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An Exploration of the Perceptions of Disadvantaged Context Learners' Career Development Interventions by Using: *"A Guide for Schools into Higher Education"* as a Vehicle.

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M.A by coursework and Research report

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ABSTRACT

Career development interventions have been lacking within disadvantaged contexts in South Africa. This is attributed to the country's political history under the apartheid system. The predominant career interventions have been standardised on the English and Afrikaans populations, which are not necessarily applicable to the black population, a previously disadvantaged population. This study explored learners' perceptions of career development interventions, career challenges and career needs within their contexts by using a career intervention vehicle, subject-career information guide titled, "*A Guide for Schools into Higher Education"*. The study was qualitative in nature and it conducted semi-structured interviews with 12 learners from a school within the disadvantaged context. The research interviews were analysed using the thematic content analysis. The findings of the study revealed that these learners had fairly different experiences of career guidance interventions within their contexts. The study indicated that the main career challenges faced by the learners were mainly externally based within their context. Thus, they needed career intervention resources to address the challenges. The findings of the study indicated that learners have benefited from *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* as an intervention resource within their context. The study subsequently recommended that frequent career interventions be more available within schools and people perceived as role models within such contexts would need to be mobilized as career influencers. Furthermore it was recommended that learners within disadvantaged contexts would need to be taught skills towards the building of internal factors to facilitate them to own their career development.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Masters of Arts in Community based Counselling Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any university.

Thabile Buthelezi

_____

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Career development interventions within South Africa's traditionally disadvantaged contexts have been lacking since the previous apartheid government and the situation is persisting currently in the democratic government (Mqota, 2004). These career development interventions were not implemented in traditionally disadvantaged contexts, because the apartheid government did not foresee a need to do so for reasons indicated in the next section (Gerber & Newman, 1980).

Firstly, during the apartheid era, black people were forced to live and still live within these traditionally disadvantaged contexts which are characterised by challenging psychosocial circumstances which include, but are not limited to: poverty, restricted access to resources, high rate of unemployment and increasing rates of school drop-outs. The schools had overcrowded classrooms, poorly trained educators and insufficient resources (Bonner & Segal, 1998). For the purposes of this research the term black people, refers to African black people.

In apartheid South Africa, black people were prohibited from entering into a broad range of careers by the government, because there was no place for them in the white society above certain forms of labour (Nicholas, Naidoo & Pretorius as cited in Stead & Watson, 1999). Whites were perceived as the advantaged group and had access to career development interventions to assist them with their career development. They were also at liberty to pursue a range of careers (Nicholas *et al.*, as cited in Stead & Watson, 1999).

Although South Africa has transitioned into a democratic government in the last 14 years and there have been changes on a macro level with regards to education and career development for South Africans (Knight, 2005), black people living within disadvantaged contexts are still lacking career development services and are experiencing psychosocial

challenges within their homes, schools and their community (Mqota, 2004). These challenges have the potential to influence learners' career development and thus, necessitate career interventions to assist with regards to directing the learners' career development (Dass-Brailsford, 2005).

Furthermore, career guidance interventions have traditionally been conducted by expert opinion and dominated by westernised ideologies and were not necessarily applicable for learners within disadvantaged contexts (Maree & Beck, 2004). However, this may not be the case with *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* as a career intervention vehicle, which aims to bridge the gap in the provision of career information and career development of learners (NISHE, 2005). It is believed that *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* would address the needs of lack of information on schooling and careers generally. Therefore, it is pertinent to observe the learners' perceptions of career intervention vehicles in general and to explore whether an intervention such as *A Guide for schools into Higher Education* is beneficial to learners from a disadvantaged context.

This study aims at adding to the existing research on perceptions of career development in disadvantaged communities, as well as impacting on career guidance in traditionally disadvantaged schools. It is further anticipated that this research will spur further research on career development interventions within disadvantaged contexts.

1.2 Research Aims

The primary purpose of the study is to explore learners' perceptions of career development interventions within their contexts. The study also explores learners' perceptions of career development challenges and needs within their traditionally disadvantaged context. Thirdly, the study investigates the learners' perception of a current career guidance intervention vehicle, which is a subject-career information guide titled, *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education.*

It is imperative to declare from the onset that this study is not intended as an evaluation research project, but rather, it is a study that explores the learners' subjective experiences of: career development, career challenges and needs within their disadvantaged contexts as well as their subjective experiences of *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* as a vehicle to determine the mentioned aims.

1.3 Research Questions

This research will respond to the research aims by addressing the following questions:

1. What are the learners' perceptions of career development interventions in traditionally disadvantaged contexts?
2. What are the learners' perceptions of career development challenges and needs within their disadvantaged contexts?
3. What are the learners' perceptions of *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* as a vehicle for career guidance intervention within a disadvantaged context?

1.4 Chapter outline of the research report

Chapter One covers the research aims, rationale and research questions related to the study. It also provides a brief summary of the methodology and the outcome of research.

Chapter Two unpacks each of the research aims and questions into three sections. Section one begins with the definitions of key terms that are used throughout the study. It then attempts to review career development, internationally and nationally. The second section discusses career development interventions within disadvantaged contexts. It begins by contextualising career development within these contexts, by giving a historical account of the education system and its likely impact on career development. The chapter also highlights career challenges and needs within disadvantaged contexts. The third section summarises the contents of the subject-choice career intervention vehicle, *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education*.

Chapter Three provides a theoretical foundation for career development interventions from the following perspectives: The Trait and Factor approach, Super's developmental approach and the Social Cognitive Career theory, the Planned Happenstance theory as well as the Post-Modernistic approach. Each theory is then critically reviewed regarding their applicability within disadvantaged contexts.

Chapter Four observes the research methodology which includes: the research design, research participant information, the research instruments that were used in the data collection process as well as an explanation of the data collection procedure. The chapter also discusses the thematic content analysis method that was employed as well as the ethical considerations.

Chapter Five discusses the research findings in light of the literature review and it is compared with theory discussed in chapter two. The discussion of findings is listed in three themes which were responses to the research aims and questions of the study.

Chapter Six examines the strengths of the study and presents the limitations of the study, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

SECTION 1: Career Development

The central purpose of this research is to explore the learners' perceptions of career development interventions in traditionally disadvantaged contexts. Section one begins with a definition of key terms, namely: career development, career guidance, career counselling, career education. The research then investigates career development interventions as well as the Life Orientation learning area as a type of intervention.

2.1.1 Key Definitions

The purpose of career development has been to encourage and stimulate occupational exploration and to help learners understand the relationship between school and future careers (Pruss, 1994). One perspective of career development is that career development refers to career progression or work-related progression through life stages of an individual. Career development may occur in stages and it is influenced by genetic endowments; environmental conditions and learning experiences (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani, 2004). Career development is also a life-long process that involves growth in life and work (Rainey, Simons & Pudney, n.d). Career guidance and career counselling can be used interchangeably, although career counselling may be argued to be more specific and more personal in the manner of counselling. Both are tools to support and guide individuals in their career development (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani, 2006). For the purpose of this research, the terms career guidance and career counselling will be used interchangeably. Career guidance is defined as the service and various activities that assist an individual or groups to make educational, training and occupational choices throughout their lives. Career guidance is often delivered by a practitioner in the form of career education, career information and career assessments (Rainey *et al.*, n.d; Debono, Camelleri, Galea & Gravina, 2007).

The purpose of career education has been to equip an individual with critical aspects of career and life planning such as helping an individual choose his/her career and manage his/her career development. Subsequently, career education tends to holistically develop the individual with regards to their home context, family, workplace and society by equipping the individual with appropriate career planning (Dedmond & Schwallie-Giddis in Cappuzi & Stauffer, 2006). Career education is often classroom activities that educate the learner about their career options, the world of work and how to plan for their post-school and lifelong career development (Rainey *et al.,* n.d). Career interventions, like the aforementioned, engage the person in self-exploration and that often affords the person with the vital relation between understanding oneself and the choice of a career or a job (Pruss, 1994). In short, a career intervention can be seen as an action that facilitates career development through the provision of one or more of the following namely: career guidance, career information and career education to individuals or groups in their various aspects of life (Pruss, 1994; Rainey *et al.,* n.d; Debono *et al*., 2007). The following section discusses studies done on career development internationally.

2.1.2 International Perspective

Internationally, career intervention programs have been marginalized in the schools. Many young people in different countries have dropped out of formal education and training, with little or no skills-base to cope in the workplace (Watts, 2005). The dropouts occur, because students generally face various challenges that impact negatively on their academic achievements. As observed by South African authors, these challenges include lack of proper academic preparation in secondary schooling, problems with adjusting to dialectical methods of learning, cultural diversity, alcohol and drug abuse and psychological trauma (Botha *et al.*, 2005). Studies have also proven that students who engage in academic support programs perform better academically, which signals a need for more academic support programs (Botha *et al.*, 2005).

A 10-year longitudinal North American study that was conducted by Helwig as cited in Guindon and Richmond (2005), examined career development in children. It revealed

that career aspirations and expectations changed over time and parents were the major influence in children's career aspirations till Grade Ten. After Grade Ten, the findings revealed, that teachers' influence on learners career development had more impact. Therefore, it was deemed important that career programs be implemented in the schools and be incorporated as part of the school curriculum (Guindon & Richmond, 2005).

Similarly, career development in Singapore has also been incorporated into their school curriculum after its transformation process (Tan, 2002). It initially began with information being given to the learners on the assumption that the learners knew what they were looking for and that they were already motivated to use the information that they had been given. An observation of this form of an intervention namely, information-giving only was found to be inadequate. The reason information giving was found to be inadequate, was because the learners did not know how to use the information for career planning nor were they motivated to do so (Tan, 2002).

Two other research studies indicating a need for career guidance in schools confirmed the abovementioned findings, that giving information alone to learners is inadequate as a means of career guidance (Tan, 2002). The first study consisted of 970 final year learners from 30 randomly selected high schools. The findings revealed that 95% of the learners had not experienced any form of career guidance before leaving school. In another study, interviews were conducted with company personnel concerning their experiences of young job seekers. The findings of the study showed that many job seekers were ignorant of occupational information, had little career direction and lacked job-seeking skills (Tan, 2002).

Currently, it seems that the incorporation of career guidance in schools is highly effective, desirable and is playing a critical role in preparing and shaping the learners for the new millennium. Furthermore, the career guidance in Singapore schools has included information technology to meet the demands of the new millennium and the role of the

teachers has shifted from being viewed as experts to being viewed as facilitators (Tan, 2002).

A study conducted in Canada assessed junior high school learners' needs for career guidance in Southern Alberta. Research results indicated that junior high school learners found career planning to be important, but were likely to rely on parents and friends for help rather than school counsellors. However, the learners indicated that they needed appropriate assistance in gaining information, choosing appropriate careers and making career decisions (Guindon & Richmond, 2005).

Furthermore, research was done in North America by Gibbons, Borders, Wiles, Stephan and Davis (2006) to assess what ninth grade learners would need to know, regarding college and career planning. The results suggested that there is an inconsistency pertaining to plans and accurate information about college costs and availability. The learners were concerned about finances. However, few of the learners took the initiative to do job shadowing and to execute research regarding career plans and colleges that offered the courses they were keen on embarking on. These learners indicated that they needed more information on college options and career planning. The limitations of this study are that it cannot be generalized as the sample used were Caucasians and African-American predominantly (Gibbons, Borders, Wiles, Stephan & Davis, 2006).

Similarly, in South Africa, especially within the disadvantaged contexts, there has been a need for more information on college options and career planning. The dominant Westernized ideas of career guidance have previously been imposed onto the South African context with little or no alterations. In so doing, they were not necessarily applicable to learners who do not have access to adequate education (Stead & Watson, 2006). As Maree and Beck (2004:81) note, "…by far, the majority of American and European career guidance is not necessarily valid and reliable for the diversity of South African cultures".

2.1.3 National Perspective

The South African context, in many respects, is similar to the international context outlined above. Firstly, career development programs are still marginalized in schools (Botha *et al.,* 2005). Secondly, there is still a need for career development services within schools particularly within disadvantaged contexts (Mqota, 2004). Thirdly, learners still need assistance with regards to career planning and development, especially within the disadvantaged contexts (George, 1996; Khosa, 1998; Nicholas *et al.*, as cited in Stead & Watson 1999).

In addition to the above difficulties related to culture-fair career counselling and assessments, the existing career guidance methods in South Africa have not been suitable for the majority of the population. Existing career guidance has only been previously standardised for mainly White and Afrikaans participants. Subsequently, the existing career guidance methods and interventions in South Africa are not applicable to all cultures, genders and socio-economic groups. It is specifically deemed inappropriate to traditionally disadvantaged learners, namely: learners from the previously disadvantaged Black, Coloured and Indian communities (Maree & Beck, 2004).

Linked to the above, the history of career interventions in South Africa dates back to the 1930s, with the National Institute of Career Counselling being exclusively for white people (Nicholas *et al.,* as cited in Stead & Watson, 1999). The goal was to provide work for advantaged young people (white people) with a scientific-based orientation. At that time, the education departments were primarily accountable for the development of the career counselling service for school learners and the teachers were responsible for the supply of vocational information to learners (Alberts, 1974 as cited in Khosa, 1998).

Furthermore, the Department of Labour played a role in skewing career development for disadvantaged learners, as they incorporated information from the work environments,

regarding particular character traits for particular careers to be sent to employment offices that were aimed at advantaged learners only. This led to the establishment of the National Bureau for Education and Social Research, which was accountable for the building and standardisation of a series of achievement and intelligence tests used at schools (Alberts, 1974 as cited in Khosa, 1998). The National Bureau for Education and Social Research later became the Human Science Research Council (HSRC) and played an important role in developing discriminating psychometric testing across racial lines. This organization was later incorporated into the National Institute for Personal Research (NIPR) and both were supporters of inequalities in career opportunities as well as taking advantage of the black labour force (Nicholas *et al.,* as cited in Stead & Watson 1999).

By 1981, career guidance was formally established into the schools, because the education department was addressing the need for knowledge about career opportunities and requirements of certain technical fields for the learners (Gerber, 1985 as cited in Khosa, 1998). However, the career guidance was not welcomed by the disadvantaged schools, because it was perceived as a mechanism for social control by the apartheid government (Gerber, 1985 as cited in Khosa, 1998). Subsequently, this may have had an impact on the lack of career guidance interventions within disadvantaged schools.

In reference to the lack of career interventions within black schools, a career-need assessment was conducted by Matlwa (2003) at Centurion College, a private black school in Johannesburg. In this study, the associated cognitive processes pertaining to career decision-making interventions were observed. The results of the study suggested that a short-term intervention was insufficient to address career problems and to positively influence the cognitive processes measured in the study (Matlwa, 2003). This research highlighted the need for career orientations or life orientations to be implemented within the school curriculum and to be implemented from an early phase of schooling and throughout schooling (Matlwa, 2003).

Similarly, the South African Department of Education has highlighted a need for Life Orientation programs that adequately equip the learners for life in the 21st century. The Education Department, in response to the need of such programs, has developed a progression of Life Orientation programs to be operational over a period of 12 school years (Prinsloo, 2007).

Furthermore, the career guidance policy in South Africa has aimed to make career guidance accessible to all, especially to those learners who were previously disadvantaged and to help them gain opportunities that were once denied to them (Watts, 2005). Career guidance has been incorporated into the school curriculum like other international schools, as part of the Life Orientation learning area, which is a compulsory school subject.

2.1.3(i) Life Orientation

The introduction of the Life Orientation learning area is purported to make a positive difference to South African learners by directing and preparing learners for life and its possibilities. Ideally, it is expected to empower learners for purposeful, meaningful lives and adjusting to a rapidly changing society (Department of Education, n.d). The Life Orientation learning area is also intended to allow the learners to make educated decisions and take suitable action concerning health promotion; social development; personal development; physical development and movement and orientation to the world of work. The outcomes for the orientation to the world of work are that the learner should be able to make informed decisions about further study and career choices (Department of Education, n.d).

Life Orientation is furthermore concerned with the following developmental and life skill areas: the social, physical, personal, emotional and intellectual development of learners. The Life Orientation learning area for Further Education and Training phase includes

personal well-being; citizenship; education; recreation and physical activity and careers and career choices (Prinsloo, 2007).

The learner is expected to acquire these life skills by means of being taught to them in the Life Orientation learning area. As a result of this, it is believed that the learner ultimately emerges as empowered to use his/her talents to achieve his/her full potential personally, intellectually and socially. It is also believed that the learner, through Life Orientation, should be enabled to respond and cope with challenges, while playing a productive role in the economy and society (Department of Education, 2001).

Additionally, with regards to the application of Life Orientation to this study, the scope of Life Orientation includes training the learner to have an optimistic orientation and to make informed decisions on further study and careers. The role of the educator is, therefore, seen as to help learners develop career information-gathering and planning skills, personal evaluation skills and a positive attitude to work and work ethic (Department of Education, 2001). The learner's responsibility is to research career information and by the end of General Education and Training, which is Grade 9, to be able to make effective career and study choices that will positively affect their future.

In demonstrating learners' needs for Life Orientation, an experimental study was done by Theron and Dalzell (2006) to survey the specific needs of Grade Nine learners in the Vaal Triangle region. The study demonstrated that for this sample, the Life Orientation curriculum is not perfectly tailored to the needs of Grade Nine learners. The Grade Nine learners indicated that they needed coping skills to deal with HIV/AIDS; grief and retirement. The Grade Nine learners also said that they needed help with financial planning and study methods. The survey brought to the fore that the Life Orientation curriculum does not adequately address specific problems that learners are confronted with and that the learners need to be consulted about their Life Orientation needs as this study proposed to do (Theron & Dalzell, 2006).

It is recognised that this study was conducted in the Vaal Triangle region and the students' needs there cannot be generalised to a wider context of learners' from other disadvantaged areas. However, the above study draws attention to the need for discussion with the learners, or educators within their contexts about their needs regarding interventions, in order to provide a satisfactory and relevant service that addresses their needs.

In Prinsloo's (2007) study, principals' and Life Orientation teachers' perceptions of the running of Life Orientation programs in the new curriculum in South African schools were observed. Principals in this study recognized the problems they experienced in establishing the necessary climate and structures for the implementation of Life Orientation in their schools. The teachers in this study described the barriers they struggled to overcome. Generally, there was a difficulty in achieving successful implementation of the Life Orientation learning area in their schools, which is possibly a reflection of the challenges experienced by many other schools in the country (Prinsloo, 2007). Although Life Orientation involves imparting general life skills and career development to the learners (when and if educators are confronted with barriers and there are inadequate conditions to properly implement the Life Orientation learning area) the learners may still be disadvantaged due to their contexts. Furthermore, learners within disadvantaged contexts may be further lacking adequate schooling and career development. Considering the aforementioned, it is necessary to reflect on the origin of learner's difficulties related to the career development.

SECTION 2: Career Development challenges and needs within a disadvantaged context-

The secondary aim of this study explores the learners' perceptions of career development challenges and needs within their disadvantaged contexts. Therefore, section 2 explores the literature and research that highlights factors that may have been responsible for career challenges and needs within the previous education system in disadvantaged contexts. The literature then explores the current education system and the current

challenges it is experiencing and how that may be linked to learners career development. The section also explores the need for career development interventions in disadvantaged contexts and how career influences as well as impacts on the role modelling plays a significant role in career development.

2.2.1 Traditionally disadvantaged context and previous education system

The roots of career development challenges and needs within disadvantaged contexts can be traced back to South Africa's unstable political history. A traditionally disadvantaged context is, in South Africa, one that was originally developed by the apartheid government wanting to assert its oppressive control over black people. This system forced blacks to migrate from the rural areas to the cities in search for work, as well as imposing oppressive laws to further subjugate black people (Dass-Brailsford, 2005). Some of the laws imposed by the apartheid government prohibited black people from living at their preferred residences, working within various sectors of the labour market. It also forced an oppressive type of education on black people (Gerber & Newman, 1980). In 1960, it is reported that out of 190 black applicants, 4 of them were accepted to study at a traditionally white university. Black people were refused to study Engineering, because there was no prospective employment for them. If black people wanted to pursue other careers, they were forced to leave the country and risk never to see their families again, because they had to accept an exit permit which implied they were prohibited to enter South Africa. Black people also experienced difficulties in certain careers of Accountancy and Law, because there were a limited number of companies that were willing to accept black people to do their articles (Nicholas *et al*., as cited in Stead & Watson, 1999). Apartheid made life and schooling for black people difficult and thus, has had a negative impact on education, culture of learning and career development at present.

Some of the reasons for the oppression were done with the aim of maintaining apartheid dominion. In 1954, the apartheid government introduced the Bantu Education Department for black people within disadvantaged contexts. The purpose of the Bantu

Education was to perpetuate inequality, racist ideology and further subjugate black people (Gerber & Newman, 1980).

H.F. Verwoerd said the following at the Senate in 1954 in support of the Bantu Education as cited in (Gerber & Newman, 1980:62):

> Bantu must be guided to serve his own community in all respects. There is no place for him in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour. Within his community, however, all doors are open. For that reason, it is of no avail for him to receive a training which has as its aim absorption in the European community while he cannot and will not be absorbed there. Up until now, he has been subjected to a school system which drew him away from his own community and practically misleads him by showing him the green pastures of the European, but still did not allow him to graze there. This attitude is not only uneconomical, because money is spent on education which has no specific aim, but it even dishonest to continue with it. The effect on the Bantu Community we find in the much-discussed frustration of educated Natives who can find no employment which is acceptable to them. It is abundantly clear that unplanned education creates many problems, disrupts communal life of the European.

The Bantu education set the model for black people's education which was restrictive in many respects and weakened the influence of the school towards career prospects. This is because the macro system did not offer career opportunities to black people. It was believed that educating black people would misdirect them to assume that they could be similar to Europeans, while they were not, and needed to be oppressed to be reminded of their place within society. This implied that education in the schools within disadvantaged communities experienced inadequate funding, which resulted in challenges that included insufficient resources; overcrowded classrooms and a significant shortage of qualified teachers (Bonner & Segal, 1998).

Schooling was not compulsory within a disadvantaged context and therefore, children started schooling when it was financially and socially feasible. The number of opportunities that were made available to girls by the school system was less than those presented to boys, because girls were only expected to be domestic servants or primary

school teachers. Thus, the impact of schooling was less for girls than boys (Gerber & Newman, 1980).

Furthermore, secondary schools were reported to be more crowded than primary schools. It was reported that no new schools were built from 1962-1971 despite the overcrowding. During this time, the Department of Bantu Education was focusing its resources on convincing students to leave the township to attend newly-built schools in the homelands (Bonner & Segal, 1998).

However, in the 1970s, transformation was needed in the areas of skilled labour as there were insufficient white people to occupy the required positions. The factory owners at the time insisted on improved education and training for the black urban labour force. The government reluctantly agreed and within a short space of time, it increased the number of secondary schools in Soweto by mid 1974 to 40 new schools (Bonner & Segal, 1998).

A short while later, South Africa experienced an economic depression and Bantu Education Department observably suffered financially. The government was known at the time to spend approximately R644 on education for every white child and R42 on every African child's education. An African parent was expected to pay the rest of the money, contribute to the building of the schools and buy school uniforms with the minimal income he/she made. In addition, Bantu education introduced the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction and the teachers had great difficulty in understanding the language, let alone teaching other subjects in Afrikaans. This resulted in much discontentment by the students which lead to the 1976 uprising. The school learners were protesting against the education system and many students never returned to school after the 1976 uprising. The students that returned to the vandalised schools continued to experience similar problems, if not worse than before the 1976, June 16 protests. The schooling crisis continued for years after, because the students repeatedly boycotted schools and it is estimated that hundreds of school children died, thousands joined the underground ANC activities and thousands went into exile (Bonner & Segal, 1998).

Other insecurities persisted to afflict disadvantaged contexts, especially within the townships. The level of crime increased, because many job seekers were not able to get jobs and school leavers within disadvantaged contexts were the main victims of the job crisis. It was reported that about 70% of the job seekers were under the age of 35 years and most of the teaching in Soweto, by the end of 1980, had eventually ceased (Bonner & Segal, 1998).

Research shows that Africans were more concerned with political and social issues for evident reasons (Gerber & Newman, 1980). Africans in the apartheid era were occupied with more pressing issues relating to survival than exploring career development. The universities of African students were concerned with problems arising from the political systems, community problems, injustice and social change, while whites seemed to lack political and social concerns (Gerber & Newman, 1980).

The inadequacies of Bantu education negatively impacted on the culture of education within disadvantaged contexts. The few schools which survived were in appalling conditions. Students did not have any direction, experienced problems of high failure rates, overcrowding, school dropouts and the shortage of trained teachers persisted (Bonner & Segal, 1998).

It is important to highlight that schooling within the disadvantaged contexts has never been compulsory at that time. Therefore, after the student protests and the political unrest, students in these contexts were not prepared for occupational achievements. This, therefore, negatively impacted on prospects of career development within the disadvantaged context, which still continues to be a mark of struggle for freedom in South Africa. Traditionally, disadvantaged contexts are still characterized by socio-economic stress and often lack recreational facilities that have the potential to restrict children's growth and development (Dass-Brailsford, 2005). The lack of recreational

facilities and the socio-economic stress may restrict the children's career development by impacting on their self efficacy beliefs negatively.

In the current South African context, many black people expected improved education services and better opportunities after 1994. However, the provision of adequate education to the disadvantaged contexts is still an impediment as traces of apartheid are still evident (Mqota, 2004). Mqota (2004) argues that low income, low income jobs and low levels of education are the three essential variables to understanding the persistent underachievement among black people. He further purports that although black people have managed to advance themselves with regards to income and occupation, education is still an obstacle. Within traditionally disadvantaged contexts, this is due to low socio-economic status, difficult contexts (single-parent homes), or community influences (teenage pregnancy, drugs, HIV/ AIDS) (Mqota, 2004). Furthermore, schools within the townships are still experiencing struggles related to poverty; insufficient resources, broken windows, inadequate furniture, overcrowding and a shortage of trained educators. The persistent obstacles of poverty, unemployment, lack of role models and lack of career direction are a serious hindrance in the learners' career development.

South Africa transitioned to a democratic government in 1994 and there have been significant changes in all public schools in South Africa, such as the implementation of the new curriculum, namely Curriculum 2005 (Knight, 2005). However, Pruss (1994) postulates that the South African education system, in many ways, has deprived the learner from developing his/her best potential. This is evident in the learners' inability to make informed career decisions. This is particularly relevant to black learners, as they enter the job market unprepared (Pruss, 1994). The above postulation can possibly be attributed to a lack of career guidance interventions within disadvantaged contexts. It is also believed that the challenges that occur currently, with regards to career development of learners within disadvantaged contexts, are the result of the apartheid legacy and not inherent inadequacies of black people (Mqota, 2004).

2.2.2 Current Educational system: Curriculum 2005

In the democratic South Africa, the education curriculum has been revised to what is known as Curriculum 2005. This new education curriculum is recognized as laying a foundation for a single national core syllabus. Curriculum 2005 is a learner-centred educational process that requires the learners to make informed decisions about their futures, which include study and career choices (Department of Education, 2001). The Curriculum 2005 needs to equip the learners, especially of disadvantaged backgrounds, with tools needed to minimise the inequalities that they previously experienced. These inequalities also pertain to career development and career choices (Mqota, 2004). Curriculum 2005 is observed by the Department of Education as a tool for positively transforming the South African society, different to what the previous education system intended to do. However, Curriculum 2005 has been criticised for not positively changing the South African society in that it tends to promote some cultural heritages over the others, for instance, the Zulu culture may be promoted over learning about the Afrikaans culture. This may possibly imply that the Afrikaans cultures are not as important (Breidlid, 2003).

However, some researchers, as cited in Knight (2005), perceive Curriculum 2005 as an authoritarian approach that was devised by experts and then handed down to the people on the ground level. These people on the ground level are the principals, teachers and learners. Curriculum 2005, in this case, may possibly be inadequate and may not address the needs of the principals, teachers and learners (Knight, 2005). It was reported by Knight (2005) that in the new curriculum, approximately 200 000 learners failed their Grade Ten examinations at the end of 2006. Three studies that were done concerning teachers' understanding of the Outcome Based Education (OBE) and Curriculum 2005 revealed that teachers have been concerned by its introduction, because their teaching performance has been negatively impacted on. The teachers think that they are unable to meet the demands of the OBE. The studies found that generally, there is a negative attitude to the OBE and that educators from traditionally disadvantaged contexts were

less positive concerning Curriculum 2005 than those from advantaged communities (Knight, 2005).

Kgosana (2006) noted that most Grade Ten learners across the country failed their exams, especially learners within township schools and rural areas. It was reported that only 38 learners out of 245 passed in a particular school in Limpopo. In another school in Limpopo, it was reported that out of a class of 75 Grade Ten learners, six had passed. Similarly, in KwaZulu Natal, in a school of 315 Grade Ten learners, 186 passed Grade Ten and of the 186 learners, 106 were condoned to the next grade and 80 actually completely passed (Kgosana, 2006).

Additionally, it was reported that only three of out of seven Grade Ten classes passed Grade Ten in the North West province. At a rural school in the Eastern Cape, 57 of the Grade Ten learners were condoned to the next grade. The school principals believe that the reasons for the high failure rate were the phasing in of the new curriculum in schools. The OBE is said to be more challenging than the old curriculum. Some of the school principals attributed the high failure rate to the inadequate training of teachers (Kgosana, 2006).

Research was done by Knight (2005) on the exploration of Grade Eight and Grade Nine educators' preference for and expectations of Curriculum 2005. The research findings suggest that these educators feel weighed down by the amount of work that is required with Curriculum 2005. Some felt disempowered by the top-down approach and some seemed to think it does prepare learners to make better life and career decisions (Knight, 2005).

It is therefore clear that teachers have a substantial influence with regards to how the teaching will occur and thus, have the potential to guide the learner. The teachers that are optimistic about Curriculum 2005 are likely to achieve the curriculum's objectives within

the classroom and produce learners that are prepared for life and its possibilities. The teachers that are pessimistic may not adhere to Curriculum 2005 and thus, may hamper the learner even further, especially within a disadvantaged context. It is therefore postulated that if teachers are dissatisfied, it is unlikely that suitable teaching will occur (Knight, 2005).

2.2.3 Schooling Challenges

In June 2007, Serrao (2007) observed that many school teachers from different schools were dissatisfied with their wages and were demanding a 12% pay increase and improved benefits. A teacher strike emerged. It was also reported that a few schools continued to operate during the strikes which lasted for about a month (Serrao, 2007). The teacher strike was the longest strike over wage disputes in South Africa since the end of Apartheid regime in 1994 .This strike negatively impacted on learning within most public schools, especially schools within disadvantaged contexts. After the teacher strikes, it was reported that the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) continued to disrupt schools and threatened learners who were going to school while COSAS was making their demands to the Department of Education (Sholz & Serrao, 2007). It is alleged that COSAS intimidated students who were going to school in Alexandra, Ekhurhuleni, Tswhane, Soshanguve and Soweto (Serrao, 2007). Furthermore, it was indicated that COSAS was demanding that pupils receive an extra 20% to their end of year marks to compensate them for missing school. It disrupted the schools in Soweto and other townships. COSAS was dissatisfied with the department's alleged failure to embark on a recovery plan, which should have included distributing material through the print media and providing support material (Sholz & Serrao, 2007).

Sholz and Serrao (2007) also reported that none of the demands made by COSAS were addressed by the government and still, the schools within traditionally disadvantaged contexts, were further held back. This may have had negative implications for learners schooling and possibly their career plans as well.

2.2.4 Career interventions within disadvantaged contexts

Historically, within the disadvantaged contexts, career development has been lacking. A number of studies have shown that guidance programs which were developed for white people were generally not suitable for their black counterparts, because of the large gap between perceived and real opportunity structures for blacks in South Africa (Matlwa, 2003). Political problems within South Africa's existing educational structures for blacks have been severely affected. Black people's bitterness and anger about inferior education that they received in the past, has led to suspicions about any service offered by state-run schools. Furthermore, research into vocational development of black youth in South Africa has been severely neglected (Matlwa, 2003). An investigation in 1992 on national education policy showed that guidance and counselling services in South Africa had been ignored and were inadequate for the majority of the population (Nicholas *et al.,* as cited in Stead & Watson 1999).

Additionally, career guidance interventions have been lacking within traditionally disadvantaged contexts in the apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa. Career guidance interventions were not properly implemented in the apartheid South Africa in disadvantaged contexts for the reasons cited before under section one of this chapter. It is also postulated that guidance interventions within disadvantaged contexts in the past were only applied to perpetuate the negative attitudes of the state towards black people. This led to a lack of resources, exclusion, and prejudice (Nicholas *et al.,* in Stead & Watson, 1999). Learners in disadvantaged circumstances have been prevented from entering into higher education and aspiring for diverse careers and seeking employment in a wide range of jobs (Sibalanga, 2002). Community associations tackled the gap in the provision of career development services where no official career guidance services were available to black people (Nicholas *et al*., as cited in Stead & Watson 1999).

A study conducted in India showed that in the lack of career development services, young people may make inadequate career choices fuelled by external factors. These ineffective

career choices may potentially have negative long-term implications such as job dissatisfaction, dropping out of higher education and low self-efficacy beliefs (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani, 2006).

In the current South Africa, learners within disadvantaged contexts are now exposed to similar career opportunities as traditionally advantaged learners. However, it is assumed that they need more exposure to the world of work and access to career education services. Students in South Africa often enter higher education institutions without preparation or having received career guidance (Botha *et al.*, 2005). The lack of career intervention services supports the need for career guidance interventions, especially within disadvantaged contexts.

2.2.5 Career influences

Some learners are aware of the careers that they want to pursue, but lack the knowledge of what the career involves (Ireh, 2000). It seems, therefore, that career development interventions are needed that would address this. Additionally, it seems that learners have had limited exposure to career development in the schools in disadvantaged contexts.

A study done in Manchester by Kniveton (2004) on 348 learners investigated the influence and motivation for students' career choices. The findings revealed that parents primarily influenced the learners' choice of career, followed by their teachers. In this study, the key motivation for career choice was the remuneration of the occupation and then the liking of the occupation (Kniveton, 2004). The study further revealed that learners' career choices or lack thereof, are influenced by what they are exposed to prior and the significance of parental influence on career decisions. Li & Kerpelman (2007) also suggests that parent-adolescent relationships are the primary influences on the learners' career goals. Otto (2000) reveals that most of the youth look to their parents, more specially their mothers, for career guidance, as their mothers are observed as sources of assistance with regards to their career goals. Similarly, Maite (2006)

conducted a study whereby the focus was on exploring the youth within disadvantaged contexts experiences of their parental involvement with regards to their career development. Maite's research findings seemed to confirm that youth value their parental involvement and educational support, because it served as a means of encouragement and facilitated a discipline in their studies. Maite (2006) indicates that the learners that had less parent involvement and support with regards to their career development, showed delayed career planning and less motivation. The research corresponds with previous studies related to the impact of parental influence on the learners' career developments. This current research, unlike Maite's, explores the learners' perceptions of career development interventions within their disadvantaged contexts. This exploration will include the results of that investigation of career intervention including other career interventions that learners in this study within the school environment.

Subsequent to the above, Pruss (1994) stresses that career development interventions should be integrated throughout the school years, but emphasis should be placed particularly on Grade Eight learners. This is due to the fact that they are transitioning from a pre-adolescent to adolescent phase in high school. It has been observed that the faulty manner in which learners make career decisions could be a result of insufficient assistance from educators, specifically the guidance teachers. Other teachers of other subjects also tend to see little or no value in facilitating the career development of learners (Pruss, 1994).

In relation to the above, another aspect frequently referred to as a major determinant of drop-out rates and inadequate career development, is indecision. Meyer and Gordon (2002) did a study on Grade 12 learners examining the nature of career indecision amongst prospective university students. These participants considered themselves to have had decided on their careers while others had not. The findings of this research supported previous research by indicating that there is a substantial degree of career indecision amongst prospective students (Gordon & Meyer, 2002). This suggests a need for a career guidance programme amongst prospective university students that have

decided on a career, as well as those who have not decided on a career, prior to university enrolment. However, the limitation of this study is that the participants were predominantly Afrikaans and English speakers, with a small sample size. Thus, the findings cannot be generalized (Gordon & Meyer, 2002). An Indian regional survey done by Arulmani and Nag-Arulmani (2006) regarding work orientations and responses to career choices, showed that individuals who had been through career guidance and counselling were more certain about their career choices, compared to individuals who had not been through career guidance and counselling. This was a study done in India, meaning that a survey of that nature in South Africa may yield different results (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani, 2006).

However, Khosa (1998) studied the career decisions of black high school learners in rural areas. His findings suggested that there was a need for career guidance and career information services, especially in the black communities, as they had been previously deprived of appropriate career guidance. The findings of his research also indicated that guidance teachers need to appropriately assist learners to obtain occupational knowledge, especially regarding subject choices. His research also recommended that career guidance should be incorporated into the school curriculum, especially with regards to subject choices (Khosa, 1998).

A needs analysis was done on career guidance with Grade Ten learners in the Eastern Cape (George, 1996). The results revealed that most learners perceived career guidance as necessary in selecting subjects that are relevant in making the appropriate career choices, providing information on bursaries and higher education. The results also indicated that the white learners were more informed regarding career guidance, compared to their black counterparts. It can be assumed that black pupils would need career guidance even more than white pupils (George, 1996). Sibalanga (2002: 26) argues "…inevitably, the present social, economic and political contexts of the South African society are largely informed by the past apartheid regime that was characterized by inequalities, with Africans, particularly blacks at the receiving end". This has presented a

problem for black learners who, in the absence of adequate career guidance, are still aspiring to traditional careers, despite the introduction of multiple career opportunities. It is, therefore, perceived that what has remained important to the black learners is job security, rather than self-fulfilment; hence, vocational choices were still responded to in terms of lower order needs (Cloete, 1982). Sibalanga continues to argue:

> The previous political dispensation in South Africa, which discriminated against blacks on social, economic and labour issues, was accompanied by an educational system in which black adolescents had little exposure to the broader professional world and career decision-making, hence directly impacting on their career development (2002:26).

In addition to the limited exposure to the broader professional world, it is also important to reflect on the fact that learners within disadvantaged contexts were not exposed to a range of role models within diverse careers.

2.2.6 Role Modelling

South African learners from low socio-economic backgrounds have few opportunities to associate positive meanings with the value of work, primarily because they are seen to lack positive role models (Bonner & Segal, 1998). Traditionally, despite the difficult socio-economic conditions, few blacks have managed to be in professional careers. This implies that there are very few role models in these professional careers, especially within the disadvantaged contexts. Role modelling is seen as an important aspect of career development (Nicholas *et al*., as cited in Stead & Watson 1999). A role model has been known to influence a person in some direction, directly or indirectly. A role model is a person in a leading role. It could be a parent, teacher or a mentor and they provide examples for individuals to imitate (Gibson, 2004). Individuals generally seek and aspire to role models for various reasons (Quimby & DeSantis, 2006).

Role models may provide vicarious learning experiences that increase the likelihood of choosing a specific career. Popular media reflects that career success is the consequence of a good role model and career failure is the consequence of not having role models (Gibson, 2004). Researchers have found that learners, who aspire to be like certain people

within specific career directions, tend to have a preference to follow similar career directions and believe that they would be successful. Further research indicates that exposure to role models through video or written material increases the learners' chances of considering non-traditional careers (Quimby & DeSantis, 2006). This implies that within a disadvantaged context, role models may be significant in career guidance interventions, as they may increase the likelihood of learners aspiring for careers and having some sort of career direction.

SECTION 3: Career Intervention vehicle within a disadvantaged context

The third aim of the research seeks to explore the learners' perceptions of a type of career intervention within their context. This type of career intervention is *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education*. The purpose of section three is to give information about *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* regarding its aim, rationale and a general broader understanding of this type of an intervention.

The goal of Higher Education South Africa (HESA) has been to provide information and guidance pertaining to higher education as well as the pathways of getting to higher education and the career options that people could pursue. Therefore, through the National Information Services for Higher Education (NISHE) on the subject of providing information and subject-career guidance to learners, teachers and parents introduced an information guide. The information guide was formally known as "A Grade 9 Guide into higher education", but presently known as "A Guide for Schools into Higher Education". *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* is a resource workbook purported to be implemented in response to the national curriculum statement (Curriculum, 2005) as a type of career intervention.

2.3.1 A Guide for Schools into Higher Education

A Guide for Schools into Higher Education, understood to be a new approach, is aimed at learners to assist them to make informed subject choices to benefit from career opportunities. It is also purported that this process would happen through a different career approach, where the learner is responsible to take the opportunity to make his/her own choices (NISHE, 2005).

Through *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education*, the learner is meant to bridge the gap of Further Education and Training and Higher Education (NISHE, 2005). The role of career guidance as indicated by Maree and Ebersohn (2002) is to successfully address the transition between school and work, as well as the provision of education that strengthens the individual for the transition. *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* is an intervention that could facilitate that bridge between school and work, as well as develop the individual for the changes in schooling and the world of work subsequently providing career guidance (NISHE, 2005).

A Guide for Schools into Higher Education Guide is assumed to be applicable to learners across racial, gender and socio-economic barriers, because it is based on Curriculum 2005. Curriculum 2005 "aims to make education for justice and social citizenship a key feature of a curriculum designed for non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa"(Department of Education, 2001:3). Therefore, *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* is perceived to be providing appropriate information and guidance to prospective higher education students in South Africa and has been understood that it has been distributed to all schools in South Africa via print materials, the press and World Wide Web (NISHE, 2005).

A Guide for Schools into Higher Education seems to be in keeping with the current career counselling process where there is a trend towards alternative career guidance approaches

which involve learners as the agents who are part of the process in career planning and development. *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education,* through interactive dialogue with the learner, aims to address the above-mentioned needs. It also helps the learners to make appropriate subject choices, which are linked to prospective career opportunities.

A Guide for Schools into Higher Education is meant to provide such useful and current information to support mainly high school learners in making informed choices about their future. Therefore, the researcher deemed it important to explore learners' perceptions about *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education,* as an appropriate career guidance intervention and establishing whether it provides information and career guidance adequately for learners within disadvantaged contexts.

2.3.1 (i) Summary of the contents

A Guide for Schools into Higher Education is designed as a workbook to capture important changes in the transition between higher education and schools. It is a booklet containing information and exercises that should help learners map their current and future choices. It is an interactive intervention geared towards improving the current state of affairs in career guidance in South Africa (NiSHE, 2005).

The learner, through *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education,* is required to embark on a personal research project prior to making subject choices that are relevant for future career fields. The personal research project includes the following: Step One is related to research information about self, study information and career information. Step Two involves doing research on options that are available to the learner and Step Three involves choosing Grade Ten to Grade 12 subjects. *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* has seven chapters and each one addresses a specific area which will be summarised in the two paragraphs (NiSHE, 2005).

Chapter One speaks about the changing world and introduces the learners into the world of work that is influenced by globalization. Chapter Two addresses the subject of higher education, defines what higher education is, the role of higher education and who benefits from Higher Education. Chapter Three informs the learner of opportunities that are offered after finishing school. These include learnerships, a gap year, volunteering and being an entrepreneur. Chapter Four encourages learners to start thinking about their future in general and their careers specifically. It acknowledges that not all Grade Nine or Grade Ten learners know what to do in future and that personal concerns may influence their options, decisions and subject choices (NiSHE, 2005).

Chapter Five informs the learner about learning in a new way, like the new school curriculum namely, Curriculum 2005. The new curriculum consists of four compulsory subjects that include Life Orientation and three choice subjects. The three choice subjects are categorised according to the learning fields of Higher Education. Chapter Six is about accessing higher education. It also describes the link between the school subject choices, university studies and future career directions. Chapter Six additionally deals with the different kinds of qualifications that are available at the university. Finally, Chapter Seven focuses on arriving on campus. It also touches on the university life on campus, student services and facilities (NiSHE, 2005).

2.4 Summary of Literature review

The three sections of the literature review chapter were explored according to the main research questions and aims of the study. Section one explored career development trends internationally as well as within the South African context. Section two reviewed literature on career development challenges and needs within disadvantaged contexts by starting with a politico-historical context with regards to education and its current impact on career development within disadvantaged contexts. Other career challenges and needs were also explored, such as career influences and the impact of role modelling in career

development. The third section of the study provided a brief synopsis of *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education.*

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL REVIEW

The following section discusses the applicable theories pertaining to career development and guidance in this study namely: Trait and Factor approach, Super's developmental theory and the social cognitive career theory. The section will also discuss the Planned Happenstance approach as well as the Post-Modernistic approaches as types of career interventions.

3.1 Theoretical Review

Traditionally, career developments have been informed by theoretical backgrounds. Theoretical backgrounds enable us to understand career phenomena (Gysberg, Heppner & Johnston, 2003). The phenomena are often described by a body of information. This body of information, namely career-related theories, are constructs that provide explanations for career development and career behaviour (Gysberg *et al.,* 2003). Consequently, with regards to career guidance, one is able to identify, understand and have insights into the possible outcomes of counselling and also to respond appropriately to client's career problems (Gysberg *et al.,* 2003; Shoffner in Capuzzi & Stauffer, 2006).

Theory has been known to be a predictor of future development and stimulates further research (Shoffner in Capuzzi & Stauffer, 2006). Therefore, this section of the chapter examines the following theories: The Trait and Factor approach and Super's developmental theory. The section also examines the Social Learning and Decision-making theory, specifically the Social Cognitive Career theory as well as the Post-Modernistic approach and the Planned Happenstance approach. The theories used in this study sought to bring forth an understanding of career development and career related interventions.

This section begins by explaining the different theories and then proceeds to review research done on each theory with regards to career guidance interventions worldwide.

Each theory will then be critically evaluated regarding its applicability within the South African disadvantaged context.

3.1.1 The Trait and Factor Approach

The Trait and Factor theory was developed by Frank Parsons in the early 1900s. The theory involves the matching of the individual's traits with what is available in the world of work, in order to make work performance successful (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani as cited in Kumar, Umpathy & Bhogle, 2001).

Linked to the above, The Trait and Factor theory assumes that a person has abilities that can be measured objectively and then directly linked to the requirements of a job or training programs (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani, 2004). These abilities, namely traits, are learnt and adaptable. Individual traits are seen as career-related characteristics which include attitudes, abilities and interests (Watson & Stead, 2006). Traits are said to match a specific occupation once. The choice of occupation is reached by making a logical decision by integrating step one to step three (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani, 2004).

The Trait and Factor theory also postulates that the more related the individual's traits to the requirements of the occupation are, the more likely it is that the individual will succeed and be satisfied. However, The Trait and Factor theory is criticised for the above assumption, because it is not always that the matched traits and job requirements always lead to job satisfaction. In fact, other contextual factors beyond the matched job traits and job requirements may have a significant influence on job satisfaction (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani, 2004).

Furthermore, The Trait and Factor theory has three steps to vocational development. The first step is the understanding of self, which includes the creation of awareness and understanding of personal aptitudes, abilities, interest, strengths and weaknesses. The second step is related to the acquisition of knowledge about the world of work. This

includes knowing about working requirements, conditions for success, opportunities, advantages and disadvantages in the different lines of work. The third step involves the matching of self- knowledge and the world of work (Peterson & Gonzalez, 2000).

However, The Trait and Factor theory tends to focus more on the influences of career choice by matching the traits of the person and the job requirements rather than explaining and clarifying the process of career development. The latter explores other factors that could be influencing career development as well such as contextual factors. Critique against the assessments measures that are used with regards to The Trait and Factor approach is, that they are not representative of society at large and are, therefore, limited. Furthermore, the approaches of this theory have been limited in the degree to which they incorporate the context, for example, the theory does not account for the influence of the cultural, social, economic and relational context within which careers are created (Schultheiss, 2003). Therefore, it is deduced that The Trait and Factor theory does not aid in the understanding of other factors such as the individuals' motivation as well as how contextual factors impact on the career process that would lead to career decision-making (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani, 2004).

The theory is also criticised for its direct nature. Therefore, The Trait and Factor theory is believed to be restricted in its application to other contexts, such as disadvantaged contexts. The theory also assumes that clients are clear on their self-concepts, aware of their options and have had various life experiences (Peterson & Gonzalez, 2000). The theory, therefore, fails to account for adjustment and development in traits such as interests, values, aptitudes, achievements and personality characteristics, particularly within the disadvantaged context (Patton & McMahon, 1999). Learners from a disadvantaged context may be struggling with the developmental stage they are currently facing and burdened with psycho-social economic problems. They might, furthermore, have limited resources and might be unable to use the psychometric testing of abilities, aptitudes, values and interests that would have aided them in their career decision-making. The Trait and Factor theory relies heavily on the execution of such psychometric testing of individuals as a precursor to career decision making.

However, what The Trait and Factor theory does not take into account is that psychometric assessments are not applicable for all populations, especially disadvantaged learners, because the assessments are often administered in the learners' second or third language, namely the English language. The assessments are also not standardized for the learners' population groups. Subsequently, the career assessments disadvantages the learners from disadvantaged contexts further in their career decision making as the assessments are not valid within their contexts (Maree & Beck, 2004). The Trait and Factor theory might, therefore, be not necessarily valid within a disadvantaged context.

The second step of The Trait and Factor approach involves knowledge of the world of work (Watson & Stead, 2006), which may be difficult to achieve within a disadvantaged context. The learners within a disadvantaged context have limited access to resources and are exposed to a limited range of traditional careers (Nicholas *et al*., in Stead & Watson, 1999). Subsequently, it becomes very difficult for learners within a disadvantaged context to integrate self-knowledge and the world of work in consolidating career goals, as step three of The Trait and Factor theory postulates, when self-knowledge and knowledge of the world of work are not forthcoming (Peterson & Gonzalez, 2000).

3.1.2 Super's Developmental Theory

Super's development theory is a theory that pertains to career development, constructed over time (Peterson & Gonzalez, 2000). Super's theory has 14 propositions. The first three propositions highlight that individuals are different and that they are qualified for a range of occupations based on their characteristics. These characteristics are unique to each individual and include values, abilities, personality traits and self-concepts (Langley as cited in Stead & Watson, 1999). Therefore, no person fits only one occupation, but there are a variety of occupations available for an individual and occupations accommodate a variety of individuals (Gysberg *et al*., 2003). However, within the South African context, especially with the youth population, there are high rates of unemployment (Fourie, 2007). The reasons for the high unemployment rate, especially

within the disadvantaged contexts have been attributed to a lack of quality school guidance, poor grade 12 results and wrong subject-choices (Fourie, 2007).

Super's theory states that an individual goes through five career stages of development which results in the individual's implementation of a vocational self-concept. In each of these five career stages, there is a developmental task that the individual is required to undertake before movement to the next stage occurs (Super & Bohn 1971). For the purposes of this research, the focus will be on the exploration stage of Super's approach. The learners according to Super's theory are assumed to be at an exploration stage (Age 14-25 years). The exploration stage is characterized by trying out different roles and ascertaining which of these are both agreeable to self and acceptable to one's associates. The exploration stage includes a sub stage of crystallization (Super & Bohn, 1971).

The learners within the exploration stage would be in the process of crystallizing and specifying his/her career plan. Crystallizing refers to the forming of a preferred career plan and considerations around how that might be implemented. This involves the process of considering a variety of vocational options, discarding some, and ultimately limiting the list to a few that most appropriately use one's interests and abilities (Super & Bohn, 1971). The process also involves a clear formation of a vocational identity, or vocational self-concept. This task includes understanding the factors that need to be considered when making a vocational choice (interests, abilities, values, self-concept), understanding the factors in the environment that may affect personal goals (parental factor and financial circumstances), knowing how to set goals and progress toward them, and learning in detail about the occupations under consideration (Super & Bohn 1971). Therefore, according to Super's theory, the learners in the study should be at an exploration stage, and specifically in the sub stage of crystallization with regards to their career development.

Based on Super's theory, career guidance would have promoted self-exploration in terms of identity, reflection on context and provided information with regards to various

careers. Based on the learners needs, intellectual potential, vocational interests, study methods, values and career maturity; a recommendation will ensue suggesting that the learner pursues research into the specified career fields. This will have implications for the learner who has to engage in a personal research project, that encompasses job shadowing and encourages the learners to find out more about their preferred career options. Exploration is a tentative phase in which career options are narrowed, but not finalized (Zunker, 2006). The career guidance process, using Super's developmental approach, should assist the learner in narrowing his/her career options. Once the learners have narrowed their career options, implementing the career option is an indication of career maturity. Super then postulates that a career decision is the implementation of the self-concept (Zunker, 2006).

The next six propositions in Super's theory relate to the self-concept and its implementation in career choices, within the particular life stages. This may occur after the process of exploration, the adolescent phase that was discussed above and may occur repeatedly throughout an individual's life span. The self-concept is shaped by the individual's career interest and competencies, which evolves over time as the individual relates to their world and as a consequence of social learning (Stead & Watson, 2006). The self-concept is seen to be the picture of the self in a role, position or situation. The self-concept is a combination of factors which include individual view of self; how he/she would like to be seen; and how he/she thinks others view him/her (Super, 1957). The growth and richness of the self-concept continues throughout our lives. Its development is influenced by the culture as well as the family and experiences that the individual encounters. The aspects of the self-concept that brings satisfaction are retained and those which do not bring gratification are rejected. Therefore, the individual makes a career choice, based on their vocational self-concept which will determine the level of career satisfaction (Super, 1957). It is, therefore, presumed that the self concept of the learners in the study would then be shaped by culture, family and life experiences that take place within their disadvantaged contexts.

The last group of propositions focus on the combination and negotiation between the individual and social factors and work life and satisfaction (Gysberg *et al.,* 2003). In Super's view, vocational maturity can be described simply as accomplishing the tasks, during the life stage in which one would optimally do so. Career maturity refers to the readiness of an individual to implement as well as develop their self-concept (Stead &Watson, 2006). According to Super's theory (Super 1957; Super & Bohn 1971), if an individual does not accomplish these tasks and sequence at the time proposed, he or she may become vocationally immature, that is, not having the needed skills to make informed and satisfying career choices. The individual's self-concept is a central and all-important factor (Super, 1957; Super & Bohn 1971; Langley as cited in Stead and Watson, 1999).

In making a vocational choice, an individual is expressing his or her understanding of self; his/her self-concept. Research, as discussed in Zunker (2006), has shown that there is a significant relationship between career maturity and an adolescent's achievement of a significant degree of self-awareness, knowledge of occupations and development planning capability (Zunker, 2006). It is presupposed that the high school learners in a traditionally disadvantaged context would not have been receiving appropriate career guidance, because career guidance is still a service that is lacking (Mqota, 2004). Within career guidance and counselling, self-knowledge is pertinent. The absence of self-knowledge impacts the learners' career decision–making. Therefore, the learners may be easily persuaded by external factors to opt for certain careers, because there is an absence of self-knowledge and possibly a lack of internal locus of control (Millar & Shevlin, 2007).

Critiques against Super's theory include limited empirical evidence about the relevance of Super's theory in disadvantaged communities, because not much research has been done within such contexts (Peterson & Gonzalez, 2000). The relationship between self-concept and career behaviour has not been systematically investigated with African-Americans, nor has the role of socio-economic status and discrimination on occupational

self-concept been investigated. Peterson and Gonzalez (2000) argue that the concept of career maturity may need to be revised, because it is correlated with socio-economic status and most African-Americans are lower income earners, suggesting that their career maturity may need to be developed. There also seems to be little theoretical formulations or empirical researches that explain which specific aspects of socio-economic status or ethnicity impact on which aspects of career development for specific populations. Super's theory does not address obstacles, barriers, reinforcements, received messages and other variables affecting the career behaviour of women, racial and ethnic groups (Peterson & Gonzalez, 2000). Therefore, Super's theory can be criticised for not taking contextual factors that tend to affect career patterns into account. These contextual factors include dominant culture, racial, age and gender stereotypes as well as traditional gender and age expectations (Shoffner in Capuzzi & Stauffer, 2006).

Another criticism levelled against Super's theory is that it is assessment based, one-to-one and lengthy. The participants in this study are learners from a disadvantaged context where contextual factors tend to play a significant role in their career development in addition to other factors pertinent to career development. Super's theory, in this regard, becomes restricted as is does not take contextual factors, race and age and gender stereotypes and expectations into account (Shoffner in Capuzzi & Stauffer, 2006). However, the theory will be applied to ascertain its relevance, if any, within this particular context, especially regarding self-awareness.

3.1.3 Social Cognitive Career Theory

Another theory linked to career guidance is the Social Cognitive Career theory. This theory is derived from Bandura's theory on self-efficacy beliefs. The Social Cognitive Career theory posits that career guidance is a cognitive process that regulates the individual's actions (Swanson & Fouad, 1999). The Social Cognitive Career theory postulates that people are products and producers of their environment, suggesting that the environment actively influences the individual, whilst the individual is shaping the environment (de Bruin as cited in Stead & Watson, 1999).

The Social Cognitive Career theory postulates that there are personal attributes that impact on career-related interests, namely self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations and personal goals. Personal goals relate to an eagerness to engage in a particular activity or to achieve a particular future outcome (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 2002; Peterson & Gonzalez, 2000).

Self-efficacy beliefs are acquired by personal performance accomplishments, vicarious learning, social persuasion and physical and affective states (Lent *et al.*, 2002). Self-efficacy expectations are a person's belief about his/her capabilities to perform a particular task (Swanson & Fouad, 1999). Self-efficacy is context-specific and can be both positive and negative (de Bruin as cited in Stead & Watson, 1999). This self-efficacy belief regarding one's abilities plays a central role in the career decision-making process (Niles & Bowlsbey, 2002). The individual's belief about his/her ability to do a certain task may affect his/her decision to choose certain subjects, which may exclude certain careers or not. Self-efficacy influences career choice, actual performance and persistence. Self-efficacy is also postulated to be shaped by learning experiences, educational opportunities and family context (Zunker, 2006).

Personal performance accomplishment provides opportunities for mastery experiences, which tend to increase individuals' self-efficacy. However, learners within disadvantaged contexts lack opportunities for performance accomplishments. The poor learning conditions tend to impact negatively on the learners' self-efficacy (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani as cited in Kumar *et al.*, 2001). Vicarious learning involves learning from someone who's going through similar experiences (Lent *et al.*, 2002). Within a disadvantaged context, there is a tendency for the learners to observe more failures than successes with regards to career directions, accomplishments and lifestyles (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani, 2006). The implication for the learners within disadvantaged contexts is that adult attitudes may be projected onto the younger generation, further negatively impacting on self-efficacy beliefs (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani as cited in Kumar *et al.*,

2001). Social persuasion refers to encouragement that learners receive and within a disadvantaged context, constructive social persuasion might not be as frequent. This means that for a learner under such circumstances, self-efficacy beliefs may be further undermined (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani as cited in Kumar *et al.,* 2001).

A learner in a disadvantaged school may prematurely foreclose on occupational options that are potentially rewarding, due to faulty self-efficacy and outcome expectations that do not fit reality (de Bruin as cited in Stead & Watson, 1999; Swanson & Fouad, 1999). This implies that individuals may avoid areas of coursework associated with careers, because of low self-efficacy beliefs; likewise low self-efficacy can lead to procrastination or avoidance of career decisions (Zunker, 2006).

Outcome expectations are expectations related to outcomes after a process of performing a given activity, which includes self-directed consequences and extrinsic reinforcements (Lent *et al.,* 2002). Individuals may be motivated by various factors in their exploration of interests that influence outcome expectations, namely, external reinforcement, self-motivated activities and the process of performing an activity (Lent *et al.,* 2002). If the individual succeeds in the activity, then he/she is likely to pursue it further and gain competence within the activity and thus, it becomes a set interest (Zunker, 2006). The individual may then consider pursuing the interest in their career goals. However, if the interest fails to develop, because of negative outcomes expected from the activity, this may then negatively impact on the individual's self-efficacy (Zunker, 2006). Hence, an individual's interest influences the choice of educational and career options. Subsequently, this will impact on the performance and persistence in educational and vocational pursuits (Shoffner in Capuzzi & Stauffer, 2006; Gysberg *et al,* 2003).

Self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations and personal goals are interrelated and have a reciprocal influence (Lent *et al*., 2002). Self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations both predict academic and career interests. Outcome expectations are plausible outcomes

as expected by the individual, which may direct the individual to the exploration of interests (Gysberg *et al.*, 2003).

However, self-efficacy and outcome expectation do not only influence career aspirations and career choices, but also perceived barriers, perceived supports and other contextual factors (Lent *et al.*, 2002). Furthermore, persistence and actual performance act as moderators between experience and career interests (Shoffner in Capuzzi & Stauffer, 2006). Studies have shown that adolescents within disadvantaged contexts have lower levels of task persistence, helplessness and a tendency to give up (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani as cited in Kumar *et al.*, 2001). In addition, Mji (2002) reports that the major obstacle of students from previously disadvantaged backgrounds entering university, is related to their financial difficulties, because they are unable to pay their university fees.

Stead, Els and Fouad (2004) conducted research that observed perceived career barriers among South African school learners. It took into account that a high school environment provides limited career guidance. Findings indicated personal factors, experiential factors and contextual factors as perceived barriers, which may impact negatively on learning experiences and thus, influencing self-efficacy and career choice and goals. The findings of the above mentioned research suggest that socio-political factors such as affirmative action policy seemed to exert an extremely important influence. The learners from the discussed study may not have opted for certain careers, because of affirmative action policies which may restrict their career goals. However, the research was done on white English-speaking participants in Grade 11 and 12 and although applicable to adolescents, the research may not necessarily be applicable to the disadvantaged learners. Learners from disadvantaged context have been known to experience career barriers which may not be similar to the above researched learners, which is what this particular research attempts to explore.

Another barrier that learners from a disadvantaged context may experience, relates to the level of their secondary education. There are contextual factors that impact negatively on

career development such as inadequacy in properly qualified teachers of mathematics, natural sciences and commerce-based subjects. The National Board of Further Education and Training (NBFET), (2004/2005) statistics indicated that there is an increasing shortage of teachers in the schools teaching these subjects. This means that students cannot pursue those subjects, thereby increasing the chronic mismatch between the needs of the economy and the output of higher education. It is also reported that there is a shortage of graduates to fulfil the needs of the economy in the following fields: science, engineering, technology and commerce (NBFET, 2004/2005).

The National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE) has highlighted its need for a program that will implement career orientation that shifts the enrolments from Humanities in Higher Education to the abovementioned fields (Maree & Beck, 2004). This program would need to act as a mediator to perceived barriers that prohibit learners from taking the above mentioned fields and concentrate on developing interests, values and talents and challenging the faulty thinking that has lead to the learners' premature foreclosure of the above mentioned fields of study. This also implies that the NPHE would need to have programs specifically addressing the needs of the educators in the above mentioned fields to accommodate the learners who would be keen on pursuing those study fields. Subsequently it is envisaged that the learners would attain varying levels of performance and persistence in the above mentioned educational and career pursuits, would increase their self-efficacy beliefs (Maree & Beck, 2004).

Previous research (Quimby, Seyala & Wolfson, 2007) shows that self-efficacy and other social cognitive variables were good predictors of student interests, persistence and performance in the sciences. Therefore, the Social Cognitive Career theory, within a disadvantaged context in the framework of a career guidance intervention, would aim to encourage learners to examine processes and experiences that have shaped their career goals (Gysberg *et al.,* 2003). These learning experiences include the following: performance accomplishment, vicarious learning and social persuasion (Zunker, 2006).

Furthermore, Social Cognitive Career theory explores the learners' perceived or actual barriers and perceived or actual support systems and how that may have influenced the learners' self-efficacy. The intervention may need to challenge low self-efficacy beliefs due to contextual, learning experiences and internal factors pertaining to the limitation and exploration of interests. Subsequently, the intervention would also need to help the learners establish goals, take action and attain a level of performance and persistence in meeting the set goals that assist in determining the career direction (Gysberg *et al.,* 2003; Zunker, 2006).

The Social Cognitive Career theory within a disadvantaged context seems to be applicable, because it explains career development aptly by paying attention to the potential barriers (perceived or real) that impact on the learners in disadvantaged contexts. Low self-efficacy may be seen as limiting the exploration of a diverse range of interests, because of poor outcome expectations of learners in a disadvantaged context. Other research by Arulmani and Nag-Arulmani as cited in Kumar *et al.* (2001) has also indicated a correlation between adolescent self-esteem and socio-economic status. This research suggests that adolescents, who are poverty-stricken, seem to have lower self-esteem than those who are not. The same research further argues that adolescents from disadvantaged backgrounds have lower career aspirations and low outcome expectations (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani as cited in Kumar *et al*., 2001).

The Social Cognitive Career theory challenges the perceived barriers and explores mediators to overcome obstacles and barriers to career development (Stead *et al.,* 2004). Social Cognitive Career theory is pragmatic in that it encourages the learners to explore and implement their interests and learn from the process which informs their career decisions (Lent *et al.,* 2002). Social Cognitive Career theory would also call for interventions that mainly focus on building up self-efficacy and providing opportunities that overcome the barriers hindering learners from adequately planning their career development (Lent *et al.,* 2002). The learners within disadvantaged context with regards to this theory may benefit from career development interventions that build on the self-

efficacy beliefs and provide opportunities for overcoming perceived career barriers which, within disadvantaged contexts, can be a grave hindrance to career development.

3.1.4 Planned Happenstance

Different to the Social Cognitive Career theory is the theory of Planned Happenstance. which was developed by Mitchell, Levin and Krumboltz in the late 1990s. The theory postulates that chance plays a vital role in one's career planning and that chance events are present in career explorations. According to this theory, no one can predict the future and therefore, needs to be open-minded to new discoveries and career opportunities (Mitchell, Levin & Krumboltz, 1999). Similarly, the world continues to change at a rapid rate and new careers emerge as a result with some occupations becoming obsolete. Unpredictable social events, environmental conditions and chance events over the lifespan are to be recognized as important influences in client's lives (Zunker, 2006).

Indecision or uncertainty about career paths is encouraged, because it gives the learners an opportunity to explore and generate chance opportunities. The assumption is that if one has decided on his/her career paths, the person may have foreclosed opportunities that come by chance. Therefore, Planned Happenstance plays a more vital role (Gysberg *et al*., 2003). Learners in disadvantaged contexts are often undecided and uncertain, because of the limited opportunity structures presented to them and the theory of Planned Happenstance would perceive indecision and uncertainty as a positive construct. However, one would assume that the application of the Planned Happenstance approach would frustrate the learners within a disadvantaged context even further. However, Planned Happenstance as an intervention encourages the learners to use what they have, where they are, to maximise their learning and growth and not be so quick to foreclose on career options (Mitchell *et al.,* 1999).

Planned Happenstance has the following propositions: individuals are born to parents and circumstances with certain characteristics and inclinations without their choice or consent. These individuals are brought up in environments where unpredictable events

occur that provide opportunities for learning of both constructive and destructive nature. The individuals can capitalize on life events and resources to take full advantage of their learning (Mitchell et al., 1999).

The role of the counsellor within this happenstance intervention is to encourage the clients to develop a curiosity. The clients are also encouraged to recognize and use opportunities in career planning. The strong component in this theory is to facilitate the client's action of generating and anticipating possible opportunities (Mitchell *et al.*, 1999). In short, the clients are furthermore encouraged to embrace uncertainty and resist premature foreclosure in decision-making, which is unlike the predominant career guidance theories that attempt to reduce anxiety, find solutions and provide clients with career information (Gysberg *et al.,* 2003).

The theory highlights the five skills to promote chance events and to increase career options namely: curiosity, persistence, flexibility, optimism and risk-taking. These skills are appropriate in a disadvantaged context, because learners tend to experience idiosyncratic events such as unexpected death of parents due to HIV/AIDS, poverty, teacher and learner strikes, which can be used as a learning experience to career options (Mitchell *et al.,* 1999). A learner within this context can be encouraged to explore new learning opportunities. Furthermore, learners within disadvantaged contexts can be encouraged to persist despite obstacles as they have the tendency to give up easily, as indicated in literature and previous research (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani as cited in Kumar *et al.,* 2001). A learner within a disadvantaged context, according to the Planned Happenstance intervention, will be equipped to find ways to plan for career development. This theory is relevant within a disadvantaged context, because it does not solely rely on psychometric testing, which is not readily available in a disadvantaged context. This theory, unlike The Trait and Factor theory, is not quick to match career traits and what is available to the world of work, but rather, prefers to keep an open mind. Additionally, it does not place a ceiling on what an individual can do, but rather, allows chance events to dictate what can be achieved. This is applicable within a disadvantaged context. It seems

that in disadvantaged contexts, there are constant unpredictable psychosocial circumstances that occur. Individuals within such contexts, who muster the skills that will enable them to utilize chance events within this type of intervention, are more likely to have better opportunities (Gysberg *et al.,* 2003). Furthermore, the Planned Happenstance approach is the post-modern approach to career development interventions, as I will explain in the paragraph below.

3.1.5 Post-modernistic Approach

The notion of Planned Happenstance prepares an individual to expect the unexpected while the post-modern approach to career intervention focuses on the subjective experience of the individual. Career guidance within a contemporary era is a process of making meaning and co-constructing the meaning (Maree & Ebersohn, 2002). Within a post-modern context, the notion of a single, objective truth is questioned and the tendency is to move towards an acceptance of multiple truths, each being subjectively rooted in the individual (Niles & Bowlsbey, 2002). The post-modern approach then places an importance on understanding a person from more subjective experience of career development rather than through objective measures (Niles & Bowlsbey, 2002). Career development is seen as a growing experience and a career as contextual conceptualization. This theory also assumes that career concerns are life concerns impacted by a variety of contextual factors (life roles) and that a client's concerns fit within life long development (Dagley & Salter, 2004).

The theory also takes a subjective stance, whereby clients are regarded as experts in their lives and clients define themselves and their environments and create their own personal stories. The process of career counselling is used to assist clients in uncovering themes and meanings in their personal stories so that they can take action in preferred directions (Brott, 2004).

The post-modern intervention is then conducted through the use of a storied approach. This means that the client and the counsellor construct a story where they are authors and

the main characters. Also, the story uncovers the past and present chapters. This is then followed by a deconstruction phase, whereby the client and the counsellor identify themes, patterns, and make connections within and across chapters in a client's story. The final phase concerns the authoring of future chapters; this is a process whereby the client builds a preferred direction (Brott, 2004).

One disadvantage of the post-modern approach is that it is restrictive, because the theory is not well researched in the area of career development. It is postulated that there are neither manuals nor standardized tests on this method (McMahon & Patton as cited in Bischof, 2007). Furthermore, this type of intervention, within a disadvantaged context, gives the individual an opportunity to construct their personal story that is built up into a personal career story. This type of intervention is time consuming and potentially expensive especially within a disadvantaged context. Although there is a macro scale need for career intervention services the post-modern approach may be limited as an intervention within a disadvantaged context.

3.2 Summary of theoretical review

In short, career guidance interventions have been and continue to be informed by theory and previous research. The Trait and Factor intervention relies heavily on psychometric testing and matches individual traits to what is available in the world of work. Different to The Trait and Factor theory, Super's theory highlights the self-concept in career development. The self-concept is vital in career development according to Super's theory, because career choice reflects the implementation of the self. Therefore, the intervention is to discover and explore the individual self-concept. Central to the Social Cognitive Career theory is the construct of self-efficacy. According to the Social Cognitive Career theory, the career intervention should be aimed at building the self-efficacy of the individual, because it determines an outcome expectation, which ultimately becomes a career interest which then leads to activities which will result in a career choice. Additionally, the Planned Happenstance intervention encourages the

individual to plan for chance opportunities, while the Post-Modernistic approach constructs, deconstructs and co-constructs a career story.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4. Research design

The goal of this research was to gain an understanding of the learners' perception of career development interventions within their disadvantaged contexts. The study also explored the learners' perception of career development intervention challenges and needs within their context. The study also observed the learners perceptions of the subject-career information guide titled: *"A Guide for Schools into Higher Education"* as a career intervention vehicle.

A qualitative research design was employed. A qualitative research design has been known to lend itself to the discovery and capture of rich meaning in data collected (Dey, 1993). Additionally qualitative research gives the researcher an inside perspective that is not only thick and detailed, but also exploratory in nature. In this way, it was helpful to have an in-depth understanding of the attitudes, opinions and perspectives of the participants.

Qualitative research is a useful methodology when trying to make sense of the meaning creation of the participants' world views (Greenstein, 2003). Through qualitative research, the researcher gained a broad understanding of how the learners perceive career development, career challenges and needs and the subject-choice workbook: *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education.* The qualitative research was conducted through the use of interviews with 12 learners and 2 educators using a purposive non-probability a typical case sampling methods. The interviews were subsequently analysed using thematic content analysis which is a qualitative inductive process that was used to elicit main themes from the transcribed data with the intention of responding to the research questions (Ezzy, 2002).

4.1. Interviews

The qualitative research was conducted through the use of semi-structured and unstructured interviews. The researcher started by asking the respondents defined questions, but pursued a more conversational style of interview (O'Leary, 2004). Semi-structured interviews are known to be a schedule of questions pre-arranged in themes and consisting of broad areas to be covered. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with the learners. This type of interviewing allowed the researcher an opportunity to probe and pursue other areas that may emerge from the interview (Milward in Breakwell, Hammond, & Fife-Schaw, 2002).

The unstructured interviews were conducted with the key informants to investigate how *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* was implemented into the Life Orientation module. Unstructured interviews involve the researcher being sensitised into the meanings that the key informants bring into the situation. These interviews allow the participants to freely ask the researcher questions, to which she/he can freely answer whilst expressing her/his own feelings. The goal of unstructured interviews is to have a human-to-human relationship with the participants and to understand their perspective, as cited in Mertens (2005). Additionally, interviews with the key informants helped to understand the way in which the learners perceived career guidance interventions and *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education*.

The interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis to allow the participant the freedom to express his/her thoughts whilst the researcher is controlling the process (O' Leary, 2004). The researcher adopted an informal conversational type of approach, which is a relaxed and casual form of interviewing, to establish rapport, whilst creating a natural environment that is conducive to open and honest communication. The raw data that emerged from the individual interviews was put into the various themes and analysed using thematic content analysis.

4.2 Participants

For the purpose of this research, those who were interviewed were referred to as participants, who were Grade Nine learners; Grade Ten learners and the Head of Life Orientation educators. With the Grade Nine and Grade Ten learners, the researcher employed purposive-non probability sampling method and with the Head of Life Orientation educators, the researcher employed typical case sampling.

4.2.1 Sampling method and size

A purposive non-probability method is a deliberate choosing of participants that will be representative of other relevant populations for a particular investigation (Huysamen, 1994 & Greenstein, 2003). This sampling method demands that the researcher thinks critically about the limitation of the population she/he is interested in, thus choosing the participants carefully on this basis (Silverman, 2000).

The researcher aimed to conduct semi-structured interviews with eight Grade Nine and Ten learners in a disadvantaged context. The researcher increased it to 12 Grade Nine and Ten learners, in order to have two extra participants to replace those that might have decided to withdraw during the course of the study.

Typical case sampling is sampling that involves interviews with individuals possessing a particular knowledge and in this case, knowledge of the execution of career development interventions and *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* (Mertens, 2005). This was the head of Life Orientation educator who was interviewed as the key informant.

4.2.2 Criteria for participants

The study had two kinds of participants as already mentioned above, Grade Nine and Ten learners and the Head of Life Orientation educator.

The criteria that the Grade Nine and Ten learner participants had to meet were: Black; male and female; falling within the age range of 13-19 years old. These participants were living in a disadvantaged context and attending a traditionally disadvantaged school. These Grade Nine and Ten learner participants were each given a copy of *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* a week prior to the individual interviews to interact with it personally. It is important to mention that these learners did not have exposure to *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* through the Life Orientation learning module. Additionally, these Grade Nine and Ten learners were considering career aspirations, including higher education.

Key informant interviews were conducted by using unstructured questions as already mentioned, to allow the direction of the interview to follow interesting avenues that might come forth (Greenstein, 2003).The Head of Life Orientation educator had knowledge of the content as well as the implementation process of career interventions and *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education.* The Head of Life Orientation educator was chosen as a key informant, because s/he might have played a vital role in the incorporation of *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* into the Life Orientation module as a learning area. Another reason is that he/she may have a better understanding of the influences of the Grade Nine and Ten learner perceptions regarding career perceptions generally and *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* specifically.

The researcher chose not to use the author of *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* or any official from the Department of Education as key informants because the researcher is not evaluating *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* itself, rather, the perceptions of Grade Nine and Ten learners in traditionally disadvantaged contexts of career development interventions. This includes the learners' perceptions of A *Guide for Schools into Higher Education.*

4.3 Instruments

Instruments are specific tools used in the research method to collect data (Greenstein, 2003). For the purpose of this research, an interview schedule was used.

4.3.1 Interview schedule

The interview schedule guided the interview process. The interviews were conducted face-to-face, allowing the researcher to access the greater depth of participants' perceptions. Interviews are purposeful conversations between two people directed by one in order to get information (Scheurich, 1997). Interviews provide access to the perspective of those interviewed beginning with the assumption that what they have to say is meaningful. Also, interviews allow participants to speak freely about their perceptions and experiences without bring restricted (Patton, 1990; Greenstein, 2003). However, interviews have advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages of using interviews as cited in Greenstein (2003) are that the researcher can read non-verbal cues to enable understanding of the verbal response and get in-depth information on a particular topic. Furthermore, the researcher, through interviews, is able to see and understand what is reflected by the participant by prompting and probing (Gillham, 2000). The disadvantages with using interviews are that biases are difficult to rule out. Also, interviews can be time consuming and lack of standardization implies inevitably, raising concerns about reliability. Furthermore, the participants may not be willing or feel comfortable to share everything with the researcher (Greenstein, 2003).

The first interview schedule for Grade Nine and Ten learner participants was constructed and arranged into three sections, essentially to respond to the research questions aims. The first section covered questions about self-knowledge and career goals as well as career information. The second section reflected on learners' perceptions of career needs and challenges in their context. The third section covered the learners' perceptions of *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* in their context.

The second interview schedule was constructed and arranged for the key informants. The aim was to understand the implementation process and key informants' perceptions of *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education*. This was arranged in two sections. Section one

asked about the implementation process and section two asked the educator about his/her perception of *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* and what they thought would influence the learners' perception of *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education.*

4.4 Data collection Procedure

The data collection procedure was as follows**:** the researcher sought permission from the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) and the principal to get access into the school. Permission was granted from the Gauteng Department of Education and from the school principal to conduct the research.

The researcher was referred to the Head of Life Orientation by the principal of the school. The Head of Life Orientation randomly chose a few learners who were invited to be volunteer participants in the study. Only one learner was keen to participate as a volunteer participant. This learner was used to pilot the interview schedule and methods of collection. Thereafter, a class of Grade Ten learners was randomly allocated to the researcher. The researcher then invited participants to volunteer in the study. 15 participants seemed keen to volunteer. The participants met with the researcher afterwards and discussed the conditions of the interview. The researcher was then meant to arrange and meet individually with the 15 learners, but encountered difficulties in meeting the learners at this particular school. The researcher tried for four months to meet the learners, but her efforts were pointless. The Life Orientation Educator had an excuse most, if not all the time, when the researcher tried to get into the school to meet with the learners.

The researcher then proceeded to another school and gained permission to conduct the research. The researcher was also granted permission by the Department of Education to conduct research interviews within this school. The researcher was allocated to the Head of Life Orientation educator who directed the researcher to the Grade Nine and Ten learners. The Life Orientation educator randomly chose three Grade Nine and Ten classes. The researcher met with these learners and told them about the research, as well as requested participants to volunteer for the study. The prerequisites for participants, as

mentioned in the inclusion criteria section of this chapter, were emphasized in this meeting. The following transpired during the meeting; ethical considerations and the research interview process. The researcher requested for at least six male and six female volunteer participants in order not to compromise the representation of the sample. Out of the three classes, 12 Grade Nine and Grade Ten learners volunteered to participate in the study. The participants comprised of five females and seven males.

The 12 learners volunteering to be participants in the study were given information sheets, assent forms and/ or consent forms. Learners less than 14 years of age were asked to take the information and consent forms home to their parents, to request for permission to participate in the research. The information sheets restated what the research was about, and requested the learners to assent to being participants. The information sheet also gave information about the research procedure as well as ethical considerations. The parental information sheet and consent form were similar to the above mentioned information and assent form, the additional factor is that it requested parental consent. The learners who took the information sheets; assent and or consent forms; were asked to return the completed consent and assent forms within a sealed envelope to the researcher on a pre-scheduled day and place at the school.

Following that, the researcher contacted the research participants telephonically to discuss their participation. The time, date and venue were outlined to the participants. The interviews were done on a one–to-one basis, for approximately 30-45 minutes. Interviews were conducted in Sotho and Zulu and English as the researcher is conversant in all three languages. The interviews were facilitated through the usage of in-depth semi-structured interviews. This included a list of questions to be answered and probes to facilitate discussions. The researcher made handwritten notes during the individual interviews. This helped the researcher formulate new questions as the interview moved along, especially to verify something that was said earlier. Taking hand notes was also useful for pacing the interview, as well as facilitation of analysis by locating important quotations from the tape itself (Patton, 1990). The interviews were audio-taped and permission to taping was granted by all the participants.

Tape recording of the interview gave the researcher an opportunity to be more attentive to the respondent (Patton, 1990). Thereafter the researcher transcribed and translated the interviews into English. The transcribed data was analysed using thematic content analysis.

4.5 Method of analysis

The researcher read through the transcribed data looking for information pertinent to answering the research question. The researcher used thematic content analysis to extract the information from the data. Thematic content analysis is an inductive process that involves the researcher eliciting emerging categories from the data that was not specified, prior to conducting the research (Ezzy, 2002). Thematic content analysis is understood as the extraction of the main themes in the data, which is the grouping of statements, words and phrases (Greenstein, 2003). The identification of themes was generated inductively from the raw data through reading and re-reading of the transcripts. The identified themes were then coded and categorized. Coding and categorizing of data is the breaking down of data into meaningful pieces (Lyons as cited in Breakwell *et al.*, 2002).

The researcher used the following process in the thematic analysis as outlined by Ezzy (2002) and Greenstein (2003). The researcher started by reading and re-reading through the data and placing headings on the data. The researcher then physically cut out the sections she had labelled in the transcriptions. The coded data was then sorted into piles according to the headings. All the data that had the similar label was put into a pile. The piles were then placed in envelopes with the relevant names given to the piles. The coded data in the envelopes was further categorized into main themes and sub-themes. Each pile was then renamed with a word that captured the gist of what was going on in that pile. The categorized themes framed the research findings as well as the learners' perceptions of *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education.* Thereafter, the analyzed data was summarized into research findings and interpreted in view of the reviewed literature and theory.

4.6 Quality assurance

The interview schedule was piloted to verify if it was appropriate for the participants within the study. The interview schedule was then modified and checked by a research mentor to facilitate content validity prior proceeding with the interviews. After the transcription of the interviews and the categorising and coding of the data, the coded and categorised data were also checked by the research mentor to facilitate quality assurance.

4.7 Ethical considerations

As indicated above, permission to conduct the research interviews was obtained from Department of Education and the concerned school. Furthermore, all participants were asked to sign a letter of informed assent and their parents signed parental consent forms. Participants were informed that participation was voluntary and once having agreed to participate, they could withdraw their participation at any time without any consequences. All data and personal information were kept confidential. The ethical requirements for research with human subjects according to the University of the Witwatersrand were adhered to.

A researcher's paramount responsibility is to those participants they study (University of the Witwatersrand of Research Office, 2005). The aims of the investigation were communicated as well as possible to the participants. Where there is conflict of interest, the participants must come first (University of the Witwatersrand of Research Office, 2005). The researcher did everything within her power to protect her participant's physical, social and psychological welfare and to honour their dignity and privacy. Monitoring devices such as tape recorders were only used once the researcher received permission to do so. The participants were free to reject the use of monitoring devices. Participants had the right to remain anonymous, through the use of pseudo names. However, the researcher could not guarantee anonymity, but could guarantee confidentiality. The privacy and wishes of the participants were respected at all times.

Questions asked were not insulting or embarrassing. Results were consonant with the participants' right to welfare, dignity and privacy. The researcher and participants had no direct benefits. There were no unforeseeable risks for the participants. The transcripts and tapes will be destroyed after completion of the study. The researcher was obliged to reflect on the foreseeable repercussions of research and publication on those studied.

4.8 Summary of the research methodology

The researcher used a qualitative research design in the study's methodology to gain an understanding of the learners' perceptions of career development interventions within their disadvantaged contexts. Therefore, the researcher used a purposive non-probability method in her sampling method for the Grade Nine and Grade Ten learners and typical case sampling for the key informants. The research instruments that were used to collect the data was an interview schedule which was constructed and arranged into sections that aimed at responding to the research question aims. The data collection procedure involved obtaining permission from the Department of Education and the schools to conduct the research as well as obtaining informed assent and consent from the participants and the parents' participants to participate in the study. The researcher adhered to ethical procedures throughout the data collection process. The collected research data was analysed using thematic content analysis.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The study explored learners' perceptions of career development interventions and challenges and needs within their traditionally disadvantaged context. The study also investigated the learners' perception of a current career guidance intervention vehicle, subject-career information guide titled, *"A Guide for Schools into Higher Education"*. It is important to highlight that the research was not an evaluation research project, but rather, an exploration of the learners' experiences of career development interventions.

The research findings, therefore, will be discussed alongside literature and theory in the three main themes that respond to the research questions and aims of the research. The first theme generally discusses perceptions of career guidance interventions. The second theme reflects on the learners' perceptions of career development challenges and career needs in their disadvantaged context. The third theme covers the learners' perceptions on the career intervention vehicle, *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education.*

5.1 Theme 1: Career Development within a disadvantaged context

In discussing the learners' perceptions of career guidance interventions, the section begins by discussing the self-knowledge sub-theme, followed by the sub-theme of learners' general perceptions of career guidance interventions.

5.1.1 Self- Knowledge

Self-knowledge is important, because career development begins with an understanding of self. The understanding of the self informs on the career direction that one is likely to pursue, based on how one views oneself in relation to self and how one views oneself in relation to one's context which includes home, school and community. In this regard, The Trait and Factor theory can be applied, regarding the understanding of self-knowledge.

The Trait and Factor theory postulates that career development has three stages. The first stage is an understanding of self which includes aptitudes, abilities, interests, strengths and weaknesses. The second stage involves knowledge of the world of work and the third stage is matching self-knowledge and the world of work (Peterson & Gonzalez, 2000). When applying the tenets of The Trait and Factor theory, the learners need to know about themselves, as well as contextual influences that can impact on their career development. In relation to The Trait and Factor theory, self-knowledge will enable learners to progress towards the third stage, which may be difficult to achieve if the conditions of the first stage have not been met. However, The Trait and Factor approach may be limited in its application within the disadvantaged context, because it relies mainly on the use of standardized psychometric assessments to elicit information in self-knowledge. It is also known that psychometric assessments are not necessarily applicable for all populations, especially the disadvantaged learners, because psychometric assessments are not standardized on their population group and may, therefore, not be valid within a disadvantaged context (Maree & Beck, 2004).

In the same way, the Social Cognitive Career theory argues that self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations and goal conceptualizations influence the career interests (Gysberg *et al.,* 2003). Therefore, the learners need to possess an understanding about oneself in relation to goal setting and what they are able to achieve as this will determine the actions that they are likely to take in their career development.

Similarly, Super's theory highlights that career choice is the implementation of the self-concept shaped by the self and the context. The self-concept is the individual view of self, how she/he would like to be seen and how she/he thinks others view her/him (Super, 1957). The learners need to know about themselves with regard to career development, because it enables them to implement their self-concept which is influenced by internal and external factors. The learners, according to this theory, are at an exploration stage, where they are making tentative career choices and are exploring their chosen fields in greater depth which would be in tandem with their self concept (Bischof, 2007).

The self-knowledge theme was elicited from the interview schedule. The learners were asked to tell the researcher about themselves and how others within their contexts would describe them (See Appendix 1). The learners' responses to the question reflected an internal and external understanding of self. The internal factors include how the learners interacted with self as well as with others. Some learners provided negative perceptions of themselves based on how others have perceived them. Some of the learners seemed to have incorporated people's perceptions about them as part of themselves influencing their behaviour as well as their career choices. The external factors included information about the contexts namely home, school and community. Others provided information about their interests in their description of self. Respondent one said the following in giving information about self:

> *I'm getting used to people very fast. I like people who are also friendly with me. I am also a person that likes reading and taking information in, especially one that will help me in future. I like helping other people, especially if the don't understand. I don't like mocking them. I can't keep information for myself, if I find useful information I share with others as well.*

The third respondent also said the following in describing self in relation to how people perceive her:

> *They would describe me as a person who talks a lot, I love communicating with people and some of them people describe me as someone that does not have a good attitude towards people, because I am described as hyperactive. Some people don't like it, but some like it and want me to participate in various things. I really like communicating, being known and taking challenges. I enjoy them a lot, I like being with people so they know me.*

Respondent eight seems to have incorporated a negative perception of self by saying the following about self:

> *To be honest eish; at home they would say I am a naughty person, I am stubborn. Yes, stubborn, they will rebuke me and I will choose not to listen to them at times, I am stubborn.*

Similarly, respondent ten shared the following:

> *I am a stubborn person. It means that if you change your attitude towards me, I will change my attitude towards you too. I am that kind of person. At home, many times they know me as a funny person. My mother would definitely say I am a stout and a stubborn person. Maybe if I say this. I would like to do things my way and my mother may have a different way to doing things, she would say I am stubborn. That's what I mean, that's the way I am.*

Respondent four said the following on her incorporating her parents' interest as her own, thus influencing her career choice:

> *I am interested in accounting most of the time and other subjects. It's my choice subject, because I love it from grade 6. My parents wanted me to do it and my sister was doing it in standard 8.*

The findings of the study reveal that the learners' knowledge of the self, in relation to The Trait and Factor theory, reflects aspects of career self-knowledge described in the theory which are: interests, abilities, strengths and weaknesses (Peterson & Gonzalez, 2000). Similarly, with regards to Super's approach, these learners are in the process of exploring and crystallizing their self-concepts based on how they perceive the self in relation to the self and in relation to the others in their context (Bischof, 2007). The learners' understanding of the self seems to be still in construction as these learners are in the process of resolving conflicting roles and identities, as well as their career goals. Some of the learners' negative view of the self, as well as the reciprocal relationship between the individual and the context (home, school, community) may impact on their self-efficacy belief, which influences one's career interest, thus impacting on their career development (de Bruin as cited in Stead & Watson, 1999).

Along with discussing self-knowledge, it was also important to view what career development interventions the learners perceived to be available in their disadvantaged contexts.

5.1.2 Career development Interventions

The second sub-theme of career development interventions responds to the first question and aims of the research. It discusses the research findings according to the learners' perceptions of career guidance interventions and the educators' perceptions of career guidance interventions. This theme then discusses learners' and educators' perceptions of a school intervention namely, the Life Orientation module as a type of career development intervention.

The researcher had asked the learners, in the third section of the interview schedule (see Appendix 1) what their general perceptions on career development interventions were. Many of the learners felt that they were not exposed to career development interventions, while other learners admitted that they were not aware of the career development interventions. Respondent three said the following: *"There's no career guidance in Moletsane"*. The learners' responses reflect the lack of formalised career guidance interventions within their contexts. Additionally, the learners' responses correspond with (Mqota, 2004) who argues that within disadvantaged contexts, there is minimal career guidance interventions.

The reason for the learners' feeling of a lack of exposure to career guidance interventions is that previous interventions are specific, suggesting that they attract learners who are in the sciences or the commerce study fields. An educator said the following concerning the focus of career interventions:

> *The focus is on the science students and the commerce students. The other students are left out. The information that is supplied currently is for specific streams.*

As a result, this has the tendency to make the interventions less-tailored for all learners in the other subject choice fields, like the humanities, amongst others. These interventions are a response to the needs of the economy as indicated by the National Board of Further Education and Training (2004/2005), which indicated that there is a shortage of graduates to fulfil the needs of the economy in the following fields: science, engineering, technology and commerce (NBFET, 2004/2005). It could imply that the career interventions that have been employed may be irrelevant to the learners within their disadvantaged contexts. It could also imply that the learners' self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations are low, such that they fail to acknowledge career-related interventions. This is because they do not have personal interests or goals in the career fields of science or commerce. As learners within disadvantaged contexts, they have had limited exposure to role models in those career fields to inspire them to take an interest in the career-related field (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani, 2004).

5.1.2.1 Life Orientation

The learners were also asked about their perceptions to Life Orientation as a type of career intervention. The learners' response to the subject of Life Orientation module reflected that they are gaining various life skills that are relevant to their well-being. The module also plays a significant role in guiding the learners about sexuality and valuable life lessons.

Respondent one shared the following:

> *Okay as I see it, Life Orientation is based on many things. Life Orientation is about your health, about your career, about the environment you are living in, culture. So Life Orientation I think of it as being compulsory to our school as a good thing. Even if I arrive at a Techinkon or FET college, we must do Life Orientation, because Life Orientation is what we do. It is what we face in life*

Some learners found Life Orientation useful. This is what respondent three had to say:

> *Life Orientation is good, because it is teaching us about many things; it is teaching us about life and things that we see happening every time in our life. And some of those things, they do not educate us about at home and Life Orientation bridges that gap. Like for example, at home we are not taught about HIV, the risks of teenage pregnancy, suicide. So Life Orientation informs you about such things and I do really enjoy it a lot.*

The learners felt that they were also learning about career guidance in their Life Orientation subject. In this particular school, the Life Orientation educators have implemented career guidance as a career research project. The educators have given them projects to embark on whereby they conduct research on the careers that they are mostly interested in pursuing. The learners have to find relevant information about their careers:

> *Yes they do teach us about career guidance. Even now we have a career guidance assignment, they told us to go and find information about the careers that we are interested in pursuing. We have to look at three careers. The first one is the one that you are really interested in, especially when you get to grade 9 and grade 10 they really teach you about career guidance. Okay, we are tasked to choose three careers and you have to discuss what they are about, they subjects that you need to do, what would qualify you to be in that career and the minimum requirements, you write about all of it, for this assignment you had to find out more about the careers, and eh.. Yah find out about them* (respondent two).

After their research, the learners were tasked to present their research to the class:

> *Yah, like now I have to present my, they gave us a work to present, our careers. They gave us three careers and you must find three careers and I must start with the one I love, one that interests me"* (Respondent one).

One learner admitted that at times, laziness makes it hard for them to embark on the career research and they resort to copying each other's work:

> *Most of them, I'll say we are lazy. So what we do is that we end up taking Neo's research and maybe Neo wants to be a C.A or a Model, or she wants to be this. I end up copying her researched work and make it my own work, while knowing that I do want to be a C.A or a model or that which Neo wants to be. So I normally get my information from the library and that guy I spoke to at Wits (Respondent three).*

Most of the learners found the subject of Life Orientation beneficial, because it teaches the learners about what is relevant to them. In reference to the career guidance section of Life Orientation, the learners felt that they were assisted and encouraged to embark on a career research project. The research that the learners were expected to embark on, added a pragmatic and applicatory aspect to the subject. The career research project that learners embark on can be mapped unto The Trait and Factor approach which postulates that vocational development occurs in three stages. The three stages are namely knowledge of self; knowledge of the world of work and matching of both self knowledge and knowledge of the world of work to career development (Peterson & Gonzalez, 2000). However, the first stage of The Trait and Factor approach is mainly based on psychometric assessments in exploring the individual traits and self knowledge (Schultheiss, 2003).

Unlike The Trait and Factor approach, these learners did not do psychometric assessments with a career counsellor, as their disadvantaged context does not have such resources available. The exploration of self-knowledge was left to the learners to figure out themselves. This leads us to Super's theory which highlights that career development is a lifetime process. As part of this development, the career research project facilitates career development to some extent for the learners (Super & Bohn, 1971). According to Super's theory, these learners are in an exploration stage, mainly exploring their vocational self-concept. The career research project encouraged career exploration, which is where the career choices are narrowed, but not finalized (Zunker, 2006). The learners

in this stage would be in the process of crystallizing and specifying their career plan (Super & Bohn, 1971). However, it is reported that there is little empirical evidence for the support of the applicability of Super's theory within disadvantaged contexts of African-Americans (Peterson & Gonzalez, 2000). However, this current research is within a different disadvantaged context and may yield different results.

Furthermore, these learners are expected to take the initiative to research career-related information within their disadvantaged contexts unlike the second stage of The Trait and Factor approach (Peterson & Gonzalez, 2000). In the case of The Trait and Factor approach, the counsellors provide their expert knowledge of the world of work after the administration of career-related psychometric tests (Schultheiss, 2003). This career project seems to equip the learner with the value of gathering career guidance information. This can be correlated with the Planned Happenstance theory which encourages learners to recognize and use opportunities in career planning by facilitating their action of generating and anticipating possible opportunities (Mitchell et al., 1999).

With regards to the Social Cognitive career theory, the Life Orientation educators, in giving the learners this project, can be seen as a form of verbal and social persuasion for the learners to embark on career-related research. As the learners embarked on this career research and they learnt more about their interest and the world of work, they were likely to have increased self-efficacy beliefs (Swanson & Fouad, 1999). As their self-efficacy beliefs increased, they were likely to consolidate their personal career-related goals. Subsequently, the career research project as a career intervention would be seen as beneficial, especially within their disadvantaged context. The learners' responses of their experience of the Life Orientation learning module were suggestive of the necessary life skills as mandated by the Department of Education that the learners are meant to acquire. In this regard, the educators are facilitating learning in the area of career guidance (Department of Education, 2001).

Although the subject of Life Orientation addresses career development needs, there were some challenges regarding service delivery by some of the educators. A learner felt that

they needed an active teacher to teach Life Orientation: *"I like it, but our class teacher is never in class to teach us. She's always busy in the office. She's hardly there"*. Respondent four felt Life Orientation needs to offer more information: *"So Life Orientation should tell us more about the careers and the topics that we are interested in"*. This suggests that the learners still need more environmental factors of verbal persuasion and vicarious learning as indicated by the Social Cognitive Career theory to facilitate further career development (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani, 2004).

5.1.3 Educator Perceptions on career development interventions

In contrast to the learners' responses, the educators indicated that they expose learners to various career development interventions which include the provision of role modelling through career talks, career exhibitions and career guidance within the Life Orientation learning area. These educators indicated that as part of the Life Orientation learning area, they have links with people from outside their context who give career talks that informs the learners on the different study fields. The educators reported that the talks are given at scheduled times during the year, consistent with the focus of the learning areas. In addition, the educators felt that role modelling was an important aspect of career intervention. An educator said the following:

> *When I speak of role models, I don't mean role models have to be educated. An ordinary simple neighbour can be your role model. My parents were my role models and they were not educated. They showed an interest in my work.*

One educator, in illustrating his point, spoke about the differences one observes when a child is schooling in a disadvantaged context compared to when schooling in Town. He attributed the rationale for the differences to the role of social influence:

> *The problem is multifold; there are people who are successful from those townships. What is amazing, if a learner leaves our township school and goes to a school in Town, the very same learner comes from the same environment, but there is a turnaround? The problem is much deeper than just looking at it in face value; the problem is what is this learner coming across in its interaction with other people? Are these human beings having an impact on the learner, our problem here in township schools is that the role models, I'll start with us teachers, the kind of role modelling that we mostly present to the learners is not constructive.*

This educator believed that the other learner is exposed to more positive role models, which are what the children within disadvantaged contexts lack. He even recounted his personal experience:

> *I grew up in Molestane in the 60s and there were very few people that had big houses and those were our role models and they lived up to it. Right here in Molestane, there is a judge living amongst the people;, he is an inspiration. One of his daughters has a PhD in Chemistry from a university in the Netherlands.*

In the discussion above, it is evident that role modelling, according to the educators, is important in career development. The Social Cognitive Career theory is in agreement, that the role modelling in career development is significant. Role modelling was observed as one of the influencers of self-efficacy beliefs in the form of vicarious learning and social persuasion (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani, 2004). The Social Cognitive Career theory indicates that external factors of a constructive environment, which includes role modelling that encourages positive verbal persuasion, may contribute to the children within this disadvantaged context to perform better. A constructive environment has been shown to develop the individual's self-efficacy belief (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani, 2004). Social persuasion is the encouragement or lack of encouragement the learners are likely to receive from their external environment (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani as cited in Kumar *et al.*, 2001). From the above discussion, it is clear that the learners within disadvantaged contexts have insufficient career development interventions. This consequently links to the career development challenges and needs within the disadvantaged contexts.

5.2 Theme 2: Career development challenges and needs in learners' disadvantaged context

The second aim and research question explored the learners' perceptions of career challenges and needs within their disadvantaged context. The researcher had asked the learners questions pertaining to their experiences of living within disadvantaged contexts. Specific questions were also framed, related to the career challenges they encounter and career needs within their contexts.

The findings of this current research suggest that learners from the disadvantaged context have a range of various psychosocial experiences that seemingly impact on their lives generally, thus, indirectly impacting on their career development. The learners are exposed to psychosocial experiences at home, school and community. Below is a summary and discussion of the findings of the psychosocial challenges that the learners face within the various contexts and how those may impact on career development. Each of these contexts is listed in the following themes: home context theme, school context theme and community context theme. The research findings then proceed to discuss the career development needs within the disadvantaged contexts.

5.2.1 Home context

According to the learners' responses, they felt that their career development within their home context was hampered by limited parental involvement with regards to their education, financial constraints, exposure to alcohol and drug abuse and the indirect impact of HIV/AIDS on their lives. Some learners felt that the lack of finances made it difficult for them to continue with their career goals:

> *There are many youths who have completed matric (grade 12) and are at home doing nothing, because they don't have money and they need to go into university, if their parents are unemployed, and then the government should fund people to go to university* (Respondent two).

Speaking about her sister, respondent four said: *"She just quit, because she didn't have money for further studies. She got a job at Pick and Pay as a cashier and now today she just goes for an interview at the bank"*. Bandura (1995) as quoted in Arulmani and Nag-Arulmani (2004) postulates that the closer the assumed relationship of the model to the learner, the more influential the models success or failure on the learner. This, according to the Social Cognitive career theory, may be a vicarious experience that impacts on the learners career beliefs. This may be a sort of challenge that impacts on the learner negatively, consequently, impacting on their career development.

Some of the learners explained the economic hardships that they experience within their context:

> *Many of them lack the finances. They would need to market themselves. They would need to make phone calls, look for sponsors and things like that. Most of the time they have something to say and at times want to fight with me. I then leave them and remind them that their living their own lives* (Respondent eight).

Respondent two shared the following:

> *Yes that's a challenge, my mother works, but does not earn that much money. There are 4 of us from my mother. My older brother and sister have finished school and are not working; my younger brother attends Hector Peterson school and uses transport which costs money. So my mother ends up spending lots of money everyday, she also has to give us pocket money, and here at school they would request for various things, and my mother at times cant manage .Yes, it is difficult, as I said no one helps my mother with money, so it is a challenge.*

These financial constrains experienced by the learners agree with Mqota, (2004) who purports that children in disadvantaged contexts are constantly confronted by economic hardships that hamper their academic potential. This makes it difficult for them to focus on education, while their basic survival needs are not met (Mqota, 2004). A positive external environment is critical to the learners' career development according to the Social Cognitive career theory, as it puts it forward that people are products and producers of their environment (Lent *et al.*, 2002). This suggests that according to this research, financial difficulties are barriers in their external environment and have the potential to hamper the learners' career development. The above findings seem to agree with previous research in Turner *et al*, (2003) cited in Maite (2006), which indicated that there is a strong relationship between environmental influences and adolescents' educational and vocational self-efficacy.

The current research findings also indicate that some of the learners do not live with their parents, but live with their siblings. They do not have parental guidance, thus, there is limited supervision and/or discipline. Some of the learners' parents have houses that are far away from the school, while some of the learners' parents are deceased. Respondent eight remarked:

> *So I would do what I wanted basically, because my sisters could not tell me what and what not to do, they are not my parents. I would take advantage of my sisters. No one would rebuke me; I would do as I pleased. Almost everyday after school I used to bring girls and friends over and we would get high, but now I am looking forward to my future. I don't care about many things".*

Respondent six said:

> *My mother passed away, my father passed away and I need to see how my future will turn out and how I will take care of my grandmother. We are currently living on my grandmother's grant, sometimes I don't get pocket money and my friends and I would put money together and share our food.*

Respondent five added:

> *Some of the young people tend to just do things without thinking about it, they don't care, they do not think about their future and how they will need to take care of themselves especially when their parents die, they are mainly living in the present and don't care which is wrong .They know, but they still persist and they are rude to the teachers and they tell them everyday not to do certain things, but they still persist.*

This research suggests that parental involvement is limited due to circumstances beyond their control mainly, death of parents in some cases. Maite's research (2006) also indicates that parental involvement is an important factor in career development. Furthermore, literature reveals that parent-child adolescent relationships are primary influences on the learners' career goals (Li & Kerpelma, 2007). Therefore, with regards to these researched learners, it is clear that these learners' career development is impacted upon negatively, because of the limited parental involvement.

Furthermore, the educators explained that they have observed that some of the learners are often malnourished. The educators suspected that some of the learners were selling their bodies in order to meet basic nutritional needs. Some parents are believed to be absconding from taking responsibility of their children and often leave that burden to someone else. The educator expressed his concern in the following way:

> *Another challenge is that they don't have parents, if my analysis is correct 50% of the learners in the school don't have parents and they are raised by grandparents. The one parent may be dead and the other one is unknown. To be more direct, the learners do not have father figures, the majority of them if you ask them where their fathers are. They say I don't know. Can you imagine your child grows up knowing one parent who is irresponsible and the other one is unknown? Some are raised by their grandparents. Some don't even have grandparents or parents and raise themselves. They are helped by their neighbours to get by. As I have already indicated earlier on, the family structure is not strong. It is undermined these days, family is nothing and parents are not valued. As you can see now, even at*

this age I need support and some form of structure. The children are pushed into adulthood.

The educators also felt that some of the learners are exposed to alcohol and drug abuse within the home context. This makes it difficult to intervene at school, because alcohol and drug abuse are projected as being acceptable at home. One of the educators explained:

Yes one of the challenges we face, most of these children have mothers who drink excessively, most of them. Most of these children are exposed to substance abuse, drugs from home. Yes, so it becomes difficult to intervene, because at home the substance abuse is a norm.

Applying the Social Cognitive Career theory to current research findings, the learning experiences of vicarious learning (learning from someone who's going through similar experiences) and social persuasion (encouragement that learners receive) tend to impact negatively on the learners self-efficacy beliefs (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani as cited in Kumar *et al.*, 2001). The learners' self in relation to context, in this research, are exposed to more negative experiences, further undermining their self-efficacy beliefs (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani as cited in Kumar *et al.*, 2001).The challenges experienced by learners within the home context flows into the school context as discussed below.

5.2.2 School context

The learners reported that they are also exposed to teenage pregnancy, teenage suicides, and drug abuse as well as high school drop outs of friends and being under peer pressure in school. The learners also said that they are exposed to insufficient educational support from some educators, especially with regards to career education. There are also influences such as teacher strikes and school boycotts by Congress of South African Students. The sub-themes illustrate the various scholastic and career challenges that learners' deal with in their school context and which are possibly, hampering their career development.

5.2.2.1 Limited educational support

Some of the learners felt that they do not receive sufficient assistance within their school with regards to career guidance and subject choices. Other learners questioned the quality of their education that they received, because they paid less school fees than children attending multiracial schools. Respondent three remarked:

> *Struggles are that we struggle to get further education, we do not get educated in the same way as a child in a multiracial school that pays about R1000. Maybe they deserve to be taught more than us, but we do not get proper education. For example the teachers in our school will teach us chapter 1 and the next time she teaches us, she will be teaching chapter 17. This means that she will not do the other chapters.*

Some of the learners experienced discrimination from teachers:

> *Other teachers discriminate towards other children. If a person fails the year, the teacher will continue to embarrass the learner by saying the one that is repeating school should explain what she's writing on the board. And discourage the learner from schooling, suggesting that they go and work at McDonald* (Respondent three).

The above learner indicated that the teacher strikes in mid-2007 had a negative impact:

> *Other struggles are the strikes they just had, this disturbs us, and they were on strike for a month and we have to suffer for their strike, because now I think the schools are not going to close although we are supposed to be on holiday. The last two weeks we would finish school at 4pm. We would get to school very early and be taught until 2pm. After which we would write an exam on the same day on what we were taught earlier. I think it is unfair, how you can be taught in the morning on the different subjects and in the afternoon you are expected to write an exam, by then you have forgotten and you are tired. For example we would write an economics paper in the afternoon and the whole day we would be catching up accounting subject.*

This same learner suggested that the teachers are not well trained in the specific learning fields in which they are educating the learners:

> *We need more experienced teachers. The math's teacher does not know how to teach, its not that I am bad mouthing her, he just can't teach. He does not explain properly, however he is very generous with the marks. At the end of the year you fail, because he is not the one that is always marking the paper….Some of the teachers are never in class; some of the teachers give the responsibility to a learner in class to teach. We need teachers to attend to us more; we need teachers to teach us more.*

Respondent three further highlighted the unfairness of access to the school resources that is controlled by the educators:

> *We are not getting an access to the library, a lot here at school. I go during break and the teachers are selective at the school concerning who may and may not enter the library. Some of the children are kicked out of the library.*

Similarly, the Life Orientation educator shared his perceptions which correspond to the above learner's sentiments:

> *Okay, what is also lacking the educators, most of us do not have people skill as you have seen in some of my colleagues. It leaves much to be desired. Our problem here in township schools is that the role models, I'll start with us teachers, the kind of role modelling that we mostly present to the learners is not constructive. Why do I say this, come after school, possibly my way of recreation is drinking alcohol and the learners will see this. This then becomes acceptable so the learner sees nothing wrong. Our coping mechanisms as a community are destructive, not constructive. We are sending in a wrong signal, we don't have a foresight.*

Literature shows that the introduction of Curriculum 2005 has been negatively received by many teachers, thus making it difficult for them to implement it appropriately, especially teachers within the disadvantaged contexts (Knight, 2005). After the teachers' strike in 2007, the learners were expected to work harder to compensate for the time lost. The learners were expected to do so with very little support, making their schooling difficult. It seems that schools' contextual factors such as teachers' strikes; teachers' discrimination against learners; under-qualified teachers as well as the poor implementation of the Curriculum 2005 are serving as barriers to learners' education (Knight, 2005; Mqota, 2004).

Mqota (2004) shows that learners who are studying under poor conditions and limited educational support compared to learners who are in fair school conditions have lower scholastic achievements. These educational challenges are seen as obstacles in career developments. Applying the Social Cognitive theory, such challenges are experienced as perceived barriers to learning and may negatively influence self-efficacy beliefs. These self-efficacy beliefs would thus impact on outcome expectations (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani, 2004).

Linked with self-efficacy beliefs is influence of peer pressure and increasing school drop-out rates. The learners, through negative verbal persuasions and negative observations of their social environment are influenced negatively (Lent *et al.,* 2002). The following paragraph discusses the school challenges that continue to hinder the learners' career developments.

5.2.2.2 Peer pressure and school drop-outs

The learners' responses indicated that they experience additional challenges namely; peer pressure to engage in delinquent behaviours; exposure to teenage suicide; the travelling of long distances to school and a high school drop-out rate. These learners stated that as they lack hope and direction with regards to their future, they engage in delinquent behaviours. Respondent seven said:

> *They are smoking marijuana, drugs, stealing and do things that are out of line, but when it comes to their books they are not serious about their books. And when you are not education in South Africa, you can't be a success, but if you are educated you can be something*.

Some of the learners in the schools are suicidal, Respondent three said:

> *Yes, there's someone that killed herself this year. She was in matric and she killed herself for a boyfriend. There was one who attempted in the school premises and she is in grade 9. I don't know why she tried to commit suicide. There's another one last year in our school that tried to commit suicide, there was a rumour that if you failed grade 9 you would be taken back to grade 8. So she killed herself after realizing that she had failed and she was afraid of being taken back to grade*

This learner recounts her township experience about school drop-outs:

> *In my street, there are lots of girls and boys my age, they drop out of school and eh, having children doing odd things* (Respondent one).

Similarly, another learner said the following:

> *"My friend just dropped out of school, his older brother also dropped out of school. The only person that is schooling in my friend's family is their younger sister who is still in primary school* (Respondent nine).

Some learners travel long distances to get to school, which may be another perceived career barrier. Respondent four shared her sentiments: *"The difficulty is that some of us attend school far"*.

These learners are in the process of searching for their identity and a sense of self in relation to self and in relation to context, and therefore are prone to peer pressure influences that may predispose them to delinquent behaviours. The influence of peer pressure and school drop-outs are in tandem with previous research that adolescents within disadvantaged contexts tend to have lower levels of perseverance and have a tendency to give up (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani, 2004). Learners in the current research tend to give up easily possibly, because the factors that are said to contribute to self-efficacy beliefs of performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences, and verbal persuasion may be lacking (Lent *et al.,* 2002). The reason may be the negative exposure that they are often dealing with within their context, added to the fact that there are limited role models to positively influence the learners. Subsequently, the learners within such contexts are impacted upon negatively.

Linked to the above, Stead *et al.,* (2004) conducted research that observed perceived career barriers among South African school learners. Findings indicated personal factors with regards to self, experiential factors and contextual factors are barriers which may impact negatively on learning experiences and thus, influencing self-efficacy and career choices and goals.

It is also important to note that previous research as cited in (Gordon & Meyer, 2002) has shown indecision to be a major determinant of school drop-outs. This research cited in Gordon and Meyer (2002) found that high school drop-out rates are caused by low self-efficacy beliefs. School drop-out rates are also caused by having low self-concepts, as well as the influence of peer pressure and minimal involvement from teachers in the learners' career direction and choice. On the contrary, applying the Planned Happenstance theory, it is believed that career indecision is encouraged, through the lack of career guidance to the learners, because it gives the learners an opportunity to explore

and generate chance opportunities (Mitchell *et al.*, 1999). However, the learners within disadvantaged contexts are said to be undecided, because of the limited opportunity structures presented to them as well as other challenges they are exposed to in their environment (Gysberg *et al.*, 2003).

In addressing some of the challenges experienced by the learners, the educators explained that they attempt to address some of the challenges and problems faced within their school context, mainly using a referral system to address contextual problems. These educators also explained that they are aware of their limitations and they prefer using their own referral system, because in contrast to protocol set out by the Department of Education, they believe their referral system is more effective. This is what one educator said:

> *The way I do it, if I identify a child cause obviously I can't be a master of all. I use the referral system, for instance there is a place nearby here called Noah's ark, It also helps with social work issues. So if I don't understand what the child is telling me, I feel this is beyond me. My first port of call is to take the child by the hand and go with the child to Noah's ark and the child will make a presentation there. As a teacher I may not know what to do and they guide and assist us. If I raise an issue of drugs those that have problems are referred to SANCA. I really make use of the referral system. In some cases I have a working relationship with some of the clinics. If it a health issue I refer the child to the clinic. I found that this networking relationship with the other organizations works much faster than the one that is prescribed by the department. Where they say the learners have to be referred to the district. I refer children directly to the clinic if they have psychological problems which are right here, there is less red tape and it is so much easier. I prefer the referral system that I use; the department system is bogged down into lots of unnecessary paper work, because what is needed is intervention, so I use my referral system.*

Literature suggests that support interventions may be helpful for those people who are most likely to encounter difficult conditions in their environments (Lent *et al*., 2002). It seems that the educators within this context have attempted to address barriers in the external environments which possibly have a bearing on the learners' career developments. Furthermore, these educators could be perceived as role models, because they are seen to be influencing the learners in some direction (Gibson, 2004).

5.2.3 Community context

Within the community, the learners said they are exposed to the following: poverty, unemployment, and delinquent behaviours, limited recreational facilities, minimal exposure to adequate resources and limited access to appropriate role models and limited career guidance interventions. The educators who were interviewed agreed that learners face contextual challenges. The learners also felt that they are lacking resources, career guidance counselling as well as relevant career information and mentors or role models. This is what some of the learners had to say:

> *So here in Soweto in the area that I live in, there are no near libraries, they are so far away from home and its not safe to go to the other side to go to the libraries, so I haven't find that support someone to like, to mentor me, to guide me, I mean to encourage me to do this if this is what you want, you can do this. I want that when I do something to have someone to encourage me, so I also get encouraged, and I believe that I know that I can do it* (Respondent one).

Respondent three said the following: *"There's no library in Moletsane"*. Additionally, this learner took it upon herself to have access to the nearest library to her community, because there are no libraries where she resides: *"I have a library card from Phiri Township, because there are no near libraries. The closest ones are Phiri, Emndeni and in Town"*.

Some of the learners felt that the career opportunities that they are exposed to are limited:

> *There are no opportunities, there are lots of people with matric and are not working, they are not getting bursaries and people are looking for jobs and there are no jobs. The jobs are limited, a few get permanent posts, and the opportunities are limited* (Respondent six).

Another learner shared her sentiments:

> *Usually I don't get support, I don't have someone to aspire to, there isn't a family that I could learn from, I think that I am locked to that place. No one inspires me to do something"*. Yet another learner said the following: *"I see it as people lacking appropriate role models. If you look at it, in the old days, we used to have our older brothers playing soccer and we used to watch them play soccer and we*

> *used to see how talented he was and we would wish to do the same as him, because it looked appealing. Then the younger ones would also want to play the soccer, because it seems like a nice thing to know how to play, but nowadays, the young generation that is following my generation see my generation getting excited about being high on drugs and get aspire to do exactly that, because that is all they are exposed to. They are not exposed to positive things, but rather the negative things* (Respondent one).

It seems that from these current research findings, there is a correlation between scholastic difficulties and career development, home and community challenges. The Life Orientation educators interviewed agreed with what the learners regarded as challenges. These challenges can be understood within the theoretical context of the Social Cognitive theory. The theory postulates that an array of factors influences the nature and the range of career possibilities (Lent *et al.,* 2002). The theory also emphasizes that the individual is an active agent in the process, when incorporating the theory as it is postulated that outcome expectations are activities that determine career interests (Patton & McMahon, 1999; Peterson & Gonzalez, 2000). Therefore, the learners may have interests in completing school and studying further. Apart from the challenges expressed, the learners and the educators both expressed their career interventions needs within their contexts. These interests and goals need to be enhanced with the school, family and community contexts through vicarious learning and social persuasion.

5.2.4 Career Needs

5.2.4.1 Learner perceptions

In response to the question of career intervention needs within disadvantaged contexts, the learners indicated that they need career guidance in the form of career exhibitions. Some of the learners interviewed deemed parental and teacher involvement pertinent in their career goals, whilst also acknowledging that their parents are not as involved in the education. The learners felt that they needed someone to help them directly with career guidance, to inform them about what is happening in the world of work, learnerships, bursaries and scholarships. One of the main challenges that were experienced by most of the learners interviewed was the limited resources that they are exposed to. These research findings are consistent with previous research conducted in disadvantaged

contexts, showing that there is a need for career guidance interventions (Nicholas *et al.*, in Stead & Watson, 1999). Career intervention services were shown to be neglected within disadvantaged contexts, because of the oppressive apartheid laws on black education and there was a limited exposure to jobs previously (Sibalanga, 2002). However, over the past 14 years of democracy, learners throughout South Africa have had similar opportunity structures, but those interviewed are still lacking resources (Nicholas *et al.,* in Stead & Watson, 1999). This current research findings corresponds with Khosa's research (1998) which suggests that there's a need for career guidance interventions and that high school environments expose learners to limited career education (Stead *et al.,* 2004).

Having reported the above, some of the learners felt it was important that they have a change of mindset as an internal factor. Respondent nine said the following: *"They need to change their mindset, and then need to start believing in themselves"*

Most of the learners expected external factors to assist them with their career guidance. A study was done by Millar and Shevlin (2007) in Northern Ireland to explore career locus of control amongst school pupils. Their research findings suggested that school pupils who had a strong internal locus of control had better self knowledge in relation to one's understanding of the self and were actively involved in their career development processes. On the contrary, individuals who held strong external expectations (external locus of control) over career-related developments were prone to rely on their external environments such as the career counsellor or the career development services to direct them in their career developments (Millar & Shevlin, 2007). Similarly, with this current research, the findings suggest that the learners rely more on external influences in their career developments and therefore, may not take the initiative to be actively involved in their own career processes. Therefore, as revealed in the current study, learners may need to develop a stronger internal locus of control with regards to their career development. However, the learner is likely to develop an internal sense of control when some or all of the conditions of the Social Cognitive Career theory are met, which include personal performance accomplishments, vicarious learning, social persuasion and physiological

and affective states (Lent *et al.,* 2002). As the learners' self-efficacy beliefs are strengthened, then, according to Bandura as cited in Betz (2000), the learners are likely to be more actively involved in their career process. The learners are likely to explore and take an interest in career-related activities and persist in the face of challenges or discomforting experiences (Betz, 2000).

5.2.4.2 Educator perceptions

In response to the question of career intervention needs within disadvantaged contexts, the educators indicated that they needed more assistance from tertiary institutions with regards to career guidance. Educators believed that assistance from tertiary institutions should come to schools as early as possible. Furthermore, the educators felt that there is a deficit of role models and they need more people who could serve as role models to the learners. The educators also felt that there needs to be a change of mindset from the learners, teachers and the community as a whole. This educator shared her experience:

> *In this school we have more that 40 teachers and in the assembly there were very few, what example are we setting? A bad example. How do I say to those children that you are not behaving very well, when I who am supposed to be leading is not showing a good example. People don't care; they have a non caring attitude. If you care the young ones will see the important of caring. There is no support structure; the support structure is every body to himself.*

The above can be related to the Social Cognitive Career theory, regarding vicarious experience. The educators' behaviours may have a powerful impact on the learners' behaviours in that the learners may, through vicarious experience, adopt similar behaviours to that of their educators which are meant to be positive social models (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani, 2004). Consequently, the findings highlight a need for positive social models within the learners' school context, which may have a positive impact on their career development.

The following section, in response to the third research question and aim, observes a career guidance intervention vehicle, namely *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education.*

5.3 Theme 3: A career intervention vehicle: *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education*

The third research question and aim was to explore the learners' perceptions of a career guidance intervention, *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education.* The learners felt that *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* was a useful tool in aiding them with information pertaining to subject-choices, higher education and financial resources to studying. Some of the learners felt that *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* helped them identify with role models and yet, some learners made suggestions to improve the contents of *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education.*

A Guide for Schools into Higher Education seemed to bridge some career challenges and needs within a disadvantaged context. The themes that emerged were: *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* as a source of information resource; a form of educational support and role modelling influence.

This section will begin with a discussion of the learners' responses to the question of the career goals, career information as depicted in the first section of the interview schedule (See Appendix 1). This will be integrated with a discussion of the learners' perceptions of *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* as an information resource. This section will be followed by a discussion of the learners' career influences as well as link it with the learners' perceptions of *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* as a source of role modelling influence and a form of educational support. Subsequently, the discussion will highlight the learners' recommendations of *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education.* Thereafter, there will be a discussion of the educators' perceptions of *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* as a source of career intervention within a disadvantaged context.

5.3.1(A) Career Goals and career Information

The researcher deemed it pertinent to explore the learners' career goals and career information as part of the exploration of the learners' perceptions of career development interventions, specifically their perceptions about *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* as a type of intervention. Therefore, the learners' career goals and career information will be explored, followed by a discussion with regards to the learner's perceptions of a career intervention vehicle *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education*, pertaining to their career goals and career information.

All the learners interviewed had career goals. However, for most of the learners, the career information of the careers they aspired towards seemed to be limited. Many of the learners had opted for more than one career option, as an alternative plan should their first option fail to materialize. Most of the learners aspired for careers within the financial and business fields namely: chartered accountant, financial accountant, bookkeeper, economist, financial advisor, businesswoman, chief accounting clerk and businessman. Respondent eight said:

> *When I grow up I would like to be a businessman. It's businesses that will, eh, produce eh. This is my plan. I plan to sell batteries, engines for fridges. I would like to sell those; have a company and employ people who will make deliveries.*

Some of the learners aspired to have careers within the social field: social worker, travel and tourism, business economics teacher, policeman, metro policeman, paramedic. Only a few learners seemed to have a career aspiration towards the sciences, namely mechanical engineering and climatology. Few learners aspired for traditional careers, suggesting that learners are more exposed to a range of other careers compared to the learners of the apartheid South Africa who were exposed to a limited number of careers (George, 1996). Literature suggests that extensive research in South Africa highlighted the need for orientation programs that would adequately equip learners for life in the 21st century. Consequently, the Department of Education took into consideration the findings for the research and developed a progression of Life Orientation programs (Prinsloo,

2007). The implementation of these orientation programs may have exposed learners to other careers. Other reasons for exposure to other careers may be attributed to social factors namely the media, social context, schooling and career interventions generally.

Although these learners knew which careers they aspired for, very few had career information on the career they wanted to embark on. Respondent one, who is interested in doing travel and tourism said*:*

> *I was still doing research on tourism that they told me it's about being a tour guide and a tour driver, but I am not to keen, that is not on my mind, I want to do something. I want to do bookings for people; I want to do many more. So I want to do research about tourism… I always do, read the work place and find information about it. And I always get the delivery for the times, the news paper for the Sunday times. I always read the careers section to find more about tourism.*

The above implies that the learner has some knowledge regarding his/her career aspirations, but still needs career information. Respondent two, when asked about career information pertaining to being a chartered accountant, responded by saying:

> *"Okay, I would like to be a chartered accountant, so a chartered accountant analyses and evaluates the financial information"*.

Respondent three said the following regarding career information on being a financial accountant:

> *It is all about strategic and make sure that the company is working in order and making new ideas for the company. And then financially is about calculating, accounting sheets and making of things go good. And then bookkeeping is not about calculating most of the time and giving the company back the reports.*

This suggests that these learners know some information regarding the careers they want to embark on, but still need more exposure to the world of work and career information. The learners seemed to have committed to memory limited information about their potential careers. Furthermore, many of the learners are not aware of the duration of studying of their wished-for careers. These learners have limited knowledge of higher education institutions where the potential careers are meant to be studied in as well as the minimum requirements for the proposed career fields. The lack of career information confirms previous postulations in Ireh (2000) about learners being interested in careers,

but lacking the knowledge of what the career involves. This is what respondent four had to say regarding career information:

> *The way I think of it, I think I should study first, I have asked around and I have been told that If I need to be in business I need to learn about it first. I need to have the diplomas for it then when I finish studying I can go to Shoprite and get a job as a manager.*

Additionally, the learners that aspired for the social field indicated that they knew a bit of information regarding their career choice. *"I would like to be a social worker. It helps children who are orphans and poor children"* (Respondent two). However, this particular learner did not know how long it took to be a social worker: *"I don't know how long it takes to be a social worker"*. Similarly, respondent eleven said the following: *"A paramedic, it's like people who work in an ambulance, who helps patients"*. This particular learner admitted that she didn't know how long it would take to be a paramedic.

On the other hand, some of the other learners knew a little bit about other careers hence, they chose not to opt for certain careers. Respondent three said:

> *Like being a social worker, cause like sometimes you listen to people's problems neh, okay I am emotional person, people's problems tend to affect me, some of those careers I would not take, even to be a doctor, no way. I don't think I will take that as a career.*

Yet, respondent nine had been exposed to limited information regarding his career goals in response to a question on what a climatologist does. He shared his sentiments: *"A climatologist. You predict the weather, but I don't want to be on T.V. I think it's just the weather only"*. Additionally, respondent ten was keen to embark on being a mechanical engineer, but lacked adequate information about it:

> *I want to be a mechanical engineering. I don't know that much about it, but I can try telling you the little that I know about it. It has to do with a person that works on fixing and designing cars. I know that the job market lacks engineers, like they lack psychologists. I have not come across many of them, so that's what made me to think of doing engineering.*

This learner is aware of the need for engineers in the world of work although his career information about mechanical engineering may be limited. According to the Social Cognitive career theory, these learners' interests (if pursued actively) should propel them towards goal-setting, which would entail searching for job information which would lead to implementation of a job. The latter would be accomplished if the learner has high self efficacy, outcome expectations and is encouraged by significant others through verbal persuasion and vicarious experiences.

In the discussion of the above-listed findings, it is important to review previous research conducted in India which has indicated that learners within disadvantaged backgrounds have lower level career aspirations and lower outcome expectations. This is because of their limited exposure to careers and career-related interventions and other factors (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani as cited in Kumar et al., 2001).

However, this research was not exploring the learners' career aspirations and outcome expectations as in the research conducted by Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani as cited in Kumar *et al.,* (2001). This research was observing the learners perceptions of career interventions within disadvantaged contexts. The elicited information on career goals and career information of this research informs the researcher about career guidance needs within their disadvantaged context, which responds to the third research question of this research. This enables the researcher to respond appropriately to career guidance intervention needs within this particular disadvantaged context.

These findings also suggest that the learners in this study aspired for the above-mentioned careers, not because they believed they have the traits to match the job as in The Trait and Factor theory. Traditionally, career traits as in The Trait and Factor approach are elicited by the use of psychometric assessments facilitated by a career counsellor suitable for a certain population, namely the disadvantaged contexts (Maree & Beck, 2004). The learners in this disadvantaged context have not had exposure to psychometric assessments, nor been exposed to career counselling. The learners,

therefore, relied on their self-knowledge, self-concept and career beliefs to inform them about their career goals and interests. This suggests that according to the Social Cognitive Career theory, these learners have developed interest, because they have positive self-efficacy beliefs and they perceive desirable outcomes when choosing to aspire for their careers (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani, 2004). These learners' career goals are in contrast to The Trait and Factor approach which supports that career choice is a function of agreement between an individual and the job, which implies that individual traits should match the career choice (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). In this research, it is evident that the learners' career goals are the result of social cognitions about the careers.

Furthermore, people have been known for choosing careers for other reasons not related to traits, which are of individual meaning to them. Also, in relation to The Trait and Factor approach, these learners would be said to have limited information of the world of work. The world of work includes information on the working requirements, conditions for success, opportunities, advantages and disadvantages in the different lines of work (Peterson & Gonzalez, 2000). It is questionable if the learners' career goals are realistic, because these learners lack adequate information about the careers. The following section will discuss the learners' perceptions of *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* as an information resource.

5.3.1(B) *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* as an Information Resource

A Guide for Schools into Higher Education seems to have been informative and is perceived as an intervention that can meet learners in disadvantaged contexts dire needs for resources, which was a main challenge that was experienced by most of the learners interviewed. Additionally, the learners complained about the restricted access to the physical material resources. In relation to physical material resources, most of the learners firstly complained about the libraries that are far away and not accessible:

> *We need more libraries, have an access to the computers at the school. We have computers, but the people that do the computers at the school are chosen"* (Respondent four).

Secondly, the learners experienced that the teachers do not give learners equal access to use the computers, but perceive that selected learners are privileged to use the computers. In addition to libraries, the learners felt that they needed books:

> *We need to get books, find out what people love and encourage them to pursue their careers, some people only know in grade 12 that they want to be a pilot, but when you look at their subject you realize that their subjects are not in line with being a pilot and you realize that it is too late. Yes they need to know what they are good in and what they are talented in so that they can make that their careers, for example if a person is talented in soccer that can be made into a career. It helps me a lot with career guidance, because during this time we were doing careers and I go into the library, but I didn't get so much and then the other things, I found things about my career in this book, which I should take. What else, there are a lot of things. Even if I didn't want to do general, but I saw there are so many interesting subjects that I can do general* (Respondent four).

Thirdly, some of the learners felt that they needed information on scholarships and bursaries. Financial constraints were a hindrance to these learners pursuing career goals. In response to some of the needs addressed above, the learners experienced *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* as an information resource; this resource seems to have met their physical and material resource needs. In elaboration of the above, many of the learners interviewed were not aware about the universities' or universities of technology and the minimum requirements for entering into the higher education institutions. Respondent six remarked:

> *I think the guide is informative. It encourages the learner to go into higher education. It helped, especially the stories about people, because they speak about their subject-choices and how that helped them become what they wanted to become.*

A Guide for Schools into Higher Education addresses the challenge of lack of information on financial resources for higher education. Respondent four shared their perceptions on *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education*:

> *Okay the book teaches me about so many careers and the degrees, there are for instance if you need to be this or that you will need to take the following subjects to qualify as this or that. That's what was interesting to me. And then again it inspires me that you have to study a lot, even if you don't have the money there are scholarships and bursaries, they are for students who don't have the money and they will pay it back when they are working. You can communicate with those people who can do your financials, the financial aid.*

A Guide for Schools into Higher Education as a vehicle for career intervention seems to have addressed the need for information resources within their disadvantaged context. According to the Planned Happenstance theory, *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* as an information resource makes the learners aware of the opportunities that are available (Mitchell *et al.,* 1999). The Planned Happenstance theory encourages the individuals to develop a curiosity in order to recognize opportunities in career planning. Additionally, *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* also seems to direct the learners to be open to new possibilities and discoveries as one can never predict the future (Mitchell *et al.,* 1999). Similarly, *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* also informs the learners about what is available in career development and the world of work, which links with The Trait and Factor theory that postulates that a career path is a combination of the knowledge of self and the knowledge of the world of work (Peterson & Gonzalez, 2000). Along with Planned Happenstance, *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* also takes into cognizance that life experiences are unpredictable and the world is in a constant flux (Zunker, 2006). The following section will explore the learners' career influences.

5.3.2 (A) Career influences

The learners were also asked about what influenced their career goals (See Appendix 1). Although the learners' responses reflected that their career goals are influenced by external factors namely, family; role models; teachers and their financial situations, some of the learners' career aspirations were influenced by altruistic needs, namely, to help people, to make a positive difference within their context as well as internal drives namely a desire to learn. Most of the learners' responses reflected their career influences to be contextually based.

Some of the learners' responses suggested that they were motivated by their difficult financial situations and possibly, a desire to please their parents. Respondent three said the following:

> *I knew back then that I wanted a career that makes lots of money. I see a C.A is a rich person and that is what I would like when I grow up. My mother does not have anything; I'll need to support her. So I have to finish school. I want to be a C.A, my mother never managed to finish school, that's why she is poor and not rich. I want to be a better person to make her proud and become a C.A.*

The findings suggest that the learners from disadvantaged contexts wanted to pursue certain careers, because of the financial benefits as most indicated that they currently struggle to meet their own financial needs. The vicarious experiences and verbal persuasions that these learners observe and experience within their disadvantaged contexts serve to alleviate their career intervention challenges and career intervention needs within their disadvantaged context (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani, 2004).

Tien (2007) reported on an investigation conducted by Bonjuwoye and Mbanjwa in South Africa that focused on factors that influence youth career decisions, reflected that parental expectations of children, prestige and status of some occupations, school subjects, academic performance and the teacher's role influence the individuals' career development. Regarding family influences, Kniveton (2004) shows that learners' career goals are influenced by their parents, attractive salary of the job and the careers that they are exposed to within their environment. Many of the learners' interviewed intimated that their career influences were inspired by people whom they look up to within their families. Respondent four remarked:

> *My parents wanted me to do it (accounting) and my sister was doing it in standard 8.*

Specifically, many of the learners' maternal figures influenced their career directions. The learner that wanted to be a climatologist indicated the following: *"My mother. She also encourages me to do it; she thinks it is a good idea. She also suggested that I study to become the weather man"* (Respondent nine). Another learner indicated the following:

> *"My mother, but she didn't know how to help me, because she does not know what subjects I would need for being an engineer. So I told her that I needed to do science and she agreed to sign the form"* (Respondent ten).

Otto (2000) reveals that most of the youth look to their parents, especially their mothers, for career guidance. Their mothers are particularly observed as sources of assistance with

regards to their career goals. Maite's (2006) research findings also suggest that supportive parental involvement is beneficial for the learners' career development, whilst non-supportive parental involvement is likely to have an opposite effect. Some of the learners' sisters had a significant role to play in the choice of the learners subject-choices that influenced the career choices. Respondent eight shared his experience:

> *My sisters choose my subjects on my behalf. I wanted to do physical science and my sisters said that physical science involves too much work. My sisters had to sign the subject-choice form and they signed commerce subjects even after I told them that I didn't want to do that. The school gave us the forms for a day and wanted them the following day, so my sisters didn't want me to do physics, but wanted me to do commerce so they signed that I'll be doing commerce. And I love physics. I told them how I felt and I got angry, but there's nothing I can do now, it's already done. I can't change my subjects.*

The above-mentioned learner seems to have been disempowered by his sister's choosing subjects for him. It seems that his subject-choices were externally controlled, thus he had no control over what he wanted to do. Yet, the same learner was positively encouraged by his sister: "*My sister is currently studying there. She encourages me to study there as well and it is her final year now. My mother, father, Monte and my sister. Those are the people I can say encourage me"* (Respondent eight). These findings suggest that the particular learner's motivation is externally based and not directed by an internal locus of control.

In addition to the aforementioned influences, role models above appear to play a significant role in directing learners' lives and at times, career choices (Gibson, 2004). One of the role models that they mentioned is a popular soccer star. Respondent seven said the following*:*

> *He used to play for Swallows soccer team his name is "Bobs" also known as Jacob Lekgetho. He also played for South Africa and how he's overseas playing for one of the teams there. And now he's not playing anymore. Yes this is the person that inspired me, he's inspired me. He used to be my coach when I used to play soccer, he used to encourage us to play and the way he coached us was inspiring. He used to say that even soccer may seem as a simple thing at the moment, it will take you far.*

This particular role model's verbal persuasion seems to have primed the learner for the unexpected, because he is aware that chance plays a vital role in career planning, as

indicated by the Planned Happenstance theory that individuals need to be prepared for the unexpected, because chance opportunities can occur at any stage in one's career planning and development (Mitchell *et al.,* 1999). This particular learner was encouraged by his role model to be open-minded to new discoveries and career opportunities (Mitchell *et al.,* 1999).

Similarly, some of the learners' other role models were ordinary members of their community. Respondent six told about his role model:

> *I've always wanted to be a mechanical engineer since primary school or Metro police man. There was once a man that wanted to be a mechanical engineer. He grew up poor and he struggled. He was living with his mother and sister, his father had passed away. His mother struggled to get him through to school. He used to travel long distances going to school, he used to be teased by some kids, because he would walk barefooted. He had told himself that he wanted to be something one day while he was in high school and he decided to be focused and started doing that. He's now an engineer, his mother passed away and he still lives with his sister. Then I told myself that I see the things that are happening within my township, the young people are doing drugs, abusing alcohol so I have decided that I will not drink alcohol. I used to do that as well, but then my granny spoke to me about my behaviour and basically gave me a choice, she encouraged me to be focused and continue going to school. So I know that I need to work hard to get where I want to get. I could even get a bursary.*

According to the Social Cognitive Career theory, the learners vicariously learn through role models' experiences and this gives the learners courage to pursue a career direction despite challenges (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani as cited in Kumar *et al.,* 2001). The learners observe the social model, which has been through something similar to that which he is currently experiencing and who, through consistent effort, accomplished a certain task. The learner's belief in self to accomplish something similar is raised. Consequently, role modelling in this regard may build the learners' self- efficacy beliefs and possibly minimize premature closure of occupational options. Similarly, should the social model fail to achieve regardless of his attempts, this weakens the observer's opinion of their own self-efficacy (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani, 2004). This above-mentioned learner seems to have identified with the role model as well as chosen to follow the path of his role model. Therefore, the perceived financial barriers and other contextual factors that may hinder the learners from pursuing careers are moderated by

witnessing the challenges their role models' experienced in their life when growing up similar challenging contexts but who overcame their obstacles and became successful (Lent *et al.,* 2002).

Other learners' career goals are influenced by the roles that they are exposed to on television. Respondent three said:

> *I wanted to be an economist. It started from when I was young. I used to watch the news and I would watch this woman on SABC 3 on a program that plays from 12pm-1pm. I like the way that woman talks and explaining the increase or decreases in the stock exchange. Then I started there wanting to be an economist.*

Another learner suggested that his career was influenced by an actor:

> *In fact yes, it is an actor, I like the way Dlomo acts. I like to run a business the same way that Sibusiso Dlomo runs a business… the way he dresses, the way he talks to people, the way he is inspires me to be like him* (Respondent seven).

The findings confirm previous research that posits that exposure to role models, through video or written material, increases the learners' chances of considering non-traditional careers (Quimby & DeSantis, 2006). It seems that external sources of vicarious influences have an important attitude on the learners' career development.

Some learners were influenced by ordinary people who did not succeed in their own career goals, but were still verbally encouraging them: *"There's this man in my street that wanted to be a climatologist and he didn't succeed in being one, but encouraged me to pursue it. He's a sound engineer"* (Respondent nine). This links in with one of the sources of influence of the Social Cognitive Career theory that contributes to self-efficacy beliefs namely, verbal persuasion. This particular learner receives positive feedback from someone in their context, which increased his self-efficacy beliefs (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani, 2004). The influence of a role model ties in with the self-concept as highlighted in Super's theory, implying that the individual is able to see him/her self in a similar role to that of his/her role model. Furthermore, the influence of role models (contextual factor) may enhance one's self-efficacy beliefs in that they enable the person to believe that he/ she is capable to perform the task (Zunker, 2006).

On the contrary, the same learner shared the following: *"The people in Zola can only guide you about what they know which is not much.* This paints a picture of the type of influence or guidance learners were likely to have been exposed to and their perception of the people in their contexts. Despite North American research evidence as cited in Guindon and Richmond (2005), only a few of the learners interviewed were influenced by their teachers to aspire for their careers:

> *Since I am studying here, the teacher that is teaching accounting makes me more interested in accounting. When it's time for accounting I feel inspired and oh my Mem is coming then you be focused. So others make me sleep and accounting is the best. Most of my teachers from my past grade influenced me about school, I was always the good girl in class and I am quiet so one day they take me to the library for career choice book. I said okay, at home I used to study accounting with my sister, so I said I'll take accounting. And then here I am and I am still studying accounting and I so wish to do it when I grow up* (Respondent four).

The school teachers also account previous learners' life stories through verbal persuasions to influence their current learners:

> *They encourage me, the guide me, and show us example of learners they used to teach, but now are drunkards. Previously these people used to be bright learners, but they choose to let go of their dreams and goals. We use to know them and aspire to be like then. We often bump into them in the community and we do not want to end up like them. We are still young and do not want to be like them* (Respondent eight).

The different life stories of which some are positive and some negative; seem to assist the learners to adjust their attitudes and to influence their thinking on how to differently construct their futures. This encouragement is positive; as it seems that the teachers are indirectly using aspects of Post-Modernistic principles in guiding the learners' career directions by narrating stories of past pupils' successes and the learners are given an opportunity to construct their own alternate life stories (Brott, 2004). It also appears that *A Guide for schools into Higher Education* is using verbal persuasion according to Social Cognitive Career theory in influencing the learners' career development. *A Guide for schools into Higher Education* seems to fulfil this gap and act as an intervention with regards to role modelling. The following section will discuss it in greater detail.

5.3.2 (B) *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* as role model influence

The learners experienced *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* as an intervention that assists them with role modelling by using role models to direct the learners' career direction. This learner learnt a lesson from the story of one of the people written about in the book:

> *It taught me about career guidance, like I was a person like if I failed something , I am the kind of person that will not quit, like look at this person she didn't manage to complete school, she can still continue to finish her studies even when she's old. This story appealed to me, because there is no failure in life, there is no failure in life eh, if you tell you're self that you will quit, you will one day want to continue and finish were you left off. This story appealed to me, because she's now in marketing* (Respondent one).

Yet, respondent six shared their perceptions of *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education*:

> *When I was reading it, I read about some of the stories that are in the book and how for example the story of the swimmer. He's always wanted to swim and he is doing that today. He really inspired me to get into higher education. I know that I need to be more serious so I can also have a chance to get into higher education.*

Additionally, respondent seven spoke about their highlights:

> *My main highlight from this book was reading about other people and knowing that they got to where they are, because they started somewhere. You do not start by getting 100%, you start small and it grows. I learnt a lot about from this book and the celebrities. Some of the celebrities you never think they got an education, but they did actually and they are what they are, because of the education they got.*

Linked to *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education,* learners suggested that role models influenced their career directions. It is postulated that role models have played a significant role in directing one's life and at times, career choices. Career theorists postulate that identification with role models is significant to individual development (Gibson, 2004). The media also played a part in role modelling and it continues to show that successful career paths could be the result of appropriate role modelling. In contrast, career failure is postulated to be a consequence of a lack of appropriate role models

(Gibson, 2004). The media's influence with regards to role modelling is significant in the disadvantaged contexts as many of the learners mentioned that role models in the media, influenced their career directions. This links with the Planned Happenstance theory which postulates that learners need to recognize and prepare for opportunities should they happen (Mitchell *et al.,* 1999). In *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education,* some learners read of role models, from the biographies, who did things which landed them in their current occupations. These learners learnt from the people's experiences in *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* to get ready for the unexpected, because the unexpected can occur in one's career planning and one needs to be prepared for chance events, as suggested in the Planned Happenstance theory (Mitchell *et al.,* 1999).

The above mentioned findings confirm postulations made by career theorists, that identification with role models is important for individual development. It is important to note that the influence of role models does not take into account the traits suggested in The Trait and Factor approach. The individuals seem to be interested in the following careers, because their role models are in similar careers, not because they have the traits to match the job specifications. The influence of a role model ties in with the self-concept as highlighted in Super's theory, implying that the individual is able to see him/herself in a similar role to that of his/her role model (Quimby & DeSantis, 2006; Zunker, 2006). These learners see themselves in similar roles to their role models. They are therefore keen to embark on specific career paths, based on the liking of the career as well as it being suitable to one's associates. A few of the learners suggested that peer influences also falls under role modelling and tended to play a role in career influences. Respondent three said the following:

> *You can see that one of the people in the book choose the subjects, because her friends choose them, she was not really interested in choosing the subjects. Peer pressure directed her choice of subjects.*

However, this same learner did not conform to peer pressure with regards to her subject choices: "*I chose my subjects, because it was what I really wanted to do, and not peer pressure. I don't follow the crowd".* Learners who conform to peer pressure opt for career directions that are similar to their peers in their search for identity and belonging,

or different to what their peers opt for in search for an individual identity. According to Super's perspective, the interviewed learners are at an exploration stage, where they are exploring different roles and settling on the roles which are satisfying to self and others (Super & Bohn, 1971).

However, the interviewed learners felt that *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* discouraged learners from submitting to peer pressure in career discussions, but encouraging learners to rather make their own choices. One learner said the following: "*The Guide showed me that I need to make my own choices, not because my friends are choosing this. For example I should not opt for commerce subjects if my friend is doing commerce"* (Respondent three). Another learner shared his sentiments:

> *It spoke about subject-choices and that you need to be sure of the subjects that you are choosing. You must not just choose subjects for the sake of choosing subjects, because when it gets difficult you cannot just change. That is why it is important to choose subjects, because you want to do so* (Respondent seven).

In a discussion of the research findings, *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* used aspects of a Post-Modernistic approach, which focused on the individuals' experience of their career developments. The research participants seemed to relate very well to the autobiographies of people in various careers that tell a story of what they wanted to be when they were 15 years old. The Post-Modern approach puts it forward that career development is a process of meaning making thus making it a subjective experience (Niles & Bowsbey, 2002; Maree & Ebersohn, 2002). Similarly, the research participants seemed to construct their own meanings and make their own stories from the subjective experiences of other people's autobiographies.

In summary, the learners seemed to have experienced *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* as an information resource, a form of educational support, role model influence and peer influence. The learners seemed to have appreciated the information that *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* presented to them. *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* seemed to act as a bridge to the needs and challenges related to

their potential careers. Having said the above, the learners felt *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* could be improved upon as an intervention.

5.4 Summary of discussion of findings

This chapter listed a summary of the themes that emanated from the analysed research interviews of the learners and the Life Orientation educators. The chapter also discussed the research findings in responding to the research questions that this research aims to explore (See appendix 2b for a table summary of themes). The learners had different experiences of career guidance interventions within their contexts. Some of the learners were aware of career guidance interventions and others weren't within their contexts. The career guidance interventions that these learners are exposed to are to some extent informal and indirect, yet, have a significant impact on a recipient learner. The more formal career guidance interventions of Life Orientation and *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* were experienced in a variety of ways. The learners considered the subject of Life Orientation with regards to career guidance as constructive, because it addressed questions that learners themselves were asking, but limited in exposing the learners to other significant information of career-related development and the opportunities offered in the world of work.

In exploring the learners' perceptions of *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education,* the learners seemed to have benefited from *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* as a career intervention. The learners perceived it as an appropriate intervention within their context that is overwhelmed with psychosocial problems beyond their control. *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* seemed to tap into existing indirect interventions of career guidance namely, the concept of role modelling. The learners indicated that *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* provided them with role models they could learn from and experienced it as appropriate. However, the learners felt *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* needed to be more interactive and should supply more information and have a facilitator to walk them through it.

In review of the learners' needs and challenges within their contexts, the research findings suggest that learners from the disadvantaged context should have a range of various psychosocial experiences that impact on their lives generally, thus indirectly impacting on their career development. The learners are exposed to these experiences at home, school and community. Still, the learners felt they required more positive role models to vicariously learn from as well to guide the learners in relation to the career development in their disadvantaged contexts. The learners felt they needed career exhibitions as well as educational support from educators to direct their career development. Although the learners felt that they needed external interventions, they also believed they needed to adjust their mindsets in order to endure their psychosocial difficulties and make a success of their lives within their context. Essentially the learners felt that their understanding of self in relation to self needed a positive adjustment. The learners also felt that contextual factors of home, school and community needed a progressive shift with regards to assisting them with their career development interventions.

CHAPTER 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Strengths of the study

The strengths of the study were as follows:

- The qualitative analysis employed in the research enabled the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the attitudes, opinions and perspectives of the participants.
- The aim of the study was to explore the learners' perceptions of career development interventions within traditionally disadvantaged contexts. The research findings were also important in the study, because they informed on the learners' perceptions of career development interventions as well as the perceived career challenges and needs within the disadvantaged contexts. This information on career development challenges and needs is pertinent in career development within such contexts, because it could serve as a starting point for one to implement suitable career development interventions within disadvantaged contexts.
- The learners perceived *A Guide for Schools for Higher Education* as a career intervention mainly as a source of information.
- The qualitative interviews with the key informants gave the researcher an opportunity to have an informed understanding of both the learners' perspectives and the educators' perspectives of career development interventions within disadvantaged contexts.

6.2 Limitations of the study

The following limitations may have hampered the study and these should be taken into account when considering related research in the future:

- The interviews were conducted in English, Sotho and Zulu as the researcher was conversant in all languages. Through translating the Sotho and Zulu transcripts

into English, the researcher may have lost the quality of data in the process of transcribing the interviews.

- The tape recorder may have been a disadvantage, because some of the respondents may not have expressed themselves freely.
- The venue in which the research interviews were conducted may have been a limitation. The venue was pre-arranged and pre-booked for the research interviews. However, there were some challenges in using the venue. The venue had broken windows so it was difficult to rule out the noise from outside the venue. Other learners walked into the classroom during the interview despite being informed that there was a private interview occurring in the particular venue.
- The researcher may have contributed to hampering the research at times by the researcher asking the research participants leading questions and leading the respondents to answer in a particular manner.
- The research was qualitative in nature, the size and character of the sample does not allow for generalization of research findings to the population.

6.3 Conclusion

The study set out to explore learners' perceptions listed in three research aims and questions. In response to the first question, the study suggested that the learners felt they were not exposed to career guidance interventions within their disadvantaged contexts. The learners' responses reflect the lack of formalised career guidance interventions within their contexts. The educators' responses reflected that there were formalized career development interventions, but the learners were not aware of them. This suggests that publicity regarding communication and awareness on career development interventions must be addressed so that the learners are more aware of the interventions available within their contexts.

In response to the second research question and aims, the learners felt that they experienced challenges in their various contexts that impacted on their career development. These challenges included: limited parental involvement with regards to

their education, financial constraints, exposure to alcohol and drug abuse and the indirect impact of HIV/AIDS on their lives. The learners also reflected that they experienced inadequate educational support, exposure to teenage suicide, pregnancy and substance abuse. The learners felt they were prone to be influenced by peer pressure to drop out of school and seemingly impacting on their career development. The learners felt that they need career intervention. The learners also felt that they needed career interventions in the form of career exhibitions, parental and teacher involvement as well as a positive change of mindset.

In reflecting on the learners' perceptions of a career guidance vehicle: *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education,* the learners felt that it addressed some of their career development needs of providing career information and role modelling. The learners also perceived that: *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* needed improvement with regards to the provision of more information and needed to be more applicable to them.

If this research were to be reworked, the researcher would focus on one research question and not on all three research questions to have a greater focus. She would also experiment with the learners the different types of career development interventions namely, the post-modern approach and the psychometric testing as the interviewed learners were not exposed either of the career interventions. Thereafter conduct interviews to explore their perceptions of the career development interventions. Furthermore the researcher would conduct interviews with grade 12 learners because career guidance within grade 12 is a pressing need, especially within a disadvantaged context.

6.4 Recommendation

The learners with regards to personal career development

1. The learners need greater self-awareness to help them understand themselves better, subsequently linking it with their personal career goals and career development. Self-awareness within disadvantaged contexts as a result of the limited resources will need to be facilitated through self-awareness workshops.

2. The learners seemed to rely heavily on external contextual factors with regards to their career development and not so much on internal factors. Therefore, the learners may need to be taught skills pertaining building on internal factors in the owning of their career development. These skills may include, but not limited to: learning how to take initiative and being active in their personal career development; leaning to maximise their learning and being open to unexpected opportunities.
3. The Planned Happenstance theory purports that there are five skills to promote chance events and to increase career options namely: curiosity, persistence, flexibility, optimism and risk-taking (Mitchell *et al.,* 1999). The learners within disadvantaged contexts will need to be taught the skills as indicated in the Planned Happenstance theory to facilitate their personal career development.

The learners within context regarding career development interventions

4. It seems that career development workshops on a frequent basis still need to be done within the schools in disadvantaged contexts, to act as barriers to the negative psychosocial circumstances the learners are confronted with. The learners may need to be hands on with the development of such interventions, because this may make the intervention more effective.
5. The research findings suggested that the learners perceived that they need more positive verbal and social persuasions with regards to their career development and active and intentional role modelling as a type of career intervention. Therefore, people that are perceived as role models within such contexts will need to be mobilized to act as career influences for the learners.

Further studies

6. Further quantitative studies on the efficacy of administered career development interventions would need to be conducted.
7. Further studies on the impact of career development and the labour market will need to be done with the aim of effecting change on policy level with regards to career development within schools, particularly within disadvantaged contexts.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1- Interview schedule

Questions for the learners

Self knowledge

1. Tell me about yourself?
2. How would people describe you?
3. What do you want to be when you grow up?
4. Why would you like to be that when you grow up? What influenced you to want to be that?

Disadvantaged contexts

1. Tell me about the township that you live in?
2. What does it mean for you to live in this township?
3. What are the needs of young people living in this township?
4. What are the struggles or challenges of the young people living in this Township?
5. How do these young people overcome these challenges?
6. Has living in the Township influenced who you are and what you want to be?
7. Are you exposed to many careers within the Township?
8. What do you think is needed to help you make informed career choices in your context?
9. What else is needed for children in Soweto to help them with their subject choices/career guidance?

Career guidance interventions and current intervention

1. What do you think about careers in general?
2. What do you think about career guidance or career interventions?
3. What do you think about the subject of Life Orientation?
4. What do you think about *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* in general?
5. What are your thoughts about *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* in helping you choose your subject or your career?
6. What did you find useful about *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education*?
7. What did you find difficult to understand in *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education*?

Questions for the key informants

Part1: Implementation of *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education*

How was *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* introduced to the learners?

Part2: Perceptions of *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education*

What do you think of *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education* generally?

What do you think of *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education's* applicability in a disadvantaged community?

What do you think could influence the learner's perception of *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education*?

What do you think primarily influenced your perceptions about *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education*?

Appendix 2a- Summary of personal information and learners career goals

Personal information	Career options considered in order of preference
"I am a person that doesn't like to fight. I get upset easily. I'm getting used to people very fast. I like people who are also friendly with me. I am also a person that likes reading and taking information in, especially one that will help me in future. I like helping other people, especially if the don't understand. I don't like mocking them. I can't keep information for myself, if I find useful information I share with others as well. I can't keep it for myself. As for my friends, they know that I like joking around. I am a person oh, they describe me as I am crazy" (1st Interviewee).	▪ Travel and Tourism ▪ Chief accounting clerk ▪ Business economics teacher
"Like I am a shy person, I don't like putting people down and I don't like to be put down, because we are all the same. I don't like to be treated badly, because I treat people well as well, so if you don't want to talk to me, I'll understand. They would say I am a bad person, as I said I don't like It when they put me down, I don't like people like that" (2nd Interviewee).	▪ Accounting ▪ Social worker ▪ Lawyer
"They would describe me as a person who talks a lot, I love communicating with people and some of them people describe me as someone that does not have a good attitude towards	▪ Economist ▪ Financial advisor ▪ Business woman

people, because I am described as hyperactive. Some people don't like it, but some like it and want me to participate in various things. I really like communicating, being known and taking challenges. I enjoy them a lot, I like being with people so they know me" (3rd Interviewee).	
"My name is Simphiwe, I am 15 years, and I am turning 16 on the 15th December. I attend school this year at Moletsane, it is my 1st year. I like to do accounting and enjoy spending time with my friends whom I attend with them this year. I am interested in accounting most of the time and other subjects" (4th Interviewee).* **pseudo name*	▪ C.A ▪ Financial accountant ▪ Bookkeeper
"Thomas is someone who is good, he loves people, he's known as the joker in class. He is a dedicated learner when it comes to school things. When the teacher is out of class and there is no work to be done, he makes jokes at times. Sometimes I know how to separate school things from fun things. My friends would say that I am a good person; I often hear good reports about me" (5th Interviewee).* **pseudo name*	▪ Policeman.
"My age is 18 years old. I attend Molestane high school. I am always happy. I do my house chores and I respect my parents as well as do my homework for about 20 minutes so I don't get	▪ Mechanical engineer ▪ Metro police man

crazy like my uncle. My family would describe me as a peaceful guy that does not like conflict. If I am wrong I apologize, I only have three friends and we do things together most of the time" (6th Interviewee).	
"My name is Bongani Ngubane, I am 19 years old. I live in Moletsane, and I attend Molestane high school. I have two friends at school and I like reading. And I like friends that encourage me to come to school. The friends I don't like are those that do wrong things, like smoking and drinking alcohol. I am 19 years old. I turned 19 years this year already. They would say I like to joke at school, but when teacher in class I like to pay attention to them. They would say he loves soccer, he does not love silly things like maybe teasing other children, Eish... my family sometimes I give them little bit of problems. Ya a little bit,eish sometimes when they give me money to go to the shops to go and buy, I get angry I don't know why, that thing just comes to me and eish I don't know why. And after that I regret myself, ask myself questions why should I be angry when my parents try to send me to the shops" (7th Interviewee).* **pseudo name*	▪ Business man
"Themba is a person that loves people; he has a big heart; he does not belittle people. He is also committed to his school work and does not like*	▪ Business man

getting into fights with other boys, even though they often provoke me to fight. I am a good person generally. To be honest eish; at home they would say I am a naughty person, I am stubborn. Yes, stubborn, they will rebuke me and I will choose not to listen to them at times, I am stubborn. At home, there are my twin brothers, my mother and my father is living elsewhere. Often when my mother comes back from work; she gets a report that says that I bullied my twin brothers and then I will be smacked for doing that. And I don't like that. You see, at times I listen to them, somewhere somehow they have a reason to rebuke me, because I do wrong things. I would often get into trouble, because I like girls and my mother does not want me to have girlfriends so she would shout at me when she sees me walking with girls. And I don't see a problem with liking girls. Eish, the friends that I have, I could say since standard six it's not the same friends that I have now in standard 8. I no longer understand them. They have changed, they are doing wrong things. On Friday they beat up one of the other learners. I was not part of it, but I was accused by them of being an idiot, because I didn't join them. They also smoke and I don't smoke, so they call me an idiot, because I don't want to smoke. They call me and idiot and want to pressure me into doing wrong things and I don't want to do wrong things. I would rather listen to	

my family even though at times I may disrespect them" " (8th Interviewee). **pseudo name*	
"My name is Bhekani, I live in Tladi with my uncle, grandmother and mother. Bhekani is the type of person that likes people. He likes joking; he's a fun person to be around and likes helping people with their problems. They would say I am naughty. I listen to the music player very loudly and then they say I am naughty. They would say he's a funny person and he's shy" (9th Interviewee).* **pseudo name*	▪ A climatologist
"I am 14 years old. I live in Zola with my mother. I have two parents. I am a stubborn person. It means that if you change your attitude towards me, I will change my attitude towards you too. I am that kind of person. At home, many times they know me as a funny person. My mother would definitely say I am a stout and a stubborn person. Maybe if I say this. I would like to do things my way and my mother may have a different way to doing things, she would say I am stubborn. That's what I mean, that's the way I am" (10th Interviewee).	▪ Mechanical engineering.
"My name is Ketty. I am 14 years old. I live in Moletsane. I am a lovely person. I ma kind and an active person. What can I say? My friends would describe as a light skinned and one that*	▪ A paramedic

does not like parties. I am a child that listens to her parents. My parents would describe me as an obedient child, which is always studying and always reading" (11th Interviewee). **pseudo name*	
*I am Molly *, I live in Moletsane. I get angry very quickly. Obviously they would say I get angry quickly and I love laughing. I don't know what else they would say. She's naughty and things like that. I don't know why they would say that (12th Interviewee).* **pseudo name*	▪ Social worker

Appendix 2b- Table Summary of Themes (Results)

Main Themes	Perceptions of career development within a disadvantaged context	Perceptions of career development challenges and needs in learners' disadvantaged context	Perceptions of *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education*	Other themes
Sub themes	▪ General perceptions of career interventions ▪ Life orientation ▪ Educator perception on career development interventions	**Career Challenges** ▪ Home context ▪ School context ▪ Limited educational support ▪ Peer pressure and school drop outs ▪ Community context **Career Needs** ▪ Learner perceptions ▪ Educator perceptions	▪ Information resource ▪ Career influence	▪ Self Knowledge ▪ Career goals ▪ Career information

Appendix 3- Parent information sheet

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

School of Human and Community Development
Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, Johannesburg, South Africa
Tel: (011) 717-4500 Fax: (011) 717-4559
Email: thabileb@yahoo.com/thabileb@webmail.co.za

Hi, my name is Thabile Buthelezi and I am conducting research for the purposes of obtaining a Masters degree in Community Counselling Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. The central purpose of my research is: an exploration of the perceptions of disadvantaged context learners' career development interventions by using: *"A Guide for Schools into Higher Education"* As a Vehicle.

I would like to invite your child to participate in this study.
The research procedure will involve approximately 45 minutes individual interviews, with your permission, tape record the interviews to ensure that the details of the questions and conversations are accurately captured. Your child's participation is completely voluntary and non-participation will have no negative consequences. Your child is not at an advantage or disadvantage in any way for choosing to participate or not participate in the study. Your child will have the right not to answer any questions which she/he feels are too personal or uncomfortable to answer. He/she may withdraw from the study at anytime, should they feel they do not want to continue without any repercussion, penalty or negative connotations attached to the withdrawal.

All information that I obtain in this study will be treated as private and confidential. The interview material (tapes and transcripts) will not be seen or heard by any person at anytime and will only be processed by myself. All tape recordings and transcripts will be destroyed after the research is complete. Your child will have the right to remain anonymous, through the use of pseudo names if need be. However, I cannot guarantee anonymity.The research report findings will use direct quotation marks of the child's responses limiting confidentiality. However no identifying information such as name or personal details that could identify your child will be used in the transcripts or research report; therefore issues of confidentiality will be preserved. There are no direct benefits for participation in the study. There are no unforeseeable risks for your child.

Results will be consonant with the participants' right to welfare, dignity and privacy.
The results will form part of the research report, which will be presented as a dissertation to the Faculty of Humanities, supervisor, external supervisor and possibly the developers of *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education*. You will be given a summary of the findings on request.

If you allow your child to participate in this study, please complete the consent forms below. Return them to the school with your child who will hand them over to me at week later prearranged time and place. I will call your child to discuss his/her participation within a week. Alternatively I can be contacted telephonically at 082 505 6392.

Your participation in this study will be greatly appreciated.
Thabile Buthelezi

Appendix 4- Parental consent form (Interview)

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 and he/she is not obliged to answer any question he/she would prefer not to. He/she may withdraw from the study any time. I understand that my child will have the right to remain anonymous, through the use of pseudo names if need be. However, anonymity cannot be guaranteed. I also understand that the research report findings will use direct quotation marks of the child's responses limiting confidentiality and that no identifying information such as name or personal details will be used in the transcripts or research report therefore his/her responses will remain confidential. I understand that there are no direct benefits for participation and there are no unforeseeable risks.

I hereby give my child permission to take part in the study, by participating in the interview.

Signature: _____Date_____2007

Appendix 5- Parental consent form (Tape Recording)

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 identity will be protected and that access to tapes is limited to the researcher. Tapes will be kept safe during the research process. I understand that I am not obliged to give consent for the interview to be tape recorded and that all tape recordings will be destroyed after the research is complete.

(Please indicate with an **X**)

Permission granted ☐ **YES** ☐ **NO**

Signature: _____Date:_____2007

Appendix 6- Participant information sheet

Participant Information Sheet



School of Human and Community Development
Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, Johannesburg, South Africa
Tel: (011) 717-4500 Fax: (011) 717-4559
Email: thabileb@yahoo.com/thabileb@webmail.co.za

Hi, my name is Thabile Buthelezi and I am conducting research for the purposes of obtaining a Masters degree in Community Counselling Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. Little research has been done in the area of career guidance in disadvantaged communities and it is hoped that this undertaking will thus make a contribution to the body of knowledge on the subject of career guidance, and will have an impact on career guidance in traditionally disadvantaged schools. Therefore the main aim of my research is: an exploration of the perceptions of disadvantaged context learners' career development interventions by using: "*A Guide for Schools into Higher Education"* As a Vehicle.

I would like to invite you to participate in this study.
The research procedure will involve approximately 45 minutes individual interviews, with your permission, tape record the interviews to ensure that the details of the questions and conversations are accurately captured. Your participation is completely voluntary and non-participation will have no negative consequences. You are not at an advantage or disadvantage in any way for choosing to participate or not participate in the study. You will have the right not to answer any questions you feel are too personal or uncomfortable to answer. You may withdraw from the study at anytime, should you feel you do not want to continue without any repercussion, penalty or negative connotations attached to the withdrawal.

All information that I obtain in this study will be treated as private and confidential. The interview material (tapes and transcripts) will not be seen or heard by any person at anytime and will only be processed by myself and be kept in a safe place. All tape recordings and transcripts will be destroyed after the research is complete. You will have the right to remain anonymous, through the use of pseudo names if need be. However, I cannot guarantee anonymity .The research report findings will use direct quotation marks of your responses limiting confidentiality. However no identifying information such as name or personal details that could identify you will be used in the transcripts or research report; therefore issues of confidentiality will be preserved. There are no direct benefits for participation in the study. There are no unforeseeable risks for participation in this research.

If you choose to participate in this study, please fill in your details in the form below and return it to _____. I will be at your school on this day _____at this time_____ at this venue_____. Thereafter I will call you to discuss your participation. Alternatively I can be contacted telephonically at 082 505 6392.

Your participation in this study will be greatly appreciated.
Kind regards
Thabile Buthelezi

Appendix 7- Participant informed consent form- (Interview)

I _____, have read the information about the study as explained in the information sheet. I understand that my participation is voluntary and I am not obliged to answer any question I would prefer not to. I may withdraw from the study any time. I understand that I have the right to remain anonymous, through the use of pseudo names if need be and that anonymity cannot be guaranteed. I also understand that the research report findings will use direct quotation marks of my responses limiting confidentiality and that no identifying information such as my name or personal details will be used in the transcripts or research report therefore my responses will remain confidential. I understand that there are no direct benefits for participation and there are no unforeseeable risks.

I agree to take part in the study, by participating in the interview.

Signature: _____Date_____2007

Telephone Number: _____

Appendix 8- Participant informed consent form- (Tape Recording)

I _____have read the information about the study that is explained in the information sheet. I understand that my identity will be protected and access to tapes is limited to the researcher. Tapes will be kept safe during the research process. I understand that I am not obliged to give consent for the interview to be tape recorded and that all tape recordings will be destroyed after the research is complete.

(Please indicate with an **X**)

Permission granted ☐ **YES** ☐ **NO**

Signature:_____Date:_____2007

Appendix 9- Participant informed sheet for Principal

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

Department of Psychology
School of Human and Community Development
Private Bag 3, Wits 2050,
Johannesburg, South Africa

Attention: Principal

My name is Thabile Buthelezi and I am conducting research for the purposes of obtaining a Masters degree in Community Counselling Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. Little research has been done in the area of career guidance in disadvantaged communities and it is hoped that this undertaking will thus make a contribution to the body of knowledge on the subject of career guidance, and will have an impact on career guidance in traditionally disadvantaged schools. It is further anticipated that this research will encourage the continuing opening of doors into the subject of career guidance. Therefore the central purpose of my research is an exploration of the perceptions of disadvantaged context learners' career development interventions by using: *"A Guide for Schools into Higher Education"* As a Vehicle.

I am hereby requesting permission to proceed with the research, at your school.
The research will involve individual interviews for approximately 45minutes with 10 grade 9 learners. The researcher will also interview the Head of the Life Orientation educator for background information regarding *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education.*

The researcher will request grade 9 and grade 10 learners to volunteer their participation in the study. The learners and the educator will be informed of the following: participation is completely voluntary and non-participation will have no negative consequences. The participant has the right not to answer any questions which he/she feels are too personal or uncomfortable to answer. The participant may withdraw from the study at anytime, should they feel they do not want to continue. All participants will be asked to sign a letter of informed consent and their parents will sign parental consent forms. All data and personal information will be kept confidential.

Results will be consonant with the participants' right to welfare, dignity and privacy.
The results will form part of the research report, which will be presented as a dissertation to the Faculty of Humanities, supervisor and external supervisor. The school will be given a research report on request.

Yours truly,

_____

Thabile Buthelezi
(082 505 6392)thabileb@yahoo.com /thabileb@webmail.co.za

Appendix 10- Participant informed sheet for department of education

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

Department of Psychology
School of Human and Community Development
Private Bag 3, Wits 2050,
Johannesburg, South Africa

Attention: Department of Education

My name is Thabile Buthelezi and I am conducting research for the purposes of obtaining a Masters degree in Community Counselling Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand.

I would like to conduct research at the following schools:_____Regarding career guidance interventions with the grade 9 and grade 10 learners.

I urgently hereby request written permission to proceed with this research.

The research will involve individual interviews for approximately 45minutes with grade 9 and grade 10 learners. I will also interview the Head of the Life Orientation for background information regarding the workbook on subject-choice guidance, *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education.*

I will request grade 9 and grade 10 learners to volunteer their participation in the study. The learners and the educator and Principal will be informed of the following: participation is completely voluntary and non-participation will have no negative consequences. The participant has the right not to answer any questions which he/she feels are too personal or uncomfortable to answer. The participant may withdraw from the study at anytime, should they feel they do not want to continue. All participants will be asked to sign a letter of informed consent and their parents will sign parental consent forms. All data and personal information will be kept confidential.

Results will be consonant with the participants' right to welfare, dignity and privacy.
The results will form part of the research report, which will be presented as a dissertation to the Faculty of Humanities, supervisor, external supervisor and possibly the developers of *A Guide for Schools into Higher Education*. The school will be given a research report on request.

Attach, please find the relevant documentation.

Yours truly,

_____

Thabile Buthelezi
(082 505 6392)
thabileb@yahoo.com/ thabileb@webmail.co.za

Appendix 11- Approval in respect of request to conduct research from the department of education



UMnyango WezeMfundo
Department of Education

Lefapha la Thuto
Departement van Onderwys

Enq: Morris Ngwenya: Tel: (011) 983-2317

To : **Thabile Buthelezi**
Psychology Student

From : **Sipho Mkhulise**
Acting District Director
Johannesburg Central District

Date : **1 March 2007**

Re: PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH

Dear Madam

This letter serves as an acknowledgement to your letter dated 26 February 2007 to undertake research from the identified schools;

Please be informed that the permission is granted under this condition:

- Research must not be conducted during contact time.

We believe that you will enjoy the support and cooperation from the expected parties to accomplish your objectives.

We wish you best of luck

Yours in Tirisano

Sipho Mkhulise
Acting District Director:
JHB Central Distirct



The Office of the Director: CDS. (*D11*)
Johannesburg South Mega District Corner Modjadji & Old Potchefstroom Road, Soweto,
P.O. Box 900064 Bertsham, 2013 Tel: (011) 983-2317 Fax: (011) 983-2323

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