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Parental involvement in career development: Perceptions of disadvantaged grade 9 learners

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2008-03-28T13:24:52Z
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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

The impact of parents' protection and input in their involvement with their children regarding career choices becomes clearer and real during adolescence. Through this study, young adolescents were allowed to express their perceptions regarding their parents' involvement in their future career preparations. In addition, it afforded the adults with an understanding of the impact of the protection and input they have invested in their children's development. This has a reciprocal element as, through the intervention, an evaluation of parents' and adolescents' strengths and shortcomings can be deduced and therefore re-considered to enhance the career development of young adolescents.

The focus of the study is to explore the perceptions of disadvantaged young adolescents regarding their parents' involvement in their career development and to identify other career barriers to their career development. The rationale of the study will be presented below.

1.1 Rationale of the study

Numerous challenges in the career development of young adolescents in disadvantaged communities have encouraged this study's suggestion and intention to explore parental involvement in the career development of these young adolescents as a primary intervention. These challenges fall into three categories, namely: the technological advancement in the world of work, the specific developmental task of choosing a career as a young adolescent and lastly, living in a disadvantaged community. The first challenge revolves around changes and advancements to the world of work, which is increasingly becoming more technological and industrialised, resulting in rapid and escalating changes in the labour market (Nelson, 2004; Peterson & Gonza'lez, 2000). This challenge, therefore, demands that all young adolescents and specifically,

disadvantaged young adolescents, keep abreast with these changes, and as such, active parental involvement is paramount.

In addition to the above-mentioned challenge, young adolescents are also challenged to fulfil one of their developmental tasks that is important at this stage, namely, choosing a career. This can be an anxiety-provoking process, which increases young adolescents' frustration and confusion. This is due to the fact that career education and counselling are often introduced very late, namely at Grade twelve and at the tertiary levels (Hickson, 1989; Stead & Watson, 1999). Thus, it has become apparent that career counselling interventions should be introduced much earlier, preferably at the middle school level, particularly with grade nine learners. At this age, children are already thinking about their own abilities in terms of career choices and are also confronted with the challenge of subject choices for Grade ten and beyond. Thus career counselling could facilitate the process of career exploration (Brown, 2003; Stead & Watson, 1999; Super, 1990; Zunker, 2002).

Furthermore, the new Curriculum 2005 envisages the acquisition of skills and information about self and the world of work that could enable Grade nine learners to make the right subject choices for obtaining their Further Education and Training Certificate (FETC), as well as to ascertain which career paths to follow (Department of Education, 1995). The current study therefore considers parental involvement in the career development of young adolescents as one of the major interventions which could make these Curriculum 2005 goals easily attainable. In addition to other career interventions, parents could facilitate the development of confidence in their young adolescents, which may, in turn, enhance better career choices.

Young adolescents, as residents of disadvantaged communities, are challenged by the effects of socio-political conditions that resulted from the South African Apartheid system that collapsed in 1994 (Department of Education, 1995; Stead & Watson, 1999).

These social conditions prevented people in disadvantaged communities from receiving career education for many decades (Bernhardt, 1998; Deller, 1997; Gordon & Meyer, 2002; Haffajee, 1991; Hickson, 1989; Naicker, 1994; Sibilanga, 2002). It seems that a natural deduction could be that parental participation in the career development of young adolescents has been affected by these social conditions (De Haas, 1992). Even though the new government encourages parents to participate in the decisions of the country, the legacies of Apartheid are still very prominent in disadvantaged communities (Department of Education, 1995). Therefore, there is a dire need to inform and empower parents regarding the career development of their children. This could allow young adolescents to adapt better to the changing world of work, become more employable, improve their living conditions and facilitate higher economic growth in the country (Peterson & Gonza'lez, 2000; Stead & Watson, 1999).

In addition to the above, this study was undertaken as a result of the dire need for more research on parental involvement in the career development of children within disadvantaged South African communities. This is because most of the current research available has in the past favoured research using white, working males and students at universities as samples and has led to scant research on samples of people in disadvantaged communities (Stead & Watson, 1999). The present research aims to add to the body of research on parental involvement in career development by obtaining information about the impact of parental involvement. Research on disadvantaged communities could inform the development of career intervention programmes that could address the needs of parents and adolescents in these areas (Jackson & Nutini, 2002; Sue & Sue, 1990). Additionally, through this research, awareness can be created around the importance of parental involvement in the creation of the career self-concepts and self-efficacy among young adolescents from disadvantaged communities.

1.2 **Description of the main variables**

The main variables that are operational in the study are as follows: parental involvement, career development, grade nine learners and disadvantaged communities.

Parental involvement

The term “parents” will be used to include extended family members, in addition to biological parents, such as grandparents, step-parents, foster parents, aunts and uncles (Whiston, & Keller, 2004). This reference is also made with regard to the adoptive parents and parents who are responsible for raising the child and are involved in the child’s development (Whiston & Keller, 2004).

Parental involvement is described as “the degree to which a parent is committed to his role as a parent and the fostering of optimal child development” (Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994:238). Parental involvement is also explained by Whiston et al (2004), as a family process-oriented feature and is defined by parent-child interactions, parental support and parenting styles. According to Middleton and Loughead (1993), family processes of interaction, communication and behaviour influence what children learn about work and work experiences and can be viewed in relation to life roles, which offer additional insight into family influences. Emphasis is "focus[ed] on the context and situations in which adolescents' career development occurs" (Middleton et al, 1993**:** 163). This description seeks to explain that adolescents' career development should be examinable from an interactionist perspective.

From the above definitions, it can be deduced that parental involvement implies the commitment of parents to their roles of providing a familial-based context for interaction and communication and support, from which point young adolescents can learn about work experiences through their involvement in different life roles. It also

postulates that parenting styles can further be applied to differentiate between the types of parental involvement practiced, such as effective and constructive parental involvement which are contrasted with the authoritative parenting style. The former refers to parents who provide supportive parent-adolescent interactions with open communication. Importantly, it is postulated that this leads to the development of positive career self-concepts and self-efficacy in young adolescents (Lent, Brown & Hackett; 1994; Super, 1990). On the other hand, ineffective and destructive parental involvement is associated with an authoritarian parenting style, which is characterised by parent-adolescent interactions with inadequate support. Negative career self-concepts and self-efficacy are likely to develop in the young adolescents, as greater difficulties in career decision-making might be experienced with parents with this parenting style. Additionally, through parental involvement, which includes parental attitudes about school and work, educational and career goals and aspirations, as well as values, the decisions and plans that form a part of young adolescents' career choices are impacted upon in the long term.

Career development

According to Brown (2003:14) a career is defined as "the totality of work one does in a lifetime". According to Super, (1990) career refers to the course of events which constitutes a life; the sequence of occupations and other life roles which combine to express one's commitment to work in his or her total pattern of self-development. Zunker's (2002:9) definition of career refers to "the activities and positions involved in vocations, occupations, and jobs as well as to related activities associated with an individual's lifetime of work". In summary, the above definitions of the concept career are the events and activities in one's lifetime associated with occupations and one's commitment to the realisation of self development. The researcher of the current study will use this summary of career development.

Super (1990) refers to career development as a lifelong process, which should be viewed in a social and cultural context. Zunker (2002:9) refers to career development as "the total constellation of psychological, sociological, educational, physical, economic and chance factors that combine to influence the nature and significance of work in the total life span of any given individual". The term, specifically, accentuates individually developed needs and goals associated with the stages of life and with tasks that affect career choices and job satisfaction. According to Brown (2003:14), career development is "a lifelong process involving psychological, sociological, educational, economic, physical and cultural factors, as well as chance factors that interact to influence the career of the individual". In summary, the definition of the concept career development indicates that it is a lifelong process, which could be viewed as the development of needs and goals of individuals in a socio-cultural context.

In addition, according to this research, parental involvement has a primary impact on the career development of young adolescents, even more than any of the above-mentioned factors. Therefore, parents influence the careers of young adolescents through the life roles, events and activities to which they expose their young adolescents. Furthermore, parents have a great effect on the lifelong process indicated above and thus on the development of young adolescents' career self-concepts and self-efficacy throughout their life span, starting from childhood to the adolescent stage (Lent et al, 1994). By allowing young adolescents to express their perceptions about life roles and activities that are encouraged by parents, the current study will be exploring their parents' involvement in their career development.

Grade nine learners

Grade nine learners refer to the middle or high school learners aged between 13 and 15 (Whiston & Keller, 2004). According to Super (1990), young adolescents at the age of 14-15 years, are at the first stage of the exploration phase, namely the tentative sub-

stage. In this phase there is a consideration of needs, interests, abilities, values, opportunities and tentative choices are made and tried out in fantasy, discussions, courses and work-related activities. These learners are faced with important educational decisions at the end of Grade nine, when subject choices have to be made. The description of a disadvantaged learner will be given below. Throughout this study, these Grade nine learners will be referred to as young adolescents.

Disadvantaged communities

Disadvantaged communities can be rural and township communities which are characterised by low income families, mostly with unemployed parents, inadequate educational resources, lack of career centres and lack of career counselling in the majority of schools (Bernhardt, 1998). These conditions resulted from the socio-political practices that prevailed during the Apartheid regime and it is believed that these are not conducive to the education and career development of young adolescents (Brown & Brooks, 1996; Gordon & Meyer, 2002). In addition to this, most of these parents in disadvantaged communities only have primary and secondary levels of education.

According to Bernhardt (1998), disadvantaged learners are described as learners from disadvantaged communities who are environmentally disadvantaged due to factors such as inadequate nutrition, stimulation, love and support, few positive role models, vandalised schools, under-qualified teachers and who are not proficient in English and who have been witness to excessive violence during the stages of political oppression and transformation. These environmental factors might lead to inadequate career exploration in young adolescents. Parents in such communities need assistance on how to use available resources and their own strengths to further the career development of young adolescents, as it is surmised that with active parental involvement, these negative contextual and personal factors can be reduced.

1.3 The aim, hypothesis and research methods of the study

The aim of this study is to explore the nature and extent of parental involvement in their children's career development as perceived by young adolescents. The hypothesis of the study is that young adolescents in disadvantaged communities perceive their parents' involvement in their career development in a negative way. A qualitative method, namely semi-structured interviews, will be used to confirm or reject this hypothesis by collecting data pertaining to young adolescents' perceptions. Thereafter, thematic content analysis will be used to analyse the collected data.

1.4 Structure of the research report

This section presents an overview of the structure of the research report, by giving a brief summary of what each chapter will entail.

Chapter one serves to introduce the research report by presenting the topic of study, its aims, rationale, description of the main variables and presents the structure of the chapters.

Chapter two constitutes of a brief review of the literature on parental involvement in the career development of young adolescents. The discussion starts by examining and identifying specific aspects of parental involvement such as parent-adolescent interactions, parental support and parenting styles. It is further supported by the application of Super's theory that reviews the developmental tasks of young adolescents (Super 1990). Thereafter, the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) by Lent et al, (1994) is applied to compliment Super's theory, especially with regard to the impact of contextual factors such as the school, the community and in particular, the involvement of parents from disadvantaged communities on the career development of young adolescents. Throughout the literature review, the role that career counsellors

could play to enhance parental involvement in the career development of young adolescents in disadvantaged communities will be highlighted.

Chapter three reports on the research design of the qualitative research that was applied to conduct semi-structured interviews, the procedure followed for data collection, and how data was analysed through the method of thematic content analysis. Through these the study attempts to attain its aim and verify its hypothesis. The chapter ends with a brief summary that links it to chapter four.

In **Chapter four,** the study's findings are presented. This presentation constitutes the interview questions and themes extracted through data analysis. These will be supported by quotes from the raw data. The chapter ends with a summary of the research findings, based on the eight main themes with sub-themes and will lead to the discussion of the findings in chapter five.

Chapter five constitutes of the discussion of findings supported by the literature. This discussion is confined to eight main themes constituting of the findings of the study, to answer the two research questions namely:

- What are the perceptions of adolescents from disadvantaged areas regarding their parents' involvement in their career development?
- Which other factors impact on their career development?

Finally, **chapter six** presents the strengths, limitations, recommendations and the conclusion of the study.

As outlined in the structure of the research report, the ensuing chapter aims to provide a review of the literature on the parental involvement in the career development of young adolescents from disadvantaged communities.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

It is important to note that, although parental involvement is necessary for the career development throughout the entire lifespan of a child, it is especially during young adolescence, when children between 13 to 15 years become more concerned about the careers that they would like to follow, that parental involvement is most crucial. Career decision-making at this stage culminates in the finalisation of career choices and leads to the formation of career attitudes and career directions (Lent et al, 1994, 1996; Super, 1990; Whiston & Keller, 2004). Focusing on parental involvement in career development, this study, firstly, explores three aspects of parental involvement, namely: parent-adolescent interaction, parental support and parenting styles (as indicated in figure 1). These aspects are interlinked and complement each other. Secondly, Super's Lifespan Career Theory is incorporated to highlight the significance of career development at the adolescent stage. Thereafter, application of the Social Cognitive Career Theory, contextual factors which impact on parental involvement in the career development of young adolescents in disadvantaged communities, is specifically explored (see figure 2 and figure 3). The career counselling psychologist's role in this regard is also indicated. In the following section parental involvement, is explored as a very important determinant in young adolescents' career development.

2.2 Parental involvement as a determinant for young adolescents' career development

Parental involvement, as described in the previous chapter, is the commitment of parents to their parenting role. This is reflected in family-contextual features of interaction, support and parenting styles, through which young adolescents can learn about and apply different life roles through work-related experiences as indicated by Grolwick et al (1994); Whiston et al (2004) and Middleton et al (1993). These researchers found that parental involvement influences **what** the child learns about

work and work experiences. In addition to this, parental involvement reflects parental attitudes about school and work, which in turn have a long-term impact on their young adolescents' career choices, decisions and plans. It needs to be emphasised that the greatest anxiety adolescents feel about their career decisions or exploration concerns their parents' negative involvement. Middleton et al's (1993) findings indicate three categories to describe different types of parental involvement in adolescents' career development, namely: positive involvement, non-involvement and negative involvement.

Otto's (2000) findings illustrate that of all the people to whom young adolescents turn to for help on career planning, most prefer their parents, especially their mothers. The importance of parental involvement is further illustrated in the findings of Young & Friesen (1992) and Young (1994), which indicate that parents have various intentions regarding the career development of their young adolescents. They conclude that parents are active agents in influencing their children in a broad range of career developmental activities. Furthermore, Young et al (1992) and Young's (1994) studies are related to parents' narratives about their involvement in their adolescents' career development. The present study is therefore primarily focused on the narratives of young adolescents and will lead to an exploration of how they regard their parents' involvement in their career development.

With the above-mentioned research findings in mind, the current research further intends to explore the perceptions of young adolescents regarding their interactions with their parents, their parents' support and parenting styles, so as to establish the nature and extent of parental involvement's on young adolescents' career development.

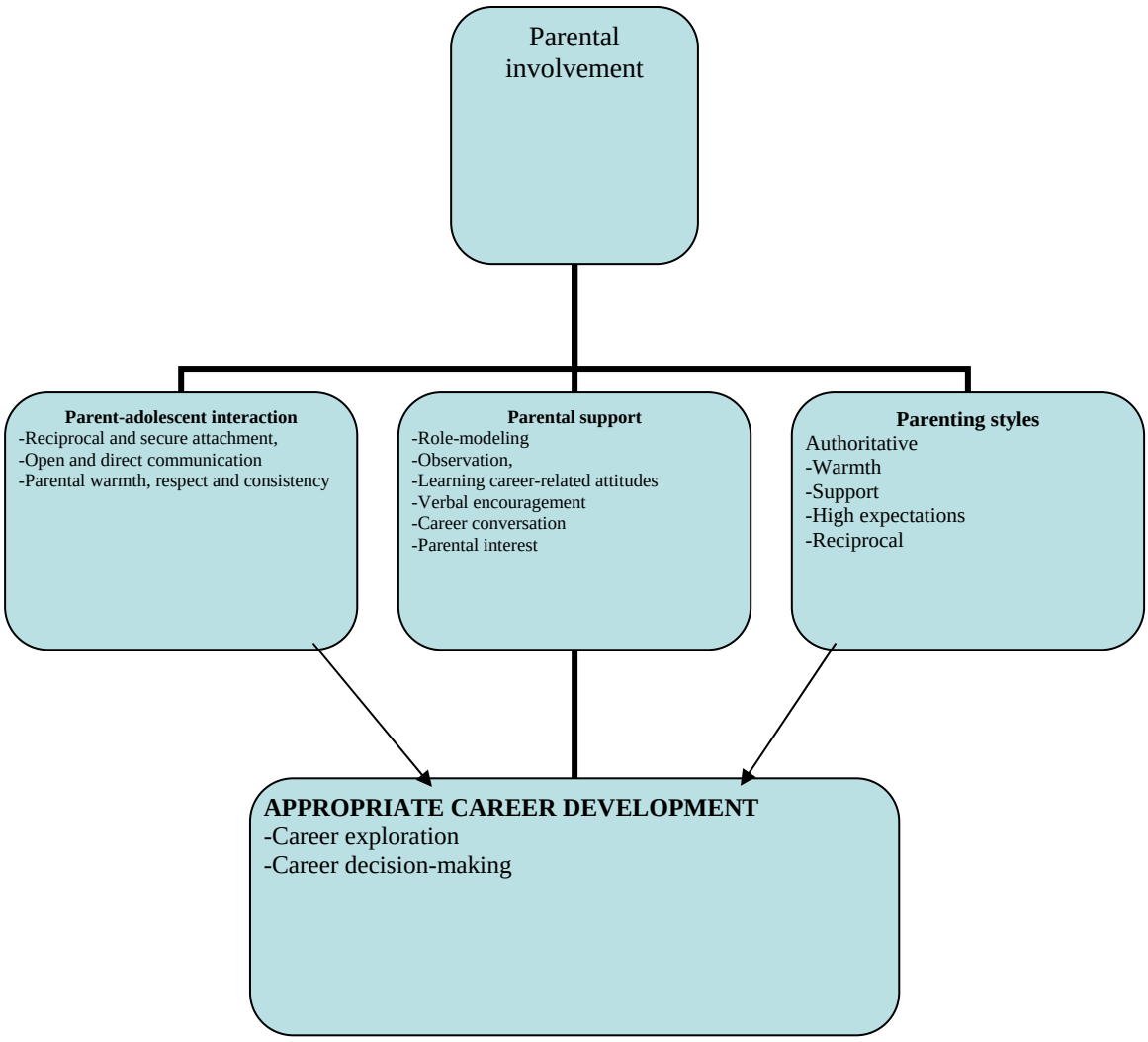


Figure 1. Aspects of parental involvement leading to appropriate career development

The following section of the literature review focuses on the parent-adolescent interaction that takes place during career development.

2.2.1 Parent-adolescent interaction in career development

As illustrated in figure 1, parent-adolescent interaction can be seen as either secure or insecure attachment, with open or closed communication. Furthermore, Ainsworth (1989) and Bowlby, (1990) cited in Colin (1996) and Ketterson & Blustein (1997), postulate that, at adolescence, the parent-adolescent interaction usually continues as reciprocal attachment or remains an asymmetrical attachment. Reciprocal attachment means that both parent and young adolescent mutually participate actively in their interaction, whereas asymmetrical refers to a parent-dominated interaction where the parents' decisions are carried as final, at the expense of the adolescents. Through reciprocal and secure interaction, young adolescents are encouraged to explore the challenging arenas of education, occupations, social demands and career opportunities (Colin, 1996). This interaction provides young adolescents with emotional connections and the ability to cope with career-related decisions. It therefore leads to the reduction of anxiety, emotional stress and feelings of depression and loneliness, which are aroused by career planning.

Asymmetrical parent-adolescent interactions lack the above-indicated emotional connection and availability. This might accelerate career-related anxiety. Thus, Ketterson et al (1997) conclude that insecure parent-child interactions, through closed communication, critically reduce young adolescents' risk-taking career behaviour in the exploration of new career settings and roles (Super, 1990). It is through the promotion or prohibition of parent-adolescent interaction that a foundation for the type of parental involvement is established. Thus, the type of parent-adolescent interaction is reflected by the kind of attachment, emotional connection, availability and communication experienced by the young adolescents.

Mruk (1995) proposes five important qualities of good parent-adolescent interaction (see figure 1). The first quality refers to parental warmth which is the acceptance and awareness of the child's strengths and weaknesses, rather than the rejection of these. The second quality refers to clear expectations, which imply clearly defined and consistent expectations and limits, while the third quality refers to respect and involves respectful treatment and parental disciplining styles. The fourth quality is parental consistency which refers to constantly maintaining the same attitudes and standards. Finally, the fifth quality refers to family behavioural patterns (Mruk, 1995). These qualities are likely to promote a secure and reciprocal parent-adolescent interaction, which may, in turn, significantly influence the career development of young adolescents.

Parent-adolescent interaction is also reflected through familial interaction patterns which determine how family members interact and construct beliefs concerning acceptable academic and career decisions (Hall, 2003). As these patterns of family interactions are continuously in a process of evolution and have a significant impact on the career development of young adolescents, it is deemed necessary for career counselling psychologists to be aware of these patterns so they can provide appropriate interventions (Hall, 2003). They can implement this awareness through working indirectly or directly with the parents, when they are in the process of providing career counselling to young adolescents. Alderfer (2004) shares the above sentiment and also views the acquisition of knowledge pertaining to family interaction patterns as an enhancement of career counselling progression.

In addition, Bratcher (1982) cited in Whiston et al (2004) asserts that career decision-making and career choices need to be understood within a specific family's perspectives. Bratcher theorises that the family members establish certain patterns and principles that attempt to keep a sense of homeostasis within the family and these impact on all behaviour, including career decision-making behaviour. This is further extended by Whiston et al (2004) who theorise that adolescents may have difficulty making career decisions when they experience a low level of differentiation between

themselves and the nuclear family. These adolescents may not be able to make a clear distinction between **their** career expectations and those of their parents. In this case, the young adolescents' career development might be delayed, thereby resulting in a high possibility of career indecision. Similarly, Whiston et al (2004) suggest that certain family patterns of interaction facilitate effective career decision-making, whereas other family interaction patterns contribute to career indecision. Trusty & Watts (1996) added that parents' negative behaviour and negative reactions are likely to affect young adolescents' academic performance and career decision-making.

Furthermore, Way et al (1996) purport that interactions between parents and children, and among siblings are powerful influences on career development. Such interactions include positive behaviour, such as open and direct communication with a few mixed messages, or negative behaviour such as pushing and controlling. Alderfer (2004) further asserts that the exchange of information with other social systems such as the school can motivate the family to use the feedback loop positively. This can lead to children feeling supported, as they will have the ability to acquire the information needed for making realistic and positive career choices. It is therefore highlighted that an open communication system within the family can motivate and empower family members to seek more career information from other systems. Therefore, a better understanding of family interaction patterns could lead to a better understanding of the nature and extent of parental involvement in young adolescents' career development. This is important to this study even though it is a qualitative study and cannot be generalised, because it anticipates the research findings.

In the following section of the literature review, parental support, another key element of parental involvement in the career development of young adolescents, will be explored.

2.2.2 Parental support in the career development of young adolescents

The above discussion deduces that secure, open and flexible family interactions could facilitate effective parent-adolescent interaction. Furthermore, these secure parent-adolescent interactions have a direct link to parental support (figure 1). It has been shown that parental support has a significant, positive impact on a child's career developmental process, pertaining specifically to school, future plans and career goals (Turner & Lapan, 2002). As indicated above with parent-adolescent interaction, the provision of parental support to young adolescents at this stage is important because they have not yet developed a strong need to seek and work towards independence from the family structure (Kracle, 1997). Therefore, parental support within parent-adolescent interaction serves to prepare young adolescents for future careers.

Parental support is manifested in various forms such as career-related role-modelling through verbal encouragement and observation (Turner, Alliman-Brissett, Lapan, Udipi & Ergun, 2003). Thus, the primary role of parents is to support adolescents' career development by providing encouragement. This can be achieved if parents stimulate their children to be curious and alert and prepare them to be responsible for their own choices (Lacey-Smith, 1992). Through this verbal encouragement and goal-directed behaviour, career-related learning experiences are provided which are important for the young adolescents' attainment of their vocational goals (Grolwick et al, 1994; Lent et al, 1994; Watson, Foxcroft, Horn & Stead, 1997; Young, 1994). Through different learning experiences, young adolescents could be encouraged to achieve academically and to pursue tertiary education (Turner et al, 2002).

Supportive behaviour contributes significantly to young adolescents' making better career choices. However, if the career needs and aspirations of young adolescents are not taken into consideration, parental support can be meaningless. In support of verbal encouragement as one of the forms of parental support, it has been suggested that parents and young adolescents could benefit from career conversations, when these are

conducted in a constructive parent-adolescent engagement (Young, Valach, Paselnikho, Dover, Paprosk & Sankey, 1997). This could promote active negotiation within career development. Young et al (1997) therefore emphasise that parents need to recognise that any help that they provide to their children has to be realised in the context of an active negotiation between parents and adolescents. Furthermore, the plans and the intentions of the young person need to be taken into account during such career conversations. It is within this constructive parent-adolescent engagement that career information is be imparted and the issues around approval and disapproval of specific career paths are be discussed (Lease, 2004).

Verbal encouragement of career conversations and parents' capacity to provide enriched personal support also reflects parents' interest in their young adolescents. Parents' active interest in the young adolescent's school subjects, home-work and their acquisition of educational and marketable skills, therefore also facilitate career development (Trusty et al, 1996). Consistent with the above-mentioned forms of support, research has also indicated that parents reported the following supportive behaviours to be critical in the facilitation of young adolescents' career development and include: helping, protecting, managing, affirming and understanding (Whiston et al, 2004; Young et al 1997). It is therefore crucial that parents should engage in various supportive behaviours to assist young adolescents to have better futures. It is with this in mind that the study aims to investigate young adolescents' perception of these issues.

The above-mentioned reflects the interest shown by parents toward their young adolescents' career development. This could increase the adolescents' interest, self-esteem and academic performance and furthermore, could lead to increased parental support as well as parent-adolescent interaction (Hall, 2003; Sher, 2000). Therefore, Turner et al (2003) propose that parental support is significant in the development of young adolescents' career interests. Research has also demonstrated that parental support has a positive effect on adolescents' career development. They have also shown that rural adolescents' perceptions of parental support in the pursuit of future occupations (representing certain Holland themes) were significant predictors of their

interests, vocational self-efficacy and valuing of certain occupations (Holland, Whitney, Cole & Richards, 1969 cited in Turner et al, 2003). Therefore it can be deduced that parents who verbally encourage and support their young adolescents, show interest for their adolescents' activities, including their career choices.

Consistent with the results related to parental verbal encouragement, role-modelling of work activities also promotes learning through observation. Thus, Turner et al (2002) state that parents could act as "value socialisers", by influencing and shaping their children's perceptions about the appropriateness of career-related decisions (Whiston et al, 2004). Work values constitute an individual's perception of important priorities that influence daily activities, general lifestyle and career aspirations (Brown, 2003).

Findings by Brown (2003) and Turner et al (2003) indicate that parents' provision of career-related modelling is strongly related to sharing their own work and vocational activities with young adolescents. In this way, young adolescents can learn more about career-related matters from their parents. Brown (2003) postulates that during this stage, young adolescents become aware and concerned about the world of work, as well as their personal relationship with it. In this way, young adolescents are equipped to acquire the necessary work-related attitudes such as punctuality, reliability, efficiency, responsibility, accuracy, accountability and the reward of work-satisfaction in a job well done (Brown, 2003, Super, 1996; Turner et al, 2003).

It can be concluded that parental support is intentional when parents verbally encourage their children and when they reflect work values related to their own work activities for their children to observe (Lent et al, 1994; Young et al, 1992). These intentional actions are explained by Bruner, (1986) and Chapman, (1984) cited by Young et al, as "voluntary behaviour employed by an agent as a means of attaining certain ends" (1992:199). For example, according to Young et al (1992), some parents, in supporting their adolescents, may attempt to develop a wide range of skills and attitudes in their children with the intention of enhancing their children's ability to develop appropriate career aspirations and make decisions consistent with those aspirations. Other parents

might support their adolescents by making them happy and well-adjusted, so that they can engage in satisfactory relationships.

As such, career decision-making skills have been linked to the early childhood experiences regarding their family's attitudes, work values and practices about careers and their parents' role modelling. Furthermore, in a longitudinal study with children, Whiston et al (2004) have found that individuals indicate their mothers and fathers as the biggest supporters of their career plans when they were in the fifth and sixth grades and then once again during early adulthood. They did not, however, consider their parents as the major supporters in adolescence and cited other influences during this period. In contrast to this, De Haas (1992) and Haffajee (1991) have indicated that parents are rated by adolescents as more important than guidance teachers and best friends, in supporting their career decision-making. Whiston et al (2004) have found that children, whose mothers are employed, are more likely to consider a greater number of occupations than children whose mothers are unemployed. It will be interesting to also investigate how parents' employment status affects young adolescents from disadvantaged communities.

In addition to the above, it is postulated that there is a contrast between the influence and support provided by mothers and fathers. Young (1994) suggests that mothers are more likely to self-disclose information and career-related feelings to their early adolescents and there is a likelihood that young people will respond positively to this modelling and therefore, develop a supportive relationship. Accordingly, Paa and MacWhirter (2000) found that adolescent girls report that their mothers' support is more influential and girls are more likely than boys to report that their mothers provide positive feedback, support their autonomy and are open to discussions concerning career decisions. Hendry, Roberts, Gleninning & Coleman (1992) cited in Whiston et al (2004) found that, on the other hand, fathers are seen as unilateral in their communication and less democratic in their decision-making style. They are also more judgmental and less willing to negotiate with their adolescent children. Contrary to this, Paa et al (2000) have found that the adolescent boys reported that after their

fathers, their mothers were the second-most important influence in their career development. Lerner at al (2004) indicated that a strong orientation toward work activities at home and in the community is a positive indication that both the mother and the father view the adolescent's movement toward autonomy in a positive light. The following section will review literature on parenting styles to identify its effects on the career development of young adolescents.

2.2.3 Parenting styles in career development of young adolescents

In the previous sections, two key aspects of parental involvement in the career development of young adolescents were explored namely, parent-child interaction and parental support. In addition to these, another important aspect to be explored is parenting styles (see figure 1). Parent-adolescent interaction and parental support are linked to parenting styles. The type of parent-child interaction and the kind of support parents provide to their children reflect patterns of child rearing practices. These broad patterns of child-rearing practices reflect values and behaviour and are referred to as parenting styles (Lerner et al, 2004; Roe & Lunneborg, 1990; Sadock & Sadock, 2003).

It is widely recognized that the effect of parenting styles on the career development of the young adolescent is significant. Roe, a renowned theorist, proposes that young adolescents' early childhood experiences are influenced by parents' child-rearing practices (Roe et al, 1990). This plays an indirect role in shaping future career behaviour through the influence of developing psychological needs, vocational interests and choices (Roe et al, 1990). In their child-rearing practices, parents exhibit the following attachment attitudes which may consequently influence their children's career development, namely: concentration on the child, avoidance and acceptance of the child. Furthermore, the categories of careers selected by young adolescents depend on these above forms of parent-child interaction attitudes (Roe et al, 1990). Thus, the type of intentional attitude exhibited by parents toward young adolescents may promote or prohibit their career development.

In addition to this, child-rearing practices have been clustered into four general styles namely; authoritarian, indulgent-permissive, indulgent-neglectful and authoritative parenting styles (Lerner et al, 2004; Rutter, cited in Sadock et al, 2003). Subsequent research has confirmed that the above-mentioned parenting styles tend to correlate with certain behaviours in children and may influence their subsequent career development.

Authoritarian parenting style has more negative effects than positive ones on the career development of young adolescents. This parenting style is characterised by parents who are highly demanding and directive, but unresponsive (Lerner et al, 2004). Parents practicing this style are very strict and set inflexible rules. Their interaction with their children is characterised by minimal and closed communication and limited feed-back. The effect of the authoritarian parenting style is the development of low self-esteem in the young adolescents, whereby the adolescent feels unimportant, unheard and unhappy and may withdraw socially (Lerner et al, 2004; Sadock et al, 2003). In addition to this, the authoritarian parenting style is mostly the source of many conflicts between parents and their children. Although the authoritarian parenting style is also associated with school success, pressures to conform and fulfil parents' expectations regarding education and careers can cause a poor fit between the individual and his or her chosen career. It can also estrange family relationships and lead to poor mental health (Way & Rossmann, 1996). Career indecision and job dissatisfaction could partly be the result of this parenting style.

The second parenting style, the indulgent-permissive style, is characterised by little or no limit-setting by parents and is coupled with unpredictable parental harshness (Sadock et al, 2003). Lerner et al (2004) describe the indulgent-permissive style as more responsive rather than demanding. This parenting style can lead to low self-reliance, poor impulse control and aggression (Sadock et al, 2003). The concept of low self-reliance implies that the adolescent will develop self-doubt and low self-confidence which are detrimental to his/her career development.

The third parenting style, the indulgent-neglectful style, which Lerner et al (2004) refers to as an uninvolved style, is low in responsiveness and demand and Sadock et al (2003) characterises it as one of uninvolvement in the child's life and rearing. The child then risks having low self-esteem, impaired self-control and increased aggression. Uninvolved or inactive parents seem unable to function well, either because they cannot set guidelines or because they cannot pursue interests that promote career exploration. This makes it more difficult for children to develop self-knowledge and differentiate their own career goals from those of their parents (Way et al, 1996).

The fourth parental style is the authoritative-reciprocal style which is marked by firm rules and shared decisions made in a warm and loving environment. It is believed to be the style most likely to result in self-reliance, high self-esteem and a sense of social responsibility (Sadock et al, 2003). Lerner et al (2004) refers to the authoritative style as both demanding and responsive, which implies that this parenting style balances clear and high expectations with emotional support and recognition of the children's autonomy. Through the promotion of independence, this parenting style tends to result in a more active career exploration on the part of children (Lerner et al, 2004; Way et al, 1996). This style is associated with self-confidence, persistence, social competence, academic success and the psychological well-ness of young adolescents. It is therefore more suitable for the effective career development of young adolescents.

One can deduce form the various levels of parental involvement in the lives of young adolescents that parents important figures in the facilitation of young adolescents' career decision-making or career indecision. The next section aims at exploring the importance of career development at this critical stage of human development, as outlined by Super's Career Development Theory. This theory highlights the developmental tasks of young adolescents and how they are affected by parental involvement.

2.3 The importance of career development at the early adolescent stage

This stage is referred to by Erikson (1982) cited in Sadock et al (2003) as a transitional stage of identity-formation from childhood to adulthood. Erikson (1982) postulates that the way in which the first four stages of development namely, Trust versus Mistrust; Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt; Initiative versus Guilt and Industry versus Inferiority are negotiated, may influence the adolescents' eventual resolution of the identity crisis and their move towards independency. It can be deduced that the effective resolution of the identity crisis is important for adolescents to achieve a sense of independence, whereas ineffective resolution may result in identity role-confusion and thus lead to career-indecision.

2.3.1 Super's Career Development Theory

According to Super's theory (Super, 1990), the developmental stages of adolescence are divided into two stages: Growth (ages 4-13) and Exploration (14-24), whereas Erikson (1982) sees adolescence as commonly divided into three periods: early (11 to 14), middle (14 to 17) and late (17 to 20). For the purpose of this study, only the Growth (ages 4-13); and Exploration (14-24) stages will be discussed. The participants of this research are almost 14 years old and thus are considered to have gone through the growth stage and have just entered the exploration stage. Other descriptions of young adolescents, who are mostly Grade nine learners, have been provided in the previous chapter.

At the Growth stage (4 to 13), four major career developmental tasks need to be met, namely: becoming concerned about the future; increasing personal control over one's own life; convincing one-self to achieve in school and at work and acquiring competent work habits and attitudes. At this stage, the self-concept develops through the identification with key people in the child's family and at school. In this way, the child acquires knowledge of people and their activities, including their occupations. The child also develops communication and thinking skills and ideas about what he would

like to do one day, what he can do, what he likes and what other people expect of him. The growth stage has three sub-stages, namely: fantasy, interest and capacity. The capacity sub-stage spans from approximately thirteen to fourteen. During this sub-stage, the child's own abilities and task requirements become more important (Brown, 2003; Super, Savikas, & Super, 1996; Zunker, 2002).

Ireh (2000) states that the process of exploration begins in infancy and continues throughout the individual's entire lifespan. She further explains how an individual views himself or herself and others in career development through the process of developing his/her self-concept. Young adolescents, at the age of fourteen, are also at the beginning of the exploration stage, which according to Super (1990) ends when they are approximately twenty-four years old. Career developmental tasks at this stage are: crystallisation, specification and implementation of career choices and the development of realistic and unrealistic ideas about themselves (Super, 1990). Through various social and task activities, they will retain and integrate the activities that they find self-satisfying to their personality and which will develop work values such as: accuracy, responsibility and accountability (Brown, 2003). This stage also has three sub-stages which are: tentative (14 to 17), transition (18 to 21) and trial (22 to 24). At the tentative sub-stage, the needs, interests, abilities, values and opportunities are considered and tentative choices are made and tried out in fantasy, discussions, courses and work (Super et al, 1996).

Adolescence is also regarded as a critical period of development where acquisition of adult skills is made through experimentation. Due to its explorative nature, this stage involves emotional instability. In addition, adolescents' thinking becomes abstract, conceptual and future-oriented (Sadock et al, 2003). Thus, career choice and decision-making may add to the other challenges that young adolescents face, and if parental involvement is insufficient, as reviewed in section 2.2, frustration, confusion and career-indecision may result.

Central to Super's Career Developmental Theory is the concept of career development, which refers to a continuing process of improving the match between self and environmental factors in an interactive process, whereby the individual both influences and is influenced by social, culture and physical features of his/her environment (Super, 1990). Super's propositions indicated in this definition concur with this study's contention that the career development of young adolescents is influenced by the type of parental involvement that they experience. The importance of constructive parental involvement is highlighted in the definition of career development and the reciprocal element of constructive parental involvement is also acknowledged by Super, (1990). Career development is one of the main developmental tasks during young adolescence and it forms the foundation for future career and educational pursuits (Paa et al, 2004; Whiston et al, 2004).

According to Super, the process of career development is essentially that of developing and implementing the occupational self-concept and refers to how young adolescents view themselves subjectively in terms of their future work situations (Super, et al, 1996). The explanation that young adolescents develop of their career self-concepts is based on how their parents assist them in preparation for future careers. Through constructive feedback from parents, support and observation of positive role-models, the formation of self-concept occurs (Super, 1990; Turner, Alliman, Brissett, Lapan, Udipi & Ergun, 2003). Processes such as self-differentiation and self-identification may occur as a result of parent-adolescent interaction which encourages risk-taking and trying out of different roles within a minimum anxiety environment. As it is indicated in section 2.2, parental involvement promotes better self-knowledge that leads to better career decision-making, whilst non-supportive interaction may lead to negative self-concepts and career indecision (Lease, 2004). A secure sense of identity associated with a move from dependency to independency and better career development may be achieved if the adolescents have resolved their career indecision.

Furthermore, Super et al. (1996) consider that when young adolescents experiment with various life roles, for example: being students, taking on part-time jobs, participating in

family career-related leisure activities, they translate those activities they like into their career self-concepts. Through positive parental involvement, the processes of experimentation and translation allow young adolescents an opportunity to acquire work values and work experience (Brown, 2003). It is therefore assumed that through parental motivation, young adolescents would participate in home and job activities, whereby they learn about basic work expectations and apply them in their future careers. According to Ireh (2000), it is assumed that adolescents at the exploration stage have a better idea of their occupational self-concepts, career information and career alternative choices and are therefore able to decide on occupations.

Super's explanation of career development focuses on the developmental tasks of young adolescents. However, Super's theory primarily focused on white Westernised Americans with little indication of its applicability to other ethnic groups within and outside the United States. Applying it to South African disadvantaged communities may pose some difficulties (Stead et al, 1998). Therefore, the current research will focus on its applicability to the developmental task of adolescence. Stead et al (1999) indicate that there is a need for an examination of the relevance of such tasks and additional tasks should be learned to cope with the numerous external and internal obstacles that many black people face as the result of few role models or support systems.

Despite the above-mentioned critique, South African counsellors used Super's career development theory extensively for research and counselling practice. The interactions and impact of contextual factors such as education, high levels of unemployment, economic conditions and parental involvement are aspects that are notably missing in Super's Career Development theory (Stead et al, 1999). The current research focuses on how parental involvement may contribute to the development of the career self-concept and includes the development of the self-esteem and self-knowledge with regard to career decision-making. This is explored in the context of the above-mentioned contextual factors.

To address this limitation, Super later presented the Archway of Career Determinants Approach to address the above mentioned limitations. However, he alludes to situational factors but these are not self-explanatory and do not cover the influence of contextual factors on the career development of young adolescents extensively, particularly those in disadvantaged communities. Therefore, the Social Cognitive Career Theory will be used merely as a framework through which to explore this aspect further.

2.4 Theoretical background of Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT)

The previous section on Super's theory focused on the importance of career development at the early adolescent stage and the pivotal role played by parents. This section of the literature review applies the principles of SCCT to explore the impact of one of these contextual factors, namely parental involvement, on the career development of young adolescents. These main constructs are: triadic reciprocal causality, self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goals (see figure 2). These four constructs will be reviewed, but the main focus will be on the triadic reciprocal causality and the development of self-efficacy. This particular focus on triadic reciprocal, causality and self-efficacy is relevant to the discussion on parental involvement because it relates generally to the development of young adolescents' self-efficacy and specifically to career self-efficacy.

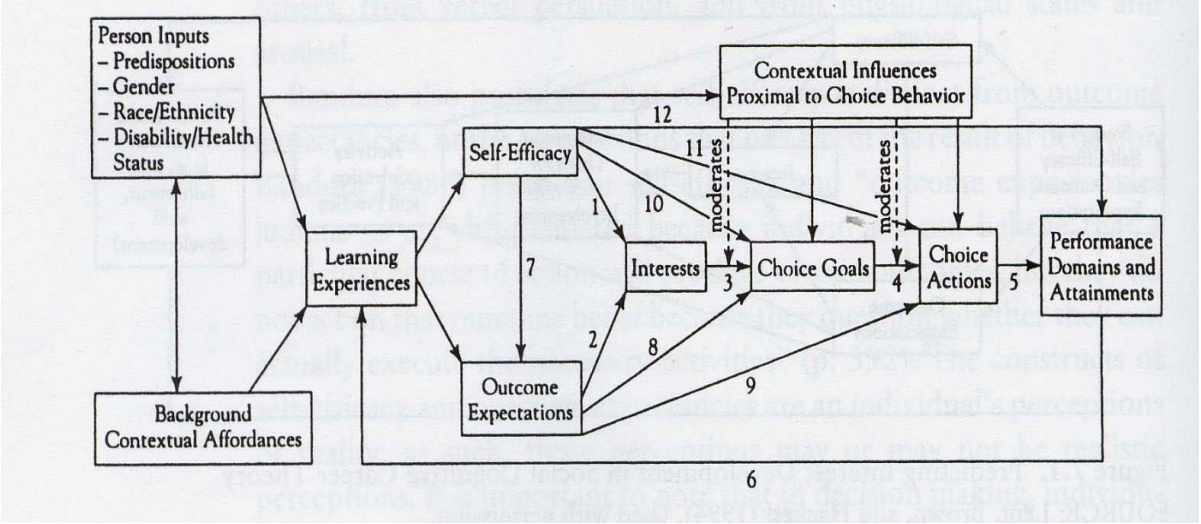


Figure 2. Predicting vocational choice in Social Cognitive Career Theory

Source: Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994). Used with Permission

The SCCT formulated by Lent, Brown and Hackett in 1987 has been primarily derived from Albert Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory (Lent et al, 1994). Social Cognitive Theory is specifically applicable to SCCT because it attempts to adapt, elaborate and extend the aspects of triadic reciprocal causality and self-efficacy that is applicable to this study. Triadic reciprocal causality refers to the mutual interacting influences between a **person's attributes** (such as interests, attitudes, gender and aptitude), **the external environment** (such as lack of parental involvement due to poverty, unemployment, few positive role-models and lack of career counselling) and **overt behaviour** (such as career development) (Bandura, 1986). These three aspects "all operate as interlocking mechanisms' that affect one another bi-directionally" (Lent et al, 1994:82).

The emphasis on mutual interaction of the three aspects of triadic reciprocal causality is in accordance with the current study. Therefore, the parental involvement, that is, parent-adolescent interaction, parental support and the parenting styles serve as a crucial foundation for the adolescents' other career–related interactions (Lent et al, 1994; 1996; Super, 1990; Whiston et al, 2004). The SCCT's contention is that adolescents have the cognitive ability to interact with their environment (e.g. parents,

teachers and career-related role-models) to attain certain desired career-related behaviour which, in turn, could influence their career development.

Young adolescents' cognitive ability of becoming aware of career barriers in their family and personal context and the way they negotiate and resolve them, is essential for their career development (Jackson & Nutini, 2002). This explains that while parental involvement might have a positive or a negative impact on young adolescents' career development, the young adolescents also, as active agents of career development, have the ability to influence their parents' involvement, facilitate their own career development and choose their careers (Lent et al, 1994). Therefore, adolescents must not be viewed as helpless victims in their interaction with their parents since they have control over their parents' involvement in their career development. This could create positive self-efficacy expectations and bring positive affect to their career development.

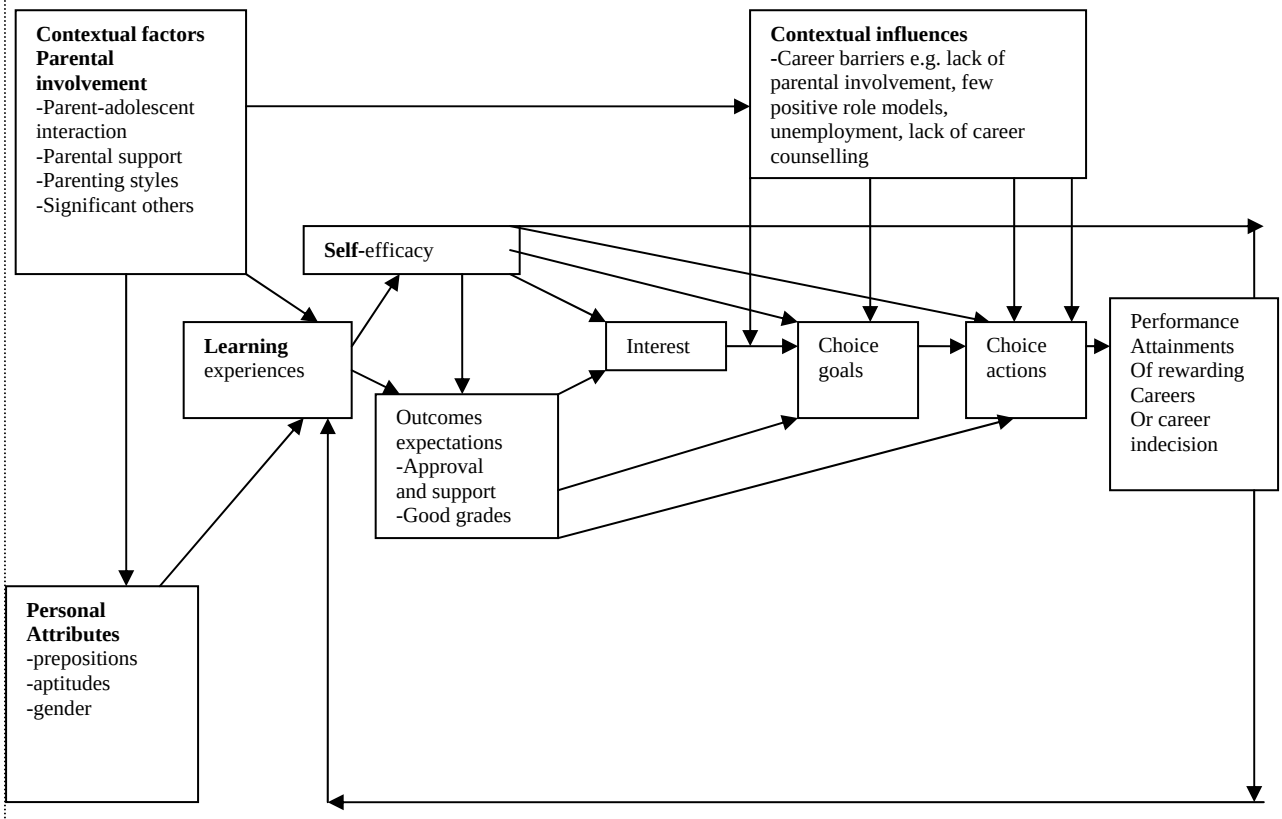


Figure 3: Adapted from Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994) and modified according to how parental involvement could impact on career development of young adolescents

Self-efficacy expectation refers to people's beliefs and judgements about their capabilities to organise and perform particular tasks (Bandura, 1986, 1997 cited in Stead and Watson (1999)). Thus, young adolescents have beliefs and judgments about their capabilities to engage in career-related tasks. These beliefs have constantly been developed and confirmed by their interactions with their parents and significant others and the provision of parental support. According to Bandura (1986), there are four ways in which self-efficacy is acquired. These are through verbal persuasion, whereby parents, teachers, peers and other people encourage or discourage young adolescents' participation in certain tasks. Self-efficacy is also acquired through personal performance accomplishments whereby direct experiences of success or failure encourage or discourage young adolescents in performing certain tasks. Another way

of acquiring self-efficacy is through vicarious learning, through which the observation of the success or failure of others either motivates or stilts young adolescents' interest in those activities. Lastly, physiological arousal, whereby heightened emotions (anxiety, inability to choose a career or joy due to ability to make career decision), young adolescents' self-efficacy expectations are deflated or inflated (Bandura, 1986; Lent et al, 1994).

The four ways of acquiring self-efficacy mentioned above are significant to the career development of young adolescents and parental involvement. Thus, the way in which parents raise, interact and support their adolescents' career development, as well as the way in which adolescents perceive their parents involvement in their career development, may be the primary sources of adolescents' career self-efficacy. Self-efficacy has been found to be predictive of academic, career-related choices and performance indices (Hackett & Lent, 1992). Young adolescents who believe they can perform a career task successfully are more likely to attempt that particular career task and tend to perform better at it than those who do not believe they can perform the task successfully, even if they have the same ability. Thus, adolescents who expect to achieve success in a particular career task have positive career self-efficacy expectations and those who expect to fail have negative career self-efficacy expectations (Bandura, 1986). Therefore, these self-efficacy precepts help in determining young adolescents' choices of career-related activities and may be reflected by their effort expenditure, persistence, thought patterns, and emotional reactions, when they are confronted with career obstacles (Stead et al, 1999).

Furthermore, according to Turner et al (2003), younger adolescents' responses indicated that parental involvement accounted for one third to almost half of their career task-related confidence. Therefore, early adolescence is considered to be a critical time for parental involvement in the career development of young adolescents. Alderfer (2004) proposes that although parental involvement is important, it needs to be informed so that it that allows freedom of choice and not blind involvement based on past patterns that are unconsciously alive in the present. This concurs with the

discussion on the importance of authoritative parenting and the negative effects of authoritarian parenting. Lack of parental involvement may transform into conflict, whereby a parent pressurises a child towards a particular career and withdraws financial support when a career path is contrary to the parents' choice (Alderfer, 2004) and is a good example of authoritarian parenting style.

Several studies have also indicated that there is a strong link between environmental support (e.g. parental involvement) and adolescents' educational and vocational self-efficacy (Turner et al, 2003). It has been shown that parental involvement, in particular, is strongly related to adolescents' efficacy to engage in career decision-making and in pursuing educational preparation for specified career interests across themes form Holland's theory (Lapan, Hinkelman, Adams, & Turner, 1999). These findings confirm assertions by Bandura (1997) and Lent et al (1994) that the presence of parents in the adolescent's environment is an important provider of self-efficacy information. Parental involvement is reported to be associated with the confidence of young adolescents in the following areas: engaging in career planning, understanding their feelings and reactions as well as that others in educational and vocational contexts, persevering in their schoolwork even when personally or academically challenged and making decisions that will lead to a rewarding career (Turner & Lapan, 2002). Young adolescents' confidence and belief that they can reach their career goals (self-efficacy) play a major role in their career development. Therefore, if parents are involved through verbal encouragement and career-related role modelling, young adolescents can develop positive career self-efficacy. This in turn may lead to better career decision-making.

Parental involvement, through the creation of outcome expectations might develop young adolescents' ability to believe and imagine what the results and consequences of particular career behaviours will be (Lent et al, 1994). The repeated performance in career activities will be higher if the outcome expectations are positive and will increase career self-efficacy. However, if failure is anticipated, these career activities will be avoided and career self-efficacy decreased (Lent et al, 1994). Thus, young

adolescents' self-efficacy forms a strong basis for their career outcome expectations, as they are likely to engage in career activities where the possibility of success is higher than failure. For example, an adolescent with high self-efficacy in Mathematics may choose to avoid Science-intensive career fields if he anticipates negative outcomes, which might have been created through the lack of parental involvement (Lent et al, 1994).

The determination to reach a career goal may be regulated by the parenting styles which reflect the type of support and interaction provided by parents and by the anticipation of career barriers to the attainment of these career goals both by young adolescents and their parents. Goals are referred to "as the determination to engage in activities in order to affect a particular future outcome" (Lent et al, 1996:85). Young adolescents who are able to make career choices are more likely to set manageable goals which are aimed at the attainment of their career aspirations. The attainment of career goals involves the adolescents' reciprocal interaction with parents, self-efficacy and outcome expectations. Young adolescents are entitled to direct their career goal attainment, but this is dependent on whether they are equipped with the necessary skills and abilities (Lent et al, 1996). Thus, this research contends that young adolescents' career self-efficacy would be increased if their parents are actively involved in motivating and encouraging their children's emerging career abilities and also impart them with career-related skills.

SCCT's major aim is the development of ability to overcome career barriers in the process of career development. Its underpinning assumption is that through the development of positive self-efficacy expectations, young adolescents, especially those in disadvantaged communities, can anticipate positive outcome expectations and beliefs regarding the attainment of their career goals. However, a better understanding of the career barriers in disadvantaged communities of South Africa is needed (Jackson et al, 2002). Parents in disadvantaged communities need to make their children aware of the conditions that lead to such career barriers and to assist them to seek possible solutions, as these barriers are in most cases influenced by familial factors (Jackson & Nutini,

2002). In addition to this, the career counsellors also need to assess the meaning of career barriers within the context of an individual's situation, since the thoughts, feelings and behaviours that the individuals learn through exposure to career barriers within their particular context can restrict their use of existing career resources and limit their exploration of areas that might be beneficial to their career development.

If parents are empowered to be involved in the educational and career exploration of their children, then most career barriers will be overcome. This is because conditions in disadvantaged communities are not conducive to the education and career development of adolescents (Gordon et al, 2003; Mitchell & Krumboltz; in Brown & Brooks, 1996). Limited exposure to role-models could be addressed as it limits career exploration of adolescents and leads to uninformed and confused career development processes that may expose adolescents to fewer career opportunities. Naicker (1994) posits that under such circumstances career counsellors should not only try to get young people to develop personal decision-making skills, but also help them to adjust successfully to the opportunity structures open to them which may be used as stepping stones for better jobs in the future.

Vicarious learning is also seen as an important aspect in the career development of the young adolescents (Bandura, 1997). However, according to Hickson (1989), most young black South African adolescents have fewer opportunities to attach positive meaning to the value of careers, primarily because they have seen their parents in low status and menial jobs. As such, a personal career identity for these adolescents may be a meaningless concept (Peterson et al, 2000). Through career counselling, parents and young adolescents could be empowered to target and strengthen their network of contextual and potential sources of support such as parents, family, teachers, peers and community members (Hackett & Byars, 1996, Lent et al, 1996; Sue et al, 1996). According to SCCT, one such strategy is to promote strong academic and career self-efficacy (or expectation about one's performance abilities) in order to facilitate persistence in the face of barriers (Hackett & Byars, 1996; Lent et al, 1996). Additionally, an improved triadic reciprocal interaction between parents, adolescents

and the larger community is needed, as it could lead to improved career self-concepts and self-efficacy of young adolescents in disadvantaged communities.

The lack of career information in disadvantaged communities as the result of parents' low level of education and lack of career guidance, was exacerbated by the Apartheid system in South Africa. Black people were not entitled to good education and jobs. One way to re-address this is to promote parental involvement (Lease, 2004; Stead et al, 1999). Lease (2004) has found that African-Americans, like Africans in disadvantaged communities, have less information on educational and vocational opportunities than European Americans. Lacey-Smith (1992) has found that very few children receive constructive career information from their parents, especially young black adolescents. Lacey-Smith (1992) concludes that in general, parental involvement is relatively low in disadvantaged communities across South Africa. The significance of the current study is therefore to investigate the extent of parental importance as perceived by the young adolescents and through this, facilitate the implementation of intervention programmes. This problem could be minimised by involving parents and young adolescents in career-related issues through workshops that address the lack of awareness to career-barrier awareness and facilitate their plans to overcome them (Jackson et al, 2002; Stead et al, 1999; Young et al, 1994; 1992). Counsellors could also assist parents and young people in disadvantaged communities to develop community career resources (Sue et al, 1996).

The parent-adolescent interaction characterised by support of authoritative parenting could also facilitate young adolescents's ability to accept their financial position and develop problem-solving skills. Authoritarian parenting on the other hand, increases the difficulties of career decision-making because parents are not supportive of their children's decisions. Active and supportive parental involvement presents a regulatory system whereby both parents and children work jointly to maintain the relationship and this is consistent with the cognitive representations derived from their history of interactions with significant others (Lerner et al, 2004; Ketterson et al, 1997).

Through the application of SCCT principles in disadvantaged communities, the influence of contextual factors on career development of young adolescents can be understood far more easily. Furthermore, as Stead et al (1999) indicated, the developmental and structural theories do not address this perspective as effectively as the SCCT.

SCCT may allow for personal empowerment and acknowledgement of people's continuous effort in facing their adverse conditions. Naicker (1994) indicates that career counselling for disadvantaged learners requires a shift in perspective and SCCT seems to produce this shift and can facilitate the understanding of the relevance of culture and work ethics in disadvantaged communities. Thus in the current research, young adolescents are afforded a voice to express their perceptions about their parents' involvement in their career development. It is anticipated that through this intention, young adolescents may also express triadic reciprocality, in terms of how they are influenced and how they influence their parents in the achievement of their goals. SCCT offers guidelines that permit universal application.

2.5 Summary of the literature review

Parental involvement in the career development of young adolescents has been regarded as significant for the reduction of anxiety related to career decision and exploration. This literature review provided information on how parent-adolescent interaction, parental support and parenting styles promote or inhibit young adolescents' career development. The characteristics of positive and constructive parental involvement, which are recommended for career development, were identified as being: supportive, reciprocal, open and encouraging communication, as well as role-modelling of work activities through which young adolescents could observe experiment and acquire work values. These characteristics befit those of authoritative parents.

Career development has been considered one of the significant developmental tasks at the adolescent stage, which Super, et al (1996) regarded as the development, translation

and implementation of career self-concepts. The context of disadvantaged communities and its effect on the development of young adolescents career self-efficacy has been explored through the application of the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT). Since overcoming career barriers is the main goal of SCCT, recommendations were made so that, through their involvement, parents in disadvantaged communities could improve young adolescents' self-efficacy, intensify their belief that they can overcome career barriers and reach their career goals.

In view of this literature, it is imperative to investigate how young adolescents in disadvantaged communities perceive their parents' involvement in their career development. The following chapter will explore the methods used for the data collection as well as the data analysis as applied to this study.

CHAPTER 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter explored the literature regarding the impact of parental involvement in the career development of young adolescents from the ages of fourteen to twenty four. This led to the identification of certain important variables of parental involvement that have a particular bearing on this study. These variables are parent-child interaction, parental support and effects of parenting styles. Furthermore, the application on the Social Cognitive Career Theory by Lent et al (1994) was established as an important theoretical framework. In addition to this, career developmental tasks of young adolescents were explained by applying Super's Theory of Career Development (Super, 1990).

Through qualitative research, the perceptions of young adolescents regarding their parents' involvement in career development and other career barriers were explored. The procedures outlined in the previous chapters were followed in observance with the aims of this research. The following section focuses on the research method of the study.

3.2 Research method

Qualitative research is an "approach to the social world which seeks to describe and analyse the culture and behaviour of humans and their groups from the point of those studies" (Bryman, 1988, p. 45 cited in Sibilanga, 2002). The current study applies a method of qualitative research because it allows for a deeper observation into the general well-being of individuals and provides an in-depth understanding of meanings (Henning, 2004; Van Manen, 1990). Thus, the qualitative method could allow for

deeper understanding of parental involvement in the career development of young adolescents, by gaining insight into their feelings, experiences, attitudes, perceptions and beliefs (Newman, 2000). Furthermore, qualitative research focuses on interactive processes and events. It also focuses on authenticity by using fewer cases and subjects (Newman, 2000). Thus, qualitative research procedures promote access to qualitative facts about the people to which researchers talk and observe. The researcher is given the opportunity to share in the understandings, perceptions and experiences of others, hence making qualitative principles relevant for this explorative study (Newman, 2000).

Supported by the literature in the previous chapter, young adolescents develop perceptions regarding their parents' involvement in their career development through experiences of various career behaviours and expressions of their parents from childhood to adolescence.

The methods of data collection in this study are flexible and sensitive to the social context within which data is produced. Thus, qualitative principles, as identified by interviews, served to yield information that helped to develop an adequate explanation of psycho-social aspects of the phenomena that were investigated. Data collection procedures, namely, data collection, including accessing the research setting, sampling research participants, determining and administering the research instrument, will be explained below.

3.3 Procedure for data collection

3. 3. 1 Accessing the research setting

The first procedure followed for data collection involved the accessing of the research setting. Permission to conduct the research at Bafeti Junior Secondary school was sought from and granted by the North West Department of Education in Mabopane Area Project office and the principal of the said school. Thereafter, a meeting with young adolescent Grade nine learners was convened to inform them about the study and to explain its rationale and purpose. The information sheets (Appendix A), as well as consent forms for participation and for audio-taping (Appendix B) were sent to the parents. These information sheets and consent letters were simplified so that they could be understood more easily by both parents and young adolescents. The volunteers had to collect them from their Life Orientation educator. These forms required completion and submission within two weeks.

3. 3. 2 Sampling of participants

A sample can be attained using probability and non-probability sampling methods (Newman, 2000). The present study applied the non-probability sampling in the form of purposive sampling. The object of this study, is to gain an understanding of parental involvement in the career development of young adolescents. The purpose was to gain deeper understanding of the selected group. Thus, non-probability sampling provided a platform for an in-depth investigation of parental involvement in the career development of a particular group of subjects – young black adolescents from a disadvantaged community.

The sample of the study constituted of fourteen young black adolescents, from the community in Grade nine at Bafeti Junior Secondary school in the North-west Province. They lived with either two unemployed parents or one of the parents earning a nominal salary. Only young adolescents whose parents granted permission to participate, were allowed in the study. The young adolescents were all 14 years old. Their participation was voluntary. On completion of the sampling, a consultation session was held with the school management team and the participants to arrange the dates and times for the interview. The ensuing sub-section will focus on the design and administration of the research instrument that was utilised for the data collection.

3. 3. 3 Research instrument

Due to the qualitative nature of the study, the research design constituted of semi-structured interviews. The interview schedule was prepared prior to the interview. It was simplified with most of the questions emanating from an extensive literature review (see Appendix C). The semi-structured interview schedule composed of open-ended questions which were used probingly, to allow for clarity and flexibility in covering a number of precise questions as a result of the exchange with the respondent. The aim of probing and clarifying was to maintain the direction of the topic under discussion and prevent these from digressing. Yin (1986) added that interviews are believed to enable the researcher to access information that relates to the authentic feelings of the participants.

In support, Fontana & Frey (1994:365) emphasise that semi-structured interviews "provide greater depth" of information and accordingly, the interview schedule was divided into three parts. Part one aimed at covering the young adolescents' career interests, career-goals and the role played by parents in developing them. Part two focused on their career life-stories so as to facilitate greater exploration of these young adolescents' perceptions of their parents' involvement in their career development.

Part three focused on the reality check by exploring how the young adolescents' perceived their career development.

The semi-structured interview schedule was then administered to the 14 volunteers at Bafeti Secondary School. The interviews were conducted over a week and each lasted approximately forty-five minutes. The language used for the interviews was based on the preference of the participants. Some participants preferred both Setswana and English, while others preferred either of the two languages. The interview schedule served as a guide rather than a static format. The interviews were tape-recorded to allow for the accurate capturing of information and exclude the interviewer's bias. Therefore, data that was gathered focused on how adolescents perceive their parents' contribution to their career interests, goals, career choice (parental involvement) and how they perceive (feel, experience and what they think of) their parents' influence on their career development, as well as how they perceive their own career development. Throughout the interviews, the researcher noticed that insight into career development occurred naturally in these young adolescents, in the form of personal empowerment during and after the interviews, as indicated by Seedat, Duncan & Lazarus (2001).

With regard to the ethical considerations, parents' consent was sought before the study, as the participants are minors and thus dependent on their parents' consent. At the beginning of each interview, the participants were reminded of their rights to choose not to answer the questions, if they felt uncomfortable to do so and that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any prejudice or penalty. The issue of confidentiality was also clearly explained. The researcher also emphasised that transcripts and audiotapes would not be disclosed to anyone except the researcher and the supervisor and that the tape and transcripts would be destroyed upon completion of the study. It was also indicated that the research report would not have any identifying information about each one of the participants. The following section explains the method used for data analysis.

3.4 Data analysis

The data collected through semi-structured interviews was analysed by means of thematic content analysis, based on the research questions, namely: What are the perceptions of adolescents from disadvantaged areas regarding their parents' involvement in their career development? And, according to these learners' perceptions, which other factors impact on their career development? Richardson (1996) explains content analysis as an approach to study the entire range of communicative and symbolic media, which in the case of this study, comprises of tape-recordings that were subsequently transferred to transcripts. In that way, the researcher sought to make inferences from raw data about parental involvement in the career development of young adolescents.

In addition to this, Banister et al, (1994); Terre Blanche and Durrheim; (1999); Reber (1997), refer to content analysis as a method of data analysis involving the counting of the frequency of particular words, phrases and affective expressions. Thematic analysis is a process for encoding qualitative information, where the encoding requires an explicit "code". In the case of this study, statements and words were studied and encoded into emerging themes. A theme refers to "a pattern found in the information that at the minimum describes and organises possible observations or at most, interprets aspects of the phenomenon" (Boyatzis, 1998). In summary of the definition, Newman (2000), refers to thematic content analysis as an interpretative set of procedures or techniques which are utilised to make valid inferences from a given text.

A four-stage approach, based on set techniques of thematic content analysis as proposed by Newman, (2000) and complemented by Boyatzis (1998) was used to analyse the data. These techniques are as follows: firstly, the audio-taped data was transferred into fourteen transcripts. This was done by listening to each interview repeatedly and writing down every response, word for word, until the transcripts were

compiled. The researcher translated the transcripts which were in the participants' home language, Setswana, into English, as she is fluent in both languages. Thereafter, the researcher read the transcripts repeatedly to familiarise herself with the collected data. Secondly, the transcripts were condensed into fourteen paraphrases through the process of reading, listening and reading whilst underlining words, statements and quotes that presented the main information from transcripts. Through this process, the massive data was reduced to manageable sizes (Boyatzis, 1998).

Thirdly, through paraphrases, the transcripts were grouped into those of parents who are actively involved and those who are passively involved. From those groups, sub-samples were selected from which similar words, statements and phrases in the responses of young adolescents were identified so as to develop codes. Fourthly, the developed codes were then applied to the entire raw data to extract emerging themes. This process also provided the validity of the raw data. Thus, according to Boyatzis (1998), the strength and power of this data-driven approach is that, as far as possible, it utilises the themes that appear in the raw information as the starting point in code development. Three individuals, the researcher, her supervisor and her mentor used thematic content analysis to extrapolate themes. The final eight main themes and sub-themes that were identified are attached in appendix D. The findings of the study will now be presented.

3.5. Summary of methodology

In this chapter, a discussion ensued regarding the application of a qualitative research method for the exploration of young adolescents' perceptions regarding their parents' involvement in their career development. The procedure for data collection, which includes accessing of the research setting, sampling, research instrument, ethical issues considered and data analysis was also discussed. Finally, the process by which the researcher arrived at the eight main themes and sub-themes (Appendix D) was given.

CHAPTER 4: Presentation of the findings

4.1 Introduction

The ensuing chapter presents the findings of the current study based on the qualitative data that focused on the perception of young adolescents with regard to their parents' involvement in their career development. It is recognized that the findings cannot be generalized to a wider context, due to the small sample size and the nature of the research. The presentation commences with the biographic information which provides a description of the interviewees. This is followed by the presentation of themes extracted by using the questions from the interview schedule as a guideline. These extracted themes will be supported by quotes from the raw data to qualify and validate them. The chapter then concludes with the summary of the findings, in preparation for the discussion in Chapter 5.

4.2 Biographic information

Fourteen Grade nine adolescents, aged fourteen, volunteered to be interviewed in this study. The eight boys and six girls that participated were students at Bafeti Junior Secondary School in the North-West Province. The school is situated in Mabopane Township, in the far north region of Pretoria. Most of its learners are residents of Winterveld, Bokkenhout and Mabopane Block C and B. The school caters for disadvantaged learners with unemployed parents and those earning low salaries. Most parents could not pay their children's school fees and that resulted in the school having inadequate resources. Most parents have some secondary school-education but only a have completed Standard ten (Grade 12). The study was therefore deemed very important to investigate how these disadvantaged parents were involved in the career development of their young adolescents. It was also deemed important to investigate

how these young adolescents perceived their parents' involvement and identified further barriers to their career development to be.

4.3 Findings based on interviews

The researcher, supervisor and a mentor worked together to extrapolate themes from the data obtained through interviews. Themes that were extrapolated by these three individuals were highly congruent, hence ascertaining the reliability and validity of the findings presented below. As such, words and statements developed from the sub-samples were applied to all of the raw data in order to extract themes as indicated above. These themes form the basis of the results that will be discussed in the following chapter. As indicated above, certain questions were posed so that subsequent answers, which facilitate the extraction of these themes. Below is a report and expansion of the themes that emerged from the questions in the interview schedule.

4.3.1. Parents' educational support

This theme was extracted in response to the first question on the interviewing schedule, which enquired if these young adolescents told their parents about their future plans. Their responses indicated that they perceived their parents' involvement in their future plans by means of the kind of educational support with which they were provided. The latter was viewed as a preparation for their career choices. The responses based on the above-mentioned theme were further categorised into two clusters, indicating that educational support was provided through (1) parents' educational assistance and through (2) parents' participation in school activities.

Parents' educational assistance

The majority of young adolescents reported with excitement that their communication with their parents regarding their future plans was a very important indication of their parents' support towards their education and future plans, as portrayed through their parents' educational assistance. This assistance is provided by helping them with home-work, as the response from interviewee 10 revealed: "My parents and sister motivate me, they help me with my home work; they explain when I don't understand and give me examples". Interviewee 12 indicated: "My mother checked my school work and my sister realised that I'm struggling with Mathematics, so she helped".

Parent-adolescent communication of educational support through educational assistance is also reflected by parents encouraging adolescents to study hard. Interviewee 13 testified: "They encourage me to study very hard, they advise me to take care of myself". In addition to this, interviewee 10 also said: "They said if I want to be a doctor I must study very hard". Thus, through educational assistance, parents communicated an understanding of the relationship between educational achievement and career planning, which is essential for the career development of these young adolescents. Furthermore, the rewarding of good performance also serves to encourage the young adolescents to study harder and this is exemplified by the perception of one of these young adolescents who said: "I study very hard, for if I don't achieve better results, my mother doesn't buy me shoes and other things I like".

Some adolescents' perceptions concerned their needs for more communication with parents about their plans after matriculation. This is evident with interviewee 11: "When I tell my mother about my future plans she just says: "Finish school, then you will see what to do once you have completed Matric".

Parents' participation in school activities

It is worth noting that, although the young adolescents perceived that parents' participation in some school activities signify parents' concern about their future, they indicated a concern that their parents did not participate enough in other school activities. In this regard, some of the adolescents reported that parents' participation in school activities could be rewarding and provide them with discipline. He said: "My father is a member of the Governing Body of our school and I feel happy because I'm always on my guard since teachers could easily inform him if I did bad things". Another interviewee also elaborated how parents' participation in school activities boosted his academic performance and self-worth: "I was pleased when my parents participated in a cleaning campaign, early this year at my school. My grades have improved since then. I wish my parents could be more involved in school activities".

Other interviewees felt that their parents' involvement in school activities was lacking. One of the interviewees remarked: "My parents do care about my future plans. If they could come to see how I play soccer at school during inter-school leagues, I think they will be more proud of me. My friend's parents often do that and now our soccer teacher appreciates that". Another interviewee also perceived that parents' educational support should be shown through parental participation in school activities: "If parents could come to the class for a week and observe what we learn, I think they would be more motivated because in the past they used to learn about Jan Van Riebeeck, and other things that did not help them in life. These days we learn about practical things".

Although these comments show a concern about the low level of parental participation in school activities, the respondents highlighted their appreciation and the benefit that they derived from the parental participation that they had nevertheless received.

4.3.2 Differential types of parental reactions regarding future goals

The second question enquired about the reactions of these young adolescents' parents regarding their future goals and revealed two differential types of parental reactions, namely: constructive and destructive parental reactions. These deductions were based on the responses indicating that some parents' reactions were in the form of advice to direct the young adolescents' focus on their career goals, to motivate them towards further achievements, to provide positive attitude about school and work, as well as to communicate parents' intentions and expectations about young adolescents' future. Young adolescents also, however, indicated that some parents' reactions came in the form of criticism whereby they disregarded their children's career goals and imposed their own career goals. Some young adolescents reported that their parents seemed to capitalise on their past unacceptable behaviour and continued to criticise and punish them.

Parents' constructive reactions

The majority of the young adolescents that were interviewed perceived their parents' reaction to their future goals as career advice which directed their focus onto their career goals. That was reflected in the sentiments expressed by interviewee 05: "All the time, I remember this piece of advice my mother gave me, never drop out of school to try to get money from elsewhere, education is a brighter future. She told me not to take too seriously of always thinking of money, finances, financial index and stock exchange. And I must carry on with my studies". Interviewee 06 further emphasised this: "Mother is mostly positive; she is like you can do this and that when I write something, she advises me".

Furthermore, parents' positive reactions were also perceived by young adolescents as motivation to develop higher educational achievements and to obtain higher goals than

their parents. Interviewee 07 alluded to the acquisition of motivation: “Yes, mostly when electricity is cut-off as it usually does, my mother motivates me mostly, and she says she doesn’t want me to end education at Standard ten (Grade 12) like her”.

Again, in their reactions regarding adolescents’ future goals, parental advice emanated from their own school and work experiences and this is aimed at promoting positive attitudes about school and work. One of the interviewees testified: “Mother says they used to go to school on feet, they didn’t get money for transport like we get, but through perseverance she now has a diploma and she is busy with a degree. She says her working environment is fine. She was redeployed to another school and some of the kids she teaches do drugs, she advises me not to end up like them”.

Another interviewee added: “Mother attended school quite well, up to Standard 10 (Grade 12) and clerical courses, but father didn’t because, there were a lot of problems at home like poverty. They say school was fun, and the most important thing was getting more knowledge and getting educated. If you are educated you can be the person you want to be. They said that their work was fine”.

Parents’ destructive reactions

On the other hand, some of these young adolescents indicated that their career-related conversations with their parents were usually minimal because of the negative reactions they received or anticipated from their parents. It appeared as though parental criticism of their career goals led some of these adolescents to avoid career-related conversations with their parents and this consequently affected their self-confidence and confidence in their future goals. Interviewee 03 stated: “No, I don’t talk to them anymore about what I want to be, when I tell them about my career goal of becoming a social worker they say I should think of something else, not social work”. Also interviewee 04 remarked with low confidence: “I don’t always talk to my family about my dreams, I’m not sure

what I want to be at the moment". In addition, some of the adolescents felt that their parents' reactions showed a disregard of their future career goals, as on of them remarked: "But, my parents at times are very difficult, they say being a soccer star is not a career but a hobby".

Furthermore, some adolescents also perceived parents' reaction as the imposition of their parents' unachieved career goals on their children. One of them said: "I, at times get angry, but they tell me that even if it angers me I should be a doctor. My father once wanted to be a doctor". Some of the adolescents also perceived parents' negative reactions as capitalisation on adolescents' previous unacceptable behaviour and thus prevented them from communicating their future goals in fear of being reminded of their faults. One of these adolescents commented: "No, I don't tell them about my future goals, I think they (parents) would not have taken me seriously because of my past behaviour".

4.3.3. Parental motivation for participation in career-related activities at home

The third question in the interviewing schedule was based on career-related activities, which these young adolescents engaged in at home and the people who motivated them. Young adolescents' responses did not only reveal the activities they enjoyed, but that they also regarded those activities as a norm that they were used to and expected to participate in. Besides, this, they indicated that they cleaned their houses and yards, did the laundry, cooked for their families and looked after their younger siblings. Some of these young adolescents also engaged in other career-related activities such as helping their parents who were self-employed. The responses of these young adolescents were therefore clustered into two categories, namely; general household chores as career activities and specific job-related activities.

General household-chores as career-related activities

The majority of young adolescents indicated that their family members motivated them to participate in household chores, while some remarked that through household chores, parents seemed to instil the benefit of team work, such as sharing work. One of them indicated: "I like cleaning the house on Saturdays. Although we are five children, each has a chore to tend to and my mother likes a clean house. My sister cooks a lot". The other adolescents also alluded to their assistance in the home as the development of a sense of responsibility: "I help my mother by washing the dishes, wash clothes and even help to mark her pupils' books sometimes". The adolescents also perceived awareness of their family members' interests as the enhancement of the understanding amongst themselves. The indication by one of the interviewees was made: "My father and I like doing the garden and cleaning the yard. My mother likes a clean environment and she says that cleanliness is next to Godliness".

Job-related activities

In addition to house chores, other young adolescents are also involved with their parents in more job-related activities, which they perceive as the acquisition of skills. One of them testified: "Helping my father when fixing cars, and I learn more about cars from him", while another interviewee remarked: "I liked playing with irons, now my grandfather motivates me to fix them whilst he cleans the yard during my turn".

These adolescents perceived their parents' motivation of job-related activities as a realisation of their interests in those activities and thus aimed at developing them further. This is further perceived as part of career exploration since adolescents' repeated exposure to these activities might lead to more interests and acquisition of skills and which may develop into career interests. One of the interviewees mentioned this: "At home, my mother realised my interest in medical information, which I cut

from newspapers, collected and learnt about it, so she brought me more medical articles and gave me more time to do what interested me".

4.3.4. Childhood influences on career-related goals

The fourth question on the interviewing schedule was based on whether childhood career fantasies had an influence on the career-related goals of these young adolescents. Their responses revealed the importance of various factors such as the observation and feed-back received from significant others, including parents; and also adolescents' self-knowledge in deciding whether to change or maintain childhood career goals.

One category was used to explain how parents' encouragement of childhood identification may influence the maintenance or change of adolescents' career goals, as revealed by respondents.

Parents' encouragement of childhood identification with significant others

Firstly, from the majority of these interviewees, it appeared as though the parent-adolescent interaction, positive communication, constructive reactions and encouraging participation in career activities, motivates the young adolescents' identification with significant others. These characteristics seem to promote and maintain childhood career goals. As interviewee 05 illustrated: "I wanted to be rich since childhood, like my relatives. I wanted to be the most successful entrepreneur in South Africa. My father was a deputy director in a transport company. People like Cyril Ramaphosa, Tokyo Sexwale and Patrice Motsepe motivate me".

In support of the above, interviewee 14 said: "I wanted to play soccer since childhood; soccer players like Doctor Khumalo impressed me. One day when I was sick in the

hospital, I had an operation and couldn't come to face other students, my father reminded me of what I used to tell him about becoming a soccer star one day".

Some of these young adolescents revealed to have changed or integrated their childhood career goals along with their development, as they acquired more knowledge about themselves in relation to their intended careers goals. That was portrayed by interviewee 01: "As a child I wanted to be a doctor, I enquired from a neighbour and learnt about the inconveniences of being a doctor on call compared to being an engineer. My cousin is doing engineering and he encourages me to follow his footsteps. I will be a computer engineer".

Changes seemed to have been facilitated by their parents, significant others and adolescents' self-knowledge. Interviewee 06 also added: "I want to get into music industry and later study to become a psychiatrist. When I was a child I dreamt of being a doctor, but I'm not interested in touching other people's bodies and doing physical examination. When some of my friends have got problems they come to me and I give them good advice".

Contrary to the above, some less confident adolescents experienced difficulty in finding a relation between childhood career fantasies and their present career goals. That was presented by one of the interviewees: "As a child I liked travelling and having fun, but now I want to be a social worker. My parents want me to be a doctor; they say I must think of something better than being a social worker.

4.3.5 Career planning

The fifth question was based on the plans young adolescents have made with regard to the attainment of their future goals. Their responses indicated various ways in which

adolescents plan to reach their career goals. From these responses the following were observed: the majority of young adolescents intended acquiring bursaries; some were thinking of tertiary institutions which they would like to attend; others thought about using their skills and talents to save money for their studies; while some had already collected career information from significant others. The majority of them intended collecting career information in the near future. That ability to outline the steps necessary for the attainment of career goals seemed to be dependent on the parent-adolescent relationship, adolescents' confidence and the careers they wished to pursue.

Adolescents' plans to reach future career goals

In this category, some young adolescents indicated that they have already collected career information by either interviewing people with whom they identified, or by reading about and observing these role-models through different media. One of the interviewees said: "I enquired from a neighbour about being a doctor and an engineer, and learned..." The other one said: "I collect medical information and read about…"

Some thought about the tertiary institutions at which they wanted to enrol. One of these interviewees said: "I want to attend either the University of Johannesburg or Varsity College, a good private college and may have an international education. I want my CV to be good".

The majority of these young adolescents also have the intention of studying hard to acquire a bursary and reach their future goals. As one of them said: "I will go to the library, study very hard … to acquire a bursary, I like to have matriculation exemption with distinction in both Mathematics and English".

Furthermore, some interviewees indicated intentions of using their skills and talents as part of their plan to reach their career goals. One of them said: “I’m good at music, I usually do auditions and I’m encouraged to use my talent to put aside money for my studies,” While another commented: “I fix irons for only R20. I’m thinking of opening my own business of repairing irons”, and yet another is also quoted as saying: “I invest my money. R600/700 per month, I will use that as a capital to invest in property”.

4.3.6 Source of motivation for reaching career goals

The sixth question was based on the sources of motivation that these young adolescents had for reaching career goals. Their responses revealed that most of them have various sources of motivation for reaching their career goals such as, significant others who are family members as well as people outside of their families.

Various sources of motivation from career-role models inside and outside families

The majority of the interviewees indicated that they had career role-models who motivated them, even though some of these people had not yet been consulted. It seems probable that these significant others might have motivated them through observation and communication. Parents were indicated as primary sources of the majority of these young adolescents. An interviewee said: “He (father) is quite big, a deputy in transport company, I was impressed. I’m also motivated by a lot of people, like Patrice Motsepe, Cyrial Ramaphosa and others,” and another one said: “She is an actress, I told myself that I could be like Charlize”. Furthermore, some of these young adolescents also indicated that they are motivated by the success of their significant others, such as those who help people on a humanitarian basis. A testimony from one of the interviewees relates: “I would also like to alleviate poverty in South Africa. Like other doctors, I want to help people with HIV/AIDS, TB and to buy medicines for them”.

4.3.7 Awareness of barriers towards career goals

The seventh question focused on other factors that these young adolescents perceived as barriers to reaching their future goals. They revealed that low parental income posed a major financial barrier. Interestingly, most of these adolescents strongly believed that there actually were no barriers **within themselves** that would prevent them from reaching their career goals.

Awareness of external barriers

The majority of the interviewees indicated their parents' low-income as the main external barrier which is prevalent in their community, as most of the parents were unemployed. One of the interviewees commented: "Mother is unemployed and father is the sole breadwinner". A second interviewee added: "Yes, money could be a problem, since my mother is unemployed and my father is self-employed as an electrician". Another external barrier indicated the negligent lifestyle of their parents: "Mother is a domestic worker and earns very little and my father is unemployed. Every time my mother gets her salary, she spends it with him over the weekend. We depend on my grandmother's pension". In addition, reasons for these financial problems further revealed other external barriers, such as the death or absence of a parent or divorce. As one of the interviewees added: "Money is a problem, as it is now for school fund and transport, mother has retired and my father has passed away", and another other interviewee said: "My father said he had invested in an educational policy for me and my younger sister, but now I don't know because he is divorcing my mother".

Although these young adolescents are aware of the external barriers, they have already made an effort to overcome them. Evidence of this was given by one of the

interviewees: “As there are different obstacles in life, I have to go through them, friends, family etc, but I must become what I want to be”.

4.3.8 Plans to overcome barriers and achieving career goals

The eighth question focused on the plans that these young adolescents have already made to overcome barriers to obtaining their career goals. The question seemed to have elicited responses that indicated that **most** of these young adolescents perceived no insurmountable barriers to their career goals that cannot be overcome, as their responses revealed that they had already thought of plans to overcome barriers to reaching career goals. Thus, the plans they thought about were: seeking financial assistance and utilising their skills and talent. The majority of the interviewees intended to seek financial assistance. One of the interviewees, after considering that money could be a barrier, said: “I want to study very hard so that I could get a bursary, loans or scholarship”. Others realized that overcoming their barriers would mean improvement on subjects that could allow them financial assistance: “I want to study hard especially Science and Mathematics…so that I could qualify for a bursary like my sister who got good results at Grade 12 and she is now furthering her studies”. In addition, other adolescents considered utilising their talents and skills to earn money for their studies as one of them articulated: “After matriculation I may join the gospel music and then earn money to further my studies, I’m also learning how to repair computers; I’ll put aside money for my studies”.

Highly motivated young adolescents were prepared to try every avenue to achieve their career goals. Most interviewees were aware of barriers in their life, but still strongly believed that the barriers would not prevent them from reaching their career goals. Another adolescent said: “Nothing will stop me from reaching my career goals”

4.4 Summary of the research findings

A brief summary of the findings derived from the qualitative survey was presented in this section to highlight the main perception of young adolescents regarding parental involvement in their career development. According to the analysis of the qualitative data, the majority of adolescents' communication with parents about career goals revealed that they perceived their involvement through their parents' educational support through the provision of educational assistance and participation in young adolescents' school activities. Even though young adolescents were concerned about their parents' lack of participation in other school activities such as sport and class visits, they perceived their parents' educational support as being rewarding and it boosted their academic performance by providing them with discipline.

Young adolescents also perceived their parents' reactions as constructive or destructive, depending on individual parenting styles and were mainly revealed through interactions and support. Therefore, it can be deduced that parents' reactions have an affect on the adolescents' confidence, self-esteem and consequently, their career goals. Furthermore, parents' motivation of career-related activities was perceived positively as a way of introducing work-related habits. However, its impact depended on how parents presented these career-related activities to their adolescents and also whether the adolescents perceived it as beneficial.

The maintenance or change of young adolescents' childhood career goals, seemed dependent on parents' encouragement of the way in which their young adolescents identification with significant others. In addition, young adolescents with more parental support displayed the ability to plan careers more effectively and had various sources of motivation, while those with less support mostly had delayed career planning abilities and few sources of motivation. Adolescents' awareness of these barriers and their determination to overcome them reflected that most of these adolescents had resilience, high self-efficacy, and the cognitive ability to apply the various planning

exercises in order to overcome perceived career barriers. The ensuing chapter will focus on the discussion of the findings.

CHAPTER 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The researcher wishes to reiterate that the findings that were extrapolated are only applicable to a particular group of participants and the discussion that follows should keep this in mind. The following chapter entails a discussion of the findings acquired through qualitative enquiries which were presented in the previous chapter. This discussion comprises a summary of key findings under each theme and will be supported and confirmed by the literature. Eight themes were derived from the interviews to answer the two research questions and are presented below.

5.2 Six themes to answer the first research question

Research question: What are the perceptions of young adolescents from disadvantaged communities regarding their parents' involvement in their career development?

This question became a very important one because six of the eight themes that were identified have direct bearing on this question. Although these six core themes were identified and discussed separately for the purposes of clarification, they are inter-related and therefore discussion of each one will have a bearing on the other. Drawing extensively from the qualitative data obtained through the interviews with young adolescents, a number of perceptions from these themes regarding parental' involvement in their career development were revealed. These six main themes with their associated sub-themes will now be discussed.

Parents' educational support

The findings of this study showed that the majority of young adolescents recognised their parents' involvement in their future plans when they provided educational support. According to Zunker (2002), parents' educational support illustrates their understanding of the relationship between educational achievement and work which is the key concept for the enhancement of career development. In addition, parents' educational support was further categorised as parents' educational assistance and parents' participation in school activities. The former was described in terms of parents checking adolescents' books, helping them with homework and encouraging them to study very hard, while the latter included sports and class visits, which according to the study' findings, are lacking and a concern for some young adolescents. Hall (2003), Middleton et al (1993), Trusty et al (1996) & Sitole (1993) support the findings of the present study by acknowledging that parents' educational support lead young adolescents to acquire academic and marketable skills that are significant for their career development.

If Super's theory (refer to chapter 2, section 2.5) is applied to these findings, then it can be concluded that by means of educational support parents develop: positive attitudes in young adolescents about school, positive self-knowledge and self-concepts (Super et al, 1996). Furthermore, the findings revealed the significance of a secure parent-adolescent interaction, which according to Ainsworth (1989) and Bowlby (1990) cited in Colin (1996), allow young adolescents to explore the challenging arenas of education and prepare them for future occupations and opportunities. These findings also revealed that parents' educational assistance as well as parents' participation in school activities was perceived as having a positive impact on the academic performance of the majority of these young adolescents. The present study's findings indicated that parental involvement in disadvantaged communities was related more to the academic aspects of the young adolescents' school lives, rather than activities such as sport, arts and culture. Therefore, young adolescents in the study indicated that they also need more parental involvement in non-academic (extra-curricular) school activities. That would create a

more balanced and holistic parental involvement which, in turn, could be more beneficial to the career development of these young adolescents.

According to the South African Schools Act (Department of Education, 1995), Alderfer (2004) and Sue et al (1996), schools and other stakeholders, including career counselling psychologists, should provide the necessary support. As indicated in the findings of this study, such support can develop the cognitive ability of young adolescents and thereby enhance clearer perception of their situation and positive career self-efficacy (Lent et al, 1994). In addition, Skeel and Colemans (1966), cited in Sitole (1993), confirmed this research that the outcome of positive parental involvement is reflected by a happy child, who is encouraged and helped to learn both at home and at school.

Parents' reactions regarding future goals

Another theme, which emerged in the response to the first question, regarding parental involvement in young adolescents' career development, is parents' reactions regarding future goals.

According to the responses of the young adolescents in the current study, parents' reactions regarding the adolescents' career goals were perceived as constructive or destructive, depending on the reactions and the perceptions of these young adolescents. Thus, the adolescents may perceive parents' reactions as constructive if they provide advice that manifests a positive attitude about school and work. Young et al (1997: 196), referred to this as a "constructive parent-adolescent engagement" and also as "career-related conversations" and suggested that such reactions could benefit career development of both parents and young adolescents. Therefore, through these career-related conversations, parents and adolescents provide and receive reactions that can be classified as advice and encouragement.

Furthermore, it was found that the characteristics displayed in constructive reactions seem to correspond with an authoritative parenting style, as discussed in Chapter 2. This proves that this style is suitable for the effective career development of young adolescents. In addition, the young adolescents' responses indicated that adolescents who were confident, eloquent and could clearly articulate their career choices, perceived their parents as good creators of a supportive environment where shared decision-making takes place and young adolescents' autonomy is recognised. Authoritative parents mostly create this supportive environment.

Contrary to this, some adolescents in this study perceived their parents' reactions to be destructive, due to criticisms, disregard of their career goals, an imposition of parents' own career interests, as well as parents' capitalising on young adolescents' previous unacceptable behaviour. These findings thus indicate that some of these young adolescents felt that they were unheard and unhappy as a result of minimal parental support, limited feedback and frequent conflicts (Darling, 1999 cited in Lerner et al, 2004; Sadock et al, 2003). These destructive parental reactions are seen as anxiety-provoking, which Middleton et al (1993) refer to as negative parental involvement. Therefore, young adolescents' career exploration and decision-making may be affected by parents' negative reactions. .

The application of Super's theory to this study conclude that in these parent-adolescent interactions, the young adolescents' positive or negative career self-concepts were developed through the process of synthesising and compromising (Super et al, 1996). According to the SCCT, other factors that also influence self-efficacy (beliefs and judgments) regarding career choice, is developed by parents' reactions such as verbal persuasion. These reactions may manifest parental approval or disapproval of the adolescents' career goals (Lent et al, 1994). This is an indication that the development of positive career self-concepts and self-efficacy may be the results of authoritative parenting. Some young adolescents may have mature abilities regarding career choices which might be due to the drive for self-development and rewarding careers. Findings indicated that negative career self-concepts and self-efficacy resulted in career

indecision, frustration, job dissatisfaction, estranged family relationships and poor mental health. The latter is associated with authoritarian parenting (Way et al, 1996).

It can be concluded that although parents' reactions are important, these need to be informed reactions that allow the adolescents to have the freedom of choice, rather than blind reactions based on past patterns (Alderfer, 2004). Therefore, in this regard, career counselling psychologists could assist parents to realise the effects that their reactions have on the career development of their children. This could also lead them to assist the young adolescents to resolve this dilemma. In most cases, these career-related conversations occur when young adolescents and their parents are involved in educational activities, as well as in various work-related activities at home.

Parental motivation for career activities at home

The third theme that emerged showed that the young adolescents in this study perceived their parents as individuals who facilitate their participation in different household chores and job-related activities at home. In support to these findings, Lerner et al (2004) indicated that a strong orientation toward these activities mean that both the mother and the father view the adolescent's movement toward autonomy in a positive light. Thus, some of these young adolescents may have learnt that productivity brings recognition and reward, as an outcome of industriousness versus inferiority, a theory postulated by Erikson (1963), cited in Zunker (2002). Brown (2003) explains that most young adolescents become aware and concerned about the world of work, as well as their personal relationship to it during this developmental stage. In fact, at the age of 14, most young adolescents have had casual work experiences, such as babysitting, selling newspapers as well as the exploration of household chores and job-related activities, such as fixing cars, repairing irons and computers (Brown, 2003). Therefore, parental support of young adolescents' self and career exploration can be shown by the exposure that parents give to their young adolescents by means of home chores and job-related activities (Super et al, 1996).

Considering Super's theory regarding motivation of these young adolescents' participation in career activities, it could be concluded that through playing various roles in the real-life activities, especially at home, these young adolescents translate their self-concepts through experimentation in order to establish their abilities (Super et al, 1996). Therefore, through participation in chores at home, these young adolescents are allowed to make tentative choices, and to try them out in fantasy, discussions and work. In addition, the SCCT concluded that parents, by motivating their adolescents to participate in home-based career activities, allow them to acquire self-efficacy through personal performance accomplishment of direct experiences of success or failure and also by means of observation of the failure or success in the performance of these activities (vicarious learning) in parents, siblings and other family members (Lent et al, 1994). Therefore, parents, in disadvantaged areas who encourage these home-based career activities have met the demands of this developmental stage of adolescence and could further increase their parental involvement in the career exploration of their young adolescents.

This study has also found that young adolescents benefited from these home-based career activities by parents' sharing their own work and vocational activities with their adolescents, facilitating team-work and understanding among family members. In this way, young adolescents are equipped to acquire the necessary work-related attitudes such as punctuality, reliability, efficiency, responsibility, accuracy, accountability and the reward of work-satisfaction for a job well done (Super et al, 1996, Brown 2003 and Turner et al, 2003). Therefore, the benefits and exposure to these career activities also assist in determining young adolescents' choice of career-related activities which reflect effort of expenditure, persistence, thought patterns (cognitive abilities) and emotional reactions when confronted by obstacles (Stead et al, 1999).

In addition to the above, parents' educational support of young adolescents' future plans, parental reactions to their career goals and parental motivation of home-based career activities and the childhood influences on career-related goals were also

identified as themes to illustrate the nature and the extent of parental involvement in their career development.

Childhood influences on career-related goals

Erikson (1963), cited in Zunker, (2002), suggested that adolescents are subjected to various influences throughout childhood. Thus, when they progress towards adolescence, they search intensely for a clear identity that would include their earlier career goals. The major crises in this stage are role confusion and the choice of career. This is due to the fact that commitment to a career significantly affects identity. Lent et al, (1994); (1996), Super (1990) & Whiston et al (2004) support the contention of this study, indicating that career development of the majority of young adolescents begins in childhood and continues into adolescence.

Thus, young adolescents perceived encouragement of childhood identification with significant others including parents, other family members, teachers, peers or career-related models, as a present influence on the maintenance, expansion and integration of their childhood career goals into their present career goals. Some adolescents, who have relationship problems with their parents, indicated several changes in their career goals and that they are still undecided. Therefore, these adolescents find it very difficult to attain the processes of self-identification and self-differentiation, that is, the appraisal of one's own unique abilities and the acknowledgement of the differences between self and others and this subsequently lead to career indecision (Super et al, 1996).

These finding are confirmed by Super' theory (as indicated in chapter 2, section 2.5) that career development starts approximately at the age of four and continues up to adulthood Super (1990). In addition, Erikson (1963), cited in Zunker (2002) indicated that there is considerable continuity between the positive features of relationships established during adolescence and those established in earlier life, despite the altered patterns of interaction, emotion and cognition. This is further confirmed by Erikson,

(1963), cited in Zunker (2002) & Super et al, (1996) who postulate that during the exploration stage, adolescents encounter the career developmental tasks of crystallisation, specification and implementation of career choices that were developed during childhood. These childhood aspirations about themselves become more realistic through experimentation with various career activities. They therefore retain and integrate those childhood aspirations that they find self-satisfying into their personality, a characteristic that is also by Super et al (1996).

When we apply tenets of SCCT to the findings, we can conclude that some young adolescents, who retained and integrated their childhood career choices, appeared to have positive self-efficacy, which they have developed through vicarious learning. Through vicarious learning, they observed significant others succeed in similar career activities and believe that they could also succeed at these activities. Those who altered their childhood career goals during adolescence, reported a continuation of personal failure since childhood and observed the failure of significant others. They, therefore, learnt to doubt their ability to succeed in those careers (Lent et al, 1994). There is, therefore, strong evidence that socialisation by parents is important as it leads to the continuity or alteration of childhood career goals and subsequently promotes the enhancement of career self-concepts and self-efficacy. Counselling to develop self-awareness is therefore significant as it can be one of the major goals of career development and it involves the ability to interpret information about self and about the differences among people (Super 1990).

Career planning

Parents have a major role to play in the career development of their young adolescents, as this leads to enhanced career planning. This study revealed that most young adolescents were at different levels of career planning, despite their developmental stage. It was found that some young adolescents were confident about their chosen careers, while others were still undecided. According to Super's theory (Super, 1990),

adolescents' different levels of career planning can be attributed to their progression in the phases of crystallisation, specification and implementation of their career decision-making. As such, some of these adolescents are going through the sub-stages of the exploration stage, namely: tentative (14-17), transition (18-21) and trial (22-24). These differences in levels of career planning can be understood, as different young adolescents are at different stages in their career development although they are in the same age-group. Therefore, this study considers the different levels in career planning of young adolescent to be acceptable.

These findings suggest that there is a direct correlation between career planning and the type of parenting style. This was due to an understanding of how parental involvement might impact on young adolescents' career planning. As Brown (2003) asserted, career planning, which includes career decision-making skills, is linked to early childhood experiences such as: family attitudes, work values and the role modelling by mothers and fathers.

When applying SCCT to the findings of this study, it is understood that through constructive communication and supportive interaction of authoritative parents, adolescents may anticipate valued positive outcomes that are accrued from their career planning actions (Lent et al, 1994). This was confirmed by the findings of this study, as most young adolescents with authoritative parents had already set career goals. They also seem more confident about their career choices and most of them were studying very hard to obtain bursaries, loans and scholarships. Some even had acquired career information from significant others and from institutions of higher learning and some were using their skills and talents to obtain finances for their studies.

Thus, Turner et al (2002) reported, one can deduce that a constructive parenting style is associated with adolescents' confidence with regard to the following: engagement in career planning; an understanding of their own and others feelings and reactions in educational and vocational contexts; perseverance in their schoolwork even when they

are personally or academically challenged and the choice of decisions that lead to a rewarding career.

Furthermore, SCCT assumes that the destructive interaction of authoritarian parents leads to adolescents to avoid planning their careers out of a lack of confidence in their capabilities. They do not anticipate support (negative outcomes) from their parents and their dependence on their parents may lead to job dissatisfaction, negative career self-efficacy and poor career development (Lent et al, 1994). This study supports these claims because some of the young adolescents have either authoritarian, indulgent-permissive or indulgent-neglecting parents and indicated that they have not yet properly chosen their future careers. Some were not yet confident about their careers and most of them had not yet acquired information about their careers. Most of them indicated that they had been thinking about choosing careers, but that they lacked the necessary advice.

Sources of motivation for reaching career-goals

The majority of the adolescents in this study indicated that they had various sources of motivation for reaching their career-goals, namely: significant others, who act as career role-models inside and outside their families. In support of the findings of this study, Super's theory postulated that parents, as significant others, are the primary sources of motivation for these adolescents (Super et al, 1996). This is due to the fact that parents provide the socialisation, approval, guidance and feedback from which young adolescents' career self-concepts and abilities to reach careers are developed (Super et al, 1996). This has been supported by De Haas's (1992), Haffajee's (1991), and Young's (1996) research which revealed that young adolescents rated their parents higher than other stakeholders in their career development. Young et al (1992) contended that some parents might attempt to model a wide range of skills and attitudes to motivate and enhance the adolescents' ability to reach their career goals. The intention of other parents may be to make young adolescents happy and well-adjusted, so that they can engage satisfactorily in relationships.

Consequently, this study has shown that supportive parental involvement mostly enhances young adolescents' confidence in identifying with various sources of motivation in order to reach their career goals. Secure parent-adolescent interactions, which are similar to authoritative parenting, promote career exploration and identification with role-models inside and outside of the family. In this way, adolescents learn to acquire information about careers, (requirements, role-models, salary and other benefits) and as such, become more motivated (Ketterson & Blustein, 1997). Bandura (1986), cited in Lent et al (1994) confirms this by referring to role models as a supportive presence in the lives of adolescents. Therefore SCCT also acknowledges the effect of significant others, including parents, in the creation of an environment where young adolescents are given the necessary skills and abilities to achieve career goals (Lent et al, 1996).

On the contrary, non-supportive, insecure parental involvement is likely to minimise young adolescents' abilities and skills to identify other sources of motivation. This leads to mistrust in relationships and such young adolescents are then likely to avoid role-models in fear of embarrassment and negative outcomes (Ketterson et al, 1997; Lent et al, 1996). Consequently, limited exposure to role models may further limit career exploration of these adolescents and furthermore, expose them to fewer sources of motivation (Brown, 2003). Parents could be advised about the benefits of exposing their young adolescents to a wide range of careers through the use of the media, including radio, television, magazines, newspapers and available role models in their communities, to enhance their children's ability to attain their career goals. Open parental expressing their positive expectations, beliefs and values about the adolescents could enhance the young adolescents' incorporation of these aspects in their career development.

In response to question one, young adolescents from disadvantage communities viewed the nature of parental involvement in their career development as either constructive or destructive. Thus, constructive parental involvement was associated with secure

parent-adolescent interactions, which provide support and encouragement to young adolescents, especially in relation to their education, career goals, participation in career activities at home and identification with significant others. This constructive involvement seems to lead to better career choices and planning. In contrast,, destructive parental involvement was associated with insecure parent-adolescent interactions with limited educational support and an absence of motivation to facilitate the participation of the young adolescents' career activities at home and inadequate support around career goals. The latter led to difficulty in identifying with significant others, choosing and planning careers in order to achieve career goals.

A common concern that was identified in both categories of parental involvement centred on the lack of parental participation in extra-curricular activities which young adolescents in the study felt could facilitate their career development. Throughout the interview, young adolescents with constructive parental involvement appeared more confident about their career development than those with destructive parental involvement. These young adolescents also communicated an awareness of the barriers in their lives, and how they could overcome them. A discussion around career barriers would now be addressed by providing answers to research question two.

5.3 Two themes to answer the second research question

Research question: According to these young adolescents' perceptions, which other factors have an impact on their career development?

In answer to the above question, two crucial themes that form part of the eight themes of the study emerged. The responses of young adolescents revealed that most of them were aware of the external barriers to the attainment of their career goals and that their parents assisted them to understand the nature of these barriers and to accept them. The following section discusses the awareness of external barriers in the attainment of career goals.

Awareness of career barriers in the attainment of career goals

According to Jackson et al (2002:434), career barriers are "events or conditions, either within the person or in his environment, that make career progress difficult". In addition, Lent et al, (2000: 42) explains that "if one is interested in restoring previously blocked or discarded options, it also seems essential to study those aspects of the environment and of the individual's appraisal of, and response to, the environment that facilitate career choice and development". Therefore, through the application of both explanations of career barriers to the findings of this study, it was revealed that the majority of young adolescents indicated that their parents' low income, the result of unemployment, was their primary external career barrier. Some mentioned that other external barriers, such as parents' divorce, the death of one parent, the unavailability of the other parent, parent lifestyles and peer pressure, became significant when their basic social support failed. This awareness of external career barriers could be used effectively to assist these young adolescents to build resilience within themselves (Jackson & Nutini, 2002).

In support of the above findings, Bernhardt's (1998), Deller's, (1997), Hickson's (1988), Naicker's (1993), Sibilanga's (2000) and Stead et al's (1999) research also indicated that the main external career barriers namely, low parental income, is caused by the high rate of unemployment in disadvantaged communities across South Africa. Thus, the legacy of Apartheid in South Africa has had a negative effect on parents' career development, which in turn impacts on that of their children. These barriers are seen to limit young adolescents' career choices, exposure to career role models, career exploration and career opportunities (Bernhardt, 1998, Deller, 1997, Hickson, 1988, Naicker, 1993, Sibilanga, 2000 & Stead et al, 1999). The contention of this study is that constructive parent-adolescent interaction leads to an awareness of these barriers and the search for solutions to overcome them (Lent et al, 1996). Therefore, the findings revealed that constructive parental involvement facilitates better learning

opportunities than destructive parental involvement, as the former can enhance the career development of young adolescents.

Some young adolescents indicated that although they were aware that certain barriers, such as the lack of discipline and parental support, could subject them to internal barriers, such as lack of self-confidence, lack of commitment to school work, vulnerability to peer pressure, teenage pregnancy and drug abuse, they still believed that they could attain their goals. According to the study's findings, this awareness of external and internal career barriers could facilitate early intervention, which according to Sue and Sue (1996), leads to the identification and clarification of young adolescents' career-related needs. Furthermore, Lent, Hackett and Brown (1999) recommended developmental and remedial interventions as a way of promoting young adolescents' career development both during and beyond their school years.

Most young adolescents' awareness of the realities of their lives, their perceptions about barriers and their efficacy to deal with them were associated with a constructive rather than destructive parental involvement in their career development. A discussion on the findings on how adolescents plan to overcome these ensues.

Overcoming career barriers to the attainment of career goals

It is essential to reiterate that the career development of young adolescents in disadvantaged communities is mostly affected by destructive parental involvement and low parental income. Thus, overcoming these barriers is a significant goal of social cognitive theory (Lent et al, 1994), cited in Zunker (2002). This study confirmed the importance of this goal, since the majority of these young adolescents have already thought about plans to overcome potential career barriers. Their solutions include a commitment to study harder so as to obtain bursaries, loans, scholarships and sponsors or plans to use their skills and talents to generate money so as to further their studies. Most young adolescents in this study referred to their parents, family members,

teachers, peers and community members as the primary sources of support of their career plans, a factor that is also indicated in a study by Jackson et al (2002).

Furthermore, the findings of the study illustrated that parenting styles have a huge impact on the adolescents' ability to overcome career barriers. For example, children of *authoritative parents* were easily able to relate their experienced and anticipated career barriers. They also had no difficulties in identifying coping strategies and decisions necessary for overcoming these barriers. In addition to this, children with *authoritarian parents* were more likely to blame parents for barriers that they encountered, as they have limited coping strategies and cognitive abilities to deal with these barriers (Lerner et al, 2004; Ketterson & Blustein, 1997). The understanding that career barriers and sources of support are influenced by parenting practices was confirmed in the study, as young adolescents revealed that parents openly discuss their family expectations, values, beliefs and the facilitation of coping strategies (Fouad & Bingham, 1995; Leong & Hartung, 1997, cited in Jackson et al, 2002; Lent et al, 2000, cited in Zunker, 2002).

Naicker, (1993) and Stead et al (1999) conclude that personal ambition and motivation are possible considerations for socially advantaged adolescents, whereas most disadvantaged adolescents are compelled to take whatever jobs are available. This study revealed, however, that there is a changing trend regarding this, as illustrated by some disadvantaged adolescents. It is, therefore, highlighted that counsellors should motivate young adolescents to aim for jobs which are not only within their reach, but which may be used as stepping stones for better jobs in the future (Naicker, 1993). Therefore, Hall (2003) and Jackson et al (2002) caution that the attainment of this goal would require that counsellors learn how to assess the meaning of career barriers within the parent-adolescent context. They would also need to identify the existing experiences to strengthen their network of contextual support and increase the consideration of realistic alternatives.

Furthermore, Sue et al (1996) and Jackson et al (2002) considered that parents could act as motivators for their children and thereby facilitate their coping mechanisms in order to overcome various career barriers. Thus, they highlighted that young adolescents as well as parents needed guidance to realise that they could overcome the internal and external barriers that influence their career decisions. Furthermore, involving parents and young adolescents in career projects such as the development of a community career resource centre would heighten plans to overcome those career barriers timeously (Young et al, 1994; 1992).

In conclusion, the discussion of the study's findings indicates that parental involvement plays a significant role in some young adolescents' cognition and resolution of career barriers. Destructive parental involvement, low parental income and the young adolescents' lack of coping strategies to overcome these external career barriers, indicate that career counselling is recommended. This will assist parents in becoming more involved in the career development of these disadvantaged young adolescents.

CHAPTER 6: Strengths, limitations of the study, recommendations and conclusion

This chapter presents a brief discussion of the strengths, limitations, recommendations and conclusion of this study.

6.1 Strengths of the study

Several strengths of the study were identified, namely:

1. The aim of the study was accomplished through the semi-structured interviews conducted to explore the perceptions of young adolescents in disadvantaged communities. The young adolescents revealed that parental involvement was an important factor in their career development process. Furthermore, the nature and effects of this parental involvement in career development of young adolescents were indicated to be either constructive or destructive, depending on the type of parent-adolescent interactions and support.

2. The nature of parental involvement in career development was demonstrated by levels of career self-concept and self-efficacy of the young adolescents in this study. These insights were regarded as a good foundation for the development of future career counselling programmes in disadvantaged communities.

3. Although the findings were based only on a small group of young adolescents, it promoted several recommendations (6.4) in addressing the concerns of some young adolescents, which, if implemented, could empower both parents and young adolescents with regards to career development.

6.2 Limitations of the study

While the study indicates important facts about parental involvement in the career development of young adolescents, the following limitations hampered the study:

1. The sampling size, with regard to the nature of the study, was not big enough to generalise the findings across other disadvantaged communities in South Africa. In addition, the sample was not randomly selected, but participants volunteered to participate in the study.

2. The semi-structured interviews might have allowed too much information that was superfluous and made the interpretation of some of the information very difficult. However, the interview techniques provided a learning opportunity and, with the assistance of the researcher's supervisor and mentor, thematic content and data analysis were administered and thus, the limitations were minimised.

3. The one-on–one interview method might have further compromised the responses of the participants, encouraging them to tell the researcher what they thought she wanted to hear.

4. The fact that there were no interviews were conducted with the parents of these young adolescents might have made specific interpretations about the relationship between parents and young adolescents, as well as the self-reflection of adolescents, difficult.

6.3 Recommendations

Based on the strengths and the limitations of this study, the researcher suggests the following recommendations for future research.

1. Although the findings only applied to a limited group, the study indicated that the lack of parental participation in extra-curricular activities as a major concern of these young adolescents. Therefore, parents in disadvantaged communities should be encouraged to participate in both academic and extra-curricular activities of their young adolescents in order to create a more balanced and holistic parental involvement. This seems to be beneficial to young adolescents' career development.

2. Since this study indicated that destructive reactions were associated with young adolescents' career indecision, career counselling psychologists could assist authoritarian parents to realise the negative effects of their parenting style on the career development of their children and also emphasise the benefits of constructive reactions to the career development of these adolescents.

3. Parents and adolescents in disadvantaged communities should be encouraged to realise the benefits of involving young adolescents in career-related activities at home so as to encourage their children's career exploration and acquisition of various work-related values. This could enhance the young adolescents' career development.

4. Parents should be encouraged to be good role-models, to expose the young adolescents to a wide range of careers and vicarious learning through the use of the media such as radio, television, magazines, newspapers and other available career resources in their communities. In addition to this, the development of young adolescents' self-awareness, a better interpretation of career information

about self and career role-models would be achieved. This could contribute to better career choice and planning.

5. Parents should create an environment where possible and future career barriers are identified and clarified timeously, thus leading to the identification and application of possible realistic alternatives. Career counsellors could also develop career programmes which aim at addressing these career barriers. This would in turn also empower parents to become more involved in the career development of young adolescents.

6. There seem to be very few studies that focus on the perceptions of young adolescents from disadvantaged communities in South Africa, especially regarding their parents' involvement in their career development. This study provided and discussed these young adolescents' perceptions presented as eight major themes. It is therefore recommended that more qualitative studies should be designed and implemented to extrapolate factors that promote or hinder career development in such areas.

7. Studies that focus on the same topic, but using bigger sample sizes of homogeneous groups could be conducted for more generalised results. Furthermore, a national study of this nature would do justice to the career developmental needs of parents and learners in disadvantaged communities and would better inform career programme developers and other related stakeholders.

8. There is also a dire need for further studies on existing career guidance interventions so as to ascertain their effectiveness in regard to parental involvement in the career development of adolescents. Such studies could contribute to the enhancement of both parents' and young adolescents' self-concepts and self-efficacy. As a result, the career development of children, particularly young adolescents, would be more positively affected.

6.4 Conclusion

Although the results cannot be generalised due to the small sample size, this study has been instrumental in identifying two categories of parental involvement in the career development of young adolescents, namely: constructive and destructive parental involvement, based on the parent-adolescent interactions and support revealed through the perceptions of these young adolescents. It is therefore suggested that further research should be conducted to validate these categories. The potential for the development of improved career development and career counselling was revealed by the findings of this study. Therefore, it seems that career programmes aiming at empowering both parents and adolescents in disadvantaged communities could receive the necessary attention and funding. This would do justice to the needs of not only adolescents, but also their parents, as they are often not thoroughly involved when career plans regarding their children's futures are made. More studies of this nature are therefore needed to keep the country up-to-date about the career needs of people in disadvantaged communities.

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APPENDIX A: Information sheet to parents

Dear Parents

I am a student at Wits University doing a Masters degree in Community-based Counselling Psychology. Completing a research project is one of the components for fulfilment of the degree. I therefore would like to conduct a research study at your child's school. My focus is on how young adolescents think and feel about parents' involvement in their career development.

The main aim of this study is to explore the nature and the extent of parental involvement in the career development of young adolescents and also to identify other factors that may impact on their career development. As previous studies show, a limited amount of research has been conducted concerning this area with young people in disadvantaged communities, especially in Black communities. This study intends to partially cover this point and to recommend programmes for intervention to assist parents on how to become involved in the career development of young adolescents. Only fourteen grade nine learners are needed for the study, because it is based on interviews. The interviews will be recorded, to enable the research to be a reflection of the accurate information that was gained. It was envisaged that the results of this study may have important implications for career guidance and counselling in South Africa.

The information obtained from the interviews will be kept confidential at all times. A copy of research findings will be given to the school, and that will not include particulars of participants. I would like you as the parents to provide authorisation for the participation of your child in this study. It is also important to note that children are by no means compelled to take part in this study, and may withdraw from the study at any time. To give your consent, please complete the consent form on the next page.

Please return the form within two weeks before the 30th of June, to Mrs Nokoane's office.

Thank you for your co-operation

_____

Orepa Sefepi Maite

(Student)

_____

Dr. D. Alexander

(Supervisor)

APPENDIX B: Consent form for participation and audio-taping

A study of parental development in career development: Perceptions of Grade nine learners in disadvantaged communities.

I _____, a parent/legal guardian of _____, have read the information about the study as explained in the information sheet. I understand that my child's participation is voluntary, that she/he can withdraw from the study at any time and she /he may refuse to answer any question she/he would prefer not to answer. I also understand that the study will be audio-taped for the capturing of accurate information. I understand that no information that may identify my child will be included in the research report, and her/his responses will remain confidential.

I therefore give my child consent to take part in the study, by participating in the interview and to be audio-taped.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

(Parent)

I agree to take part in the study, by participating in the interview and to be audio-taped.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

(Child)

APPENDIX C: Interviewing schedule (Semi- structured individual interviews)

The following questions explore young adolescents' perceptions regarding their parental involvement on their career development.

PART ONE: Interests, goals and role of parents

(1) What are your hobbies? Which one do you like the most and Why?

(2) Everyone has future dreams, which are mostly based on one's future career.
Do you have future dreams?
If so tell me about them and how you plan to achieve them.

(3) Have you shared this wonderful dream with your parents?
If yes, what did they say about it?
What plans do they have to help you achieve your dreams?
If no, why have you not told your parents about your future dreams?
How do you think they could have responded to your future dreams?

(4) As you grew up, there might have been activities at home that you liked mostly.
Please mention them if there were any.
How are these activities related to your future occupation (job)?
Who do you think encouraged and motivated your interest in these activities?

PART TWO: Career-related life-story, incidents of parental involvement and factors that may promote or hinder achievement of career goals.

1. Tell me about your childhood fantasies about work and the people who may have influenced you.
2. What do you remember your parents saying about their work and aspirations?

3. Did they ever mention any aspirations they have for you regarding your future career choice? Expand.
4. Assuming no barriers, what would you like to do in the world of work?
5. If there were any barriers, what would that be?
6. How would you propose to overcome these barriers?

PART THREE: Reality check

1. Have your parents supported you in any way regarding your future career choice and development?
2. If no, why?
3. If yes, how?
4. How would you like your parents to support you?
5. Who, besides your parents, has had an influence on your career aspirations?
6. What other aspects are affecting your career development? (Both positively and negatively).

APPENDIX D: Identified themes

Eight main themes and sub-themes

1. Parents' educational support

- Parents' educational assistance
- Parents' participation in school activities

2. Differential types of parents' reactions regarding future goals

- Parents' constructive reactions
- Parents' destructive reactions

3. Parental motivation for participation in career activities at home

- General household chores career-related activities
- Job-related activities

4. Childhood influences on career-related goals

- Parents' encouragement of childhood identification with significant others

5. Career planning

- Adolescents' plan to reach future career goals

6. Sources of motivation for reaching career-goals

- Various sources of motivation from career-role models inside and outside families

7. Awareness of barriers to reaching career goals

- Awareness of external barriers

8. Plans to overcome barriers to obtaining career goal.