocational maturity would determine how the individual would deal with tasks, which need to be performed during career choice (Robinson, 2003). A person needs to plan his or her career, therefore, needs to explore available careers by seeking information about careers, which fits with his or her self-concept. The person also needs information about the world of work and knowledge on preferred careers. According to the career maturity concept, a person must be mature enough to master certain tasks, which are expected from a person of his or her age at certain stages as mentioned before (Stead & Watson, 1996; Sharf, 2002). For example, a ten year old boy may be expected to play with his toys, but one may expect a man of 30

years to work. It is also expected from an older person to have certain capacities and abilities in order to work or take a career decision. These capabilities could be decision-making skills, ability to get necessary information about certain careers or ability to study further in order for someone to achieve his or her goals.

## **2.5 Values, Life Roles and Cultural Context**

The concepts of values, life roles and cultural context were also developed and expanded during the 1990s by Super, in collaboration with other theorists from all over the world (Super, 1996). The purpose of the international research was to have the different nations' views on values, roles and cultural differences regarding career development and choice. The concept of values basically means "*what is important to the individual in order to lead a meaningful life*" (Stead & Watson, 1999:74). Every person has things he or she considers valuable in life, that make life worth living.

According to Super, job satisfaction is more achievable if organisational culture or values and the individual's values are in agreement. Therefore, career development and choice, will be affected by interests, abilities, personalities, and socio-economic aspects, and also by what the person values as important in life.

People play different roles in life, such as the role of a child, student, worker, spouse, parent and citizen. The importance of those roles to a person at a certain given time, will determine which role he or she has to play. The importance of the role for the

person depends on the level of participation, the actual time spent in this role and commitment to the role at a certain time.

Super acknowledged the importance of culture in the context of career development. Career choice has to be seen in the cultural context of a specific individual where these factors are present and learned and copied from. What one culture considers as an important factor, another culture may not agree (Kerka, 1998). Career development is a product of many factors, such as interests, abilities, personalities, and socio-economic factors, which include culture (Stead & Watson, 1999). Therefore, it must be recognized that culture has an influence on choices made by individuals regarding their careers.

## **2.6 Criticism of Super's theory**

Stead & Watson (1999) are of the opinion that although Super's Career Development Theory is well known and accepted world wide, some factors he referred to are lacking African context. They believe that because of the constant unemployment problem in Southern Africa, the relevance of career development becomes questionable. It maybe difficult to apply Career Development Theory in career counselling for unemployed people (Kerka, 1998).

The other problem in Super's theory is the applicability of the adaptability concept, which is only applicable to adult workers who have to adapt to their working environment, as well as to changes in their working conditions or situations (Stead &

Watson (1999). Stead & Watson (1999), thought, that, it would be wise if the concept could be extended to include the youth, which I tend to agree with.

The other criticism is that the theory refers to role modelling as a way in which the youth could learn more about careers (Stead & Watson, 1999). The models are usually parents, friends and relatives. The problem comes in when someone is choosing a career and does not have a known model. This could happen when the person is the first in his family to study further or to choose a certain career that hasn't been chosen yet in his or her social environment.

Therefore, the important role that 'significant others' play in career development and choice should be studied from an African perspective as well as explore what would be the result if there is no such role model to replicate from.

The concept of cultural context has not been researched in different countries like the concepts of values and life roles. It is thus recommended to research cultural context in different countries in order to determine its influences on career development and choice (Stead & Watson, 1999).

## **2.7 Summary**

The Career Development Theory is broad, because it incorporates different concepts and constructs. Therefore, the Career Development Theory fits the current study as most of the concepts i.e. self-concept, career maturity, career development values,

life role and cultural context, could influence many young Namibians in how they perceive themselves and their future careers.

The applicability of Super's theory to this study lies in the fact that the theory covers the stages of development that people go through. It covers self-concept and vocational maturity, which is needed to make informed career decisions and take responsibility for their lives. Values and cultural issues are also enclosed which make the theory more applicable to Namibian situations with its multi-cultural history of development that may affect many young people today.

Super's theory influences career counselling and guidance. Namibian students need to go through career counselling and guidance in order to be made aware of themselves, others, their abilities and interests and the world of work. This will enrich their knowledge about all issues before they make a career decision.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH ON CAREER CHOICE**

### **3.1 Career Choice during Apartheid South Africa and Namibia**

The National Vocational Guidance Association of America in 1937 defined *vocational guidance* as “*the process of assisting the individual to choose an occupation, prepare for it, enter upon and progress*” (Crites, 1969: 21). Super (1951, as referred to by Crites, 1969: 21)) defined *vocational choice or career choice* as “*the process of helping a person to develop and accept an integrated and adequate picture of himself and of his role in the world of work, to test this concept against reality, and to convert it into a reality, with satisfaction to himself and benefit to society*”.

It is believed that if career guidance is applied properly, it could benefit society. However, should the implemented of career guidance aimed to harm part of the society it could do damaged to that society. This could be true regarding the history of career guidance in South Africa as well as in Namibia.

Stead & Watson (1999) gave an account on how career psychology developed in South Africa. According to them, career psychology developed as a response to social conditions in that country at that time. After the Europeans colonised South Africa, including Namibia, then Southwest Africa, they brought about some change in social, economic and political systems of the indigenous people. They introduced industrial economy and forced black people to abandon their nomadic self-sustained

agricultural economies to become their labourers. The Europeans also introduced formal schooling to the indigenous people. The education brought change in black people's behaviour, and the colonisers realised that they may lose their power holding over black people, should they become literate. They decided to use different schooling systems for whites and for blacks. In 1920, Native Education was introduced with the purpose of making people believe that they have different roles to play in society (Stead & Watson, 1999). The Native Education System was used as a control mechanism to enforce low self-esteem in black people.

The first career guidance programme in South Africa started under the National Institute of Career Guidance in South Africa and was exclusively for whites. Later, the Human Science Research Council (HSRC) started to develop psychometric testing based on different races in South Africa (Stead & Watson, 1999). In South Africa, the provision and the objectives of career guidance and counselling for white and black high school students were different and functioned as control mechanisms to enforce the education systems (Stead & Watson, 1999). For instance, career guidance was regarded as important for white students, while it was not regarded as important or did not exist for black students (Stead & Watson, 1999). Jacobs, van Jaarsveld & van Mollendorf (1991) confirmed that career guidance education was not getting the same attention for black and white children in South Africa. According to Jacobs, et al (1991), it was the duty of educators to orient, inform, prepare and motivate all children through career education in order to create opportunities in the world of work in a meaningful way. A person should know

himself or herself with regard to his or her abilities, aspirations, values as well as have knowledge of the occupational world (Jacobs et al, 1991).

This could be achieved through the implementation of career guidance with the following objectives as indicated in various literatures (Jacobs, et al, 1991; Gothard, 1985; Hayes & Hopson, 1977) and summed up as follows:

- Guide children to explore, understand and accept themselves
- Guide children to explore, understand and realize their educational potential.
- Guide children to explore educational and occupational opportunities and to relate these to their potential and future occupational choices.

It is believed that students who went through such career guidance may be able to choose and realise the implications of their choices. But unfortunately, the situation was different from the ideal in South Africa as well as in Namibia. With a controlled educational system, plus negligence of career guidance concerning black students, the consequences were harmful to the development and preparation of black students for the world of work. The impact of this socially controlled education was demonstrated at the University of Western Cape (UWC). As from 1994, UWC started to administer a need survey to all first year students (Stead & Watson, 1999). The purpose was to find out whether first year students were satisfied with the career guidance they received at their former schools. The students who took part in the survey were mainly from the disadvantaged groups (non-whites) around Cape Town.

The survey found that more than 50% of first year students were not satisfied with the guidance they received at their former schools. They also found that more than 50% of the first year students were experiencing problems with making career choices at university level. According to Stead & Watson (1999) the career guidance they received was aimed at filling the country's need for unskilled labour, e.g., work in gold mines. Thus, the kind of schooling and career guidance provided did not prepare them for life at tertiary level.

One may assume that the history of career guidance in Namibia is the same as in South Africa since Namibia was part and parcel of the South African education system. The same career counselling orientation was exported to Namibia and influenced the development of career guidance in Namibia. The little career guidance received by those that could be referred to as the lucky ones also tried "to retard the intellectual development of Africans" (Stead & Watson, 1999:6) and to keep black people under control.

According to a study done by Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC, 1981) in South Africa to investigate guidance, the school as a formal institution has the responsibility to educate all children. The study divided guidance into two parts, namely general guidance and career guidance. The aims of **general guidance** were to teach children to: *"realize that life and one's existence are meaningful, assess and understand themselves, respect the human dignity of others and to have compassion, to make independent choices and act responsibly, and live according to one's structure of values"* (HSRC, 1981:12). The aims of career guidance according to the

HSRC report on Guidance (ibid) are stated as being: *"... each student has to be supported and guided in his exploring, understanding, accepting his physical, mental, social and spiritual potential; to make educational and vocational information available to the pupils; to interpret it and to guide them to explore the educational and vocational opportunities; and to connect them with their own potential with a view to a choice of education and occupation; to identify pupils with problems regarding their choice of education and occupation and the solution of those problems"* (HSRC, 1981:13)

The above quotes emphasised that general guidance as well as career guidance are important tools to equip students or young people for the future. General guidance is supposed to teach young people the meaning of life; awareness of self and others; decision-making skills and respect for one's values, while career guidance is supposed to support and guide students and young people in the exploration process; enhance their self-concept; provide career information; explore educational and vocational opportunities as well as help with career choice problems.

If the aims of career guidance and general guidance could be achieved, then situations like the one at UWC would not arise. The relevance of the HSRC study to the research question is that, it confirms that career guidance is a necessity in order to teach student's skills and competencies they might need in making career choices.

### **3.2 Lack of Career Counselling: A Namibian Example**

Mostert, Keyter & Scott (2001) conducted a study to find out factors that influence students' career choice at the University of Namibia. According to them gender was found to be one of the factors affecting career aspirations and choices. More boys seem to follow in the footsteps of their fathers than girls, especially in occupations, which are generally regarded as male dominated, namely fields like fishery, mining, electricity, water supply, construction, transport, storage and communication, real estate, business activities, defense and security. They also found that females dominated the fields of health and social services and education. However, most students indicated that their parents influenced their choice of field of study, especially students whose parents have obtained higher qualifications than those without or with lower school qualifications.

According to the Ministry of Education and Culture (1993, as referred to by Mostert et al, 2001) gender expectations and stereotypes have an influence on subject choice in school. Girls are usually advised to take subjects other than mathematics and science. This could be due to the perception or expectation that the girls' role is mainly to have children and to nurture them (Mostert et al, 2001). The result is that many women or girls are not prepared to enter the labour market. They are compelled to settle for low-paid jobs, such as cleaners and typists. Therefore, girls need to be encouraged to choose subjects in school that will give them more opportunities as far as careers are concerned rather than following stereotyped career choices.

Mostert et al. (2001) investigated factors that influenced the career choices of adolescents at the University of Namibia. They used a questionnaire, which was administered to 503 students. The aim was to find factors that restricted or encouraged those students in making suitable career choices.

On the question “who had the greatest influence on your choice of study” (Mostert, et al, 2002:10), 40% of the students indicated that their parents had the greatest influence on their choice of career. The other people who influenced the students’ career choices were their friends, teachers and other family members. Interestingly, only 15% of the students indicated that it was their own choice (Mostert, 2001). This could be attributed to the fact that most of the students were from low socio-economic background. According to Wahl & Blockhurst (2000), people from low socio-economic backgrounds tend to have less access to information about career choices. As to the question about where the students got information about possible careers or study courses, 44% of the students indicated that they got the information from their teachers. The rest indicated that it was friends and the media. Only a few rated their parents as source of information regarding career choice (Mostert, et al, 2001). Students whose parents had a high level of education indicated that their information sources were mostly their parents and the media. The students whose parents had a lower level of education indicated that their main source of information came from their friends.

Mostert et al (2001) found that financial aspects (48%) prevented some students from choosing the career of their choice. The other restriction was a lack of information (35%).

Some of the students indicated that the university requirements were also one of the factors that prevented enrolment in certain careers. Students whose parents had a high level of education did not see finance as a restriction. This could be attributed to the fact that their parents may be able to financially support their studies. It was found that students from the Faculty of Health and Medical sciences indicated that they would not have chosen nursing had they had sufficient funds to study another course. By choosing nursing they were assured Government financial support for their studies and accommodation.

Mosterts' study (Mostert et al, 2001) showed that students in the field of Education and Medical and Health Sciences reported a lack of information as a restricting factor in entering other careers (Mostert et al, 2001). This could be attributed to the fact that most people (models) in low socio-economic societies are to be found in education and nursing careers.

The students were asked to indicate whether career guidance was offered at their previous schools (Mostert et al, 2001). Only 27% of the students who took part in the study confirmed that they received career guidance and counselling related to career choices, while 73% indicated that they had not received career guidance or received little guidance.

As to the question of whether the school they attended prevented them from entering the career of their choice, 29% of the students confirmed that it was the case for them (Mostert et al, 2001). They attributed this to a lack of school facilities (43%), such as libraries and subject choices (36%) offered at the school. Other reasons for not choosing the career the student wanted was the lack of efficient teachers (34%), a segregated school system (29%), which prevented the students from choosing the subjects they would have liked. Other students blamed the particular schools they attended as the reason for not having the subjects that they would have liked to choose.

Only 27% of the students indicated that they had received career guidance and counselling at school. However, 81% indicated that they would like to make use of guidance and counselling facilities if available (Mostert et al, 2001). The students also indicated what kind of counselling they regarded as important for them. 71% indicated that career counselling was important and helpful, while 62% indicated that they would like to have counselling which would teach them study skills. Others indicated that they would like to be guided in how to make decisions (54%). 45% indicated that personal counselling was an area of need and 42% indicated that counselling about family and sexual issues would also be helpful to them (Mostert et al, 2001). According to the indication above, career counselling, study skills and decision-making skills were high amongst the students' needs for counselling.

Lack of career guidance and counselling could affect the future of students and their

happiness by choosing wrong directions, which might de-motivate them and thus prevent them from studying harder or further in order to achieve their goals in life. This could result in students failing and repeating courses, which might be too costly for many, as their parents are unable to support their studies financially, and available bursaries are usually not for repeaters.

### **3.3 The Role of Career Counselling**

Sharf (2002) referred to how Super's model can be used in counselling children in schools. According to him the following topics in counselling children could be based on Super's model, such as lack of academic progress, dyslexia, reading problems, problems with hearing, sight, and disruptive behaviour. The other areas in which counselling sessions might be required could be family related problems, such as child abuse, child neglect, divorce, stepfamilies and working parents (Sharf, 2002). Counsellors might use Super's model to explain certain terms or processes in dealing with these problems. The counsellor might discuss the child's exploratory behaviour and the fact that the younger the child is, the less developed some of the factors, such as self-concept. May be a counsellor could also relate the developmental stage to age and check what developmental tasks the child is able to perform and then advise accordingly.

Grant (2000) investigated the background and educational factors that may have, over time, influenced the career-related decisions of gifted females, whose pre-school education occurred primarily in the rural schools (Grant, 2000). The study

contained seven gifted female students who attended their Primary and High Schools in rural areas. They were identified as gifted by their schools and participated in gifted programs until the 8th grade and also attended public schools. The data was collected in three phases. The first phase was after High School graduation. The second data collection was two years after High School graduation. The third data collection was five years after their High School graduation. It was also noted that none of the participants had received career guidance at school.

The results showed that even gifted students who might be intelligent and have opportunities were undecided or unsure about their career decisions. This was because they lacked career guidance interventions at school level. The research showed that in the absence of career guidance, their parents, teachers and friends influenced their career aspirations and choices. Later, in the study, the importance of significant others will be addressed in the questionnaire concerning career decisions.

After five years most of them had completed their college education and were working. Although the participants were gifted they missed out on many opportunities that would have opened up for them if they had gone through career counselling interventions while deciding on their career aspirations and choices (Grant, 2000). They lacked in-depth self-knowledge, knowledge of the world of work, decision-making skills, which if they had had, could have helped them in choosing their careers.

The relevance of Grant's study (2000) to the current study and the research questions, is the way that young gifted females went on to achieve their goals without having been exposed to career guidance and counselling. Since career guidance in Namibian schools is not regarded as an important subject, most young people proceed with further studies or start working, without having the benefits of career guidance and counselling. But still, they, too, might miss out on many other possible opportunities, which might have been discovered had they gone through career guidance.

The study by Mau, Hitchcock, & Calvert (1998) in USA, examined high school students' post-secondary future plans and what they perceived to be the expectations of counsellors and other influential persons' of them. In order to understand the self Schott & Bellin (2001) explain that... *“significant others in one’s life become social mirrors, ... and one gazes into these mirrors in order to determine others opinions of oneself. One then adopts this opinion in forming one’s self-definition”* (Harter 1988:51, as quoted by Schott & Bellin, 2001:1). According to Mau et al. (1998) counsellors play a significant role in shaping high school students' career goals.

Therefore, it is important to understand students’ perceptions about counsellors' attitudes. It is also important to obtain students' perceptions of their significant others, as it will give clues on who the key persons who might influence their career plans are (Mau et al., 1998). More than 50% of the students in the study thought that their counsellors expected them to go to college. The perceptions of others might influence the perceived self-concept and decisions. According to Mau et al (1998) peers could influence students’ decisions to study further. If trained counsellors were

not available, peers would be the resources of career information. Therefore, there are limited career choices for black people as most of their parents and peers are not educated, and lack role models. Proper career guidance aims to develop students' career choices. It also covers cultural and sociological values and furnishes practical and realistic information regarding career decisions.

When providing information to younger children about careers, information should be clear, concise and focused. The counsellor also has to remember that information to children about careers should be free from gender bias (Sharf, 2002). If they do not understand the information, someone has to explain it to them.

### **3.4 Personal Interests and Self-Concept**

As mentioned before, Ginzberg (1952, as referred to by Wahl & Blockhurst 2000) was the first theorist to include childhood in his theory of vocational choice. According to Ginzberg's theory of occupational choice, children's fantasies and tentative choices are based on interests without consideration of abilities and realistic constraints. According to Chickering & Reisser (1993, as referred to by Wahl & Blockhurst, 2000) their research supported that interests play an important role in selection or rejection of careers in children. Their study provided evidence that children's career choices were more stable than mere fantasy. A study on career goals of kindergarten children showed that 74% of their career goals were stable and realistic. The study was repeated after 8 months and the career goals were found to have increased from 74% to 89 %. Further, Wahl & Blockhurst (2000) found that

two of the developmental tasks related to career development, do take place during childhood (childhood defined as up to age of 15). They identified different stages. In the first stage, children might start identifying with adult workers from the age of 5 to 10, which include their family members. In the second stage, they may start to develop habits of work between the ages of 10 to 15. Research done by Trice & Knapp (1992, as referred to by Wahl & Blockhurst, 2000) showed that children identify with adult workers close to them. Therefore, their career aspirations are closely related to their parents' occupations. Mothers were found to have more influence on their children's career aspirations than fathers. This is because most children experience their mother's work environment than their fathers, as a result of visiting their mothers at work. Mothers take their children with them to work more frequently, than fathers do.

Miller (1977, as referred to by Sharf, 2002) conducted a study about issues that confront children of culturally diverse backgrounds in their career development. It was found that more white-American children were able to list their academic and personal strength and weaknesses than African-American children. This is due to the fact that African-American children have fewer extra-mural activities such as music, dance and sports than white children. Through participation in these activities white children learned to know themselves better than those who only know their academic strength and weaknesses.

The problem which may prevent children from choosing certain careers is that African-Americans are not exposed to many careers, and therefore, have a limited

view of the types of work adults do. It was also found that Hispanic and white girls have a more open and less stereotyped view of careers than African-American girls. Therefore, Sharf (2002) recommended that career counsellors must provide the same information as well as opportunities for all children in schools.

Most of the career developmental theorists saw vocational choice as a continuous process over a period of time rather than a once-off decision (Crites, 1969). As mentioned before, Super, in his theory, stated that the reality of the choice is somewhat absent in the early years, but increases with age. He saw the exploratory experiences of youth as an indication of getting clarity and elaboration of the self-concept. The implementation of the self-concept through career choice is an elaboration on what already exists rather than discovering something new (Crites, 1969). Crites (ibid) stated that research on the continuity of the vocational choice process is scarce. A study done by Gesell, Ilg & Ames (1956, as referred to by Crites, 1969) confirmed that vocational choice starts to reflect reality when a person gets older. The study was done with 10-year old boys over a period of seven years. Their vocational choice behaviour was monitored. It was found that the boys' choices at 10-years old were more varied than at 13 years. The boys of 13 years were able to choose realistic and fewer possible careers than they were at an early age. They also found that the younger the boys were the more indecision there was about career choices, and the older they became the more realistic the decisions they could make. By the age of 16 the boys were sure about their career choices and they were not indecisive anymore. However, they also found out that somehow, the decidedness was overcome by indecision at some stage again, which could be

explained by the recycling of career choices in different stages. Crites (1969) also refers to the recycling as the re-evaluation of choices. This could happen, especially during transition periods between one developmental stages and when the adolescents were exposed to new information.

To illustrate that career guidance or counselling is needed in order to make sound career related decisions, Grant (2000) explored the influences on choice of university major and career related decisions of female students as from the end of their high school until college in USA. The study was done over five years. According to Super's theory (1990, as referred to by Grant, 2000), career development is a life-long process and it involves ongoing learning to master the tasks associated with the development level of every person.

Herr & Cramer (1996:232, as quoted by D.F. Grant 2000) saw career development as *“personal development where individuals are viewed as ‘socialized organisers’ who organize their experience in order to choose occupations that fit in with their self-concept”*. This is what Stead & Watson (1999) also referred to as the implementation of self-concept in career development and choice. The kind of self-concept referred to above, is like the one Huitt (1998:1) referred to as *“the totality of a complex, organized, and dynamic system of learned beliefs, attitudes and opinions that each hold to be true about his or her personal existence”*. The above self-concept is learned through socialising and later it becomes complex, organised and dynamic. For a person to develop and implement such a self-concept into a career choice, one needs to be taught and guided through both general and career guidance.

One can find many studies on self-concept in most books about career development (Osipow 1983). Most of the studies explored the relationship between occupational self-concept and the development thereof. Some of the studies are described below in order to highlight the importance of developing a positive self-concept in children at an early age.

A study by Stephenson (1961, as referred to by Osipow, 1983) examined the occupational self-concept of premedical students. He explored the possibility that career self-concept crystallises long before they were admitted to medical schools. He used rejected applications to one specific university. It was assumed that the rejected applicants saw themselves as doctors and that was why they applied to the medical school then. With the rejection to one medical school it was assumed that if they persisted to apply to other medical school until they succeed, it might see their career crystallise long before their admission. A questionnaire was used in the study containing occupations related to medical or medical related fields. There were also other occupations not related to medical fields.

The results showed that two-thirds of the sample were in the medical or medical related occupations, while one-third were in non-medical occupations. Stephenson concluded that the students in his sample had an established occupational self-concept prior to their applications to the medical schools. They were beyond exploration stage according to Super's theory and were busy with the establishment

stage when they applied for medical school. The study confirmed that good occupational preparation during school, could guide students throughout the future. Students whose self-concept is established know what they want to be and persist until they achieve what they want.

Warren (1961, as referred to by Osipow, 1983) conducted a study in which he predicted that changes in college major occur when there is a discrepancy between a person's self-concept and the expected occupational role he is preparing himself for (Osipow, 1983). The change of majors in college could be attributed to academic level of performance and the expectation that one may not be successful in prior choice based on performance and not on discrepancy between self-concept and occupational role expectations.

Another study by DeAngelis, Dean, & Page (2003) investigated the reasons why students choose to study dental hygiene and what their perceptions of the profession were. A questionnaire was used in this study, which was mailed to the prospective students and some who were already studying dental hygiene at the college. 71% response rate was achieved. The average respondents were 22 years old, female and white with high averages of academic achievement. Dental hygiene was their first choice of career. It was also found that most respondents had prior dental assisting experiences (DeAngelis, Dean, & Page, 2003). The respondents also showed that they received their career guidance from dental hygienists and dentists and that their former high schools and college counsellors had the least influence on their career

choices. However, high school career counsellors were rated third in influencing the students' career choice.

Other reasons why the respondents choose dental hygiene as a career were indicated as their desire to help people, they perceive it as a career where someone could work flexible schedules as most of the respondents wanted to have a family later, as well as receive good salaries. They viewed dental hygiene as a career, which could offer a bright future in terms of job security, diverse career opportunities and personal responsibility. No different perceptions were found between the applicant respondents and those already enrolled at the college.

### **3.5 Socio-economic and Educational Background**

Children of unemployed parents have less career fantasies, as they might not be exposed to career experiences, like children of employed parents. This could lead to these children having less career aspirations than children with working parents (Doxey, 2003). In Namibia where more people are unemployed this could have the same effect on career development and choice. Social status of the individual was found to influence career aspirations. To support the above statement, Valadez (1998, as referred to Wahl & Blockhurst, 2000) investigated the role of socio-economic background on career aspirations of children. The result indicated that children from low socio-economic backgrounds do not have access to important resources that might help them in their career aspirations. The study also showed that such children did not have skills to capitalise on available resources compared to

students from high socio-economic backgrounds. This means that even if you expose children from low socio-economic backgrounds to information, they may not know how to use it effectively in order to benefit from it.

It was also found by Wahl & Blockhurst (2000) that students from low educational backgrounds have lower educational aspirations than those from high educational backgrounds. This might be the case as the parental expectations and support play an important role in students' aspirations to attend college or further education. A study done by Brantlinger (1992, as referred to by Wahl & Blockhurst, 2000) showed that 40% of the students from low educational backgrounds were certain that their parents did not expect them to attend college or study further.

In Namibia where most parents are from the low socio-economic and low educational background, the same result could be applicable to the youth. They may lack educational aspirations, because they know their parents do not expect them to attend further education than a certain grade. This could be true, because they may be the only members of their family to reach such a grade or even make it to school at all. Therefore, general career guidance is needed as early as possible at school level in order to prevent low educational aspirations in youth.

According to Mafeye (2001), Namibia has an unequal income distribution, which contributes to the high poverty rate – ranging between 50% and 65% of the total population. Mafeye (ibid) also said that Namibia has less qualified black people, which mean black people have a low educational background as well as a low socio-

economic level. This is difficult as it prevents black people contributing effectively to the economic development of the country. Most students are from backgrounds associated with poverty and low literacy rates. Parental expectations and support for the children to attend further education could be lacking. Therefore, exposure to career development processes through career guidance at school level is highly recommended. This might expose students to self-awareness and awareness of the world of work, which will help in career choice process.

### **3.6 Career Choice and Gender**

Gottfredson (1981, 1996, as referred to by Sharf, 2002) conducted a study about gender issues in career development. It dealt with gender-role stereotyping of career choice. This is because role stereotypes could develop early in developmental stages. Important was the four stages of cognitive development through which a person could view him or herself in the world of work.

The first stage in cognitive development is the orientation to size and power between the ages of 3- 5 (Sharf, 2002). In this stage the children are forming and trying to understand the idea of becoming old by comparing themselves to the size of adults. The second stage is between the ages of 6 – 8, when the children become aware of the different roles of men and women. They start associating certain roles with either women or men. This has an influence on the children's career choices. The third stage is between the ages of 9 – 13, when they are affected by the idea of social

classes. This develops children's idea of prestige as an idea in career choice. The fourth stage occurs after the child has turned 14 years.

As adolescents, children become more introspective and more aware of themselves (self-awareness) and others. Gottfredson (1981, 1996, as referred to by Sharf, 2002) gave more attention to stereotyping of gender roles in career choices. From the age of 6 – 8, children identify certain roles with men or women according to what they observed. It was found that more girls identify themselves with the career of nurses and teachers, while boys identify more with police and sport careers. According to Sharf (2002), the stereotyping of career aspirations could be caused by bias in education. Many studies show that in the books that children read in schools, one may find biased pictures in the literature. Boys are mostly shown in active roles, such as doing sports activities, while girls are shown in passive activities, such as caring for others or animals (Scott, 1981, as referred to by Sharf, 2002). Scott (ibid) referred to the fact that the key role players at schools could promote career bias or stereotype in children. Most teachers at schools tend to be women, while principals tend to be men. Therefore, boys tend to identify them with problem solving pictures, while girls see themselves in roles, which are less active in problem solving situations. The stereotypes are thus reinforced by all these factors during the child's early years in school.

Although Super's theory does not deal with gender bias, Gottfredson's theory (1981, 1996, as referred to by Sharf, 2002) is relevant to some of Super's concepts, such as career exploration and career information as being important aspects in career

choice. During the exploration stage both girls and boys should be allowed to explore activities free of gender bias and stereotypes.

This could be done if information available in schools is not reinforcing career gender bias. If career exploration and information is not gender biased, the selection of key figures is also going to be unbiased. As shown earlier, the concepts of exploration and information do affect the formation of self-concept and the ability of children to make career choices in the future. It will also affect the development of their interests in careers. Books must be free of gender bias. Prescribed books must be selected carefully, in order to prevent stereotyping and wrong role modelling to children, which could lead to wrong formation and interpretation of available information to students. On these available resources, students do base their career development, career aspirations and career choices for their future.

### **3.7 Career Choice and Decision-making Skills**

The need for exposing young people to career guidance in order for them to discover their future potential in full, is given above. The question is when does someone need to start with career guidance or any guidance at school level? Historically, schools concentrate on the importance of career guidance during High School years. This is because it is believed that it is most significant in adolescence, as students are preparing to leave school. Therefore, they need to make choices regarding careers. According to Wahl & Blockhurst (2000) students in High School are assumed to be mature and have more realistic views of career choices, compared to younger

students in Primary Schools. Usually, it is believed that plans for post-secondary education and employment are not crystallised until students reach High School years. However, a recent study by Chickering & Reisser (1993, as referred to by Wahl & Blockhurst, 2000) about education and aspirations of students revealed that career development process could occur before adolescence. Therefore, Wahl & Blockhurst (2000) emphasised that the need to prepare students for changing economic and social conditions, should not be limited to High School years only, but should be part of the whole school career. They referred to the USA, where career guidance programmes have become part of primary, Junior and Secondary Schools.

Mostert et al (2001) stated that most of the young people lack decision making skills; therefore rely highly on others to make choices for them regarding subjects and career choices. These others could be the parents, peers, teachers and significant members of the community, who might or might not have access to relevant career information. It is thus imperative to teach young people the basics of decision making-skills, regarding careers.

Harris (1999) stated that the aim of career guidance is to develop decision- making skills. The study done by Elwood (1992, as referred to by Harris, 1999) showed that career decision-making is a process that develops and becomes clear after a person has obtained information about him or herself understands his or her abilities and interests before making a decision. Therefore, according to Cochran (1997) career or vocational guidance has to emphasise objectivity in helping the individual to select a career in which he or she will succeed in the future.

Hayes & Hodson (1977) outlined the purpose of counselling in secondary school as being: to increase the sense of responsibility of individuals about their own lives. Hayes & Hodson (1977) also referred to career guidance as a tool to help students to make up their mind. Counselling or career guidance might also motivate a person to act on decisions taken, as it does not help for a person to decide and not take action. Counselling helps students to cope with the huge responsibility of decision making. It is supposed to help students to accept things beyond their control. An individual could decide to follow a career, which might be difficult to follow due to many factors. Accepting things that one could not change must become part of the preparation before leaving school. Otherwise, students might not be well prepared about the reality outside school.

The ability to take decisions regarding careers stays one of the important abilities about which a person needs to take proper and “*right*” decisions (Gati & Saka, 2001: 334). According to Gati & Saka (2001:334), the ideal decision maker is “*a person who is aware of the need to make a career decision, is willing to make such a decision, is capable of making the decision right*”. A right decision means, “*a decision based on appropriate process as is compatible with the individual’s goals and resources*” (Gati & Saka 2001:334). Although people are supposed to develop decision-making skills during their youth stage (Miller, 1999; Jarvis & Keeley, 2003; Gati & Saka, 2001), they also tend to have difficulties in making career choices (Gati & Saka, 2001). If adolescents have difficulties with making decisions, while they are supposed to make decisions, this may have lifelong consequences for the individual’s

future careers, their health, their psychological well-being and their social acceptance (Gati & Saka, 2001). Decisions made while still young may affect the students' educational and vocational opportunities. Gati & Saka (2001) conducted a study in Israel to examine the difficulties adolescents are faced with when making decisions related to careers. The study was done with adolescents in Grade 9,10 and 11. The aim of the study was to find out their decisions regarding High School choice, the choice of subjects at High Schools as well as their decisions regarding the type of military service they prefer after completing schools (ibid). They found that most adolescents (46%) in Israel have problems with choosing subjects in Grade 9 and Grade 11. They also have problems in choosing High Schools.

The study found that if adolescents are faced with difficulties in decision-making, they tend to delay or transfer the responsibility of taking the decisions to others. They may even avoid making the decision at all. Therefore they need to learn the importance of having decision-making skills. To consolidate their world, adolescents need decision-making skills (Gati & Saka, 2001).

### **3.8 Career Choice within a changing world of work**

The reality is that jobs are not freely available, especially in Namibia where unemployment is high. According to Miller (1999) the current practice is to take what is available, which might mean accepting a second or third career choice.

In his study, Carter (1962, as referred to by Miller, 1999) found that only a third of the school leavers found jobs reflecting their aspirations prior to leaving school. According to Miller (ibid), the decrease in availability of jobs might lead to an increase in compromises in a person's values. This could lead to reshaping one's needs and values in order to fit available circumstances. Gottfredson (1981, as referred to by Miller, 1999) said that the matter of compromises in career development could be relevant to many people in the future.

It was found that people tend to adapt by compromising their needs and values as they become mature (Miller, 1999). Their level of accepting alternatives expands with maturity.

What is consoling is to know that in the process of compromising interests and values due to available jobs, basic things like self-concept do not change that easily. The example could be someone who is looking for gender appropriate jobs. He or she could compromise that need and replace it by taking a career usually stereotyped as suitable for the other gender. Therefore, students need to prepare more carefully and have alternative careers in mind in order to be in a position to compromise, when the need arises. Further, in order to be in a position to compromise, students need to develop meta-skills, which fit in more than one job (Miller, 1999). The main aim of getting work is thus not to a get job per se, but to have a meaningful life. This refers to a cumulative work experience and career achievements, which a person may experience, in different work roles as a student, worker, spouse, parent or community volunteer.

The issue of preparing for alternative careers was strongly supported by Jarvis & Keeley (2003). They argue that school counsellors also need to prepare and respond to economy change in order for them to help students effectively. They further argue that school counsellors are leaders in helping others to develop, grow and learn. Therefore, they need to take action and risks as well as learn new skills. The new skills might help counsellors to be creative in their counselling sessions with students. They might need to offer more than career options to students. Counsellors may need to give advice on what to do in the changing world of work (Jarvis & Keeley, 2003). Jarvis and Keeley (2003) are of the opinion that the change in economy might change the ways people consider work. Jobs might not just be defined by categories or occupations, but by skills and values someone needs to have in order to get the job.

Therefore, in the future people might tend to shift jobs in search of meaning, purpose and fulfilment from different work roles (Jarvis & Keeley, 2003). Job seekers as well as students need to prepare to enter the world of work, need to work hard in order to build their careers, by shaping them and building them the way they do with projects. Therefore, students need new competencies, which they are not aware of yet. What is needed to build careers? To do this, people need to gain the necessary employability and self-management skills. This might help them in becoming healthy, self-reliant citizens in order to balance life and work roles (Jarvis & Keeley, 2003).

The need for proper preparation for future careers is important, as there is a shift in notions of work (Jarvis & Keeley, 2003). People will no longer go to work for the boss, but for self-employment and the satisfaction of customer needs. People will work as teams rather than hold on to one job for a lifetime. This might be true in developing countries where unemployment is very high, that one might not prepare only for one career. One would need multi-skills and the ability to persist in building one's careers. According to Jarvis & Keeley (2003) the ingredients to earn respect at any level are the ability to contribute to the team, commitment to learn and the willingness to help others. There will be no job security guarantee to anyone as companies are becoming smaller. They will split or merge to form one company with fewer employees in order for the companies to survive the economic pressure.

To succeed in this kind of world of work, one needs to have specialised skills and awareness of one's values as well as the ability to market oneself effectively (Jarvis & Keeley, 2003).

### **3.9 Career Maturity**

Rojewski (1994, as referred to by Sharf, 2002) studied the applicability of the concept of career maturity of 90 economically disadvantaged rural youth. He found that African-Americans scored lower on the measures of career maturity. They were also educationally disadvantaged, and most males were indecisive about their career choice. The students who scored high points on the measures were more likely to be white, educationally advantaged, female and decisive about their career choices. It

was also found that African-American females scored higher on career maturity scales than African-American males. The same study found that if the scores of Asian-American students compared to whites' scores were compared, whites scored higher on career maturity than Asian Americans. However, Asian-Americans indicated a stronger independent style of decision-making than white students (Sharf, 2002). However, there is doubt whether cultural differences might have played a role in the way young people mature career-wise.

Super conducted a study regarding vocational maturity as suggested by his Theory of Career Development (Osipow, 1983). He used Grade 9 boys. Five dimensions of vocational choice were used in the study. One of the dimensions was the orientation to career choice. This assessed whether the students showed concern about vocational problems and whether they used available resources effectively in their decision-making tasks (Osipow, 1983). The second dimension measured information and planning for the preferred career. The study looked at the specific information the students had about their preferred careers, the seriousness of their planning toward such careers as well as the students' involvement in planning activities for such careers. The third dimension was about the career preference, which measured the consistency of career preferences. The fourth dimension was about crystallisation of traits. The study was based on the data obtained from students through the interview method. The study found that orientation to choice tasks and the use of resources were relevant to vocational maturity in the ninth grade. The other dimensions were not found to be relevant to vocational maturity in the ninth grade (Crites, 1969).

Montesano & Gist (1964, as referred to by Crites, 1969) also did a study on vocational maturity. They used Grade 9 and Grade 12 boys to test a hypothesis that vocational decisions occur in developmental context and that older boys should be more mature compared to younger boys (Crites, 1969).

The findings supported the developmental view that, the older the person gets, the more mature and clear the career choice is supposed to be. It was also found that as the students get older, their choice might shift due to reality factors. For example for students who preferred science and technology while young may change to education and business direction due to the fact that they realised that they may not be successful in the former directions. The other reason is that High School students tend to specify their career choice between the Grade 9 and Grade 12. This finding is in confirmation with Super's theory of career developmental choice.

## **CHAPTER 4:           EMPIRICAL CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE STUDY**

### **4.1 Research Methodology and Methods**

A methodology is a general approach to studying a research topic and establishes how one will go about studying a specific phenomenon (Silverman, 1995). Methods are specific research techniques, which are used in research, for example, statistical correlations, observations, interviewing and audio recording. The present study was conducted within the quantitative research paradigm of the social sciences (Mouton & Marais, 1996). Quantitative research methodology has been seen as a more scientific and objective method as opposed to qualitative research methodology, which is seen as interpretative and more subjective. Although the two methodologies differ, they can sometimes be combined in one research, depending on the research question(s) (Silverman, 1995).

Mouton & Marais (1996:155) described the quantitative approach as *“that approach to research, in social sciences that is highly formalized as well as more explicitly controlled, with a range that is more exactly defined, and which, in terms of methods used, is relatively close to the physical sciences”*. The advantages of using a quantitative approach are that the terms are usually precisely identified and have a specific measurement (e.g. 1, 2 or 3 or yes and no) attached. In a quantitative approach, the questions are usually structured. Hypotheses, which are formulated in the study could be rejected or confirmed (Silverman, 1995; Mouton & Marais, 1996). The researcher does not have to formulate all hypotheses at the same time, as they

could be generated during the study if the quantitative methodology is used. Usually, a large randomly selected sample of the population of investigation is used in the quantitative approach and strictly structured questionnaire is used (Silverman, 1995). The result obtained from the study could be generalized from the sample to the broader population.

The qualitative approach is described by Mouton & Marais, (1996:155) as “*that approach in which the procedures are not as strictly formalized, while the scope is more likely to be undefined, and a more philosophical mode of operation is adopted*”. In qualitative research, concepts could have different meanings, and therefore, need to be interpreted. It also tends to focus on the depth of understanding of the topic. Therefore, the questions are usually open-ended and directed to a smaller sample. Qualitative hypotheses are usually vague and general and thus, difficult to be proven. The researcher is not able to generalize the result to a broader population.

The choice of which research approach to use, depends on the topic of research, the research questions and how useful the approach will be to the study (Silverman, 1995). In this study, the quantitative approach was used due to its structured and directive approach, also because a lot of research has already been conducted with regard to career development.

#### **4.1.1 Data Generation**

Before the research started, the researcher approached the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture in order to obtain permission to do research in schools. A letter (Appendix 1) was written addressed to the Permanent Secretary of the said Ministry. After permission was granted, the same letter was copied to the Principals of the two schools, which took part in the study to inform them about the intention of the study and their co-operation regarding the study at their schools. Together with the letter to the Principals, an introduction letter (Appendix 2), address to the students was sent to the two schools through the Principal. This was intended to inform students about the study and served as a request to them to take part in the study. An appointment was made with the two schools for the questionnaire to be completed by the students.

According to Trochim (2000), there are two major types of surveys that can be used to generate data for a study. The researcher could make use of the *questionnaire or the interview*.

In the present study, a questionnaire was used. It was administered to groups of students at two different schools in Windhoek, namely, Augustineum High School and Ella du Plessis High School. The researcher took the questionnaire to the two schools personally. The respondents could ask questions if needed for more explanation and clarification. The completed questionnaires were picked up immediately after completion. Although Trichom (2000) argues that privacy is not a

feature in some survey methods, I believe that privacy of respondents is supposed to be applied in all methods, in order to protect their identity and to encourage people to participate more in surveys without fearing the disclosure of their identity.

The questions in the questionnaire developed for this study are grouped into two parts (see appendix), namely, awareness and decision-making. The third part of the questionnaire covered the particulars of the respondents.

The first two parts were further divided into sub-sections under each part. This was done in order to identify various factors of *Super's Career Development Theory*, the theory on which the study was based.

The questionnaire consisted of **69 questions** (Appendix 3). Under part 1, about awareness, the questionnaire had questions regarding self-awareness; awareness of the students' abilities and needs; awareness of own choices; awareness of information/knowledge (see appendix). The above, formed the sub-sections of the questionnaire. The questions were based on Career Developmental Theory of Super as already stated above (Osipow, 1996; Gothard, 1985; Stead & Watson, 1999).

The statements were based on what the literature (Gothard, 1985; Stead & Watson, 1999; Sharf, 2002; Osipow, 1983; Mclauhling, Clark & Chisholm, 1996; Walsh, 1986) saw as the goals of Development Career Counseling, which is based on Super's Career Development Theory. According to Gothard (1985) career counseling helps students to be more aware of the opportunities, which are available to them. It

also helps people to become more aware of themselves and aware of other people. Career counselling could guide students to become aware of decisions they may need to take in their lives; if they are not yet ready to make those decisions, career counselling could help them to prepare them by seeking help, or further information, in order to make informed career choices or any other choice concerning their future.

Under the decision-making part, students were asked whether they were aware of their abilities to make career decisions; they were also asked whether they knew who could influence their career decisions; whether students made proper preparation to enter the world of work or any other kind of after school activities; as well as whether they experienced career indecision about their future plans.

The statements in the questionnaire were not arranged according to the topics addressed in Super's Development Theory. They were arranged in a table format, according to the main topics, namely awareness and decision-making and their sub-topics (see appendix 4). The frequencies obtained in the questionnaire formed part of appendix 4. Lastly, students (respondents) were asked to indicate what they wanted to do after completing school (Appendix 5). This question was asked in order to get a view on how well they were prepared to make a choice concerning a career or further studies or the immediate decision to take up work after completing their school career.

The third part of the questionnaire focused on the demographic data of the respondents. It included the questions about the respondents' ages. This question was

asked to give indication in what age ranges the respondents did fall. There was a question about gender, which was asked for the purpose of distinguishing between male and female respondents in the study. The idea was to have respondents in the study on 50/50 basis regarding gender distribution. The students also had to identify the name of their school. They also had to indicate the number of years they had been at the current school. One question was whether their schools were offering career guidance.

The questionnaire aimed to answer the research question of the study, i.e. to find out whether young Namibians are aware of the need to make a career choice and whether young people do make conscious career choices, and how they go about it, as already stated before in this study. The literature indicated some reasons why people choose a career and who influences their decision and when they choose a career and why, (Gothard, 1985; Osipow, 1983; Harris, 1999; Watts, Law, Killeen, Kidd, & Howthorn, 1996; and Wahl 2000), and this study sought to compare its findings with what was mentioned in literature.

The statements posed in the questionnaire are considered to be valid (have construct validity). The statements in the questionnaire were posed to different individual students before the study as a test of their validity and clarity. The purpose of the pilot study was also to see how long it would take to complete the questionnaire as well as to test whether the statements were clear to respondents. It was found that the questionnaire could be completed within 25 to 30 minutes. The draft questionnaire was submitted to the Masters colloquium, which scrutinized the clarity and the

structure of the statements. This was also done to test its validity. It was suggested during the colloquium that some of the statements needed to be altered by shifting them from one section to another. The colloquium also suggested the deletion of some of the statements, as they seemed to be duplicated. The suggested changes were done before the questionnaire was used in the study.

#### ***4.1.2 Measures employed in the study***

The main concepts to be measured were awareness and decision-making regarding career choice. Thirty, (30) statements centred on measuring awareness and the other thirty (30) statements measured decision-making. The respondents were asked to indicate whether the statement was true or false according to their own assessment; they could also indicate when they were not sure about the statements in the questionnaire.

Only nominal measurements were used in the questionnaire. Nominal measurement utilizes numbers as labels. The labels have no quantitative features and are merely used to distinguish between statements (Maleske, 1995). The data measured at the nominal level could be analysed using statistical techniques. In the part where personal particulars were asked, a nominal scale was used in order to identify the property to be measured, e.g., age, name of school, how many years at current school, etc. Therefore, the nominal scale has no zero point and cannot be ordered in low to high order.

#### ***4.1.3 Data evaluation***

The data collected was evaluated using statistical measures provided by SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) in order to come up with crosstabulations and frequency counts and distributions (Silverman, 1995). Through this statistical measure, it was established whether there were correlations between the variables or in order to test the research hypotheses. Different variables were correlated with one another in order to get some picture of the study. The data are ready for further analysis and interpretation.

#### ***4.2 Sample***

Trochim (2000) referred to sampling as a process of selecting units (e.g., people, organization) from a population of interest so that by studying the sample one may fairly generalize results back to the population from which they were chosen.

Therefore, Trochim (2000) referred to population as the group the researcher wanted to generalize his or her findings to. It is thus the group the researcher samples from as stated above. In this present study, the population is all Namibian students in Grade 12. The sample is thus the group of people someone selects from the population to be in the study. The sample in this study is Grade 12 students from the Augustineum High School and Ella du Plessis High School. The said schools were chosen because of their disadvantaged historical past. Literature shows that students attending disadvantaged schools were not exposed to career guidance (Stead &

Watson, 1999). The assumption is that students from the above mentioned schools were not effectively exposed to career guidance; therefore, their career developmental process might be negatively affected. This means that they might not sufficiently be aware of their abilities and interests as well as not be well equipped to take career decisions.

The researcher used a *convenience sampling method* (Zechmeister, Zechmeister, & Shaughnessy, 2001). Convenience sampling means that respondents are selected based on their availability and willingness to participate in the study. In this study, the researcher requested the help of the teachers at both schools. The students who were in the classes were approached to participate in the study. The teacher explained the purpose of the study to the students and requested them to take part. The explanation was done with the help of the letter from the researcher drafted to introduce the purpose of the study to the students as well as to explain why it was important that they participate. The first 30 students from one class (15 girls and 15 boys) were included in the survey. The pattern was repeated at the other school. It was found out that some of the students did not complete the questionnaire completely; therefore, other groups of students were approached to complete the questionnaire until the required number was collected. Therefore, the response was not 100 as precisely required, but ended up with 101 responses. Some questionnaires were not completed, thus they had to be discarded, as they could not serve any purpose to keep them. Because of the difficulties with the sample, the researcher needed more staff and materials (questionnaire) than anticipated. It was found that

students needed more encouragement to fill in the questionnaire and proper guidance on how to fill it in, although it was explained in the letter to them before hand.

Overall, the research went smoothly and the students indicated at the end that they enjoyed taking part in the survey as it opened up some questions they never thought about regarding career choice. The level of their awareness was stimulated and that alone gave indication that it was worth going through some trouble in doing this study in Namibia.

#### **4.3 Limitation of the study**

The study might be perceived as limited as it focused on two schools only in Windhoek area, though, previously disadvantaged ones. The other schools, which are perceived as advantaged in the past might feel excluded from the survey. The choice of the two schools was done to show that not only students in the rural area are excluded from proper career guidance, but also the ones in the centre of all activities, in the capital city, could be disadvantaged.

In the study, no control group was used between the students who went through career guidance and those who did not, in order to see the difference in career choice. Because of this the result could not be compared to something better, in order to see the effect of career guidance. However, literature shows that career guidance is essential to career preparation and choice of students.

The other limitation of the study could be attributed to the lack of or limited availability of Super's original books and /or written materials. The study was thus based on secondary materials, which referred to Super's work.

#### **4.4 Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were based on Super's Career Development Theory and the literature review. It was expected of this study that:

- H1: Students who indicated that they know who they are will also indicate that they are aware of their strengths and weaknesses.
- H2: Older students are more often among those who indicate that they know who they are.
- H3: Younger students are less often amongst those who say that they are satisfied with the way in which they are carrying out their responsibilities.
- H4: Students who would like to study further, will be less often amongst those who indicate that they are "not sure" on whether they are ready to make a career choice.

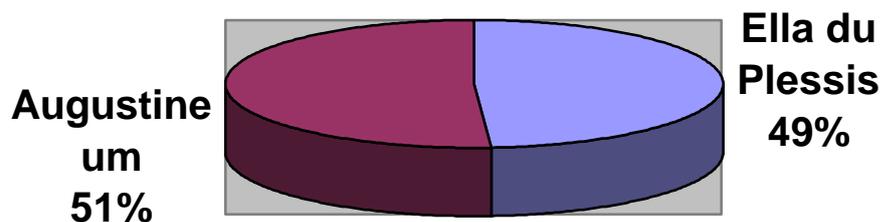
H5: Students who are satisfied with the way in which they are carrying out their responsibilities at the moment will be confident that they could perform any career related tasks in the future.

## **CHAPTER 5: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

### **5.1 Demographic data**

This section is describing the type of sample, which took part in the study. The target group was Grade 12 students from Augustineum High School and Ella du Plessis High School in Windhoek. The variables that were addressed in the questionnaire under the demographic data were: school of the respondents, age, gender, and how many years respondents were at current schools. The responses will be presented through graphs and or tables when possible.

#### **5.1.1 Schools of the respondents**

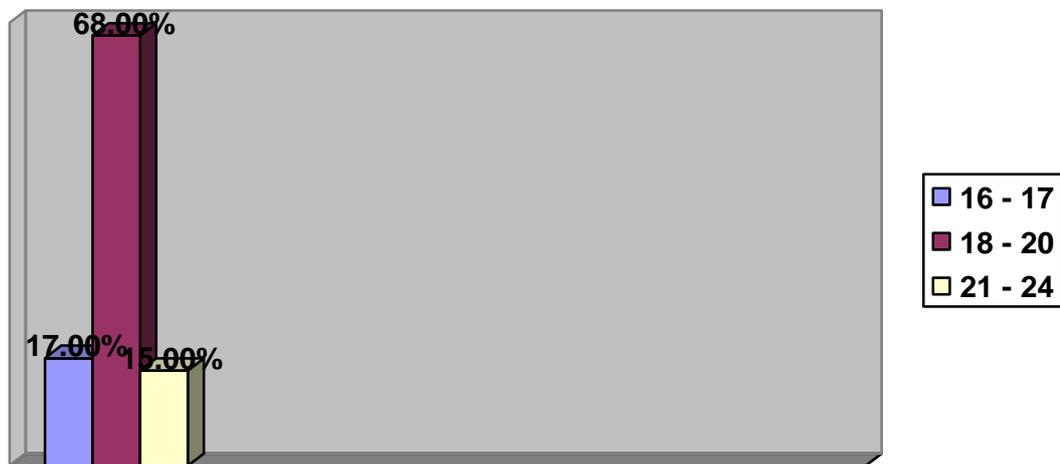


**Graph 1: Schools of the respondents**

As shown in Graph 1, Augustineum High School was represented by 51% of the respondents and Ella du Plessis High School was represented by 49%.

### 5.1.2 Age of the respondents

The average age of the respondents was 19 years (mean). The median age of the respondents was also 19 years. The number of students who took part in the study was 101 (N101). The years of age of the respondents were divided into three groups, namely, 16 to 17 years of age; 18 to 20 years of age; and 21 to 24 years of age. The percentages of respondents according to age groups were as indicated below:

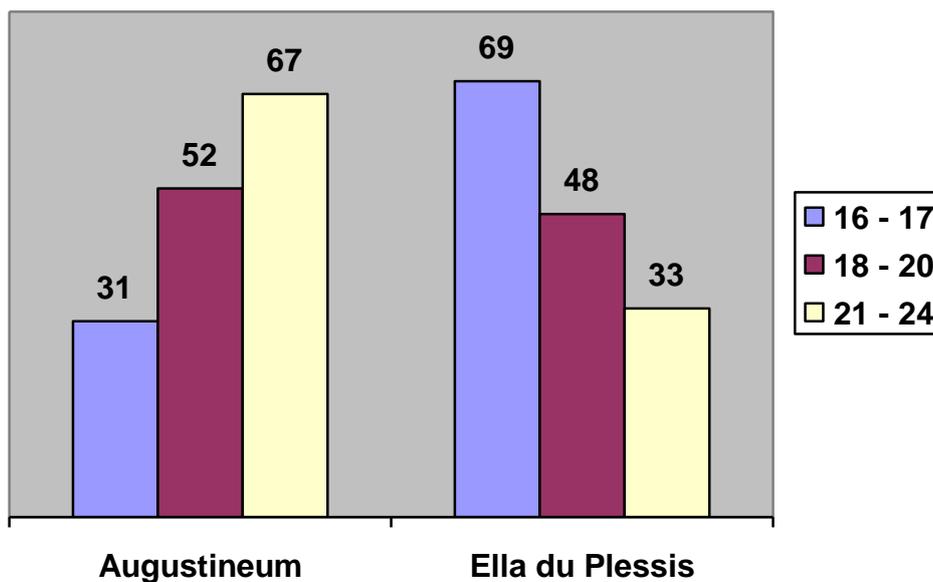


**Graph 2: Age of the respondents**

Graph 2 shows that most of the respondents in the study were in the ages of 18 to 20 years. This age group accounted for 68% of the total group. The other respondents

were in the age groups 16 to 17 and the rest of the respondents were in age group 21 to 24 years. Graph 2 shows that the other age groups, namely 16 – 17 years and 21 – 24 years contributed 17% and 16%, respectively. It was noted that out of 101 (N), 96 of the respondents indicated their ages. This is equal to 95% of the respondents. The rest of the respondents' ages were missing or irrelevant (i.e. mentioned a nonsense age, e.g. 100 years).

### 5.1.3 Age groups per School



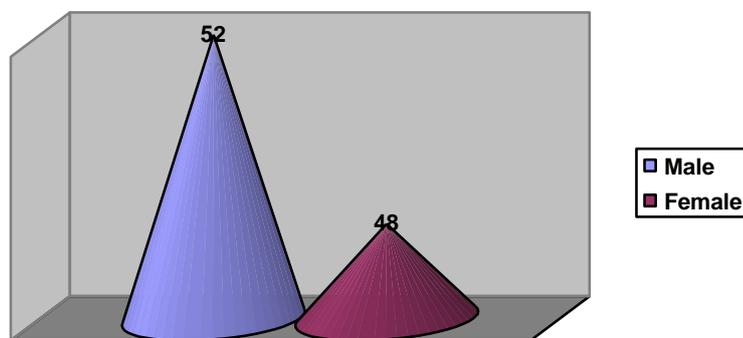
**Graph 3: Age groups per School**

According to the Graph 3 above, 31% of the respondents in age group 17 to 18 were from Augustineum High School and 69% of the respondents were from Ella du Plessis High School. In age group 18 to 20, 52% of the respondents, were from

Augustineum High School and 48% of the respondents in the same age group were from Ella du Plessis High School. In the age group 21 to 24, Augustineum High School has counted for the highest percentage (67%), while Ella du Plessis High School has counted for 33% of this age group.

One could see that the respondents from Ella du Plessis High School were more often than younger than respondents from Augustineum High School. The reason for this age group difference was that Augustineum High School was known to accept students from far rural areas where children start their school careers very late compared to the children in urban or semi-urban areas. It could also be that Augustineum High School students were repeating grades more often than Ella High School's students and could why they were older. The reason for this age group difference was not determined in this study, though.

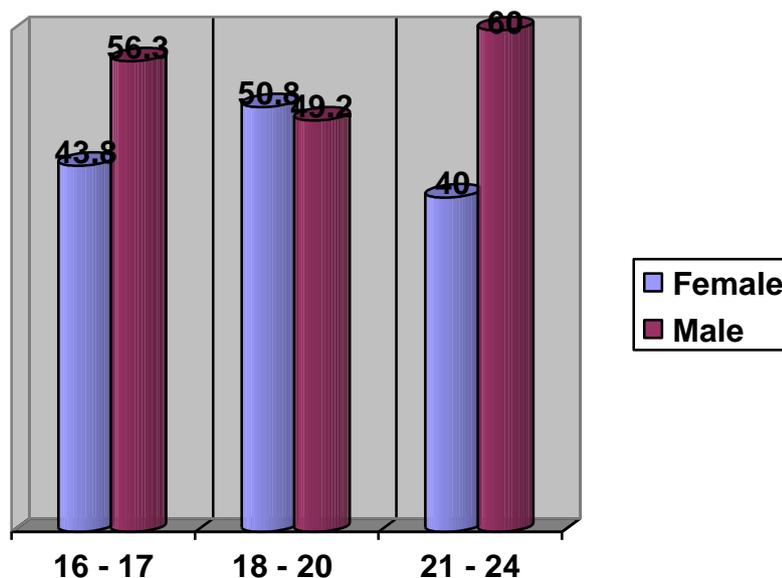
#### 5.1.4 Gender of respondents



**Graph 4: Gender of respondents**

Presented in Graph 4 is the gender of the respondents. The Graph shows that the majority of the respondents were males. They counted for 52% of the respondents from both schools that participated, while 48% were females. Although gender presentation was targeted to be 50% gender balance, it was not much diverted from, as the results were relatively close.

### 5.1.5 Age Groups vs. Gender of respondents



**Graph 5: Age Groups vs. Gender of respondents**

Graph 5 shows that the majority of the respondents (56.3%) in age group 16 to 17 years were males, while the 43.8% were females. In the age group where most of the respondents belong to, which is 18 to 20, 50.8% were females and 49.2% were males. In the age group 21 to 24 years, 60% were males and 40% were females.

## **5.2 Summary on demographic results**

The results of this study showed that young Namibians in schools, especially in Grade 12 are made out of different age groups. Their ages are from 16 to 24 years old. However, the majority of the respondents (68%) were from age group 18 to 19 years. The average age of the students who participated was 19 years. It could be mentioned that school-going age children in Grade 12 are within age groups 16 to 24, with the majority aged 19 years.

The results show that most of the respondents from Ella du Plessis High School were younger compared to respondents from Augustineum High School. However, when schools and gender were compared, it was found that Augustineum has more female respondents (53.1%) than Ella du Plessis, which represented more males (57.4%) than Augustineum.

Although the gender balance in this study depended on the respondents who participated in the study, the result gave an indication that there could be gender balance (50/50) in Namibian schools. The result indicated that girls in Namibia, or at least in Windhoek might have equal opportunities than boys to attend school up to Grade 12, as the overall participation was 52% males and 48% for females.

### 5.3 Current years at current school

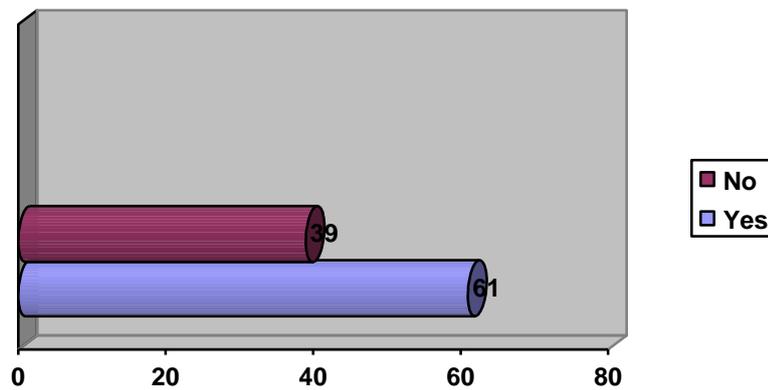
The study showed that students who were in Grade 12 at Ella and Augustineum High Schools respectively started at those schools from different years. Therefore, the time spent at their current schools differs. Crosstabulation between participating schools and years spent at current school revealed a statistical significance between the two variables ( $r = .27$ ;  $p = .03$ , Cramer's V was used). The result showed that respondents from Ella du Plessis High School are likely to have spent less than 3 years at that school, whilst respondents from Augustineum High School are likely to have spent more than 3 years at that school. It could mean that respondents from Ella du Plessis High School were more likely to have changed schools before they joined Ella du Plessis High School, while respondents from Augustineum High School were likely to have stayed at the same school longer.

The importance of years spent at the current school is revealed when the researcher wanted to find out which of the students were aware of career guidance offered at their schools. The result showed that students who indicated that their schools offered career guidance were the students who were at one of the participating schools for 2 years (77%).

This means that most of the respondents joined their respective schools in Grade 8 or in Grade 11 since all of them were in Grade 12 at the time of the study. The result shows that, students who spent more years at the same school indicated that career guidance was offered at those schools.

However, those who spent 5 years at the same school were slightly lower compared to those who were at the same school for 2 years.

#### 5.4 Career guidance offered at school



**Graph 6: Career guidance offered at school**

On the statement “Did your school offer career guidance” Graph 6 shows that 61% of the respondents indicated that career guidance was offered at their respective schools, while 39% indicated that career guidance was not offered at their schools. The study showed that 53% of the students who spent less time (i.e., one year) at the same school indicated that their school did not offer career guidance. Students who spent more than 5 years at the same school confirmed that career guidance was offered at their schools. The more time the person spends at the same school the more likely he or she becomes aware of the programmes offered at that school. It seems like new students who joined the schools latter then in Grade 8, were not introduced to school programmes.

Literature showed that career guidance is an important tool to guide students in life. It is supposed to guide students in career choice but also, about life in general (Hayes & Hopson, 1977). Therefore, it could be assumed that students who do not go through career guidance and counselling could be deprived of important information, which could change their lives. Literature also showed that lack of career guidance could also prevent some of the students from making career choices. In Namibia, career guidance or information about general life is not offered in schools from an early stage. Some students do start their school career without going through pre-schooling, where some of the information could be given to them. These could be basic information about every person being special as an individual, or information about different careers available. One may think that even if this happens at such an early stage, one may forget later. This might be true however, literature also showed that young learners are able to use such information later in life.

The following table contains some of the statements in the questionnaire of this study about career information:

### **5.5 Lack of proper career guidance**

Table 1 below shows that career guidance was likely to be lacking in providing needed information about future careers at the participating schools, if it was provided. The table shows that 33% of the respondents indicated that they could not make career choice due to lack of information. 38% of the respondents indicated that they were aware that without career guidance in school they would not be able to make a sound

career choice. The percentage increases to 44% when the respondents revealed their thoughts that their schools do not offer enough career guidance, which could help them to make sound decisions. Lack of career guidance is also evident when 33% of the respondents indicated that they were not sure whether their subject choices were the right ones for their intended careers.

<b>Statements obtained from addendum 5</b>	True	Not sure	False
I am unable to choose a career because of lack of information.	33%	27%	40%
I am not sure if my current choice of subjects at school is suitable for the career I have in mind.	33%	21%	46%
I think my school offers enough career guidance to help me to make a sound decision.	39%	17%	44%
I am not ready to make a career choice yet as I do not have enough information about myself.	23%	20%	57%
I am able to make a sound career decision without career guidance in school.	42%	20%	38%
I think my school offers enough career guidance to help me to make a sound career decision.	38%	17%	45%
There is limited information concerning career possibilities.	35%	30%	35%
I know what to do to obtain information on possible careers.	44%	38%	18%

***Table 1: Career guidance***

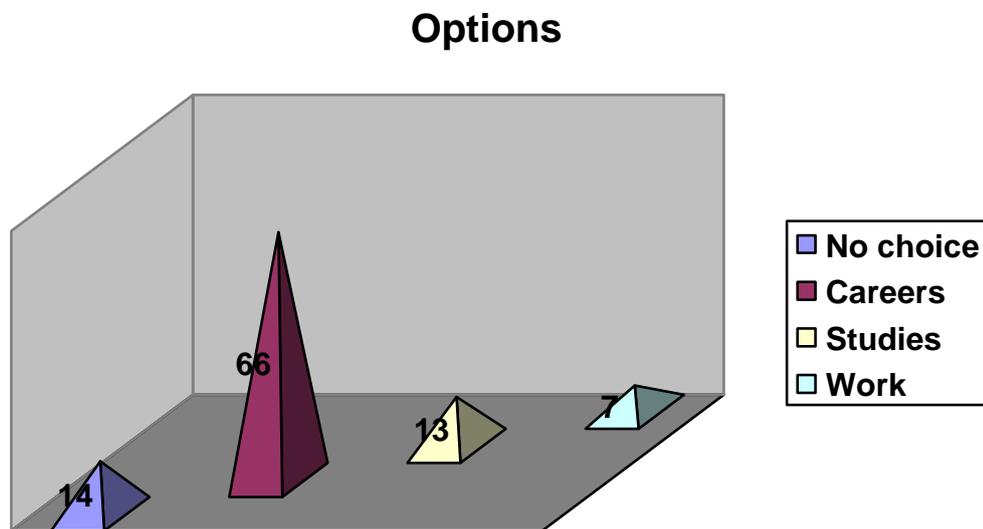
On top of that, merely 44% of the respondents knew how to obtain information on possible careers (Table 1 above). Had career guidance been offered to the respondents, it could have helped them to get the information they needed. This is in agreement with the literature, which indicated that career guidance provides information about self, work, and life skills such as decision-making. In table 1, 38% of the respondents indicated that they were not sure how to obtain career

information, while 35% of the respondents indicated that even if they may know where to obtain information on career guidance the resources regarding career choice were limited. However, students who joined the school during their Secondary School years (Grade 11 to 12) gave a higher indication that career guidance was offered, than others. This means that they were aware of where to obtain information about careers choice. This confirmed findings from the literature, which indicated that career education in schools concentrates mostly on students who are about to leave school. The problem may be what the schools then offer or cover in career education or career guidance. Most previously disadvantaged schools do not have qualified school counsellors, and therefore, could barely offer students basic information. In those schools, teachers responsible for career education are not qualified to apply psychological tests as tools, which could provide needed information about individuals characteristics and expected behaviours regarding career choice. Due to them not being qualified, they may even misinterpret and using available psychological information about students wrongly. Therefore, career guidance needs to be offered to all students in schools in order to provide the needed information about career choices. Qualified career guidance teachers need to be employed in every school in order to provide and guide students regarding career development and career choice.

It was expected in this study that older students would be amongst those who would indicate “true” that career guidance was offered at their school than younger students as they were expected to be more mature career wise. However, although table 1 indicates that more respondents said that career guidance was not offered at their

respective schools, crosstabulation between age groups and career guidance offered at school did not reveal any statistical significance between the two variables in order to confirm the above hypothesis.

### 5.6 Plans after completing school



**Graph.7: Career choice options**

The respondents were asked to indicate what they wanted to do after completing school. They responded differently to this request. Some of the respondents indicated certain careers they wanted to follow, without indicating that they have to study in order to achieve them. 66% of the respondents mentioned careers. Some of the careers mentioned, for example doctor, accountant, etc. are obvious that someone has to study in order to be such one-day. Other careers mentioned, one do not necessary

require to study further, such as a millionaire, taxi driver, etc. Therefore, careers were distinguished from studies mentioned.

The respondents, who mentioned studies (13%, see Graph 7 above), referred to specific degrees, such as B. Sc degree, or to a direction, i.e. Industrial Psychology or mentioned that they want to study further. Other respondents mentioned that they wish to start working after school (7%), while others mentioned that they were not sure or needed more information before they could decide on what they want to do after completing school.

### 5.6.1 Careers mentioned

PC Engineering	Economist
Information Technologist	Veterinary Surgeon
Civil Engineering	Zoologist
Lawyer/Judge	Agricultural
Teacher/Municipal Bus Driver	Extension Officer
Engineering	Air Hostess
Doctor	Chartered Accountant
Strategic Planner	Woodcarver
Millionaire	President of Namibia
Pharmacist	Chemical Engineering
Paediatrician	Taxi Driver
Journalist	Part-time acting
Electrical Engineering	Accountant
Writer/Musician	Biology teacher
	Software Engineering

**Table 2: Careers mentioned**

The respondents mentioned various careers and judging from the list in table 2, they knew a lot about different careers (28 careers were mentioned), which could be available to them. Some respondents mentioned more than one career (i.e. teacher/Bus Driver). Others mentioned odd careers such as taxi driver, President of Namibia and a millionaire.

### 5.6.2 Studies mentioned

Travel & Tourism	Psychology
Geology	Sociology
Nature Conservation	Industrial psychology
B. Education	HR management
B.Sc/Diploma in Agriculture	Business Computing
B.Sc – Chemical Engineering	Financial Management
Law	Accounting and Business Management
Nursing	Information Technology
Medicine	Software
Further study as planned to achieve goal	Communication
Better marks with NAMCOL	

**Table 3: Studies mentioned**

Some of the respondents in the study indicated that they wished to study further. Those respondents gave this indication by way of mentioning some directions of studies, or by just mentioning that they wanted to study further, but were not sure what direction to take. Table 3 above gives the responses of those who like to study further.

It was expected that students who would like to study further, would be less often among those who indicated that they were not ready to make a career choice due to not having enough information about themselves. The crosstabulation between the statements “*I would like to study further in order to obtain my future goals*” and “*I am not ready to make a career choice yet as I do not have enough information about myself*” confirm the expectation. The result of the crosstabulation between the two variables was statistically highly significant ( $r = .40$ ;  $p = .001$ ). The students who wanted to study further answered less often “not sure” than those who did not want to study further.

The respondents, who indicated that they wished to work immediately after completing school, as shown in Table 4 below, were few (7%) compared to those who indicated that they wanted to study further (13%). It is clear in this study that the respondents were not planning to start working soon, after completing their school careers, judging from their responses. This increases the possibility of idling among the youth should most of them not be accepted to study further due to obtaining lower marks or due to insufficient available spaces in higher education institutions.

### 5.6.3 Work mentioned

<b>Work mentioned:</b>
Look for a job Work

**Table 4: work mentioned**

#### 5.6.4 No choice mentioned

No choice
Do not know
Not sure
Need more information

**Table 5: No choice mentioned**

On the same request of listing what they wanted to do after completing school, some of the respondents in Table 5 did not indicate careers or show intentions of further study, as they were not sure what they wanted to do. Some indicated that they needed more information in order for them to decide on future careers or directions. Graph 7 below gives indications of the options of the respondents when asked to indicate what they wanted to do after completing school.

To sum up the responses of the respondents on what they would like to do after completing their schools, Graph 7 above showed that 66% of the respondents indicated the type of careers they wish to follow after completing school, while 13% of the respondents indicated that they wanted to study further. Only 7% of the respondents indicated that they wanted to work immediately after completing their school careers. What is interesting is that 14% of the respondents could not choose or indicate their future intentions, due to being unsure about their future careers. The career choice options result is in agreement with Graph 4, which gave indication of the career guidance offered at different schools. However, in Graph 4, 39.3% of the

respondents indicated that career guidance was not offered at their schools. This could be the reason that contributed to 14% indicating no choice of any career for some respondents in Graph 7.

## **5.7 Awareness**

According to Sharf (2002), Super sees career choice as the implementation of the self-concept (“how one perceives him or her self” – own frame). Therefore, the way in which an individual perceives him or herself, will affect his or her career choice. In this study, the respondents were asked to indicate the way they perceive themselves by answering “true”, “not sure” or “false” to the statements in the questionnaire under “self-awareness”.

As one can see in Table 6 below, respondents indicated their views by indicating that the statements were “true” except with statement 5 and 11. On the statement “*I know who I am*” it is clear that 91% indicated that they knew who they were. 8% of the respondents were “not sure” who they were, while 1% indicated that it was “false” to state that they know themselves.

On the statement “*I know what I want to be one day*”, 66% of the respondents indicated that the statement was “true”, while 33% were “not sure” and 1% said the statement was “false”. It is interesting to observe that more than one-third (34%) was “not sure” about what they wanted to be one day.

The following statements give an indication of self-awareness, awareness of others, abilities and information:

Awareness	“True”	“ <i>Not sure</i> ”	“ <i>False</i> ”
1. “I know who I am.”	91%	<b>8%</b>	<b>1%</b>
9. “I would like to study further in order to obtain my future goals.”	92%	<b>5%</b>	<b>3%</b>
11. “I am not ready to make a career choice yet as I do not have enough information about myself.”	23%	<b>20%</b>	<b>57%</b>
2. “I know what I want to be one day.”	66%	33%	1%
3. “I know what my dreams are.”	71%	26%	3%
4. “I am satisfied with the way in which I am carrying out my responsibilities at present.”	67%	<b>22%</b>	<b>11%</b>
5. “What other people think about what I want to be corresponds with what I think.”	21%	32%	47%
7. “I have a positive image of myself.”	78%	14%	8%
6. “I know my strengths and weaknesses.”	82%	<b>14%</b>	<b>4%</b>
8. “I am confident that I can perform any tasks in my future career.”	78%	<b>20%</b>	<b>2%</b>

**Table 6: Indicators of awareness**

On the statement *“I know what my dreams are”* in table 6, 71% of the respondents indicated that they were aware what their dreams were. However 26% were “not sure” what their dreams were and 3% indicated that the statement was “false” for them to indicate that they knew what their dreams were. The result has shown that more than one-quarter of the respondents were not aware of their dreams. On the statement *“I am satisfied with the way in which I am carrying out my responsibilities at present”*, 67% indicated that they were satisfied, while one-third (33%) were not happy with their own performance in carrying out their duties currently. Despite that, 91% indicated that they knew who they were.

The respondents were also asked to indicate their perception on the statement *“what others think about what I want to be corresponds with what I think”*. 48% of the respondents indicated that the statement was ‘false’, while 32% were “not sure” and 20% indicated that the statement was “true”. The respondents were also asked to indicate their perception on *“I have a positive image of myself”*. Over 78% of the respondents had a positive image of themselves, but over 22% were not sure or had a negative image of themselves. In some cases, respondents gave contradicting responses on statements about their self-concepts. In Table 5, although 91% indicated that they know who they were, 43% were not sure or indicated that the statement *“I am not ready to make a career choice yet as I do not have enough information about myself”* was false.

The hypothesis was made (see point 4.4: Hypotheses), that the respondents who indicated that they were “not sure” who they are, were significantly more often

among those who indicated that they do not know their strengths and weaknesses. This hypothesis was tested and the *contingency coefficient* indicated that it was moderately statistically significant ( $r = .30$ ;  $p = .035$ ). This means that more respondents, who said they know who they are, also know their strengths and weaknesses.

Super's theory implies that a mature person will be able to perform certain duties expected of him at a certain age. To be able to do this a person needs to develop certain abilities. One of those abilities is to be able to handle responsibilities. The study wanted to find out whether the students who were satisfied with how they were carrying out their responsibilities, also have confidence in their future performances. This hypothesis was confirmed in the sense that those respondents who indicated that they were satisfied with the way in which they are carrying out their responsibilities at the present were statistically, highly significantly more confident that they could perform any tasks in their future careers ( $r = .40$ ;  $p = .001$ ). Therefore, when crosstabulated those who said that "*I am satisfied with the way in which I am carrying out my responsibilities at present*" were found to be more amongst those who said "false" to the *statement "I am confident that I can perform any tasks in my future career"*.

Super's theory is based on progressive age maturity. This means, the older the respondent, the more matured he or she is supposed to be. It was expected from this study that older students (respondents) would be more aware about who they are and to be more satisfied in the way they were carrying out their responsibilities.

Crosstabulation revealed that there was a moderate correlation between the respondents who indicated “not sure” to the statement “*I know who I am*” and younger respondents (age group 16 – 17), but an acceptable statistical significance was not revealed ( $r = .29$ ;  $p = 0.62$  ns). However, crosstabulation confirmed that older respondents were to be found less often amongst those who said “not sure” to the statement “*I am satisfied with way in which I am carrying out my responsibilities at present*” ( $r = .31$ ;  $p = 0.04$ ). The result has shown that younger respondents were more amongst those who were not satisfied with their current performance. This means that the younger students (respondents) will be less confident with their performance in their future careers as the two variables were highly statistically correlated.

**No significant correlations were found between the following variables:**

- Age group and entrepreneurship.
- Age and effective decision-making.
- Age and career choice.
- Age and availability of funds to study further.

Going back to the research question, as discussed in the Introduction, it was thus confirmed that young Namibians are aware of the need to make career choices, though the younger respondents (16 – 17 years) who like to study further revealed that they were more likely to be ready to make a career choice due to lack of information. One can expect that more young Namibians are in similar situations and, therefore, cannot make conscious career choice due to lack of information.

However, it was also proven that the respondents were aware of who they were and also knew their strengths and weaknesses.

### 5.8 Influences of significant others on career choice

Section B.2 of the questionnaire	“True”	“Not sure”	“False”
43. “I prefer others (parents, friends, teachers, etc.) to make career choice for me.”	18%	12%	70%
54. “I usually discuss my career plans with my parents/guardians.”	75%	8%	17%
55. “I usually discuss my career plans with my friends.”	64%	14%	22%
56. “I usually discuss my career plans with my teachers.”	55%	11%	34%
57. “I usually discuss my career plans with my relatives.”	58%	11%	31%

**Table 7: Significant others**

Literature shows that friends or peers are the most significant people to provide information on careers. However, this study shows that the parents/guardians were the most significant others in students’ career planning. Table 7 shows that 70% of the respondents indicated that they would not want other people to make career decisions for them. 75% of the respondents would prefer to discuss their plans with their parents or guardians. The next people to discuss career plans with the respondents were indicated to be their friends (64%). Relatives, too were indicated as the next contributors to students’ career planning (58%). Table 6 also shows that teachers were indicated as the last people students (respondents) discuss their career plans with (55%). The finding confirms the Career Development Theory of Super,

which says parental upbringing could influence children's career development and choice. Literature also indicates that children model most of their behaviour from their parents as early as childhood. This behaviour translates itself in established self-concept on which they base their career choices when they grow up.

## **CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **6.1 Discussion of the results**

This section will present the overall summary of the major findings regarding career choice to High School students. As already stated, the objective of this study was to investigate, firstly, whether young Namibians, specifically, High School students are aware of the need to make a career choice. Secondly, it also wanted to find out whether the youth do make conscious career decisions.

#### **6.1.1 Demographic findings**

The result of this study has shown that 68% of the respondents were from age group 18 years to 19 years old, with average age being 19 years. The respondents from Ella du Plessis High School were younger than those from Augustineum High School.

#### **6.1.2 Lack of information**

Literature has shown that career guidance plays an important tool in guiding students on matters concerning career choice, as well as about life in general (Hayes & Hopson, 1977). It could be assumed that students who do not go through career guidance and counselling could be deprived of important information, which could change their lives. The study showed that students who were younger (16 – 17 years old) felt that they needed more information in order for them to make conscious

career decisions. Career guidance could offer them the information they needed. According to Super's theory, career guidance needs to be offered before the students reach the age of 16 years. Therefore, career guidance will be more effective if offered as early as Junior High School or even in Primary School.

The study has also proven that students were not satisfied with how they carry out their responsibilities currently. This is sad to note, as people who are not happy with how they are, will not be happy with how they see themselves in the future except if something changes. This means the students were not happy with most of the responsibilities that they normally do on a daily basis. This could be school responsibility, which includes prestige, and aspirations. This could also be social responsibility, which could be relationships or it could be personal responsibilities. The students were not happy with how they perform in school, their relationships with other people, which could be family, friends, teachers and colleagues. Lack of trust in own abilities and capabilities could have major psychological consequences and even disadvantaged students finding employment. The question is, can such a person stand up and look for a job, when he or she does not believe that he or she has the ability to be successful? It is believed that career guidance could assist in redeeming the current situation amongst the youth of Namibia.

### **6.1.3 Self-awareness**

The result showed that the students have a high regard for who they are. 91% were sure of who they were. Crosstabulation between age group and the statement "*I know*

*who I am*” revealed that there was no statistically significant correlation. However, the results showed that self-knowledge and awareness of strengths and weaknesses were correlating ( $r = 0.30$ ;  $p = .035$ ). This means respondents who indicated that they were not sure about who they were, were among those who indicated less that they know their strength and weaknesses. Therefore, if Namibian youth do not know who they are, they will not know their abilities and capabilities. This could contribute to low self-esteem and negative self-concept. Lack of self-knowledge could also contribute to poor identity formation during adolescence. Many young Namibians already lack facilities or resources where or through which they could enhance their awareness while they are still young. Many of them are not even exposed to proper pre-primary schooling where they could be helped in knowing themselves. During Primary School years, the children also lack resources, like video’s, reading materials, as well as personal motivation targeting to build their identity while young. Therefore, it could be assumed that if proper career guidance is offered, which could focus on personal as well as on group discussion, it could replace the lack of or wrong identity formation in early years and boost it to where someone could say that now he or she knows who he or she is.

Other major findings were that respondents who indicated that their satisfaction in how they carry out their responsibilities also showed confidence in their abilities to perform future career tasks. The results showed a good correlation ( $r = 0.40$ ;  $p = 0.001$ ) between the two variables. Findings also revealed a good correlation ( $r = 0.40$ ;  $p = 0.001$ ) between those who like to study further in order to obtain their

future goals and career decision-making. Those who like to further their studies did not have problems with making a career choice.

## **6.2 Conclusion**

The present study was conducted against the background of increasing unemployment rate of the youth in Namibia, even after some of them have completed school (Grade 12). In search for a remedy, the provision of career guidance in schools is suggested, in order to reduce the unemployment situation in Namibia, especially amongst the youth. Literature shows that most unemployed people in Namibia who are looking for jobs on the corners of streets are the youth (Gonzo & Plattner, 2003). Literature also shows that career guidance could play an important role in preparing students for future career choices (Gladding, 1996, Herr & Cramer, 1996). Therefore, the need to offer career guidance in schools as early as possible is recommended.

As already has been discussed in this thesis, career development and choice is a life long process. Its aims are to improve individuals' self-knowledge, and knowledge about the world of work (Ali & Graham, 1996), as well as to assess career development needs, to clarify individuals' objectives and goals for the future, and to guide individuals to take appropriate action in order to implement these objectives. But, the history of career guidance in Namibia showed that preparing students to enter the world of work is not regarded as a fundamental part of his/her education.

This resulted in the neglect of the importance of career guidance by all stakeholders in Education.

Through career guidance, students would at least know who they are, their strengths and weaknesses as well as know what is available in the job market. Some of that information could be obtained through psychological tests developed for these purposes (i.e. interest tests, ability tests, work values assessment tests, etc.). Should jobs not be available, they could be prepared to become self-employed in various areas related to their interests. Through career guidance they will be prepared to overcome future obstacles and any life situation after school (Hayes & Hopson, 1972; Jacobs et al., 1991; Brown, Brooks, & Associates (1996; Holden, 1971)).

Lack of proper career guidance could hamper national plans for education in Namibia. For example, national calls by the President of Namibia, His Excellency, Dr. Sam Nujoma, for students to concentrate on Sciences and Mathematics subjects in schools in order to upgrade Namibia's scientific expertise in those fields. Such calls will not materialize without students being made aware of their potential, their abilities and being exposed to a wider range of careers before making their subject choices in schools (Jacobs, et al., 1991). This means all schools need to be provided with teachers who are able to teach science subjects at the required level. This will result in students from different schools being admitted at various institutions of higher learning in the country and abroad. Otherwise, only some schools that were previously advantaged could afford to offer these subjects and thus exclude the rest of the population from gaining access to certain careers.

The study was, therefore, aimed at students from previously disadvantaged schools, who were neglected regarding quality education, including career guidance.

Career guidance at Primary School might help young students to form good impressions of different careers at an early age. It is also during these years that fantasies and career aspirations are formed and need to be based on realistic information about careers. Career guidance at this stage might also prevent career stereotypes and misconceptions.

At Junior High School, career guidance could lead students to form realistic ideas regarding career options. It will prevent them from relying on peer information when making subject choices for High School (Wahl & Blockhurst, 2000). It could focus on their interests and aptitudes, as well as on educational capabilities of the students.

Career guidance at High School is regarded as most important, as the students enter the final stage of education on school level. The goal of career guidance should be to provide students with tools in integrating awareness about themselves, their potential and post school education into informed decisions about their future.

It is important to keep in mind that preparing students for careers is a developmental process throughout school career and requires qualified counsellors with updated knowledge about current and future student's development needs as well as cultural values, job market trends and post secondary education options and requirements. If

counsellors are equipped to qualified students to challenge the world of work then they will sow success.

The Government has to recognize career guidance as one of the school subjects and attach to it the same value like other subjects. This will ensure that all schools in Namibia treat career guidance equally, and not only benefit the schools, which can afford qualified career guidance teachers. To make it interesting, it could be blended with topics in life skills, such as decision-making skills, HIV/AIDS and other social and economic related problems, which are facing the youth today.

The study will hopefully encourage the Government, especially the Ministry of Education, to focus on community education regarding the importance of career guidance. In this way, the community would be able to help with the upbringing of the youth.

The study could also motivate parents and teachers in the effort to encourage children to have higher goals than to only finish school. Parents could also contribute to the development of their children if they try to find out what their children's interests, abilities and aspirations are from an early age and try to develop those areas.

Schools could further use this study to motivate government to better the career curriculum at their various schools. In the past, schools in the rural areas had strange subject choices, which did not fit in with further education of the children. Students

end up not qualifying for certain study directions because of it. Having career guidance could eliminate unnecessary subjects and introduce subjects needed for further development of the youth.

Therefore, it is imperative that the stakeholders in formal education be made aware of the important role that career guidance could accomplish in Namibian schools.

In Namibia so far career choice has not been investigated from an Industrial psychological perspective. The little research that has been done in Namibia, on career choice was done from educational psychological perspective. Career choice needs to be a challenge to an Industrial Psychological field due to global changes in industrial and economic play fields where employers and employees meet. In this play field, only the prepared, informed, multi-skilled and dedicated people, including the youth will succeed. Therefore, if industrial psychologists and managers of industries (private and public) are not involved in developing the youth by providing sound information, on which the youth could base their choices, then, Namibia will be fighting a lost battle against education and poverty.

The situation of unemployment among the Namibian youth, especially those from the former disadvantaged groups and areas, is severe. Thus, the situation could benefit from the present study in order to provide effective career guidance and counselling programs to the youth.

Students from low socio-economic backgrounds could depend on accurate information regarding career options and college entrance requirements, as well as information regarding financial availability for such students, if available. In that way, they do not have to rely on information, which makes them believe that they are inferior to those in advantaged positions.

Thus, career choice is not only a challenge to High School students but to all stakeholders.

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## Appendix 1

**UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA**  
**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY**

.....  
18 October 2001

Permanent Secretary  
Ministry of Basic Education and Culture  
Private Bag 13186  
Windhoek

Dear Sir/Madam

### ***Study of Career Choice in Namibia***

I am a post-graduate student at the University of Namibia studying for a Masters Degree in Industrial Psychology. I am conducting a study on “Career Choice – a challenge for high school students in Namibia”.

To accomplish this study effectively, I would like to involve Grade 12 students, who are currently making career choices, as they are about to leave schools. The study will investigate the general trend among young Namibians concerning career choices. Hence, I am appealing to you to assist me by granting me permission to do my studies at Ella du Plessis High School and Augustineum High School.

Students, who would like to participate, should indicate their willingness through their Life Skills teacher. The sample of the study will be 100 students (50 students from each school) and will be gender represented.

A questionnaire will be distributed to the students to answer. It will be collected immediately after completion. All answers will be treated confidentially.

If you have any queries or need clarification, please contact me on telephone: 20063972 (w) or 211128 (h) or cell: 0812490795 or e-mail me at [smbwale@unam.na](mailto:smbwale@unam.na).

Yours faithfully,

.....  
Sarah Mbwale

Copy :           Circuit Inspector – Khomas Region  
                  Principals:   Ella du Plessis High School  
                                  Augustineum High School

## Appendix 2

### RESEARCH ABOUT CAREER CHOICE: A CHALLENGE FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN NAMIBIA – QUESTIONNAIRE.

#### CONFIDENTIAL

Dear students, I am Sarah Mbwale, busy with my Masters Degree in Industrial Psychology at the University of Namibia. I would like to find out whether Namibian students in Grade 12 do make career choices while they are still at school. Your participation in this research would help me to achieve this and therefore would be highly appreciated. To complete the questionnaire will take you +-30 minutes. There are no right or wrong answers. All your answers will be treated confidentially.

Thank you.

.....

Sarah Mbwale

## Appendix 3

CAREER CHOICE: A CHALLENGE FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN NAMIBIA –  
QUESTIONNAIRE.

### CONFIDENTIAL

Please answer all questions.

### **PART 1: AWARENESS**

#### SECTION 1

1. I know who I am.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

2. I know what I want.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

3. I know what my dreams are.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

4. I am satisfied with the way in which I am carrying out my responsibilities at present.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

5. What other people think about what I want to become correspond with what I think.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

6. I know my strengths and weaknesses.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

7. I have a positive image of myself.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

8. I am confident that I can perform any tasks in my future career.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

9. I would like to study further in order to obtain my future goals.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

10. I would like to work after completing school.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

11. I am not ready to make a career choice yet as I do not have enough information about myself.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

12. I know how my abilities and interests might relate to different kinds of jobs.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

13. I have the intellectual ability to make a success of the career I am interested in.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

14. It seems that circumstances will force me to become what I do not want to be.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

15. I like to work in occupation environment where I can be myself.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

16. I know what my interests are.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

## **SECTION 2**

17. I know what kind of job I want to do in the future.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

18. I know a lot about available jobs in the market.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

19. I think my school offers enough career guidance to help me to make a sound career decision.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

20. I know what to do to obtain more information on possible careers.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

21. I know what training is suitable for the career I am interested in.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

22. I am not sure if my current choice of subjects at school is suitable for the career I have in mind.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

23. I made special effort (e.g. enquiries, reading relevant literature) to obtain more information on the careers I am interested in.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

24. I have used all available information resources to find out about careers.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

25. There are limited information resources concerning career possibilities.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

26. I know very little about the working requirements of different careers.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

27. There are a lot of jobs options for me.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

28. I have to study further in order to get the job I want.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

29. I know where to look for a job.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

30. I know how to look for a job.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

31. It will be difficult for me to find a job because so many people are unemployed.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

32. Self-employment is the answer for me as I consider myself as an entrepreneur.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

33. I would like to choose an occupation, which will allow me to do what I like.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

34. I would like to choose an occupation, which will allow me to do what I believe in.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

## **PART 2:      DECISION-MAKING**

35. I do not really know how to make a career decision.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

36. I often change my mind about my choice of career.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

37. I keep on postponing my career decision for later.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

38. I have a clear goal in mind about my choice of career.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

39. I find it difficult to decide on what important concerning things what are of importance to my future career.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

40. I am an effective decision maker.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

41. When I am making important decision, my aims/goals seem unclear.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

42. Finding a job is a matter of luck.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

43. I prefer others (parents, friends, teachers, etc.) to make career choice for me.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

44. One never knows whether the chosen career is the right one.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

45. To have a future career one has to make plans.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

46. I have not yet made up my mind about a career.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

47. I am unable to choose a career because of lack of information.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

48. If I can't get the career I want, then I will have other career choices.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

49. When it comes to choosing a career I will make up my own mind.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

50. It is unnecessary to make a lot of effort on the choice of career, because of high unemployment in Namibia.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

51. I see no need to make a career choice because something will come up.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

52. I have to make a career choice now or later.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

53. Making a career choice is part of growing-up process.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

54. I usually discuss my career plans with my parents/guardians.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

55. I usually discuss my career plans with my friends.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

56. I usually discuss my career plans with my teachers.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

57. I usually discuss my career plans with my relatives.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

58. I have career goals but not many to achieve them.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

59. Time will tell how I can reach my career goals therefore I do not worry about them now.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

60. I am able to make a sound career decision without having proper career guidance in school.

- 1. True
- 2. Not sure
- 3. False

9

### PART 3: PARTICULARS OF PARTICIPANT

Age: .....

Female or male:..

Name of school:..

Current Grade: .....

How many years at current school: .....

Previous school: .....

How many years at previous school: .....

Did your school offer career guidance? Yes/no

Please write down below what you want to do after finishing school.

.....  
.....

*Thank you.*

## Appendix 4

Summary of frequencies obtained in the Questionnaire for this study

<b>A. AWARENESS</b>			
<i>A.1 Self-awareness and awareness of others</i>	True	Not Sure	False
1. I know who I am.	91%	8%	1%
2. I know what I want to be one day.	66%	33%	1%
3. I know what my dreams are.	71%	26%	3%
4. I am satisfied with the way in which I am carrying out my responsibilities at present.	67%	22%	11%
5. What other people think about what I want to be corresponds with what I think.	20%	32%	48%
7. I have a positive image of myself.	78%	14%	8%
11. I am not ready to make a career choice yet as I do not have enough information about myself.	23%	20%	58%
<i>A.2 Awareness of abilities and needs</i>			
6. I know my strengths and weakness.	82%	14%	4%
8. I am confident that I can perform any tasks in my future career.	78%	20%	2%
12. I know how my abilities and interests might relate to different kinds of jobs.	67%	29%	4%
13. I have the intellectual ability to make a success of the career I am interested in.	82%	14%	4%
16. I know what my interests are.	79%	17%	4%
31. It will be difficult for me to find a job because so many people are unemployed.	49%	29%	22%

32. Self-employment is the answer for me as I consider myself as an entrepreneur.	44%	18%	38%
10. I would like to work after completing school.	34%	29%	37%
9. I would like to study further in order to obtain my future goals.	92%	5%	3%
21. I know what training is suitable for the career I am interested in.	57%	39%	13%
27. There are a lot of jobs options for me.	41%	31%	28%
28. I have to study further in order to get the job I want.	86%	12%	2%
32. Self-employment is the answer for me as I consider myself as an entrepreneur.	43%	18%	39%
<b><i>A.3 Awareness about own choices</i></b>			
14. It seems that circumstances will force me to become what I do not want to be.	60%	24%	16%
15. I would like to work in occupation environment where I can be myself.	74%	13%	13%
17. I know what kind of a job I want to do in the future.	63%	28%	9%
19. I think my school offers enough career guidance to help me to make a sound career decision.	38%	17%	45%
20. I know what to do to obtain information on possible careers.	44%	38%	18%
22. I am not sure if my current choice of subjects at school is suitable for the career I have in mind.	33%	21%	46%

32. Self-employment is the answer for me as I consider myself as an entrepreneur.	44%	18%	38%
33. I would like to choose an occupation, which will allow me to do what I like.	87%	10%	3%
34. I would like to choose an occupation, which will allow me to do what I believe in.	79%	15%	6%
<b>A.4 Aware of information / knowledge</b>			
11. I am not ready to make a career choice yet as I do not have enough information about myself.	23%	20%	57%
18. I know a lot about available jobs in the market.	25%	35%	41%
19. I think my school offers enough career guidance to help me to make a sound career decision.	38%	17%	45%
20. I know what to do to obtain information on possible careers.	45%	37%	18%
24. I have used all available information resources to find out about careers.	41%	31%	28%
25. There is limited information resource concerning career possibility.	35%	30%	35%
29. I know where to look for a job.	28%	32%	40%
30. I know how to look for a job.	35%	30%	35%
<b>B. DECISION-MAKING</b>			
<b>B.1 Ability to make career decision</b>			
35. I do not really know how to make a career decision.	31%	26%	43%
38. I have a clear goal in mind about my	58%	28%	14%

choice of career.			
40. I am an effective decision maker.	37%	40%	23%
49. When it comes to choosing a career I will make up my own mind.	68%	20%	12%
60. I am able to make a sound career decision without having proper career guidance in school.	42%	20%	38%
<b><i>B.2 Significant others</i></b>			
43. I prefer others (parents, friends, teachers, etc.) to make career choice for me.	18%	12%	70%
54. I usually discuss my career plans with my parents/guidance.	75%	8%	17%
55. I usually discuss my career plans with my friends.	64%	14%	22%
56. I usually discuss my career plans with my teachers.	55%	11%	34%
57. I usually discuss my career plans with my relatives.	58%	11%	31%
<b><i>B.3 Prepare for transition</i></b>			
42. Finding a job is a matter of luck.	38%	30%	32%
45. To have a future career one has to make plans.	80%	11%	9%
48. If I can't get the career I want, then I will have other career choices.	62%	25%	13%
50. It is unnecessary to make a lot of effort on the choice of career, because of high unemployment in Namibia.	40%	17%	43%

51. I see no need to make a career choice because something will come up.	12%	19%	69%
52. I have to make a career choice now or later.	60%	24%	16%
53. Making a career choice is part of growing-up process.	77%	16%	7%
<b><u>B.4 Indecision</u></b>			
36. I often change my mind about my choice of career.	48%	17%	35%
37. I keep on postponing my career decision for later.	26%	16%	58%
39. I find it difficult to decide on what are important concerning things what are of importance to my future career.	45%	22%	33%
41. When I am making important decisions, my aims/goals seem unclear.	33%	27%	40%
44. One never knows whether the chosen career is the right one.	51%	22%	27%
46. I have not yet made up my mind about a career.	25%	17%	58%
47. I am unable to choose a career because of lack of information.	33%	27%	40%
59. Time will tell how I can reach my career goals; therefore I do not worry about them now.	31%	21%	48%0
<b><u>B.5 Limitations</u></b>			
58. I have career goals but not money to achieve them.	65%	22%	13%

## Appendix 5

### Career options

1. 99
2. 99
3. 99
4. PC Engineering or Travel & Tourism
5. 99
6. B. Education
7. Private
8. Information Technologist
9. Civil Engineering
10. Lawyer/Judge
11. Teacher or Municipal Bus Driver
12. Further Study
13. Information and Technology
14. Engineering
15. Doctor
16. Do not know
17. Study further
18. Geology
19. Nature Conservation
20. Engineering
21. Lawyer
22. 99
23. Law or Psychology or Sociology
24. Computer Science
25. Strategic Planner
26. Millionaire
27. Pharmacist
28. Lawyer
29. Pediatrician
30. Not Sure

31. Journalism
32. Dentist
33. Performance Arts
34. Pediatrician
35. Journalist
36. Engineering/Software/ Electrical
37. Nursing/Communication/Teacher
38. Nature Conservation/ Electrical Engineering
39. Medical Doctor
40. Study and have a decent job
41. 99
42. Electrical Engineering
43. Writer/Musician
44. Not sure
45. Software Engineering
46. Do what is right for society
47. Information Technology/Law
48. Look for a job
49. Doctor
50. Accountant
51. Study further as planned
52. Study further to achieve goal
53. Biology Teacher
54. Teacher or Economist
55. Accounting and Business Management
56. Electrical Engineering
57. Work
58. Work
59. Medical Doctor
60. Economist
61. B.Sc in Agriculture
62. Accounting

63. Geology
64. Veterinary Surgeon
65. Zoologist
66. Teacher
67. Medicine or Diploma in Agriculture
68. Industrial Psychology
69. Doctor
70. Further Studies
71. Doctor
72. Doctor
73. Accountant
74. Further study or find a job
75. Further studies
76. Lawyer
77. Agricultural Extension Officer
78. HR-Management or Business Computing
79. Air Hostess
80. Study further or better marks with NAMCOL
81. Chartered Accountant (CA) or Engineering
82. Study further
83. Need more information
84. Woodcarver
85. President of Namibia
86. Chemical Engineering
87. HR-management or Financial Management
88. Economics, Accounting or Business
89. Accounting or Economics
90. 99
91. Medical Doctor
92. Agriculture
93. Study further and later work in Government
94. Veterinary Surgeon

- 95. Taxi Driver for a while
- 96. Study further
- 97. Study further
- 98. Geology
- 99. 99
- 100. 99
- 101. B.Sc – Chemical Engineering and Part-time acting