

https://dspace.org/

Psycho-social factors influencing career decision-making of Grade 12 learners in township secondary schools in Gauteng South Africa

Ajayi, Oluwakemi Bolanle

2024

https://hdl.handle.net/10539/37347

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

ABSTRACT

Consideration is given to career decision-making as a life-long process that takes individual's strength and attention over the course of a lifetime. Career decision-making is a developmental process that includes every individual's duties prior to the beginning of a career and after retirement. Moreover, career decision-making is an important step that requires thorough knowledge of environment and the nation's economy. In South Africa, many learners in township schools do not have sufficient information concerning career options, and therefore the choices that they make are entrenched in their perception of the perfect occupation, the subjects they select at Grade 10 in secondary school and the influences around them. This could be related to psychological and social factors. In addition, little literature in South Africa's context is available on career decision-making among learners. Consequently, this study attempted to investigate the psychological and social factors influencing career decision-making of Grade 12 learners in township Secondary Schools in Gauteng; South Africa. The study was conducted in the Gauteng East District, one of the educational districts with the greatest concentration of township Secondary Schools.

The main goal of this study was to examine the psycho-social factors that influence career decision-making among Grade 12 learners in township Secondary Schools. The study also looked at the challenges that Grade 12 learners at township Secondary Schools encounter while choosing their careers. Finally, the study sought to develop a structural equation modelling that can explain the relationship between psychological and social factors and career decision-making.

Within the mixed methods research paradigm, concurrent triangulation research design was adopted. Thus, a mixed methods research methodology in which both quantitative and qualitative approaches was adopted. The target population comprised 720 Grade 12 learners at the selected six Township Secondary Schools in Gauteng East District. For the quantitative phase, 204 Grade 12 learners from six distinct township Secondary Schools were obtained using a stratified random sampling technique. A sample size of 23 Grade 12 learners was chosen for the online interviews for the qualitative phase of the study using the purposive sampling method. For the quantitative phase, the research tools such as Locus of Control Scale (LCS), Big Five Personality Inventory (BFPI), Self-Efficacy Scale (SES), Career Interest Questionnaire (CIQ), Parental Influence Questionnaire (PIQ), Peer Influence Questionnaire (PIQ) and Career Decision Making Questionnaire (CDMQ) were used to

collect data from learners. For the qualitative phase, semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from learners. Validity of questionnaires was ensured by Keyser Meyer Oklin test while reliability was ascertained by use of Cronbach's alpha. In addition, the trustworthiness of qualitative data was ensured.

The findings of the study indicated that the personality types such as extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness to experience, significantly influenced career decision-making of the learners. Furthermore, social factors such as peers, teachers, career information services and older siblings influenced career decision-making among Grade 12 learners. Moreover, the findings revealed that learners whose parents had formal education (university, college, high and primary schools) substantially influenced sound career decision-making of the learners. The findings also revealed that family related challenges, school related challenges and community related challenges all influenced career decision-making among Grade 12 learners. This study indicated that Grade 12 learners in township Secondary Schools were most significantly influenced by their career interests. The study also showed that age and gender, as demographic characteristics, had an influence on learners' career decisions. From the structural equation model, of the psychological factors, career interest had the greatest influence on career decision making among Grade 12 learners.

The study concluded that personality traits and career interests are important in enhancing effective career decision making and that learners with conscientiousness personality are best placed to make accurate career decisions while learners with neuroticism personality had poor career decision-making skills. The study further concludes that peers and friends have an influence on Secondary School learners' career decisions, which is an aspect that learners should be aware of while choosing their careers. In conclusion, the psycho-social model for career decision-making is appropriate and fit for demonstrating the structural relationship between psychological, social factors and career decision-making among Grade 12 learners. From the findings, the study proposes an 8-stage Career Decision Making Model which could assist learners in Secondary Schools to make specific career decisions. The study recommends that the Department of Basic Education should develop skills training and career intervention programs such as career expos to be held in schools to introduce learners to numerous vocations rather than focusing just on content or academics. In order to provide teachers with the social, career development, and educational skills necessary to meet the needs of learners, the

Department of Education should train and retrain teachers who specialise in guidance counselling (Life Orientation teachers), and guidance training should be given priority in funding.

Key Words: *Career; decision-making; Grade 12 learners; Secondary Schools; Township schools; Psychological Factors; Social factors*