

https://dspace.org/

The relationship between gender identity development and career decision-making process among high school learners.

Rammutla, Lara Letlhogonolo

2010-06-22T07:38:27Z
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/8189

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Early adolescence is a period of disorganization and this is true whether this period is navigated fairly smoothly or whether it is seen as a setting with a potential disturbance (Marcia, 1983). As indicated by Erickson (1968) it is during this period that the formation of a sense of identity becomes the primary task for an individual in the transition to adulthood. It seems inevitable therefore that adolescence may present as a challenging time for many adolescents as they are faced with the task of forging an identity. Even more challenging is the crisis period that adolescents face as they battle with balancing the desire to try out many possible selves and the need to select a single self. At some point between childhood and adulthood, the individual begins to examine alternative life goals and eventually personal decisions are made, some of which include choosing a career. It seems therefore that the development of an identity is a period which may be impacted on by many factors such as the social and cultural context.

Low, Akande and Hill (2005) state that identity develops within a social and cultural context and thus it cannot be separated from the social and cultural conditions. Thus with the present democratic transformation process in the South Africa society which is characterised by high levels of social disorganization and conflict, it is pertinent to look at how young South Africans forge their identity amidst all of these challenges. The difficult tasks that are faced by these young people are reverberated by Alberts and Meyer (1998) that if mature adults find it difficult to come to grips with these fundamental changes, how much more confusing would it be for young people in their formative years to deal with these challenges and find

out who they are. Furthermore with the new dispensation where the rights of women and affirmative action are at the forefront of this transformation, especially in the work force, it is crucial to look at whether there may be a relationship between the process of identity formation and career choice.

Career decision-making is a complex process and some adolescents may encounter difficulties that prevent them from making a career decision or that lead to a less-than-optimal decision (Germeijs & Verschueren, 2006). Watson and Stead (2006) state that some of the contextual difficulties that may impact on the process of choosing a career for a lot of South African youth include the high unemployment rates, which includes graduates, the lack of structured career guidance at schools, especially Black schools, and the issues of gender inequalities. Germeijs and Verschueren (2006) further add that with regard to the decisional process of choosing studies in higher education, deficiencies in the way the study choice are made increases the risk for dropout in higher education. This statement suggests that if adolescents are not properly guided in the way that they choose a career, they are more likely to end up making uninformed choices of which they may be unable to cope with in higher education. This highlights the salience of the process of career decision and at the same time raises concern as to the present high percentage of failures and high dropout rate of first year students in institutions of higher learning (Astin & Alexander, 1993).

Given that the development of an identity is a long term process which many adolescents carry through into young adulthood, and for some even into middle adulthood, it becomes even more challenging for South African learners, who according to Low, Akande and Hill (2005) need to have a declared major before being admitted to tertiary institutions. Therefore,

this make choosing a career even more difficult as these individuals are still in the process of forging an identity so that they can make personal decisions. As a result, there may be those individuals whose choice of a career may be compromised as they have not yet fully resolved the issue of whom they are and which career they may want to finally commit to.

The main aim of the current study was to explore the relationship between identity development and the career decision-making process among Grade 12 learners. In addition the study intended to compare identity formation (statuses) of males and females. Lastly, the career decision-making process of males and females were also investigated.

1.1 Rationale

The fundamental developmental task that individuals face during adolescence is defining and establishing their identity (Crocetti, et al., 2007). Research on gender differences in identity development has produced varied results (Alessandria & Nelson, 2005; Sandhu & Tung, 2006). In South Africa, although studies have explored the relationship between identity formation (identity statuses) of adolescents with personality variables such as anxiety and intelligence, there is no literature on identity formation of gender groups and most importantly, of the relation to career decision-making process.

Although a substantial body of knowledge has been generated from Erickson (1968) and Marcia's work (1980) on identity formation, there is limited research that explored the relationship between gender identity formation, in terms of the statuses, and the career decision-making process. The relationship of career decision-making process and identity

formation is crucial given the fact that a recent longitudinal survey (Scott, 2008) on students in institutions of higher learning revealed that 45 percent of students dropped out because of financial exclusions, wrong course choices, inability to cope with demands of the curriculum and social problems. Given the high percentage of failures and drop-out rates of first year students at institutions of higher learning (Astin & Alexander, 1993; Erickson & Strommer, 1991; Woollacott, 2003), it was essential to explore the appropriateness of decision-making processes of high school learners.

1.2 Overview of the study

This study consists of five chapters. The first chapter gives a global introduction into the relationship between the two constructs, that of identity development and career decision-making process. The chapter also highlights the relevance of the context within which an identity is forged and a career is chosen, with specific emphasis being placed on the South African context and the challenges that are faced by South African adolescents as they develop an identity and choose a career.

The second chapter of the study reviews literature on gender identity development and career decision-making among adolescents with specific reference to the two theories of identity development and the process of career development. The first theory is Marcia's ego identity formation and the second theory is that of career development, of which career decision-making process is an integral part.

Chapter three gives an outline of the aims of the study, research design, sampling, the two instruments that were used and how the data was analysed. The first instrument, the Revised Extended Version of the Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status was used to measure identity formation. Attention is focused on the Study Choose Task Inventory and how this instrument measures the process of career decision-making process in line with suggestions in the literature on career decision making, with more emphasis being put on its relevance within the South African context.

The fourth chapter gives an overview of data analysis and the interpretation of the results. The last chapter, chapter five, dwells into the discussion of the results, followed by the practical implication of the study and the limitations of the study. This chapter concludes with recommendations for future research which emerged from the study.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

As briefly mentioned, this chapter reviews literature on gender identity development and career decision-making process among high school learners. Regarding identity development special focus is placed on Marcia's (1980) four ego identity statuses, while the focal point for career decision-making process is on the six tasks that have been identified as crucial to this process.

2.1 What is identity?

Depending on the context within which the term identity is used, it takes on different connotations. Whether identity is held to refer to different categories, such as gender, race, or work, one consistent theme according to du Gay, Evans and Redman (2000) is the concept of a person as an individual subject, understood as a given entity, the author of its own acts and centred in a unitary, reflexive and directive consciousness. However autonomic and initiative identity may seem, in the face of new exploration and experimentation, even the most courageous cannot do without some approval (Marcia, 1983).

Early adolescence is a period in the life cycle which is marked by two important events in ego development, which includes the formation of an ego ideal and the synthesis of an ego identity. Both of these are established by means of exploration and experimentation and they require time and psychological space which are provided by the context in which individuals find themselves (Marcia, 1983).

There are several overlapping definitions of identity. Shaffer (2002) defines identity as a firm and coherent sense of who one is, where one is going in life, and how one fits into society. Identity is further defined as the clarity and stability of a person's current and future goals (Sharf, 2006). Based on Marcia's identity statuses, identity is operationally defined in the current study as the ideological and interpersonal stage of development of the self as measured by the Extended Objective Measure-Ego Identity Status II instrument (EOM-EIS II). A detailed discussion on the EOM-EIS II is provided in Chapter Three.

Adolescence is the developmental stage between childhood and adulthood. Culturally, the "idea of the adolescent depends on a presupposed level of behavioural maturity, which translates into certain rights and privileges afforded to the young person" (Stoker, 2007, p4). Because of individual and cultural differences, the age at which adolescence begins varies from 11 to 13 years, and the age at which it ends varies from 17 to 21 years (Louw, 1991). For the purposes of this study, the definition of an adolescent is between the ages of 13 and 21.

Adolescence is a pivotal stage for identity formation as during this stage, intellectual, emotional, physical and societal factors are sufficiently present both to allow and demand that identity issues be dealt with (Sandhu & Tung, 2006). It is during this stage of development that the adolescent goes through an exploratory period of self-analysis and self-evaluation, all of which ideally culminate in the establishment of a cohesive and integrative sense of self or identity (Allison & Schultz, 2001). This process of identity development involves the testing of alternative ideas, beliefs and behaviours, marking this period as one of both dramatic change and uncertainty. It can be suggested therefore that the formation of an identity is not a

smooth process. According to Shaffer (2002), it is an uneven process where a crisis may arise, resulting in a sense of confusion or even anxiety. These emotions may be felt by the adolescent as they think about the many important choices that they have to make such as the kind of career to choose.

Marcia (1983) views identity development as a psychosocial characteristic that occurs in relationship with others, additional with the fact that its fundamental basis is confidence in parental support. Other important aspect of identity development is the context within which this development is taking place, such as the cultural and societal factors. These factors may impact positively or negatively on the formation of an identity, such as when an adolescent forms an identity early in accordance with parental and cultural expectations (Louw, 1991). Additional factors such as the socio-economic status and the historical events are also important in the formation of an identity. According to Shaffer (2002) adolescents in modern and diverse multicultural societies, where there is also a rapid growth in industrialization, may have the added challenge of exploring too many options before making a choice.

Adding more voice to the influence of social factors on identity development are Côté and Schwartz (2005). They established that in late modern societies and in societies in which traditional forms of culture are going through a changing process, individualization was on the rise. Individualization refers to the extent that people are left by their culture to determine the direction their own lives will take. Côté and Schwartz (2005) add that even though this has benefits, it does have its pitfalls such as default individualization where individuals may be unable to develop a secure identity. The next section explores various identity statuses according to Marcia (1980).

2.2 Marcia's Ego Identity Statuses

Erickson's description of identity has stimulated considerable research, such as that of Marcia (1980). Marcia expanded on Erickson's theory by identifying four identity statuses. According to Louw (1991) statuses refer to the different ways in which the adolescent's identity crisis is resolved. Marcia's four identity statuses are Achievement, Foreclosure, Moratorium and Diffusion. They are based on the combination of the two underlying dimensions of exploration and commitment. Exploration is the adolescent's active questioning and weighing up of various identity alternatives and commitment is the presence of strong convictions or choices (Crocetti, Rubini, Luyckx & Meeus, 2007).

Adolescents in the Achievement status have arrived at clear commitments after exploring various alternatives. According to Louw (1991), they have passed through a crisis period and have a relatively strong commitment to a career and a value system. Luyckx, Goossens, Soenens, Breyers and Vansteenkiste (2005) showed that adolescents in this status are high on personality characteristics such as openness and conscientiousness. Openness refers to the tolerance and exploration of the unfamiliar, and conscientiousness refers to the individual's degree of organization, persistence and motivation in goal-oriented behaviour. As individuals advance in their career identity development they tend to have positive attitudes and openness to a variety of occupations (Sharf, 2006). During the process of career decision-making, adolescents in the achievement status would be more open and motivated to explore new information about themselves and their environment. This would be important as it would help them make informed decisions as to the type of career to follow.

Kroger (2000) reports that adolescents in the Achievement status are motivated to achieve goals, and they would therefore be more open to explore and seek new information about themselves and the environment, and they would persist in this task of career decision–making until they have explored all the relevant information. It is motivation that drives an individual to do anything, and according to Brown (2003), the best motivation is an inner desire to achieve goals and purpose that an individual has set for oneself. In addition, the more self-exploration that achieved individuals engage in, the more prepared they will be able to undertake tasks in a self-directed manner without needing to look to others for reassurance and emotional support (Kroger, 2000).

Foreclosed individuals have made an unquestioned and firm commitment to career field, typically adopting the desires of their parents and family traditions without exploring other options. Louw (1991) states that these adolescents have not experienced any crisis, and they have committed themselves as a result of parental influence. Luyckx et al. (2005) note that individuals in this status score high on conscientiousness, but low on openness. This would suggest that adolescents in this status are less likely to go through the exploration stage during the career decision-making process. They are more likely to conform to either parental influence or to peer pressure in the choice of a career. In addition, they would easily conform to social norms and expectations such as would be influenced by gender roles. Individuals in this status are however, more adjusted in terms of intrapersonal domains. This means that they are more likely to form and commit to relationships as they value them a lot.

Unlike individuals in the Foreclosure, those in the Moratorium status are still in a crisis period and they are actively investigating various alternatives without arriving at firm

commitments (Louw, 1991). Luyckx et al. (2005) note that these individuals score high on openness suggesting that they are open to new experiences, but they are low on conscientiousness. This suggests that they are more likely to go through some of the steps of a career decision-making process such as self-exploration, and exploration of the environment, but they are less likely to get to the final stage which is commitment. Luyckx et al. (2005) further highlight that individuals in the Moratorium status are weighing different identity alternatives in order to commit themselves to one of them at a later stage.

Individuals in the Diffusion status are characterized by the absence of both exploration and commitment. For adolescents in this status, there is a lack of genuine concern about identity issues (Holcomb-McCoy, 2005). These adolescents are also at risk of accepting and internalizing negative and faulty stereotypes and beliefs. This suggests that these adolescents would be less likely to go through the process of career decision-making since they would not be concerned about deciding on a career. In addition, they would also not be motivated to explore knowledge about themselves or the environment to search for a career that would be congruent to their personality. Lastly, since they are at risk of accepting and internalizing faulty stereotypes, when they make a career choice, it is likely not to be their choice, rather it would be out of conformity.

Luyckx et al. (2005) add that adolescents in this status show a significant decrease in openness, which means that they are less likely to explore any career options. They are also low on conscientiousness suggesting that these individuals would not be motivated in goal oriented behaviour. It seems logical therefore to assume that diffused individuals are less likely to go through the career decision-making process as they would not explore any alternatives and they are not motivated to commit to a career. They also show problematic

social behaviour, abuse substances and may be labelled as delinquents as they are more likely to go against social norms relating to acceptable behaviour.

Crocetti et al. (2007) developed an identity model in which commitment, in-depth exploration and reconsideration of commitment are considered to be critical identity processes. These tasks have been identified by Germeijs and Verschueren (2005) as three of the six tasks of the six career-decisional tasks that are core aspects of the career decision-making process, namely, Orientation to choice, Self-exploration, Broad exploration of the environment, Commitment, In-depth exploration and Reconsideration of commitment. Commitment refers to the choice made in areas relevant to identity and as the extent to which one feels about or identifies with this choice (Crocetti et al. 2007).

In-depth exploration represents the extent to which adolescents actively deal with current commitments, reflect on their choices, look for new information, and talk with others about these commitments (Meeus et al., 1999). Lastly, Reconsideration of commitment refers to the comparison between current commitments and other possible alternatives, and to adolescents' efforts to change present commitments. This means that adolescents can revise and eventually change commitments over time as they actively reflect upon and gather information about the commitments they have made (Luyckx et al., 2005).

According to Lock (2005) one of the important tasks in career decision-making process is making a decision. This task involves arranging all information gathered about the self and occupational prospects so that one can arrive at some tentative or definite conclusion about a

future career direction. However, Lock (2005) state that as new information comes in, career decisions may change. Thus it is important that an individual must be able to actively reflect upon, revise and possibly change commitments as new information comes in. Furthermore, Allison and Schultz (2001) note that the establishment of an identity is not fixed. It is a continuous process where an adolescent may experience change in and identity status relative to the domains that are deemed as important by the adolescent over time. Thus their view of what is important may change as their environment continues to change, resulting in the need to reflect upon and make the necessary changes to prior commitments.

Crocetti et al. (2007) found a positive correlation between Achievement status and Commitment and In-depth exploration. There was however, a weak correlation between Reconsideration of commitment and Achievement status. This suggests that these adolescents actively seek new information and they reflect on their choices before they commit. However, once they have made a choice, they are less likely to change their current choices even when new information comes in. Foreclosure status correlated negatively with Commitment, In-depth exploration and Reconsideration of commitment. As indicated earlier, adolescents in the Foreclosure status conform to norms readily, as a result they are less likely to explore any alternatives. They often lack knowledge on the world of work and knowledge about the self, due to the fact that they have not gone through any in-depth exploration. This task is important in the process of career decision-making (Germeijs & Verschueren, 2005). Foreclosed individuals are also less likely to revisit and make the necessary changes to their present commitments as new information is received. This is because they have committed to an occupation without any exploration (Lock, 2005).

In a study conducted (Crocetti et al., 2007), weak to moderate positive correlations between Moratorium status and Commitment, In-depth exploration and Reconsideration of commitment were found. As indicated earlier, adolescents in this status actively seek out information in order to make a commitment, even though they do not arrive at firm commitments. They are more likely to revisit the career decisional-making process as they gather detailed information about the self and their environment. This suggests that they would change commitments made and they would be open to career change should the need arise. Lastly, a negative correlation was found between Diffusion status with Commitment, In-depth exploration and Reconsideration of commitment. Individuals in the Diffusion status are less likely to go through the process of career decision-making at all. They are also less likely to follow any particular career.

2.3 Gender differences on identity formation

Literature on identity statuses and gender has produced conflicting and varied results. Much of the controversy has revolved around the salience of various identity content areas and concerns for the two genders (Sandhu & Tung; 2006). According to Alberts, Mbalo and Ackermann (2003), although various studies found significant gender differences in relation to specific domains, others found limited gender differences. Domains such as occupational decision-making, views on gender roles and other interpersonal domains are equally relevant for identity formation in both genders. Occupational decision-making is one of the ideological domains that are measured by the EOM-EIS II. Therefore it was essential to explore this area within the South African context.

Research (Allison & Schultz; 2001) found that adolescent females score higher than males on Moratorium and Achievement statuses during early and middle adolescence. In addition males have been found to be more identity diffused than females during early and middle adolescence. These findings are consistent with the view that female adolescents mature earlier than males. Furthermore this difference in psychosocial maturity is manifested in the more sophisticated identity status categorization for females and the less sophisticated statuses for males.

Alessandria and Nelson (2005) found no significant gender differences in the identity statuses among the American learners they investigated. Research in India on the other hand reflected that there is lesser Foreclosure in Indian girls as compared to boys. Similarly, according to Sandhu & Tung (2006) western researchers have also suggested that women perform better than men on identity statuses and they display higher identity Achievement and Moratorium than men, even in traditionally male dominated areas.

There seems to be various factors that are responsible for gender differences, such as upbringing and values. A body of literature seems to suggest that cultural and social environments determine to a large extent gender roles (Chae, 2001; Louw, 1991; Sandhu & Tung, 2006). Louw (1991) reports that the gender-role behaviour that a child learns depends on his/her immediate environment and on the broader cultural environment. According to theories on the development of sex-role identity, biological factors, and the two environmental factors, the cultural and social factors impact on the development of sex-role identity. The social learning theory emphasizes that children observe the behaviours of adult models, remember it and then imitate the behaviour of the parent of the same sex.

This is also highlighted by Chae (2001) that the impact of differential socialization by parents influences the way boys and girls perceive themselves as well as their external realities. This is referred to as identity reflexivity, whereby one sees one's self through the eyes of those around them (Stocker, 2007). According to Marcia (1980) this is a "less developed" structure of identity, whereas a "better developed" structure of identity encompasses "developmental assets" which refer to the perception of one's self through internal processes. In addition, differences in gender roles occur largely in societies and cultures which encourage separateness in men, and where women are reared towards conformity and embeddedness. It would seem therefore that choosing a career would be more challenging for females than for males as there are a lot of external factors that they need to take into consideration when choosing a career.

Luzzo (1995) concurs that women's career motivation is much more vulnerable to competing role priorities and environmental demands than men's career motivation. In other words, women are much more likely than men to experience the effect of role confusion and environmental stressors in the career decision-making process. Thus the influence of upbringing and values that are held by different groups seem to contribute to a considerable degree on the process of career decision-making in females. This could be explained by the fact that girls today are encouraged to consider both stereotypically female plus male paths of development (Cramer, 2000). Thus the range of possibilities for establishing an identity is broader for females than males. In addition, the modern day set-up has opened entry to girls in various careers, and politics, which attract them to establish their identity in areas which were once not welcoming for girls. Also emerging female heroes in Indian society in

different spheres of life may be an additional source of inspiration to the adolescent Indian girls (Sandhu & Tung, 2007). These contrasting results in research studies may be due to the fact that different cultures value different domains in the identity formation of adolescents. Thus these cultures would emphasize the development of favoured domains over others.

There are, however, some contextual factors that may pose as potential barriers to a healthy psychosocial development. According to Meeus et al (1999) disillusionment with factors such as the socio-economic set-up, political apathy, and the changing pace of life or the lack of role models may encourage diffusion especially in males. Unlike their female counterparts who have female heroes as role models, especially since the rise of the movement for gender equality, boys seem to lack role models that can serve as a source of inspiration. In addition, Fitch and Adams (1983) state that academic institutions of males are not pro-active in the identity process, whereas female institutions are catering to the all-round development. This could also be contributing to more boys being in the diffusion status.

Research findings (Alberts & Meyer, 1998) based on a sample of first-year male students at a historically African (Black) university in South Africa have produced contrasting but interesting results. The aim of the experiment was to determine whether there is a significant relationship between Marcia's identity statuses, as measured by the original Identity Status Interview, and selected personality variables. The results revealed that males in the Moratorium group were found to be more group-dependent, preferring to join and follow a group rather than being resourceful and taking the lead on the occupational domain. They also displayed higher levels of occupational uncertainty which could have lead to them being group-dependent. These results suggested that males in the Moratorium status were more

likely to make career choices based on conformity rather than on exploration. Males in the Foreclosure status, which accounted for the highest percentage of participants, were found to be more self-sufficient on the occupational identity domain which suggested that they were able to make independent decisions after much exploration. This is contrary to literature and other research findings which suggest that individuals in the Foreclosure status are less likely to explore any career choices.

Given that the majority of the adolescents in the study (Alberts & Meyer, 1998) were from low income communities, they would have been deprived of basic support systems such as quality education, and they would also have had limited or no access to knowledgeable people who could advice them about career options. Alberts and Meyer (1998) concluded that African adolescents therefore rely on their own resources, such as the limited knowledge that they would posses about different career options, in making occupational decisions. This suggests therefore that the Foreclosure status (in relation to occupational choice) carries a more positive content in an African context. These results highlight the salience of the context within which adolescents develop an identity. It further suggests that different identity statuses is also impacted on by the sociological factors, such as the rapid and massive transition of cultures in fast changing westernised societies.

However, a study (Skorikov & Vondracek, 1998) conducted with high school students in a rural area in the United States yielded different results. The findings indicated that the progression in identity status in the vocational realm seemed to proceed in most cases from the Diffusion through Moratorium to Achievement, without including the stage of Foreclosure. Skorikov and Vondracek (1998) asserted that this could be due to the parents of

the participants encouraging their children to select different occupations than to follow them in the manufacturing and farming occupations.

It is thus evident from the literature that forging an identity is a complex and at times difficult process which involves examining alternative life goals so that personal decisions can be made. Some of these decisions include choosing a career which marks an individual's transition into adulthood (Louw, 1991). The formation of an identity seems to be influenced by a number of factors such as the social context, gender and socio-economic factors. It is however important to highlight that on the issue of gender, there has been various conflicting research findings, some suggesting that gender may be playing no role in the formation of an identity. Other findings, on the other hand, seem to agree that gender does play a role in identity formation. The next question that needs to be addressed is whether gender influences, or not, the career decision-making process. This question is addressed in the next section.

2.4 Career Decision-Making Process

Career decision-making process as defined by Germeijs and Verschueren (2005) refers to the process that people go through when they search for viable career alternatives, compare them and then choose one. The process of career development is vital in development (Super, 1990) and it has a significant impact upon occupational attainment and work satisfaction in adulthood (Hotchkiss & Borow, 1996). According to Miller and Miller (2005) career decision-making is an important aspect of career choice and career development, and since choosing a career is central to the identity formation of adolescents, it suffices to say that the process of career decision-making is crucial in helping adolescents to choose a career.

Occupational careers are major determinants of people's lifestyle, standards of living, standing in the community and life-satisfaction (ScienceDirect Editorial, 2007). This statement highlights the salience of occupation in the life of an individual, further highlighting how crucial the process of career decision-making becomes in choosing a career. This is even more crucial given the high rates of unemployed graduates in South Africa.

Some adolescents particularly those in relatively underdeveloped and traditional societies, such as in low socio-economic communities where there is also no career guidance in schools, have no problems in choosing a career as they simply follow in the footsteps of their parents. In contrast adolescents from other cultures such as the Western culture find choosing a career very difficult due to amongst other factors the influence of mass media (Louw, 1991). This raises the question of the relevance of the process of career decision-making process within the South African context where many contextual factors influence career choice for a lot of adolescents. Some of these factors, as mentioned earlier include the high unemployment rate, lack of structured career guidance in schools and issues of gender inequalities (Watson & Stead, 2006).

According to Germeijs and Vershuerens (2005), there are six career decision-making processes that individuals go through, namely Orientation to choice, Self-exploration, Broad exploration of the environment, In-depth exploration of the environment, Decisional status and Commitment. These processes are explained in detail below. Figure 1 presents the career decision-making process. Lock (2005) reports that the process is not an exact linear process. This is because people have their own individual differences and preferences. However, it

can be suggested that despite these differences and preferences, an effective career choice path would encompass these tasks:

(i) Orientation to choice implies that an individual is aware of the need to make a decision and the motivation to engage in the career decision-making process. The individual must become aware of the need to establish a career goal and he/she must then commit to a career–planning process. This means that the individual at this stage needs to become an active agent in charting their own future (Lock, 2005).

(ii) Self-exploration means gathering of information about oneself. This means that an individual must study his/her inner self-personality such as what interests them, what are their weaknesses and strengths and what is really important to them. Self-knowledge is necessary in making judgments about occupational prospects (Lock, 2005). Therefore knowing oneself is important in choosing the career environment that will be congruent to one's personality. Miller and Miller (2005) state that because career decision-making is one of the major ingredients in personal career development, the collection and processing of important information, such as information about the self are central elements in decision making.

(iii) Broad exploration of the environment means gathering general information about career alternatives. Lock (2005) refers to this task as the general alternative task. This means that the individual must gather information on different potential

occupations that look attractive to them. This will then lead to the next task of in-depth exploration.

(iv) In-depth exploration of the environment implies the gathering of information about a reduced set of career alternatives. A thorough research of the occupations that an individual may want to choose from is crucial. Lock (2005) highlights that the gathering of information about occupations that interest an individual is at the heart of the career planning process. This will ensure congruence between a person and the work environment, which would lead to job satisfaction, career path stability and occupational achievement. Thus it is important that individuals gather important information about a possible career of choice and compare this information against their own personality so that they can have the best-of–fit between their personality and the work environment.

(v) Decisional status means the progress in choosing a career alternative. Once all the necessary information about the self and the occupational prospects has been gathered, an individual needs to arrange this information so that they can arrive at some tentative or definite conclusion about their future career direction. In other words, an individual must commit to a certain career. This implies that an exploration of one's personality type and the environmental type is essential in reaching a state of congruency. This therefore will make committing to a career less difficult.

(vi) Commitment is the strength of confidence in and attachment to a particular career alternative. Implementing the decision suggests that an individual now puts their career decision into practice.

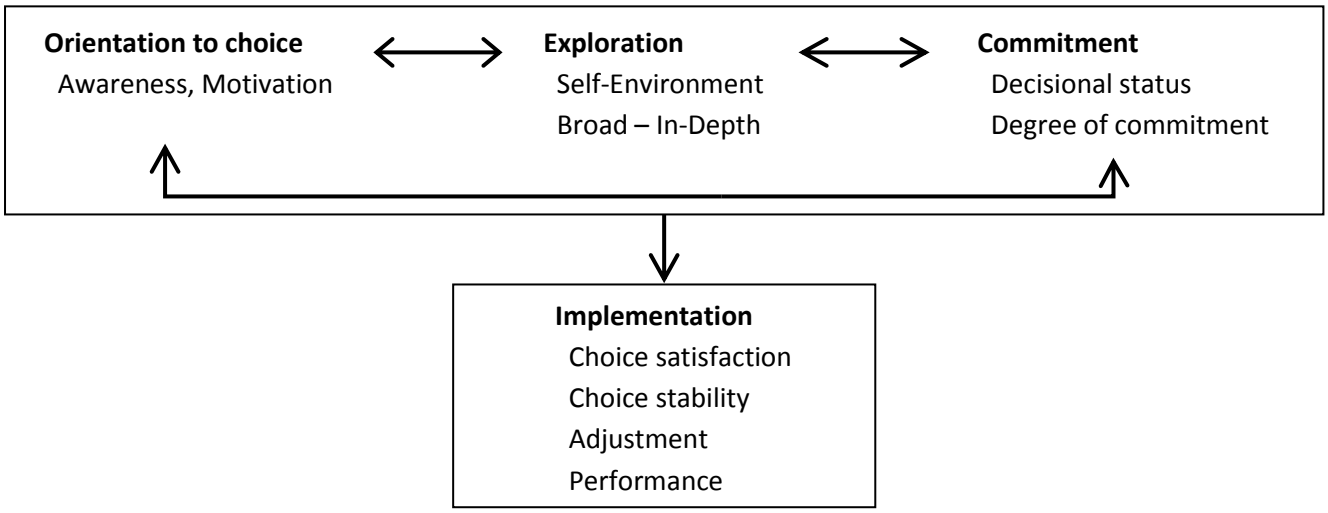


Figure 1: Tasks in the career decision-making process (Germeijs & Verschueren, 2006).

Once an individual has committed to a career alternative, he/she then takes action which determines the education majors and the degrees needed for the occupational choice. Because career decision-making process takes place within an individual's context, when doing an in-depth exploration of the environment, individuals need to take into account aspects of the environment such as their social context, the nature of the economy, geographical factors, political and physical factors that may affect their career decisions (Lock, 2005).

Several studies (Germeijs & Verschueren, 2005; 2006) investigated career decision-making process of Grade 12 students through the Study Choice Task Inventory (SCTI). The results

indicated that Orientation and Broad exploration of the choice alternatives are decisional tasks considered important at the beginning of the career decision-making process, whereas In-depth exploration, Self-exploratory behaviour and Decisional status are considered important at the end of Grade 12. It was also found that students in the Diffused status scored the lowest on all decisional tasks, and showed more career indecision and less exploratory activity.

Students who were classified into the Achievement or Moratorium status showed more Broad exploratory behaviour regarding the career environment than those in the Foreclosure and Diffusion status. Furthermore, students in the Achievement and Foreclosure statuses showed more decisional progress and commitment to their choice of a study than students in the Moratorium and Diffusion statuses (Germeijs & Verschueren, 2006) irrespective of gender. Therefore, these findings imply that adolescents in the Achievement and Foreclosure statuses are more likely to make career choices based on exploration of the environment and the self. This is important in ensuring career success and vocational satisfaction. Adolescents in the Diffusion and Moratorium statuses seem less likely to make career choice due to their lack of exploration which might lead to them showing less decisional progress. This also indicates that they would be less likely to commit to any career.

Other studies however, have focused on the possible relationship between gender identity formation and career decision-making process, yielding conflicting results. Prideaux and Creed (nd) pointed to gender-role stereotyping of particular career-related tasks as being a key determinant of gender differences in the career decision-making process. Rojewski and Hill (1998) used the Career Indecision scale which measures career indecisiveness.

The findings showed that 21 percent of the variance in career decision-making problems was accounted for by gender differences with males perceiving greater problems than females. These results suggested that males experience the most difficulties when going through the career decision-making process than females. Another study (Lucas, 1997), also found differences between males and females on the process of career decision-making process. The results indicated that females were in the Achievement status in relation to career development as compared to their male counterparts. This seems to imply that females were more likely to go through the exploration tasks that are involved in the career decision-making process, before they finally commit to a career of choice.

Skorikov and Vondracek (1998) contest that there are no gender differences in vocational development, of which career decision-making process and ego identity formation are an integral part of. This is similar to a study (Alberts et al., 2003), which demonstrated that career decision-making was equally important to both males and females.

For the purposes of this study, the SCTI was chosen as it probes the six central decisional tasks that are involved in the career making process, which demonstrate how a person arrives at a career choice. In addition the SCTI was chosen to find out if the six career tasks are relevant and applicable within a South African context. The SCTI was developed in line with theories that suggest that the career decision-making process is a developmental process consisting of different tasks, which is what the present study explored.

Acquisition of appropriate career related information is important in the successful choice of a career, as information constitutes the basis for the development of self-awareness and opportunity awareness (Shevlin & Millar, 2006). As young adolescents are engaged in one of the most significant components of their identity development, that is choosing a career, it is crucial that the process that they follow advances rather than retard their vocational identity development. After all, occupational careers are major determinants of people's life-style, standard of living, standing in the community and life-satisfaction (ScienceDirect Editorial, 2007).

CHAPTER THREE
METHODS

3.1 Aims of the study

3.1.1 General aim

The general aim of the current study was to investigate the relationship between Marcia's identity statuses as measured by the Identity Status Interview and the career decision-making process as measured by the Study Task Choice Inventory.

3.1.2 Specific aims

1. To examine whether there is a relationship between gender identity statuses and the career decision-making process.
2. To investigate if there are gender differences between males and females on identity statuses.
3. To explore if there are gender differences between males and females on career decision-making process.

Based on the first aim of the study, it was expected that Diffusion identity status would negatively correlate highly with all the facets of career decision-making processes (Orientation to choice, Self-exploratory behaviour, Broad exploratory behaviour, In-depth exploratory behaviour and Commitment). It was also expected that Foreclosed identity status would correlate negatively with Orientation to choice, Self-exploratory behaviour, Broad exploratory behaviour, and In-depth exploratory behaviour, because foreclosed individuals

have formed commitments without prior explorations. As a result, it was hoped that a high positive correlation would be found between Foreclosure and Commitment. Given that individuals within the Moratorium and Achievement identity statuses are very much high in the process of searching for meaningful adult roles and would later form firm commitments, it was expected that significant positive correlations between Moratorium and Achievement with Orientation to choice, Self-exploratory behaviour, Broad exploratory behaviour, and In-depth exploratory behaviour would be found. It was further expected that a negative correlation would be found between Moratorium and Commitment, whereas a significant positive correlation would be found between Achievement and Commitment.

Regarding the second and third aims of the current study, it was expected that there would be no significant difference on identity statuses and career decision-making processes. This postulation was based partly on the fact that given the current transitions such as affirmative action as well as socialization processes, emphasis is no longer placed on gender as to whether one would be able to carry out a particular task, but instead on other factors such as exploration and commitment.

3.2 Research Design

The current study adopted a quantitative research approach with correlational and ex post facto designs. The design is ex post facto because the variables that were being measured, which are gender identity development and career decision–making process, had already been established in the participants. Furthermore, the researcher was only seeking to understand

and explain the relationship that may exist between the variables, namely, identity statuses, career decision-making process and gender.

3.3 Sample

A purposive sampling method was used to select potential participants on the basis of gender and grade. A purposive sampling method involves the selection of participants based on certain characteristics or involves certain individuals who are likely to provide useful information for the purposes of the study (Potter, 1998). As the focus of this research study was on the difference between gender identity development and career decision-making process, all Grade 12 learners who volunteered to participate were included.

The sample comprised males and females from a public high school in an urban settlement in Johannesburg. The study was conducted at this school for two reasons, namely, because there are few empirical studies conducted with the Black learners and this school has a higher representation of this racial group, and also because of accessibility. It is a co-ed ex model C school with 1332 learners. Learners pay school fees of R8500 per year. The school population comprises 98 percent Black learners and 2 percent is made up of other nationalities. This sample has been chosen because Grade 12 learners are assumed to have gone through most of the career decision-making processes as some are already applying at institutions of higher learning.

A letter explaining the nature of the study was sent to parents via their Grade 12 children as well as a request for consent for the participation in the study (see Appendix E and F). Of the

205 Grade 12 learners who were given participants' information letters (see Appendix G) and participants' assent forms (see Appendix H), only 156 learners volunteered to participate in the study.

Data was collected in one day in July 2008. Learners were given a background information sheet on the day of the data collection, which was used to describe the sample of the study. As already mentioned, out of 205 Grade 12 learners, 156 learners (76 percent) participated in the present study. As presented in Table One, of the 156 participants, 60 learners (38.5 percent) were males and 96 learners (61.5 percent) were females. The learners' age ranged from 17 to 20 years with the mean age of 17.7 years.

Table 1: Background Information of the Participants

	n.	**%**	**Total**	**Mean Age**	**SD**
Males	60	38.5			
			156	17.7	.89
Females	96	61.5			

In terms of parental education, 54 percent of the participants' fathers have either attained a matriculation or below as their highest qualification and the remaining 46 percent had a post graduate degree as their highest qualification. Fifty-seven percent of the participants' mothers had obtained a post graduate degree as their highest qualification, whilst 43 percent had a matriculation certificate or below as their highest qualification. There were 18 percent of learners who indicated "Not Applicable" under parental education for their fathers. It seems

that the question was ambiguous as some learners' fathers were deceased and they probably took it that it was not relevant to include their fathers' level of education. It also seemed that other learners either do not live with their fathers or may have not known their fathers. As a result, they could not give such information. This information is presented in Table Two.

Table 2: Participants' Parental Education

	Father		**Mother**	
	n.	**%**	**n.**	**%**
Below Matric	16	11.4	9	6.0
Matric	34	24.1	41	27.5
Diploma/Degree	55	39	69	46.3
Postgraduate Degree	10	7.1	16	10.7
Not Applicable	26	18.4	11	9.4

In the realm of parental occupation, although a high percentage of parents, both mothers and fathers had higher education qualifications, 74 percent of the participants' fathers and 62 percent of the mothers held either manual labour jobs or semi-skilled jobs. This could be due to the high unemployment rate in South Africa which affects both the skilled and unskilled as discussed in the literature section. In addition, the variables of unemployed, housewife and deceased were put under a single category due to the ambiguity of the question on father education as indicated above. Some learners that had indicated 'not applicable' under parental education for father, indicated under parental occupation, for deceased (17), father as 'not applicable' while others put a tick next to deceased and a few did not choose any

occupation for the father. Thus it was difficult to determine whether the father was unknown, deceased or unemployed. Table Three presents parental occupation.

Table 3: Participants' Parental Occupation

	Father		**Mother**	
	n.	**%**	**n.**	**%**
Unemployed/housewife /deceased	14	10.1	18	12
Manual labour/semi-skilled	103	74.1	93	62
Professional/Managerial	22	15.8	39	26

3.4 Instruments

Data collection began with the participants filling in a background information sheet. The biographical information from the information sheet was used for describing the sample of the study. This was followed by the participants filling in two standardized questionnaires, the Extended Objective Measure-Ego Identity Status II (EOM-EIS II) and the Study Choice Task Inventory (SCTI).

3.4.1 The Revised Extended Version of the Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status (EOM-EIS II)

The participants' identity was assessed by an instrument, namely, the Revised Extended Version of the Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status (EOM-EIS II) developed by Bennion and Adams (1986). The EOM-EIS II was used as it allows for the assessment of two

identity frameworks that are representative of potential gender differences in identity formation (Adams, 1989). It measures identity formation on two domains, the ideological (i.e. occupation, religious and political) and the interpersonal (i.e. sex roles, friendship and recreation) domains. The EOM-EIS II comprises 64 items, and the participants responded to each item on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The 64 items are divided equally between the ideological and the interpersonal domains. Because an overall measure of ego identity status was of interest, the ideological and the interpersonal domains were combined for each identity status, thus providing four general statuses of ego identity.

Reliability estimates have shown the EOM-EIS II to be a fairly consistent measure for participants between the ages of 15 to 30 years (Adams et al, 1989). It has also been shown to have a test-retest reliability of 0.73 to 0.91 (Sandhu & Tung, 2006). Evidence of content and construct validity of the EOM-EIS II was reported by Bennion and Adams (1986), showing relationships between item content and identity formation theory, a factor structure that is consistent with theory.

3.4.2 The Study Choice Task Inventory (SCTI)

The SCTI was constructed in accordance with recent suggestions in the literature on career decision-making. According to Germeijs and Verschueren (2006) some of these suggestions include the importance of developing instruments that are process oriented and that are designed to probe the decisional process and not merely the degree of decidedness. Also the instruments must be theory driven or based on a clear conceptual framework regarding the

different tasks in the career decision-making process. Lastly the instruments must be allowing a separate or differential assessment of the different tasks involved in the career decision-making process.

Germeijs and Verschueren (2006) maintain that this instrument, the SCTI, is based on taxonomies of career decision-making problems and on theories where the career decision-making process is conceptualized as a developmental process consisting of different tasks. In addition, common to these theories is the distinction between the decisional tasks awareness, exploration, commitment and implementation. It probes the six central career decisional tasks, namely Orientation to choice, Self-exploratory behaviour, Broad exploratory behaviour, In-depth exploratory behaviour, Decisional status and Commitment. The SCTI uses a separate subscale for each of the tasks.

Orientation to Choice scale consists of 12 items, six of which were aimed at assessing learners' awareness of the need to make a decision. The other six items probed the degree of motivation to engage in the career decision process. The participants responded to each item on a scale of 1 (not at all applicable) to 9 (entirely applicable). The reliability coefficient of this scale is 0.90 and its construct validity is 0.90 (Germeijs & Verschueren, 2006). Given that this instrument has not been applied to the South African context, one of the purposes of this study was to determine its relevance and appropriateness.

The *Self-exploratory behaviour* scale has 24 items with three response categories, namely, never, sometimes, and often, which are used to indicate the frequency of self-exploratory

behaviour during the last and current school year. The 24 items of the self-exploratory behaviour subscales are based on the combination of four relevant domains of self-exploration (interests, values, abilities and study strategies) with six relevant sources of information (self, friends, school counsellors, teachers and others). The first three domains of self-exploration are considered as important variables during the career decision-making process that characterise individuals. These were complimented by a fourth domain, study strategies and methods, which are generally considered important for successful learning and thus also for studying in institutions of higher learning (Germeijs & Verschueren, 2006).The scale has a reliability coefficient of 0.87 and a construct validity of 0.87.

Broad exploratory b*ehaviour of the Environment* contains five items where the participants responded on three response categories, never, sometimes, and often. To probe *In-depth exploratory behaviour*, learners were asked to give the names of the studies about which they had collected information. Afterwards, the 13 items of the In-Depth Exploratory Behaviour scale were to be completed with regard to these studies. The participants responded on three response categories, never, sometimes, and often. The reliability coefficient of this scale is 0.87 for Broad exploratory behaviour and 0.75 for In-Depth exploratory behaviour. The Broad exploratory behaviour and In-depth exploratory behaviour have a construct validity coefficient of 0.71.

Decisional status has two items, (a) "list all studies you are considering now" and (b) "which study is your first choice" (if undecided, write undecided). Numerical values were given to four possibilities in responding: 1 (no first choice and no alternatives are listed), 2

(alternatives are listed without a first choice), 3 (a first choice is listed with alternatives, and 4 (a first choice is listed with no alternatives).

Commitment scale has 8 items and the answers were given on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from *yes, very* to *not at all.* Learners who indicated having a first choice in the Decisional Status were asked to rate the degree of commitment to their choice, using the Commitment scale. The reliability coefficient for this scale is 0.84 and the construct validity is 0.83. A sample of the SCTI is presented in Appendix B.

3.5. Data Analysis

In order to determine whether there was a relationship between identity statuses and career decision-making process, a Spearman's Ranks correlation coefficient was used to compare these two variables for males and females. Secondly, two sample independent T-tests were conducted to compare identity statuses of males and females.

3.6 Ethical Consideration

The researcher ensured that the participants' well being, their dignity and privacy were protected. Total disclosure of the aims and purpose of the research were put forth to the participants in writing and they were made aware of what participating in the project would involve and what demands would be made upon them (Leedy, 1993). Participation in the study was completely voluntary and the participants' right to withdraw from the study at any

point was emphasized to them. In addition, the participants were made aware that they may choose not to answer any questions in the questionnaire.

The data has been kept in a safe place and only the researcher's supervisor and the researcher had access to it. No identifying information was included in the questionnaires. All responses were kept confidential. The instruments being used did not ask for any identifying data, thus anonymity of the participants was assured. Finally, although it was not anticipated, should any learners have felt uncomfortable about their career awareness or their career choice, a referral would have been made to the appropriate counselling services at the Counselling and Career Development Unit (CCDU) at the University of the Witwatersrand.

.

CHAPTER FOUR
RESULTS

4.1 Overview of data analysis.

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data from the responses of the subjects of this study. Statistical Analysis System (SAS) version 9 was utilized to conduct statistical analysis.

Cronbach's alpha which measures how well variables assess a single one-dimensional construction was employed. If the construct is high (>0.70) it indicates a high inter-variable correlation, and should the alpha coefficient be low, it is concluded that the variables are multidimensional, that is, they do not measure the same construct (Seabi, 2004). In the current research, the Study Choice Task Inventory (SCTI) revealed Cronbach's Coefficient alphas of 0.70, 0.70, 0.79 and 0.73 for Orientation to choice, In-depth exploratory behaviour, Self-exploratory behaviour and Broad exploratory behaviour, respectively. The coefficient alpha for the last subscale on Commitment was statistically insignificant. These results confirm the reliability and relevance of the career decision-making instrument (SCTI) for the South African context. Germeijs and Verschueren (2006) reported coefficients 0.90, 0.87, 0.75, 0.87, and 0.84 for the Orientation to choice, Broad exploratory behaviour, In-depth exploratory behaviour, Self-exploratory behaviour and Commitment subscales, respectively.

Internal reliability coefficients of the EOM-EIS were also tested and coefficient alphas of 0.70, 0.86, 0.70 and 0.83 for the Diffusion, Foreclosure, Moratorium and Achievement

statuses were found, respectively. Blustein et al. (1989) reported similar results, with Achievement (0.66), Moratorium (0.73), Foreclosure (0.90) and Diffusion as 0.68.

Inferential tests employed were the T-test, and the Spearman's Rank correlation coefficient. The results are presented in three sections according to the sequence of the research aims. The results of the first aim which investigated a relationship between gender identity statuses and career decision-making process are presented in section 4.2. The second aim was to determine whether there were gender differences in the identity statuses and the results are presented in section 4.3. The findings of the third aim, which explored whether there was a relationship between gender identity statuses and career decision-making process, are presented in section 4.4.

4.2 Correlation between gender identity statuses and career decision-making process.

As already mentioned, the first aim of this study was to explore the relationship between gender identity statuses and career decision-making process. The Spearman Rank's Correlation was conducted to investigate this aim of the study. The relationship between female identity statuses and career decision-making process are presented in Table Four.

As presented in Table Four, Self-exploratory behaviour only correlated significantly with Diffusion ($r = -0.289$, $p<0.01$) and Foreclosure ($r = -0.257$, $p<0.05$). Furthermore, Broad exploratory behaviour only correlated significantly with Diffusion ($r = -0.219$, $p<0.05$) and Foreclosure ($r = -0.244$, $p<0.05$). Although significant findings were established with these variables (Self-exploratory behaviour, Broad exploratory behaviour, Diffusion and

Foreclosure), they all yielded negative correlation. However, Commitment correlated positively with Moratorium (r =0.234, p<0.05). There was no significant relationship between career decision-making process and Achievement. Moreover, there was no statistically significant relationship between Orientation to choice and In-depth exploratory behaviour with the identity statuses.

Table 4: Relationship between identity statuses and career decision-making in females.

	Diffusion	**Foreclosure**	**Moratorium**	**Achievement**
ORT	0.001	-0.150	0.106	-0.028
SEB	-0.289*	-0.257*	-0.163	-0.077
BEB	-0.219*	-0.245*	-0.072	0.109
IDE	-0.173	-0.043	-0.106	0.051
COM	0.080	0.055	0.234*	-0.005

*p < 0.05

KEY:

ORT: Orientation to choice

SEB: Self-exploratory behaviour

BEB: Broad exploratory behaviour

IDE: In –depth exploratory behaviour

COM: Commitment

Not only was the relationship between female identity statuses and career decision- making process explored, but also between male identity statuses and career decision-making process. The Spearman Rank's Correlation was also conducted to investigate the relationship between these two variables in males. As presented in Table Five, Orientation to choice correlated significantly with Foreclosure (r = 0.295, p <0.05), Moratorium (r = 0.481, p<0.01)

and Achievement (r = -0.347, p<0.01). In addition, Broad exploratory behaviour correlated significantly with Diffusion (r = -0.269, p< 0.05) and Foreclosure (r = -0.290, p<0.05). Furthermore, Commitment correlated significantly with Moratorium (r = -0.312, p<0.05). It is important to highlight that Orientation to choice yielded positive correlations with the two identity statuses, Foreclosure and Moratorium, while it yielded negative correlation with the Achievement identity status. Commitment to choice, however, yielded a negative correlation with the Moratorium identity status.

There was no significant relationship between Self-exploratory behaviour and the ego identity statuses with career decision-making process. Additionally, there was no statistically significant relationship between In-depth exploratory behaviour and the ego identity statuses with career decision-making process for males.

Table 5: Relationship between identity statuses and career decision-making in males

	Diffusion	Foreclosure	Moratorium	Achievement
ORT	0.245	0.296*	0.481**	-0.347**
SEB	-0.194	-0.129	-0.098	0.095
BEB	-0.269*	-0.291*	-0.095	0.171
IDE	-0.040	-0.031	-0.008	0.198
COM	-0.239	0.079	-0.313*	0.116

*p < 0.05

4.3 Gender differences in the formation of identity.

The second aim of the present study investigated whether there was a significant difference between the means of males and females on identity statuses. Several t-tests were conducted to determine if there were significant differences on the four identity statuses Diffusion, Foreclosure, Moratorium and Achievement between males and females. As shown in Table Six, the results demonstrated no statistically significant difference between males and females on Diffusion (t= -0.12; df: 154; p>.05), Moratorium (t= 0.36; df: 154; p>.05), Foreclosure (t= 1.67; df: 154; p>.05) and Achievement (t= 0.35; df: 154; p>.05). Although there was no significant difference between males and females on any of the identity statuses, of significant interest is the tendency of males to be more foreclosed than their female counterparts.

Table 6: Distribution of Mean Scores on identity statuses and t-test results

Variable	**Male (n=60)**		**Female (n=95)**		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t.
Diffusion	49.1	9.3	49.2	12.2	-0.12
Foreclosure	42.3	15.8	38.4	13.2	1.67
Moratorium	56.1	11.8	55.4	12.3	0.36
Achievement	69.3	14.8	68.5	13.9	0.35

4.4 Gender differences on the process of career decision-making.

As previously mentioned, the third aim of the study was to investigate if there was a statistically significant difference between males and females on career decision-making process. To test this question, a t-test was conducted. As can be seen in Table Seven, there was no significant difference between the means regarding career decision-making process (t= -1.24; df: 154; p>0.05). The mean score for males on the process of career decision-making is 2.92 with a standard deviation of 0.42, while the mean score for females is 3.01 with a standard deviation of 0.46.

Table 7: Comparison of male and female scores on career decision-making process

Gender	n	Mean	SD	t.
Males	60	2.92	0.42	
				-1.27
Females	95	3.01	0.46	

CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of the present study are discussed in three sections (5.2; 5.3 and 5.4) according to the research aims. The results of the current study are also discussed in accordance with the reviewed literature. Following this theoretical and practical implications of the study are discussed. Finally, limitations of this research and directions for future research are presented.

5.1. Correlation between Gender Identity Development and Career Decision-Making Process.

As indicated earlier the first aim of the present study was to examine whether there is a relationship between gender identity statuses and the career decision-making process. The study intended to explore if there is gender differences between males and females on identity statuses. Lastly gender differences between males and females on career decision-making process were also investigated.

It was expected that Diffusion would negatively correlate with Orientation to choice, Self-exploratory behaviour, Broad exploratory behaviour, In-depth explanatory behaviour and Commitment. This was because individuals within the Diffusion identity status generally appear to have no direction and are uninterested in finding personally expressive adult roles and values (Kroger, 2000).

The results of the current study revealed significant negative correlation between Diffusion identity status with Self–exploratory behaviour and Broad exploratory behaviour for the female participants; while a significant negative correlation between Diffusion and Broad exploratory was found for the male participants. Although these findings did not yield negative correlation with all the variables of career decision-making process, they are consistent with Germeijs and Verschueren's (2005; 2006) results which demonstrated negative correlations between Diffusion status and all six career decisional tasks. In addition, these results confirm previous findings which revealed no positive relationship between Diffusion status with Exploration and Commitment (Crocetti el al., 2007; Luyckx et al., 2005). This suggests that diffused adolescents do not actively explore different identity alternatives and lack strong identity commitments.

It was also found that Foreclosure correlated negatively with Self-exploratory behaviour and Broad exploratory behaviour for the female participants, while Broad exploratory behaviour correlated negatively with the male Foreclosure identity status. These results appear to suggest that participants in the Foreclosure status do not engage in the gathering of general information about career alternatives so that they can make a choice of which career to follow. Louw (1991) suggests that foreclosed individuals have made an unquestioned and firm commitment to a career field, typically adopting the desires of their parents and family traditions without exploring other options. This implies that foreclosed adolescents are less likely to engage in any form of exploration. Instead, they are likely to commit to a career and this could be possibly influenced by conformity, peer pressure or societal influences such as gender roles. Given that almost similar results were found within the male and female gender groups, it can be postulated that identity development plays a more crucial role than gender.

Although previous studies (Alberts & Meyer, 1998; Crocetti et al., 2007; Germeijs & Verschueren, 2006) have demonstrated significant negative correlation between Foreclosure identity status and Commitment, this was not the case in the present study. The results of the current study are contrary to Marcia's theory of identity development, which suggest that individuals in the Foreclosure status make unquestioned and firm commitments to career fields without exploring their options. Although these results showed that both males and females have not undergone any exploration of career options, it failed to show that they do make an unquestioned and firm commitment to a career, which is what other studies (Crocetti et al, 2007; Alberts & Meyer, 1998, Germeijs & Verschueren, 2006) have been able to show.

These results could probably be explained in terms of the learners' understanding of how to fill out the questionnaire. For instance for the learners to answer the questions on the last variable of the SCTI, which is Commitment, they need to have filled out the fifth task in the SCTI, the Decisional status scale, which requires that they write down a first choice major that they wish to pursue in higher education. From the responses on the questionnaires, a substantial number of learners had filled out the Commitment scale without having identified a first choice in the Decisional status scale which meant that the Commitment scale that they had filled out was null and void. This therefore came out in the interpretation of the results as learners having not made any commitment at all.

The results of the present study demonstrated positive correlation between Moratorium identity status and Commitment for the female participants, while positive and negative correlations were found between Moratorium and Orientation to choice and Commitment

with the males, respectively. It was expected that Moratorium would positively correlate with all the career decision-making processes (Orientation to Choice, Self-exploratory behaviour, Broad exploratory behaviour and In-depth exploratory behaviour) with the exception of Commitment among all the gender groups. This was because individuals in the Moratorium status are actively investigating various alternatives without arriving at firm commitments. Therefore, the current study did not replicate research findings (Crocetti et al., 2007; Alberts & Meyer, 1998, Germeijs & Verschueren, 2006).

It was also hoped that Moratorium would yield a negative correlation with Commitment among the males and females. Although the current results are consistent with previous findings (Crocetti et al., 2007), which showed that individuals in the Moratorium status are actively investigating various alternatives without arriving at firm commitments, this was not the case with the female participants. These results could be explained by other reasons unknown to the researcher.

According to Marcia's theory individuals in the Moratorium status are still in a crisis period and they are actively investigating (exploring) various alternatives before committing to a career field (Louw, 1991). Results of the current study seem to suggest that both males and females do not go through the process of exploration which is contradictory to literature.

The results of the present study showed no significant correlation between Achievement identity status and all the variables of the career decision-making process for females while Orientation to choice correlated negatively with the male Achievement identity status. The

results suggest that both males and females in this status do not go through the career decision-making process at all. In addition the results seem to suggest that males in the Achievement status are not aware of the need to make a decision and neither are they motivated to engage in the career decision-making process. These findings are contradictory to results by Germeijs and Verschueren (2006) which show a significant correlation between Achievement identity status and Broad exploratory behaviour and Commitment. Additional research (Crocetti et al., 2007 & Luzzo, 1995) also showed significant positive correlation between Achieved females and In-depth exploration and Commitment.

The current results are unusual as adolescents in the Achievement status are often motivated to achieve goals, are open to explore and seek new information about themselves and the environment, and persist in the task of career decision-making until they have explored all the relevant information. The results of this study therefore seem to be contrary to literature and they have not replicated results from other research, which is what some of the above mentioned studies, (Crocetti et al., 2007; Alberts & Meyer, 1998, Germeijs & Verschueren, 2006). These results could be explained by other reasons unknown to the researcher.

5.2 Comparison of males and females on identity status

The second aim of the research was to explore whether there was a significant difference between males and females in the formation of an identity. The results of the present study indicate that there was no statistically significant difference between the means of males and females on any identity statuses. These findings seem to corroborate previous studies (Alessandria & Nelson, 2005), which found no significant differences between the gender

groups in the development of an identity among American learners. Similar results were found in a longitudinal study of identity development (Fitch & Adams, 1983) of late adolescents. It thus seems that identity development of adolescents is independent of gender.

However, given the fact that other research studies (Allison & Schultz, 2001; Sandhu & Tung, 2006) revealed significant differences between males and females on Moratorium and Achievement statuses in favour of the females, the current results therefore should be interpreted with caution, since this study was conducted in a single school.

5.3 Comparison between males and females on career decision-making process

The third aim of the study was to compare career decision-making processes between males and females. The results of the present study indicated that there was no difference between males and females in the process of career decision-making. This seems to suggest that gender has no impact on the process that both males and females go through when they choose a career. This could be interpreted in light of the global transformation on women's rights, and affirmative action in South Africa, especially in the work force where both males and females can compete for and occupy the same jobs.

Contrary to the current findings, Luzzo (1995) found a significant positive correlation between gender and career decision-making process. Results indicated that female college participants scored higher than males on career decision-making process, suggesting that there are gender differences between males and females in the process of career decision-making. As above, Fitch and Adams (1983) also highlighted a positive relationship between

the ideological domain and career decision-making. The study suggests that more males than females are in the diffusion status in relation to occupational choice. The inconsistent findings in regard to gender differences on the process of career decision-making process indicate that further investigation into this subject matter would prove to be very beneficial.

5.4 Practical implications of the results

The present study attempted to investigate the relationship between two theoretical positions, that of identity formation and the career development process of which career decision-making process is an integral part. The study also attempted to investigate the relevance of the Study Task Choice Inventory within the South African context. Although minimal correlations between career decision-making processes and identity statuses were found in the current study, few crucial implications are noted. It is deduced that counsellors working with clients in career counselling settings together with educators, who teach career guidance (Life Orientation) could play a critical role in enhancing learners' identity development. This would enable learners not to prematurely commit to career paths.

The present study also suggest that for counsellors, whether within schools or in a career counselling setting, in determining the learners' readiness for selecting a career, it would be helpful to establish the learners' eagerness to explore career options given their status of identity development. For instance learners who are in the Diffusion status may be content with passivity in regard to exploring and committing to a career course, thus at that time requiring minimal guidance and more future direction for when the learner is ready to explore career options. On the other hand, learners that are in the Moratorium status may need a lot

more assistance in exploring who they are and what options may be more suitable for them in terms of a career choice so that they can finally make a commitment to a career. The current study seems to highlight the importance of combining an understanding of the learners' readiness to explore and finally to commit to their identity while on the other hand taking into consideration the level of comfort or satisfaction with their readiness for exploring their identity in relation to career development, of which career decision-making is an integral part.

The study is pertinent especially within a South African context, where there is continued transformation in the socio-political, cultural and the socio-economic situations, all of which seem to impact on the formation of an identity and therefore the career choices of young South Africans. It is likely that these changes, together with trained educators who are in a better position to can offer good counselling and other instruments such as the Study Choice Task Inventory becoming available, will lead to South African adolescents making better quality occupational choices in the future.

In addition, within a South African context, it should be taken into consideration that social and cultural factors seem to play an integral part in the formation of an identity, as discussed earlier on, due to the rapidly changing socio-political and socio-economic state of this country. This would therefore imply that for counsellors and educators alike, the social context within which the majority of the African adolescents have to make career choices is pertinent in understanding their status of identity development and therefore their readiness to choose a career.

Of equal importance is the issue of gender and its relationship to the career decision-making process. There have been varied and contradicting results on the possible influence of gender on the career decision-making process, where some research findings, as discussed earlier, have suggested that gender seems to influence the career decision-making process of adolescents. However, even though the results of this study found no relationship between gender differences and the career decision-making process, within a South African context, with gender equality and affirmative action being at the forefront of transformation, counsellors may need to take into consideration such issues and how they may impact on career choices that are made by male and female learners.

Finally this research also aimed at establishing the relevance of the SCTI within a South African context, thus for counsellors it may be useful to use this instrument with other existing measures like the Self Directed Search (SDS) and the Career Decision Scale (CDS), which remain influential in South Africa. These instruments above could be used concurrently with the EOM-EIS. A combination of such instruments would be useful as identifying learners who are more career indecisive. This may allow for a better understanding of how different learners engage in the identity formation process and the difficulties that they encounter in establishing an identity. By having a better understanding of the social context and therefore the difficulties that learners encounter in deciding upon an ego identity it may also give a better understanding of their eagerness to explore career choices and therefore their readiness to choose a career.

5.5 Limitations of the study

While some of the results of this study suggest that there is a relationship between the ego identity statuses, that is Achievement, Moratorium, Foreclosure and Diffusion and the six tasks that are involved in the career decision-making process, irrespective of gender differences, certain limitations of the study need to be considered together with suggestions for future research.

A major limitation of the study was that the majority of the learners that participated in the study are not first language English speakers, thus language may have contributed to how they may have understood and filled in some of the questions in the questionnaires. This was evident in the last two sections of the SCTI, the Decisional status (fifth section) and Commitment (last section), where the learners were supposed to complete the Commitment section based on their choice of a major in the Decisional status. Some of the learners completed the last section without having stated their first choice of a major in the fifth section of the questionnaire, which might have threatened the validity the results, thereby impacting on the quality of the research.

A second limitation of the study was the question on parental education in the background information sheet, which seemed to be ambiguous. The last column did not specify clearly what the category on ‘not applicable’ included. Thus some learners, whose fathers are deceased, unknown or not living with them, did not specify their level of education, resulting in a noticeably higher percentage of fathers without an educational level. This further impacted on how they categorised the father’s occupation.

Orientation to choice and Broad exploration behaviour are decisional tasks considered important at the beginning of the career decision-making process which could be when learners are in Grade 10. In-depth exploration, Self-exploratory behaviour and Decisional status are considered important at the end of Grade 12 (Germeijs & Verschueren, 2006). This implies that it would have been more beneficial if the study was conducted over a longitudinal period, thus allowing for data to be collected when learners are in Grade 10 through to end of Grade 12.

The fourth limitation was the length of both questionnaires. The EOM-EIS II had 64 items while the SCTI had six status tasks each with varying number of items. This may have impacted on the motivation of the learners, thus further compromising their understanding of the instructions on how to complete the questionnaires, especially the SCTI.

.

A fifth limitation of the SCTI is that it is a self-reporting measure (Germeijs & Verschueren, 2006). Thus by using other sources of information such as parents, teachers, and peers who evaluate the progress of the learners in the career decision-making process, important additional information about the validity of the scale could have been provided. This is significant for the present study as one of the purposes of the study was to test for the significance of the SCTI within a South African context. Lastly, although the sample comprised 76 percent which is a sizable proportion of the Grade 12 learners at the chosen school, the results cannot be generalised to the rest of the population as the study was limited to only one school.

5.6 Suggestions for Future Research

Several suggestions are put forth:

A follow up longitudinal study should be done as identity development and career decision-making are developmental processes that take place over a long period of time. Within a South African context, learners are expected to choose learning areas that they will carry through to Grade 12, and their choice of a career by the end of Grade 12 is highly impacted on by the choice of these learning areas in Grade 9. Thus it suffices to say that the career exploration of South African learners begin towards the end of Grade 9. It would be of great benefit to follow the progress of these learners over a longer period during high school as this would probably provide additional information about their career decision-making process. In addition the research would also provide crucial information on the possible relationship between identity development and career decision-making process as high school going adolescents are also in the process of forging an identity.

This research should also be conducted with learners from diverse education systems, such as Further Education and Training (FET) and the International Examination Board (IEB) and diverse socio-economic backgrounds. This would give a broader understanding of how different socio-economic factors affect the identity development and career decision-making process of South African learners. In addition to the SCTI, additional sources of information such as parents, teachers and peers who evaluate the progress of the learners in the career decision-making process should be used.

In addition, for a more comprehensive understanding of individual's career development results for the SCTI should be brought together with results from other instruments, such as the Self-Directed Search (SDS), that focuses on the career decisions and on the developmental task mastery in general. The SDS have remained an influential force in career practice and research since the 1980s in South Africa and the SDS is probably the most preferred assessment tool in career counselling activities in schools, student counselling centres and private practice (Watson & Stead, 2006).

Lastly, since there seems to be limited research on gender identity development in South Africa, it is suggested that further research on this issue be embarked on. This would give a better understanding of whether there is a relationship between gender identity development and career decision-making process of high school learners. At the same time the research would shed more light into whether there are gender differences in the formation of an identity. With the rapid social and cultural transformation that is taking place in South Africa, and the move towards equal opportunities in the work place for both males and females, the study would be relevant as it looks at how these changes impact on the identity development and career decision-making process of South African adolescents.

5.7 Conclusion

The study aimed to examine, both globally and within the South Africa context, the relationship between gender identity development and the career decision-making process of high school learners. The research was also concerned with the gender differences between males and females and also if these differences impacted on the career decision-making process of the learners.

Results suggested that learners in the Diffusion status do not undergo any exploration of career choices and they do not make any commitments to a career. The findings of the study also suggested that adolescents in the Foreclosure identity status do not engage in the gathering of general information about career alternatives so that they can make a choice of which career to follow. The findings did not support literature which suggests that adolescent in the Foreclosure identity status make unquestioned and firm commitments to a career. Male learners in the Moratorium identity status were found to be actively investigating various alternatives without arriving at firm commitments, while very unusual results were yielded for their female counterparts. Contradictory findings were yielded for both males and females in the Achievement status which were not in line with literature and other research findings, and the reason for these results are beyond the knowledge of the researcher.

There were no gender differences between males and females in the formation of an identity, which is in agreement with some research findings. The issue of gender differences in identity formation seems to have yielded contradictory results, thus more research needs to be conducted in this area, with specific focus on the South African context as there is little

research that has been conducted. Lastly, the results of the study suggest that there are no gender differences between males and females on career decision-making process, but other research findings seems to also yield contradictory results. The results of the study have implications for theory and practice and they lay a foundation for further research in exploring the relationship between identity development and career decision-making process within a South African context.

REFERENCES

Adams, G.R., Bennion, L., & Huh, K. (1989). *Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status: A reference manual* (2nd ed). Logan, Utah: Utah State University.

Alberts, C., Mbalo, N. L. & Ackermann, C. J. (2003). Adolescents' Perceptions of the Relevance of Domains of Identity Formation: A South African Cross-Cultural Study. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 32 (3), 169-184.

Alberts,C. & Meyer, J. C. (1998). The relationship between Marcia's ego identity statuses and selected personality variables in an African context. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, 20, 277-288.

Alessandria, K. P. & Nelson, E.S. (2005).Identity development and self-esteem of first-generation American college students: An exploratory study. *Journal of College Student Development*, 46(1), 3-12

Allison, B. N. & Schultz, J. B. (2001). Interpersonal Identity Formation during early adolescence. *Adolescence*, 36 (143), 510-523.

Astin, A. & Alexander, W. (1993). Engineering Outcomes, ASEE *PRISM*, September, 27-30.

Bennion, L. D., & Adams. G. R. (1986). A revision of the extended version of the object measure of ego identity status: An identity instrument for use with late adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 1, 183-198

Blustein, D. L., Ellis, M. V., & Devenis, L. E. (1989). The development and validation of a two-dimensional model of the commitment to career choices process. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 35, 342-378.

Brown, D. (2003).*Career Information, Career Counselling, and Career Development* (8th ed.). New York: Pearson Education, Inc.

Chae, M. H. (2001). Gender and Ethnicity in Identity Formation. *The New Jersey Journal of Professional Counselling*, 56, 17-23.

Côté, J. E., & Schwartz,S. (2002). Comparing psychological and sociological approaches to identity: Identity status, identity capital, and the individualisation process. *Journal of Adolescence*, 25, 571-586.

Cramer, P. (2000). Development of identity: Gender makes a difference. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 34, 42-72.

Crocetti, E., Rubini, M., Luyckx, K. & Meeus, W. (2007). Identity Formation in Early and Middle Adolescents from various Ethnic Groups: From Three Dimensions to Five Statuses. *Journal of Youth Adolescence*, 1-25

Du Gay, E., Evans, J. & Redman, P. (2000). *Identity: a reader*. London: Sage.

Erickson, B.L. & Strommer, D.W. (1991). *Teaching college freshmen*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Erickson, E.H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis*. New York: Norton.

Fitch, J. D., & Adams, G. R. (1983). Ego identity and intimacy status: replication and extension. *Developmental Psychology*, 19, 839-845.

Germeijs, V. & Verschueren, K. (2006). High school students' career decision-making process: Development and Validation of the Study Choice Task Inventory. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 14, 449-471.

Germeijs, V. & Verschueren, K. (2005).High school students' career decision-making process: A longitudinal study of one choice. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 68, 189-204.

Holcomb-McCoy, C. (2005). Ethnic Identity Development in Early Adolescence: Implications and Recommendations for Middle School Counsellors. *Asca Professional School Counselling*, 120-127.

Hotchkiss, L., & Borow, H. (1996). Sociological perspective on work and career development. In D. Brown & L. Brooks (Eds.), Career Choice and Development (3rd ed., pp. 281-334). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Kroger, J. (2000). *Identity development: Adolescence through adulthood*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage

Leedy, P.D. (1993). *Practical Research: Planning and Design* (5th ed.). New York: MacMillan Publishing Company.

Lock, R. D. (2005). *Taking charge of your career direction*: *Career planning guide*, Book1 (5th ed). Australia: Thomson.

Louw, D.A. (1991*). Human Development*. Pretoria: Haum Tertiary

Low, J. M., Akande, D., & Hill, C. (2005). A cross-cultural comparison of identity development: South Africa and the United States. *Identity; An international Journal of Theory and Research,* 5(4), 303-314.

Lucas, M. (1997). Identity development, career development and psychosocial separation from parents: Similarities and differences between men and women. *Journal of Counselling Psychology,* 44, 123-132.

Luyckx, K., Goossens, L., Soenens, B., Breyers, W. & Vansteenkiste, M. (2005). Identity Statuses Based on 4 Rather Than 2 Identity Dimensions: Extended and Refining Marcia's Paradigm. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 34 (6), 605-618.

Luzzo, D.A. (1995). Gender Differences in College Students' Career Maturity and Perceived Barriers in Career Development. *Journal of Counselling and Development*, 73, 319-322.

Marcia, J. E. (1980). Identity in adolescence. In J. Adelson (Ed.), *Handbook of adolescent psychology* (pp159-187). New York: Wiley.

Marcia, J. E. (1983). Some Directions for the Investigation of Ego Development in Early Adolescence. *The Journal of Early Adolescence,* 3, 215-223.

Meeus, W., Ledema, J., Helsen, M., & Vbllenbergh, W. (1999). Patterns of adolescent identity development: Review of literature and longitudinal analysis. *Developmental Review,* 19, 419-461.

Miller, M. J. & Miller, T. A. (2005). Theoretical application of Holland 'theory to individual decision-making styles: implications for career counsellors. *Journal of Employment Counselling,* 42 (1), 20-28.

Potter, C. (1998). *Honours Course in Research Design and Analysis: Reading Pack for Catch-up Tutorials,* University of the Witwatersrand- Johannesburg.

Prideaux, L., & Creed, P. A. (nd). *Career maturity, career decision-making self-efficacy and career indecision: A review of the accrued evidence*. Griffith University- Gold Coast.

Rojewski, J. W., & Hill, R. B. (1998). Influence of gender and academic risk behaviour on career decision making and occupational choice in early adolescence. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk,* 3, 265-287.

Sandhu, D. & Tung, S. (2006).Gender Differences in Adolescent Identity Formation. *Pakistan Journal of Psychological Research,* 21 (1-2), 29-40.

ScienceDirect, Editorial (2007). *Introduction and commentary: Studies of development in context, 70, 1-7.*

Scott, I. (2008, October 10-16). Failing the Majority: The current system is hampering economic growth and development. Mail and Guardian, p.1

Seabi, J. M. (2004). Design, Implementation and Evaluation of a Cognitive Programme for First Year Engineering Students. Unpublished MA dissertation. University of the Witwatersrand.

Shaffer, D. R. (2002). *Developmental Psychology: Childhood and Adolescence* (6th ed.).Australia: Wadsworth.

Sharf, R. S. (2006). *Applying Career Development Theory to Counselling*. Australia: Wadsworth.

Shevlin, M. & Millar, R. (2006). Career education: An application of latent growth curve modelling to career information-seeking behaviour of school pupils. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 76,141-153.

Skorikov, V., & Vondracek, F. D. (1998). Vocational Identity Development: It's Relationship to Other Identity Domains and to Overall Identity Development. *Journal of Career Assessment,* 6(1), 13-35.

Stocker, A, (2007). Adolescent Identity Formation with Pre-Adolescents and Post-Adolescents using the EOM-EIS II. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis. Texas Tech University.

Super, D. E. (1990). A life-span, life-space approach to career development. In D. Brown, & L. Brooks (Eds.), *Career choice and development: Applying contemporary theories to practice* (2nd ed.,pp.197-261).San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Watson, M.B. & Stead, G.B. (Eds.). (2006). *Career Psychology in the South African context.* (2nd ed.). Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Woollacott, L. C. (2003). *Dealing with underpreparedness in Engineering Education* : Part 1 : Defining the goal : taxanomy of engineering competency. 2003 WFEO/ASEE e-Conference, Retrieved 23rd March 2004 from http://www.asee.org/conference/e-conference/papers/Eng Competency final.pdf.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION SHEET

APPENDIX A2: EOM-EIS II

APPENDIX B: SCTI

APPENDIX C: PRINCIPAL INFORMATION LETTER

APPENDIX D: PRINCIPAL CONSENT FORM

APPENDIX E: PARENT INFORMATION LETTER

APPENDIX F: PARENT CONSENT FORM

APPENDIX G: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LETTER

APPENDIX H: PARTICIPANT ASSENT FORM

APPENDIX I: GDE INFORMATION LETTER

APPENDIX A1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION SHEET

1. Age :_____ years old
2. Gender :____ (M/F)
3. Grade :____
4. Parental education: Please tick one box to indicate the years of schooling of your parents or guardian. If one is deceased, please tick N/A

	GRADE7 & BELOW	GRADE8-10	GRADE10-12	COLLEGE DIPLOMA	UNIVERSITY DEGREE	POSTGRADUATE DEGREE	N/A
FATHER							
MOTHER							

5. Parental occupation : Please use the following categories to indicate your parents' occupation on the space provided under the table:

1. Domestic worker	7.Police	13. Doctor
2. Semiskilled worker	8. Nurse	14. Lawyer
3. Farmer, mechanic, carpenter	9. Teacher	15. Housewife
4. Crafts	10. Technician	16. Unemployed
5. Electrician	11. Administrator	17. Deceased
6.Salesperson	12. Clerk	18. Other:

Father :_____(please write the number from the list)

Mother :_____(please write the number from the list)

APPENDIX A2: EOM-EIS II

Please read each item carefully and indicate to what degree it reflects your own thoughts and feelings. If a statement has more than one part, please indicate your reaction to the statement *as a whole* .Indicate your answer by circling one of the following responses.

6-Strongly Agree 5-Moderately Agree 4-Agree

3-Disagree 2-Moderately Disagree 1-Strongly Disagree

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Agree	Disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.I haven't chosen the occupation I really want to get into, and I'm just working at whatever is available until something better comes along	6	5	4	3	2	1
2. When it comes to religion, I just haven't found anything that appeals and I don't really feel the need to look	6	5	4	3	2	1
3. My ideas about men's and women's roles are identical to my parents'. What has worked for them will obviously work for me.	6	5	4	3	2	1
4. There's no single "life style" which appeals to me more than another.	6	5	4	3	2	1
5. There are a lot of different kinds of people. I'm still exploring the many possibilities to find the right kind of friends for me.	6	5	4	3	2	1
6. I sometimes join in recreational activities when asked, but I rarely try anything on my own.	6	5	4	3	2	1
7. I haven't really thought about a "dating style". I'm not too concerned whether I date or not	6	5	4	3	2	1
8. Politics is something that I can never be too sure about because things change so fast. But, I do think it's important to know what I can politically stand for and believe in.	6	5	4	3	2	1
9. I'm still trying to decide how capable I am as a person and what jobs will be right for me.	6	5	4	3	2	1

10. I don't give religion much thought and it doesn't bother me one way or the other.	6	5	4	3	2	1
11. There's so many ways to divide responsibilities in marriage; I'm trying to decide what will work for me.	6	5	4	3	2	1
12. I'm looking for an acceptable perspective for my "life style" view, but I haven't really found it yet.	6	5	4	3	2	1
13. There are many reasons for friendship, but I choose my close friends on the basis of certain values and similarities that I've personally decided on.	6	5	4	3	2	1
14. While I don't have one recreational activity I'm really committed to, I'm experiencing numerous leisure outlets to identity one I can really get involved in.	6	5	4	3	2	1
15. Based on past experiences, I've chosen the type of dating relationship I want now.	6	5	4	3	2	1
16. I haven't really considered politics. It just doesn't excite me much.	6	5	4	3	2	1
17. I might have thought about a lot of different jobs, but there's never really any question since my parents said what they wanted.	6	5	4	3	2	1
18. A person's faith is unique to each individual. I've reconsidered it myself and know what I can believe.	6	5	4	3	2	1
19. I've never really seriously considered men and women's roles in marriage. It just doesn't seem to concern me.	6	5	4	3	2	1
20. After considerable thought I've developed my own individual viewpoint of what is for me an ideal "lifestyle" and don't believe anyone will be likely to change my perspective.	6	5	4	3	2	1
21. My parents know what's best for me in terms of how to choose my friends.	6	5	4	3	2	1
22. I've chosen one or more recreational activities to engage in regularly form lots of things and I'm satisfied with those choices.	6	5	4	3	2	1
23. I don't think about dating much. I just kind of take it as it	6	5	4	3	2	1

comes						
24. I guess I'm pretty much like my folks when it comes to politics. I follow what they do in terms of voting and such.	6	5	4	3	2	1
25. I'm really not interested in finding the right job, any job will do. I just seem to flow with what is available.	6	5	4	3	2	1
26. I'm not sure what religious means to me. I'd like to make up my mind but I'm not done looking yet.	6	5	4	3	2	1
27. My ideas about men's and women's roles come right from my parents and my family. I haven't seen any need to look further.	6	5	4	3	2	1
28. My own views on a desirable life style were taught to me by my parents and I don't see any need to question what they taught me.	6	5	4	3	2	1
29. I don't have any real close friends, and I don't think I'm looking for one right now.	6	5	4	3	2	1
30. Sometimes I join in leisure activities, but I really don't see a need to look for a particular activity to do regularly.	6	5	4	3	2	1
31. I'm trying out different types of dating relationships. I just haven't decided what is best for me.	6	5	4	3	2	1
32. There are so many different political parties and ideals. I can't decide which to follow until I figure it all out.	6	5	4	3	2	1
33. It took me a while to figure it out, but now I really know what I want for a career.	6	5	4	3	2	1
34. Religion is confusing to me right now. I keep changing my views on what is right and wrong for me.	6	5	4	3	2	1
35. I've spent some time thinking about men's and women's role in marriage and I've decided what will work best for me.	6	5	4	3	2	1
36. I'm finding an acceptable viewpoint to life itself, I find myself engaging in a lot of discussion with others and some self-exploration.	6	5	4	3	2	1
37. I only pick friends my parents would approve of.	6	5	4	3	2	1

38. I've always liked doing the same recreational activities my parents do and haven't ever seriously considered anything else.	6	5	4	3	2	1
39. I only go out with the type of people my parents expect me to date.	6	5	4	3	2	1
40. I've thought my political beliefs through and realize I can agree with some and not other aspects of what my parents believe.	6	5	4	3	2	1
41. My parents decided a long time ago what I should go into for employment and I'm following through their plans.	6	5	4	3	2	1
42. I've gone through a period of serious questions about faith and can now say I understand what I believe in as an individual.	6	5	4	3	2	1
43. I've been thinking about the roles that husbands and wives play a lot these days, and I'm trying to make a final decision.	6	5	4	3	2	1
44. My parents' view on life are good enough for me; I don't need anything else.	6	5	4	3	2	1
45. I've tried many different friendships and now I have a clear idea of what I look for in a friend.	6	5	4	3	2	1
46. After trying a lot of recreational activities, I've found one or more I really enjoy doing by myself or with friends.	6	5	4	3	2	1
47. My preferences about dating are still in the process of developing. I haven't fully decided yet.	6	5	4	3	2	1
48. I'm not sure about my political beliefs, but I'm trying to figure out what I can truly believe in.	6	5	4	3	2	1
49. It took me a long time to decide but now I know for sure what direction to move in for a career.	6	5	4	3	2	1
50. I attend the same church my family has always attended. I've never really questioned why.	6	5	4	3	2	1
51. There are many ways that married couples can divide up family responsibilities. I've thought about lots of ways and	6	5	4	3	2	1

now I know exactly how I want it to happen for me.						
52. I guess I just kind of enjoy life in general, and I don't see myself living by any particular viewpoint to life.	6	5	4	3	2	1
53. I don't have any close friends. I just like to hang around with the crowd.	6	5	4	3	2	1
54. I've been experiencing a variety of recreational activities in hopes of finding one or more I can enjoy for some time to come.	6	5	4	3	2	1
55. I've dated different types of people and now know exactly what my own "unwritten rules" for dating are and whom I will date.	6	5	4	3	2	1
56. I really have never been involved in politics enough to have made a firm stand one way or the other.	6	5	4	3	2	1
57. I just can't decide what to do for an occupation. There are so many that have possibilities.	6	5	4	3	2	1
58. I've never really questioned my religion. If it's right for my parents it must be right for me.	6	5	4	3	2	1
59. Opinions on men's and women's roles seem so varied that I don't think much about it.	6	5	4	3	2	1
60. After a long self-examination, I have established a very definite view on what my own lifestyle will be.	6	5	4	3	2	1
61. I really don't know what kind of friend is best for me. I'm trying to figure out exactly what friendship means to me.	6	5	4	3	2	1
62. All of my recreational preferences I got from my parents and I haven't really tried anything else.	6	5	4	3	2	1
63. I date only people that my parents would approve of.	6	5	4	3	2	1
64. My folks have always had their political and moral beliefs about issues like abortion and mercy killing and I've always gone along accepting what they have.	6	5	4	3	2	1

APPENDIX B: SCTI QUESTIONNARE

This questionnaire asks you about choosing a course of study or a major in higher education. Please read the directions to each part carefully.

MY CHOICE OF A MAJOR

The following statements deal with choosing a course of study or a major in higher education. Please indicate to which extent these statements apply to you on a scale of 1(not at all applicable) to 9 (entirely applicable).

This statement is.....

Not at all applicable								Entirely applicable to me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

1.	I am not worried about my choice of a major yet.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
2.	I know I will have to choose a major, but I am not motivated to think about this decision at the moment.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
3.	The thought that I have to choose a major doesn't occur to me very often.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
4.	It is too much effort for me to already think about my choice of a major.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
5.	I often daydream about what it will be like to be in higher education.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
6.	I am willing to spend time looking into major choices at the moment.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
7.	I am motivated to tackle choosing a major at the moment	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
8.	I often daydream about which major I will choose.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
9.	At the moment I seldom think about what I am going to study.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
10.	I am willing to make an effort now in order to choose the right major.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
11.	I often think about the fact that I have to choose a major.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
12.	I don't feel like thinking already about what to study.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

THINKING ABOUT YOURSELF

This part deals with thinking about your characteristics: your skills, interests, values and approach to studying. We would like to know if you have ever thought about these characteristics, or have possibly talked about them with other people. Please read every statement carefully and indicate how often you have done the activity described during this school and last school year by ticking the appropriate box

Your skills: People can have different skills. Examples of skills are : being good with your hands, having good mathematical reasoning, being good at interacting with people, having good writing skills, having a good memory, et cetera.

How often have you done the following during the last school year and this school year (please tick only one box per statement)	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Often**
1. I have consciously reflected on what I am good at /not good at			
2. I have discussed with my parents what I am good at /not good at			
3. I have discussed with my friends what I am good at/ not good at			
4. I have discussed with my teacher what I am good at/ not good at			
5. I have discussed with people other than those mentioned above what I am good at/not good at (for instance siblings)			

Your interests: People's interests can be divided into different categories such as art, health, science and mathematics, sports, etc. I t is important to note that these statements refer to your interests rather than to your talents or capacities.

How often have you done the following during the last school year and this school year (please tick only one box per statement)	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Often**
6. I have consciously reflected on what does/does not interest me			
7. I have discussed my interests with my parents			
8. I have discussed my interest with my friends			
9. I have discussed my interests with my teacher			
10. I have discussed my interests with other people other than those mentioned above (for instance siblings)			

Your values: People differ in terms of the values they consider important. With regard to your choice of a major, values refer to characteristics whose presence in the chosen major or profession is important to you. Examples off values are: prestige, challenge, independence, correspondence with your interests, variety, sufficient leisure time, et cetera.

How often have you done the following during <u>the last school year and this school year</u> (please tick only one box per statement)	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Often**
11. I have consciously reflected on values I consider important/not important			
12. I have discussed which values I consider important/not important with my parents			
13. I have discussed which values I consider important/not important with my friends			
14. I have discussed which values I consider important/not important with my teacher			
15. I have discussed which values I consider important/not important with other people other than those mentioned above (for instance siblings)			

Your approach to studying: Your approach to studying is characterized by amongst others your readiness to study, your study skills and techniques (e.g. summarizing), your ability to draw up an effective study plan, et cetera.

How often have you done the following during <u>the last school year and this school year</u> (please tick only one box per statement)	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Often**
16. I have consciously reflected on my approach to studying			
17. I have discussed my approach to studying with my parents			
18. I have discussed my approach to studying with my friends			
19. I have discussed my approach to studying with a teacher			
20. I have discussed my approach to studying with people other than those mentioned above (for instance siblings)			

LOOKING FOR INFORMATION

This part is about looking for information about majors in higher education. It is important to note that this does not include covering information during lessons about a choice of study at school. We would like to know how often you have taken the initiative yourself to look up information.

Question 1

How often have you done the following during the last school year and this school year (please tick only one box per statement)	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Often**
1. I have reviewed general overviews about the structure of higher education on my own			
2. I have leafed through brochures of different majors			
3. I have reviewed overviews of major course contents on my own			
4. I have reviewed overviews of major titles on my own			
5. I have reviewed overviews of education institution addresses on my own			

Question 2

- **About how many different majors have you looked up specific information during the last and during this school year? Please indicate one statement only.** (Two majors that resemble each other closely, but of which one are taught at a college, i.e. a non-university institution of higher education, and one is taught at a university, can be considered as 2 separate majors).
  - I have not looked up any information yet
  - About one specific major
  - About 2 to 5 majors
  - About 6 to 10 majors
  - About more than 10 majors: I try to find out something about as many majors as possible.
- **Please fill in the full name of the major(s) you have looked up information about during the last and this school year.**
- **If you answered " I have not looked up any information yet" to the previous question, please write "not applicable"**

.....

.....

.....

If you answered "I have not looked up any information yet" to Question 2, please skip Question 3 and go to the next page

Question 3

This part is about ways to look for information. The question ONLY concerns

INFORMATION you looked up ABOUT THE MAJORS IN QUESTION 2 ON PAGE

How often have you done the following during the last school year and this school year (please tick only one box per statement)	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Often**
1. I have thoroughly read a brochure about a major			
2. I have compared the brochures of different majors			
3. I have been to an information day at an education institution where a major is offered			
4. I have made an overview of information I have found out about a particular major			
5. I have talked to students in higher education about a major			
6. I have looked at a course book of a particular major			
7. I have talked to people with professional experience about their studies and /or their profession			
8. I have talked to my parents in order to find out more about a major			
9. I have talked to a teacher in order to find out more about a major			
10. I have talked to friends in order to find out more about a major			

DECIDED?

1. Please list all majors you are currently considering. Please write the full name of the major. If you do not have any specific majors in mind yet, please write ‘none’ on the first line.

   …….

   …….

   ……..

   ……..

   ……

2. Which major listed in question 1 is your first choice at the moment?

   If you do not yet have a preference for one of the majors listed, please write ‘none’

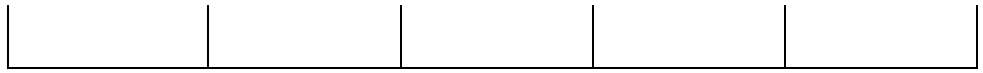
   If you answered ‘none’ in question 1, please write ‘not applicable.

   ……

The questions on this page need ONLY be completed if you FILLED IN MAJOR QUESTION 2 ON PAGE 6 (based on GIDS; Bosma, 1985).

1. Would you be able to easily change your mind about this major?

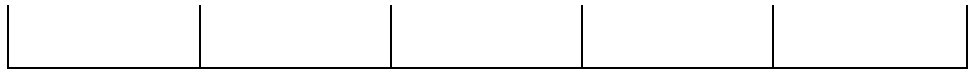
Certainly | Yes, with some difficulty | Probably | Probably not | No, this would be difficult | Definitely not



1 2 3 4 5 6

2. Are you uncertain about this major?

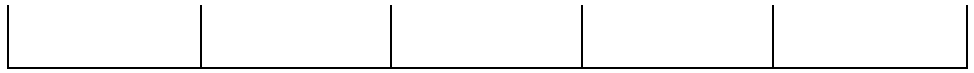
Yes, very much | Yes | A little | Not really | No | Definitely not



1 2 3 4 5 6

3. Does this major provide you with a feeling of optimism about and confidence in the future?

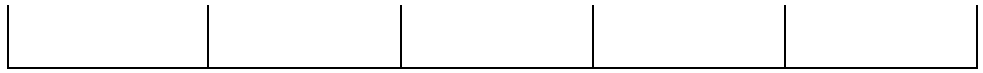
Yes, very much | Yes | A little | Not really | No | Definitely not



1 2 3 4 5 6

4. Could you just as well change your mind about this major choice?

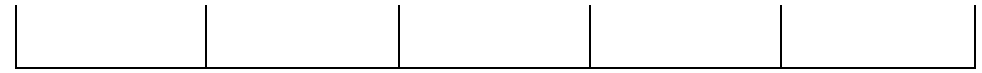
Certainly | Yes, with some difficulty | Probably | Probably not | No, this would be difficult | Definitely not



1 2 3 4 5 6

5. Are you certain about this major?

Yes, very much | Yes | A little | Not really | No | Definitely not



1 2 3 4 5 6

6. Do you find yourself defending this major when talking to people who do not agree?

Yes, very much | Yes | A little | Not really | No | Definitely not | This situation has not occurred



1 2 3 4 5 6 0

7. How many problems are you willing to face to achieve a degree in this major?

Very many | Many | A few | Not so many | Hardly any | None



1 2 3 4 5 6

8. Is this major your own choice entirely?

Yes, entirely | Yes | A little | Not really | No | Not at all



1 2 3 4 5 6

APPENDIX C: PRINCIPAL INFORMATION LETTER



Dear Mr. Jeffrey

My name is Lara Rammutla, and I am conducting research for the purpose of obtaining a Masters degree in Educational Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. The focus of this research is on exploring the relations between identity development and career decision-making process of high school learners. The study aims to determine whether there is a difference in identity formation between males and females. Furthermore the career decision-making process between males and females will be explored. I wish to request your permission to conduct my research in your school. In order to do this learners will be asked to fill out two questionnaires, each requiring approximately 30 minutes, to which there is no right or wrong. Please see Appendix A and B. The questionnaires ask for no identifying data and I intend to use the responses obtained to determine group trends only. The information sheet and the two questionnaires do not require that learners fill in any identifying data, thus anonymity is ensured. In addition only my supervisor and I will have access to the data to ensure confidentiality.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Should parents or learners choose not to participate, they will not be disadvantaged. Apart from my supervisor and myself, no one else will have access to the data. On completion of my research report the data will be destroyed.

I would appreciate your consent for me to conduct my research in your school since this study will provide valuable insight into the issue of identity development and career decision-making in male and female learners within the South African context. Once more, I assure you that all responses are confidential and anonymity is assured. All questionnaires will be destroyed after I have analyzed them. Should you allow the study to take place in your school, would you be so kind as to sign the consent letter granting me permission.

Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me on the number below during working hours. You may also contact my supervisor, Joseph Seabi on (011) 717-8331 or e-mail him at joseph.seabi@wits.ac.za.

Thank you for your kindness.

Rammutla Lara (Ms)

Cell: 0733367400

E-mail: lararammutla@yahoo.com

APPENDIX D: PRINCIPAL CONSENT LETTER



I ----------, the principal of Queens High School, do hereby grant Lara Rammutla permission to conduct her research in my school.

(Please Print)---------- at ---------- on----------

Signature----------

APPENDIX E: PARENT INFROMATION LETTER



Dear Parent

My name is Lara Rammutla, and I am conducting research for the purpose of obtaining a Masters degree in Educational Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. The focus of this research is on exploring the relations between identity development that is the development of a sense of who one is, and the steps that learners follow when they choose a career. The study also aims to determine whether there is a difference in identity formation between males and females. Furthermore the career decision-making process between males and females will be explored. In order to do this learners will be asked to fill out two questionnaires, each requiring 30 minutes, to which there is no right or wrong.

A background information sheet asking for: age, gender, grade, parental education and parental occupation will be filled out. The first questionnaire measures the identity status of a person and the second questionnaire is designed to assess learners' decisional process of choosing studies in higher education. This questionnaire seeks to examine the steps that a learner follows in choosing a career. I intend using the responses obtained to determine group trends only. The information sheet and the two questionnaires do not require that learners fill in any identifying data, thus anonymity is ensured. In addition only my supervisor and I will have access to the data to ensure confidentiality.

I wish to invite you to grant permission for your child to participate in the group. The entire process should not take more than one hour and will be conducted with the permission of the school in a time that will be specified by the school. Participation in this study is voluntary. Should you choose not to provide your consent your child will not be disadvantaged. He /she will thus not participate in the research and you will s not have to respond to this letter. Should you grant consent, I ask you to please complete and return the form overleaf. In addition, your child has the right to choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time.

Once more, I assure you that all responses are confidential and anonymity is assured. All questionnaires will be destroyed after I have analyzed them. Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me on the number below during working hours. You may also contact my supervisor, Joseph Seabi on (011) 717-8331 or e-mail him at joseph.seabi@wits.ac.za.

Thanking you in anticipation

Rammutla Lara (Ms)

Cell: 0733367400

E-mail: lararammutla@yahoo.com

APPENDIX F: PARENT CONSENT FORM



I ---------- parent of ---------- in Grade ----- have read and understood the information provided in this consent form. I grant permission for my child to participate in the study conducted by Lara Rammutla.

Signed ---------- Date ----------

APPENDIX G: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET



Dear student

My name is Lara Rammutla, and I am conducting research for the purpose of obtaining a Masters degree in Educational Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. The focus of this research is on exploring the relations between identity development that is the development of a sense of who one is, and career decision-making process among high school learners. The study aims to determine whether there is a difference in how males and females develop a sense of who they are. Furthermore the career decision-making process between males and females will be explored.

I wish to invite you to participate in this study. Participation in this research will include filling out two questionnaires, one at a time. A background information sheet asking for: age, gender, grade, parental education and parental occupation will be filled out. The first questionnaire measures the identity status of a person and the second questionnaire is designed to assess learners' decisional process of choosing studies in higher education. The second questionnaire is designed to assess learners' decisional process of choosing studies in higher education. This questionnaire seeks to examine the steps that a learner follows in choosing a career. I intend using the responses obtained to determine group trends only. The information sheet and the two questionnaires do not require that you fill in any identifying

data, thus anonymity is ensured. In addition only my supervisor and I will have access to the data to ensure confidentiality.

This entire process should not take more than one hour. Participation in this study is voluntary, and you will not be disadvantaged in any way for not choosing to participate in the study. You may refuse to answer any questions you would prefer not to, and may choose to withdraw from the study at any point.

If you desire any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me telephonically on 0733367400 during working hours or via e-mail at lararammutla@yahoo. You may also contact my supervisor, Joseph Seabi on (011) 717-8331 or send e-mails to joseph.seabi@wits.ac.za.

Kind Regards

Lara Rammutla Joseph Seabi

(Researcher/Masters Student) (Research Supervisor)

APPENDIX H: LEARNER ASSENT FORM



I ----------, in Grade------- assent to participate in the study conducted by Lara Rammutla. I understand the following conditions:

- My participation in the study is completely voluntary.
- I will not in any way be disadvantaged by agreeing to fill out the questionnaires.
- The questionnaires are confidential.
- My responses may be used but no information that could identify me will be included in the researcher's report.
- I have the right to withdraw from the study at any stage.
- I may refuse to answer any questions in the questionnaire which I would rather not answer.

---------- ----------

Signature Date

APPENDIX I: GDE INFORMATION LETTER



Dear Madam/ Sir

My name is Lara Rammutla, and I am conducting research for the purpose of obtaining a Masters degree in Educational Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. The focus of this research is on exploring the relations between identity development and career decision-making process of high school learners. The study aims to determine whether there is a difference in identity formation between males and females. Furthermore the career decision-making process between males and females will be explored. I wish to request your permission to conduct my research at Queens High School in Bez Valley. In order to do this learners will be asked to fill out two questionnaires, each requiring approximately 30 minutes, to which there is no right or wrong. Please see Appendix A and B. The questionnaires ask for no identifying data and I intend to use the responses obtained to determine group trends only. Thus confidentiality and anonymity are assured.

This entire process should not take more than one hour and will be conducted in a time specified by the school. Participation in this study is voluntary. Parent consent forms will be issued to parents asking for permission to have their children participate in the study. Should parents or learners choose not to provide their consent they will not be disadvantaged.

Apart from my supervisor and me, no one else will have access to the data. On completion of my research report the data will be destroyed. I would appreciate your consent for me to conduct my research in the above mentioned school since this study will provide valuable insight into the issue of identity development and career decision-making in male and female learners within the South African context. In light of the high failure rate in tertiary institutions, and the high unemployment rate of graduates, it is hoped that the study will help shed some light as to the possible impact of career choice on these factors.

Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me on the number below. You may also contact my supervisor, Joseph Seabi on (011) 717-8331. You may also e-mail him at joseph.seabi@wits.ac.za.

Thank you for your kindness.

Rammutla Lara (Ms)

Cell: 0733367400

E-mail: lararammutla@yahoo.com