

# **The career adaptability of a young Swazi woman**

by

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### **Dedication**

This work is dedicated to my late father, Patrick Mehluli S'kuta Nkambule, who inspired me and challenged me to always do my best, no matter what the circumstances. I would also like to dedicate this work to my nieces Buhlebetive and Nikudumo Dlamini, with whom I have spent too little time lately.

Ngiyabonga

## ABSTRACT

### **The career adaptability of a young Swazi woman: Using a Life Design Model**

In this study the researcher explores the career adaptability needs of a young woman in Swaziland. The study is driven by the work of Hackett and Betz (1981) and the Career Counselling Approach of Savickas (1993, 1997, & 2009). Hackett and Betz (1981) postulate that women's career development is hindered largely as a result of socialization experiences. A number of academics and practitioners assert that career adaptability is a key competency for career success (Hartung; Hirschi, 2009; O'Connell, McNeely & Hall 2008), hence the focus in this study on career adaptability through a qualitative research approach employing a case study design. In a bid to yield an up to date and inclusive personality and career profile of the participant, the following data collection techniques were utilised: *Career Adaptability Questionnaire*, *career-story interview*, *semi-structured follow-up interviews*, *Rothwell-Miller Interest Blank*, *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*, *Career Interest Profile*, *Values Scales*, observations and a researcher journal. The results were then be analysed and interpreted quantitatively and QUALITATIVELY.

Swaziland has established her own rules based on widely accepted and held values, beliefs and meanings (Daly, 2001). These views, beliefs and meanings have a strong influence on women's place in society and in the workplace. In fact, a number of interrelated factors influence the way in which Swazi women are treated in Swaziland. Given this long-standing heritage, Swazi society has become accustomed to male control and decision making over family, traditional and societal issues (Daly, 2001). The research includes recommendations for career counselling practice and training as well as research and policy development appropriate to the cultural context of Swaziland that in many respects typifies most developing Africa countries.

### **Key Words**

Career adaptability  
Developing countries  
Gender differences  
Gender stereotypes  
Life design  
Young women

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# 1. INTRODUCTORY ORIENTATION

## 1.1 Introduction

In this study I explore the career adaptability needs of a young woman in Swaziland. In chapter one I shall briefly discuss aspects that relate to my study, including a preliminary literature review, rationale, purpose statement, research questions, paradigmatic perspectives, research design, data collection, data analysis strategies, quality assurance criteria, ethical considerations, role as researcher, possible contributions and anticipated limitations. I shall conclude this chapter with an outline of subsequent chapters.

## 1.2 Preliminary literature review

My study is located in and underpinned by the following two theoretical frameworks: the self-efficacy approach and a Life Design Model as described by Hackett and Betz (1981) and Savickas (2010) respectively. According to the self-efficacy approach, women's career development is hindered (Hackett & Betz, 1981) largely as a result of their socialization experiences. Career Construction Theory was developed by Savickas, a pioneer and advocate for post-modern and narrative career development and counselling. Moreover, Savickas was one of the first scholars to propose the move from the concept career *maturity* to career *adaptability* (Savickas, 1993, 1995, 2005). He has more recently been involved in the development of the Life Design Model, of which one goal is to enhance a person's career adaptability (Savickas, 2009, 2010). The goals of the Life Design Model (framework) are to be discussed in chapter two.

Career adaptability has become a major area of interest and concern **internationally** for researchers, career and industrial psychologists, as well as human resources practitioners (Hirschi, 2009). As a result scholars across the globe have been collaborating to develop a universal technique for assessing career adaptability (Savickas *et al.*, 2009). The limited research on career counselling in Africa, with specific reference to career adaptability, suggests a need for research on career adaptability in the African context.

Increasing clients' career adaptability is a central goal in career counselling (Savickas, 2009) and according to Savickas (1997) adaptability does not merely entail "readiness for the workplace", as first proposed by Super and Knasel (cited in Stead & Watson, 2006). Instead, in recent literature, adaptive individuals are conceptualised as 1) becoming concerned about their vocational future, 2) taking control of trying to prepare for their vocational future, 3) displaying curiosity, by exploring possible selves and future scenarios, and 4) displaying confidence to pursue their aspirations (Savickas, 2009).

O'Connell, McNeely and Hall (2008) contend that adaptability is a key competency for career success, and mention a number of factors strongly related to personal adaptability, viz. **gender**, employability, education and management support. O'Connell *et al.* (2008) believe that it is important to understand the factors intrinsic to individuals, especially those that can be developed within individuals and in the work environment, as it seems possible to foster the development of personal adaptability in the workplace.

I will now focus on the rationale for my research.

### 1.3 Rationale

I will firstly focus on a global perspective on changing attitudes towards women to help lay the foundation for my rationale.

According to Morrison (cited in Stead & Watson, 2006) prejudices, or treating gender differences as a weakness by assuming that women are incompetent, is one of the most instrumental barriers in the career development of women in general, limiting their advancement in the workplace. Gender stereotypes, such as the assumption that women are less competent or less suitable for leadership than men, are still prominent in society worldwide (Naidoo & May, 2006) and have an implication for the self-efficacy beliefs of women. According to Hackett and Betz's (1981) approach women have low levels of self-efficacy, mainly because of their socialization experience, which often results in their low expectation of success (compared to men).

Growing up in Swaziland, a developing African country, I faced many career obstacles on my own career path. For instance, I did not have access to a career counsellor, there was little career information available and my country's university had only a limited number of courses available for school leavers to pursue. The two modules I completed during my postgraduate years of study in career counselling, namely career development at honours level and vocational orientation at masters level, inspired me to conduct research on the career development of women in Swaziland.

Swaziland has established its own societal norms based on widely accepted and held values, beliefs and meanings (Daly, 2001), which have a strong influence on women's place in society and in the workplace. In fact, a number of interrelated factors influence the way in which Swazi women are treated in Swaziland, a monarchy with a long tradition of patriarchal dominance and control. Given this long-standing heritage, Swazi society has become accustomed to male control and decision making over family, traditional and societal issues (Daly, 2001).

Despite major developments regarding women's career development, women's rights and gender

differences globally, to date, very little has been documented on the career development of women internationally, including in Swaziland. I am particularly interested in finding out how women in Swaziland adapt, that is how they handle and cope with important transitions in their lives amidst cultural beliefs, values, practices and patriarchal dominance. These transitions include, but are not limited to transitions from pre-school to primary school, from primary to secondary school, from secondary to high school, from high school to university, from university to the workplace, from one job to another, from one profession to another, or from being employed to being unemployed or self-employed.

## **1.4 Statement of purpose**

The purpose of this study is to explore the career adaptability of a young woman in Swaziland.

## **1.5 Working assumptions**

The assumptions on which this study is based are listed in this section. My first assumption is that women in Swaziland face barriers that hinder their career development. These barriers include, but are not limited to, socio-economic issues and gender-related matters. As a result, Swazi women struggle to adapt to career or vocational transitions in their lives. My second assumption is that career psychology, which encompasses career counselling and career education, is offered to a very limited extent in Swaziland, and this is not conducive to the career development of individuals. My third assumption is that extensive research is required in the area of women's career development to create awareness in this field. My last assumption is that there is a dire need for post-modern career interventions relevant to the 21<sup>st</sup> century career world in Swaziland.

In the next section I will outline my research questions.

## **1.6 Research questions**

### **1.6.1 Primary research question**

My main research question is:

How does a young woman in a developing country (Swaziland) adapt to transitions in her life?

### **1.6.2 Secondary research questions**

My secondary research questions are:

- What are the career adaptability needs of a young woman in Super's (1990, 1982 & 1957) exploration life stage?

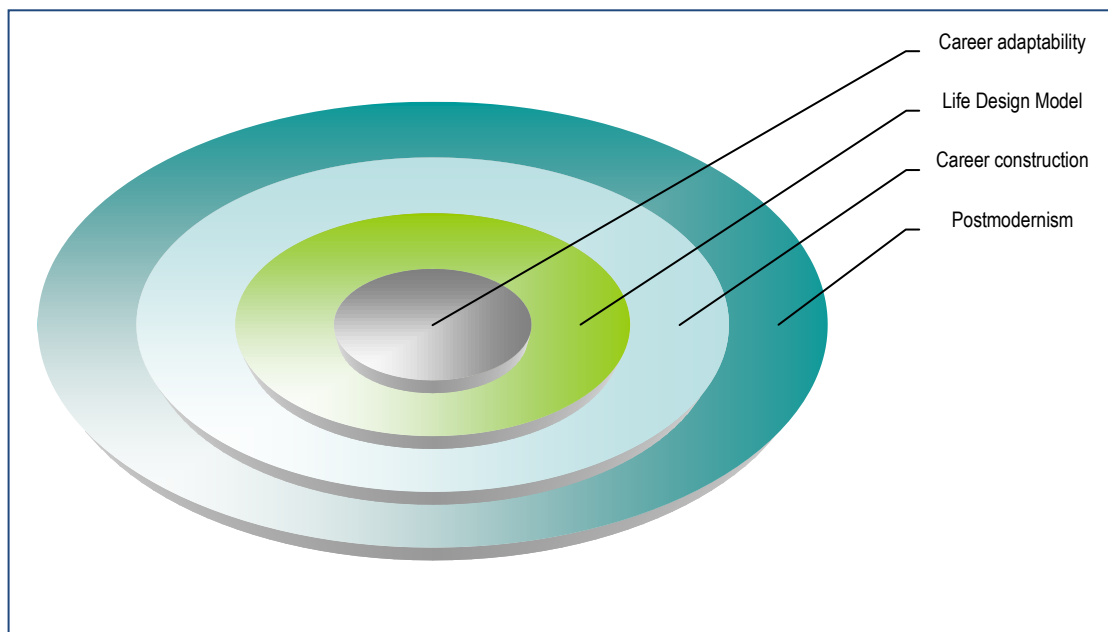
- How do socio-cultural factors influence the career adaptability of women in Swaziland?
- How do Swazi Women experience the lack of career counselling in Swaziland?
- Which strategies might augment the adaptability and self-realisation of Swazi women?

The next section will present my theoretical and conceptual framework.

## 1.7 Theoretical and conceptual framework

### 1.7.1 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework in which I locate my research is represented in the figure below. My research will include: postmodernism, career construction, Life Design Model and career adaptability, which I will discuss in chapter two.



**Figure 1.1** *Diagrammatic representation of theoretical framework*

### 1.7.2 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework of the study encompasses the concepts defined in the next section. I will elucidate the conceptual framework in chapter two.

#### 1.7.2.1 Concept clarification

The key concepts in this study, which will be clarified below, include career adaptability, developing countries, gender differences and gender stereotypes, life design and young women.

## **CAREER ADAPTABILITY**

For the purpose of this study I will adopt the new definition of career adaptability, which is the readiness to cope with predictable and unpredictable adjustments prompted by changes in work and working conditions, and which is applicable to all stages of the lifespan (Savickas, 2009). In this study adaptive individuals will refer to those who fit the description in the orientation section above (Savickas, 2009).

## **DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

Since there is no single universal definition of a developing country, for the purpose of this study, a developing country is conceptualized as a nation with a low level of average standard of living, usually characterized by a low (poor) economy. According to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) there are no WTO-definitions of “developed” and “developing” countries, and members themselves decide whether their countries are “developed” or “developing”. Other members can, however, challenge the decision of a member to make use of provisions available to developing countries. Swaziland is a member of the WTO and currently listed as a developing country (World Trade Organisation, 2009).

## **GENDER DIFFERENCES**

In this study gender differences refer to social and cultural discrepancies between men and women, i.e. ways in which genders relate to one another and understand themselves to “be” in the world (Salkind, 2008).

## **GENDER STEREOTYPES**

For the purpose of this study the concept of gender stereotypes refers to beliefs about differences between women and men (Deaux, 1985 cited in Serge, Armand, Delphine, Crisp, & Redersdorff, 2006).

## **LIFE DESIGN MODEL**

In this study, the term life design refers to a post-modern intervention that is aimed at creating meaningful careers and/ or meaningful lives for clients. Life designing is a lifelong process of trying to answer the question, *What am I going to make out of this life?* (Savickas *et al.*, 2009). Savickas *et al.* (2009) postulate that almost all persons have to address this question as they deal with transitions in their lives, including changes in health, employment and intimate relationships (Savickas *et al.*, 2009). Life design also deals with issues surrounding work-family balance in persons’ lives.

## **YOUNG WOMEN**

For the purpose of this study young women are women in the exploration and establishment phase of Super’s (cited in Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006) developmental theory, aged between 15 and 30 years

(Stead & Watson, 2006). In Swaziland this is the period when maidens (with no children) can participate in the annual ceremonial reed dance<sup>1</sup>.

## **1.8 Paradigmatic perspectives**

The research paradigms with which I align myself are interpretivism and social constructivism. My approach is therefore anti-positivist, and views the truth as socially constructed between individuals and based on their personal knowledge (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2004).

The epistemological and ontological assumptions of my research study are described next.

### **1.8.1 Ontological assumption**

I concur with Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) who postulate that social reality can be understood from both an external point of view and within levels of persons' consciousness. Furthermore, every context prescribes and constructs its own meanings, dealings, experiences, terms and understandings. The interpretivist and social constructivist paradigms emphasise that knowledge is constructed and acquired through people's experiences (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000).

### **1.8.2 Epistemological assumptions**

Social constructivism and the interpretivist approach hold the view that knowledge and meaning are socially constructed (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). Since this study seeks to explore and understand the career adaptability of the participant and her experiences, it is situated within an interpretive paradigm. I align myself with Williman's (2005) definition of interpretivism, that interpretivism is the standpoint that recognizes the 'embedded' nature of the researcher and the unique personal theoretical stance upon which persons base their actions. Interpretivism rejects the assertion that human behaviour can be codified in laws, by identifying regularities and that society can be studied by the researcher from a detached, objective and impartial viewpoint. Humans create reality by learning from others, teaching others and reflecting on their own understanding (Cohen *et al.*, 2000).

### **1.8.3 Assumptions about human nature**

As I align myself with interpretivism and social constructivism, I hold the following assumptions about the nature of human beings (Maree, 2007).

- Interpretivism prioritises the meaning persons and communities assign to their experiences.

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<sup>1</sup> The Umhlanga reed dance is an annual event where maidens participate in a weeklong celebration in honour of Her Majesty Indlovukazi the queen mother. During that week the maidens gather reed and dance, the reed is used to build fences for the traditional royal residences.

- Inter-subjective meanings are crucial to achieving understanding and meaning.
- Interpretation is required, since behaviour is constituted in social conventions,
- There is no distinction between subject (practitioner) and object (client).
- The social context, convictions, norms and standards of the particular person or community are crucial elements in assessing and understanding human behaviour.

## **1.9 Research design: Qualitative research approach**

My assumptions about human nature necessitate a qualitative research approach, which appeals to my interpretivist nature, as it allows me to implement a case study design and apply multiple data collection techniques. A case study design involves the in-depth investigation of the unique characteristics of a programme, event, activity, individual or group, gathered over a period of time (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001).

## **1.10 Research methodology**

I assume that multiple realities exist that can act as lenses to help me understand career adaptability, that subjective and objective information can be obtained from multiple sources.

### **1.10.1 Research sites**

The research will take place at a location that is neutral and comfortable for me and the participant.

### **1.10.2 Sampling**

The participant in this study will be selected purposefully (Maree & Pietersen 2009) and the selection criteria will be presented in chapter three.

### **1.10.3 Data collection techniques**

A multi-method data-collection plan will be employed and I will provide a detailed description of these data collection techniques in chapter three.

### **1.10.4 Data analysis strategies**

Creswell (2009) suggests that researchers should look at qualitative data analysis as a process of following steps from the specific to the general, and that multiple levels of analysis are involved. I will analyse the data collected from the interviews according to the steps provided by Creswell (2009) and will elaborate on these strategies in chapter three.

### **1.11 Quality assurance: data verification**

I will employ a number of strategies to add rigour and to ensure that the study is authentic. According to Creswell (2009), there are several threats to validity and reliability in a research study, and I will elaborate on the quality assurance strategies applied in this study in chapter three.

### **1.12 Possible contribution of this study**

The study aims to create awareness of the career developments needs of women in Swaziland and could inform policy development and future career psychology practice in Swaziland and other developing countries. I am thus eager to interpret the data in order to provide schools, teachers, parents and psychologists with greater insight into the value of nurturing career adaptability in career development.

This research could also be of value to career counsellors, policy makers in developing countries and human resource practitioners by enlightening them on the unique career needs of women, particularly in the African context.

Students and other individuals in the exploration phase of their career development might also benefit from the findings of this study.

In addition, this study forms a basis for future research, e.g. the implementation and evaluation of post-modern approaches in career counselling could form the focus of subsequent studies.

It is of paramount importance for me to attempt to make recommendations for career counselling practice and policy development appropriate to the multi-cultural contexts that often typify developing countries, and most importantly, that these recommendations will favour women.

### **1.13 My role as a researcher**

In this study I will assume the role of a researcher, not a psychologist or practitioner, and I will clarify this with the participant. I had to clearly distinguish between these roles and clarify to the participant from the onset of the study.

### **1.14 Ethical considerations**

I will be working with a human being, and will therefore take great care that the participant is not placed at risk or harmed in any way. I will, at all times, adhere to the guidelines stipulated by the University of Pretoria, Faculty of Education, Research Committee and the Health Professionals Council of South Africa. I will elaborate on the ethical considerations in chapter three.



## **1.15 Outline of chapters that follow**

### **Chapter two**

Chapter two will offer a comprehensive literature review. In this chapter a number of theories and concepts deemed relevant to this study will be explored.

### **Chapter three**

Chapter three will provide an outline of the research methodology. The research process will be discussed in detail.

### **Chapter four**

Chapter four will focus on a content analysis of the data and the findings of the study will be discussed.

### **Chapter five**

Chapter five will provide the conclusions, recommendations and limitations based on the research findings and literature review. The research questions will be addressed in this chapter.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

In chapter one I presented the background for my research study by specifying the rationale, purpose and key question of the study. I also provided a brief outline of paradigmatic and theoretical perspectives, methodological strategies, issues of quality assurance, as well as potential limitations and contributions of the study. In this chapter I discuss in detail the theoretical framework outlined in chapter one, within the existing literature related to my topic.

I discuss the key issues associated with the career adaptability of a young Swazi woman. Firstly, by reviewing relevant literature associated with the career adaptability of a young woman, and secondly by situating the career adaptability of a young Swazi woman within the conceptual and theoretical framework of the study. Whilst literature on career development, women's career development and career adaptability prevails, the extant literature is limited in regard to the career development of women in Swaziland and women's career adaptability. This study aims to contribute towards reducing this gap in the scholarly literature.

In summary, this chapter aims to explore in detail the concepts, constructs and theories that will help understand and explain the phenomenon of the career adaptability of a woman in Swaziland.

### **2.2 Importance of the literature review in my study**

In qualitative research the literature review forms the foundation for substantial, useful research, and contextualises the study (Boote & Beile, 2005). The literature review is essential because it reveals similar and/or related studies conducted on the topic and provides insight into the dimensions and complexity of the research problem. Furthermore, it will equip me with justification for subsequent steps taken to conduct the research (Fouché & Delpont, 2002).

The next section will conceptualise the concept 'career'.

### **2.3 Career**

There are varied definitions of career in the literature consulted. For this study career is conceptualised as the unfolding interaction between a person and society over time - the way in which a person realises his or her career-related behaviour. In this definition career includes the following facets:

individual and society, objective and subjective, present and future, structure and process. Career is concerned with the processes of continuous learning, the development of new skills, the integration of personal, family and social dimensions, an attitude of open-mindedness, and a clear, but flexible sense of direction (Collin & Law as cited in Gothard, Mignot, Offer & Ruff, 2001:96-97).

The next section comprises a discussion of women's career development globally.

## **2.4 Career development of women**

A number of studies conducted across the globe indicate that women's career development is an under-explored topic (Hamel, 2009; Naidoo & May, 2006). According to Hamel (2009) most of the theory guiding career development research is grounded in studies of the careers of men in professional positions. In addition to largely ignoring the career experiences of women, the career literature pays little attention to overcoming barriers to career advancement in organizations - a challenge many women and men face over the course of their career development.

Tower and Alkadry (2008) support the notion that women in the workforce, especially those in professional and management positions, are doubly burdened by social traditions that expect female workers to meet masculine standards at the office, while maintaining their feminine role of nurturer at home. They studied the social costs of woman's career progression using a survey of respondents from different levels of the public sector. The results of their study revealed that working women have an increased incidence of being single or divorced; married working women tend to have more housework responsibilities; and working women have fewer children, or are childless. In their study Tower and Alkadry (2008) recommend that government and business organizations need to pay serious attention to this hidden problem of social costs that affect women and men disproportionately.

Naidoo and May (2006) assert that the interaction between gender and cultural values on occupational choice, occupational satisfaction and occupational success has not been sufficiently explored, and suggest that more applicable research on women's career development, particularly the career development of women from various racial, cultural and socioeconomic groups, is imperative.

The next section will outline some the factors that have been identified as barriers in the career development of women.

## **2.5 Barriers to the career progression and success of women**

Internationally the available literature acknowledges the factors to be discussed below as the most instrumental barriers that women experience. In a study conducted in South Africa, Chabalala (2005) found a number of emergent themes in his study titled: *What do women teachers identify as barriers to promotion?* The themes (some of which will be discussed below) include discrimination on the basis of gender, stereotyping in the form of a belief that men are better managers, fear and lack of self-esteem and the unavailability of support structures for women. Reynolds-Dobbs, Thomas, & Harrison (2008) highlight how images of professional black women align with their workplace experiences, and also how these experiences may derail women's ability to fully reach their potential.

### **2.5.1 Role conflict**

Across cultures and over time women retain major responsibility for home and family, regardless of their involvement in paid work outside the home (Betz cited in Naidoo & May, 2006). Women experience difficulty in balancing career and family demands, and they battle to reconcile home and work, which conflicts with career demands and career decisions. As a result they have to postpone or preclude their advancement into senior management. In addition, many organisations provide little support for women to meet these dual responsibilities (Morrison, 1992).

### **2.5.2 Gender stereotyping**

Discrimination, sexual harassment and cultural constraints as occupational gender stereotypes and gender-role socialisation inhibit women's career development (Fitzgerald & Betz cited in Naidoo & May, 2006). In a study conducted in South Africa, Chabalala (2005) asserts that complex and diverse social factors underscore women's current positions in leadership, and societal stereotypes are the core deterrent to women's advancement in the workplace. Chabalala, (2005) recommends research on issues of gender and leadership.

According to (Lupart & Barva cited in Naidoo & May, 2006) girls and young women are less likely to participate in advanced mathematics and science studies, as they perceive themselves as incapable and are less likely than men proceed into related career fields. Negative parental influence, media stereotyping, inappropriate teaching materials and methods and poor perception of self efficacy are the key causes of this imbalance.

Although there are no inherent differences between men and women in their skill and ability to study in the science-engineering-technology (SET) field, gender socialisation impacts not only on reproducing gender segregation in regard to interest and occupations, but also on self-efficacy and competency beliefs (Bebbington, 2002; Lupart & Barva cited in Naidoo & May, 2006).

### **2.5.3 The glass ceiling**

This metaphor is used to describe an invisible barrier that is transparent, yet inflexible enough to prevent access to leadership positions. The term 'glass ceiling' explains why only a few women attain leadership positions, why women do not move up the organisational hierarchy as rapidly as men, as well as why women tend to be faced with more stringent promotion requirements in comparison to men. This is due to, among other factors, discrimination, the inability of women to penetrate the 'old boys' network', insufficient generic counselling to address women's needs and masculine organisational culture, limited role models for women and mentors to guide them (Naidoo & May, 2006).

I concur with Naidoo and May (2006) that understanding how women have successfully negotiated barriers in career processes, e.g. through career decision making, choice, development and progression, will be helpful in designing suitable interventions in other contexts. Research that focuses on facilitative and inhibiting factors in regard to career processes is therefore deemed necessary.

It is important to note that some women do manage to find equal opportunities compared to men and maintain family-work equilibrium, despite the perceived barriers. Wallace (cited in Naidoo & May, 2006) recommends longitudinal research to clarify multiple influences that produce different outcomes and that will have an impact on women's orientation towards both family and career.

According to Jano and Naidoo (2002) women need support to actualise commitment to career in a society that continues to prescribe career for home and family as the primary role. Women need assistance to identify their strengths, define themselves as independent of the conformity myths and stereotypes that abound, and decide whether to confront the myths and stereotypes in the workplace. Career counsellors need knowledge and diverse skills to confront injustices that women often face, and to clarify and affirm women in women's life options (Cook *et al.* cited in Naidoo & May, 2006). Based on my own experiences as a Swazi woman, I believe that the above barriers could be particularly applicable to women in Swaziland.

The next section will provide a brief outline of women in Swaziland in relation to career development.

## **2.6 The situation of women in Swaziland (United Nations Organisation, 2009)**

The United Nations Organisation (2009) based in Swaziland has in recent years reported that Swaziland has made fairly noticeable advancements in conscious attempts towards ensuring gender equality and women empowerment. This is evident in the provision of an equality clause in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland that was adopted in 2005. In the Final Progress Report (Government of Swaziland, 2007) on the achievement of the Millennium goals Swaziland revealed that gender equality and the empowerment of women show signs of positive advancement, which indicates an upward progress towards gender equality. Some disparities, however, still occur as regards education, employment, decision making (unsupportive legislation) and gender based violence, to name but a few, (United Nations Organisation, 2009). For the purpose of this study the areas that will be elaborated are education, employment and decision making.

According to the United Nations Organisation, (2009) the participation of boys outweighs the participation of girls in the educational system. The differences are relatively minor, with an average female participation rate of 49.2%. A recent study conducted by Morope, Mmantsetsa and the World Bank (cited in United Nations Organisation, 2009), reveals that gender inequalities in enrolment for formal general education and training are small, until the age of 16 years. This therefore means that boys remain in the school system longer than girls. Between the ages of 17-20 the enrolment of boys exceeds that of girls considerably. In contrast, girls make-up 90% of non-formal enrolments in Universal Primary Education programmes. In recent years, Swaziland has shown consistent improvements in primary enrolment rates with insignificant gender differentials. For example, the primary school female enrolment rate increased from 79 percent to 85 percent between 2004 and 2007.

The poor progression rate through several academic levels is a serious cause for concern for the Swaziland government. The progression rate from primary to secondary school is only 47.4% and of those learners, only 51.5% progress to tertiary education. Currently, about 15% of women have never had any level of education and are classified as uneducated. Of those who enrol in primary school, more than half never progress to secondary school.

The study conducted by Morope, Mmantsetsa and the World Bank (cited in United Nations Organisation, 2009) reports that gender parity has been attained in overall access. Even though

women's enrolments in tertiary education have increased, most women still tend to enrol themselves in the lower return tertiary programmes, such as humanities, teaching and nursing, rather than in the mainstream high return fields which are mostly dominated by men, such as science, business and law. Women are significantly under-represented in faculties of science, agriculture, commerce, and in postgraduate studies. The dominance of women in the fields associated with low employment opportunities increases the risk of perpetuating the already existing gender-related inequities in earnings.

Swaziland has a 31% employment rate, which represents 39.6% of men and 23.5% of women. The agricultural and food production sector which is also known as the informal sector has a significantly higher proportion of women employed, with an average of 70%-80% of the women carrying the work. In the Government of Swaziland Labour Force Survey, 2007/8 it was reported that women's participation in the non-agricultural wage employment sector remains dismal. The figure showing the level of employment of women in the non-agricultural sector showed a decline from 25.2% in 2001 to 23.5% in 2005. The Swazi population is generally poverty stricken, but women are normally worse off than men, due to their poor percentage of participation in employment. Women's employment is at about 45.2% versus the 59.2% of men.

Women's participation in the area of public office in parliament and cabinet is still minimal and is not a fair representation of society. There are minimal, yet positive trends showing upward mobility. During 2003 and 2008, there was a significant increase in the representation of women in parliament, from an embarrassing 8% to 20%, which still needs improvement. The cabinet had a better reflection with a 50% representation of women, with four out of eight members being female. Swaziland made history in 2006 when the office of deputy prime minister and the post of deputy-minister were occupied by women. In Swaziland the civil service sector has a far greater representation of women in professional, technical, administrative and managerial positions, about 58%. The situation is in complete contrast to the private sector, where only 30.2% of similar positions are held by women.

The United Nations Organisation (2009) has reported that until the Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland is fully implemented, gender inequality will continue to be a challenge in Swaziland, due to its rich history as a patriarchal society. Swaziland is well known for its strong traditions, values and norms that continue to guide the nation's way of life. In the Swazi patriarchal system, male dominance and other socio-cultural factors interplay to influence the interactions between women and men,

resulting in inequalities. Other factors that intensify gender inequality in Swaziland include unsupportive legislation; limited opportunity for women in national development; poor access by women to the means of production, education and health; and different forms of gender discrimination (United Nations Organisation, 2009).

There is an increase in positions filled by women in decision making structures, but the desired representation of 50% is still a major challenge. In the public and civil society sectors, senior positions such as those of director and chief executive officer are dominated by men, as only 23% and 27% of these senior positions respectively, are held by women (Government of Swaziland, 2008). Traditional leadership, which is still a dominant culture and society in Swaziland is still the domain of men, and women can act only in cases where the incumbent is young, or has not yet been identified.

Strategies have been implemented to combat gender inequality in a number of domains in Swaziland. According to the United Nations Organisation, (2009) the Swaziland government has established the Gender Coordination Unit (GCU), housed in the deputy prime minister's office with the view to strengthening institutional capacity. Diverse training programmes have been implemented in order to train managers in the public sector and civil society on a number of gender aspects. Advocacy has also been employed to target policy makers, opinion leaders and the general populace. The Women's Parliamentarian Network and the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Gender have been established to strengthen the advocacy efforts. The majority of programmes introduced to Swaziland are quite inadequate, due to their not being supported by substantial research and data. Therefore further investment is required in research programmes in Swaziland to further the understanding and eradication of gender inequalities (United Nations Organisation, 2009).

It has also been reported that many women seek employment in South Africa and emigrate from Swaziland due to the lack of career opportunities and basic employment (International Organization for Migration, 2008).

It is in relation to the above state of affairs that I position my study. I concur with the United Nations Organisation (2009) that even though the gender inequality in Swaziland is exacerbated by extrinsic factors such as socio-economic and cultural issues, intrinsic factors such as women's attitude and self-concept have a reinforcing effect in the scenario detailed above. I will discuss the conceptual and



theoretical framework in the subsequent section, using Hackett and Betz's Self-efficacy Approach to the Career Development of Women, which I found to well suited to help understand this appalling situation.

## **2.7 Hackett and Betz's Self-Efficacy Approach to the Career Development of Women**

This study is based on the theoretical assumptions of Hackett and Betz (1981) who postulate that women, largely as a result of socialization experiences, lack strong expectations of personal efficacy in relationship to many aspects of career-related behaviour, and as a result fail to fully realize their capabilities and talents in career pursuits. This scenario is typical of the current situation in Swaziland where gender differences in the access to and availability of sources of information available to Swazi women have created an untenable situation. Access to, and the availability of resources are after all important to the development of strong expectations of personal efficacy. In fact, lack of access and the lack of resources have critical implications for women's career decisions and achievements.

Hackett and Betz (1981) argue that their proposed model was useful in integrating existing knowledge on women's career development for generating productive avenues of inquiry, and for guiding intervention efforts. They also view their model as one with implications for the career development of men as well as women, but the focus is mainly on its potential for contributing to knowledge of the career development of women (Hackett & Betz, 1981; Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006; Stead & Watson, 2006). Their conceptual lens is therefore highly appropriate for the analysis of the position of women in Swaziland.

As previously stated, women's socialisation into feminine gender roles provides fewer opportunities to access sources of information and reinforcements that are imperative for developing positive self-efficacy for career success. Hackett and Betz (1981) postulate that women experience less success in their career development due to the way in which they are socialised. Furthermore, these scholars assert that perspectives on gender differences which contribute to gender stereotyping and stereotypical socialisation have negative implications for women's career development. These implications often result in low levels of self-efficacy among women in regard to career success. Low levels of self-efficacy, in turn, hinder the career adaptability of women. I assume that this could be applicable to women in Swaziland as well. One of my working assumptions (based on first-hand experience as a Swazi citizen) is that prevailing socio-cultural circumstances, such as male control and dominance over women in Swaziland, as well the overriding power men hold with regard to decision making regarding family, traditional and societal issues, could possibly contribute negatively to the

career development of women in Swaziland, in that it impacts their self-efficacy negatively and eventually impedes their career adaptability.

The next section will provide an overview of the relationship between career and culture.

## **2.8 Career and socio-cultural factors**

Swaziland is known for its cultural heritage, customs and beliefs. Arthur (2006) states that cultural influences are inextricably intertwined with individuals' career development. This is an important point to bear in mind throughout the research process that includes data collection, analysis and interpretation, to avoid drawing biased and uninformed conclusions. Elaborating on diverse cross-cultural career counselling, Maree and Molepo, (2006) are of the notion that multiple and flexible approaches to the collection of data and a combination of approaches are necessary for making a well-informed or appropriate career decision. Furthermore, they state that research is essential in order to refine and develop post-modern narratives that could be used in diverse contexts for individuals and groups (Maree & Molepo, 2006). Socio-cultural factors have a significant impact on individuals' career development and culture (ethnicity, race, religion, socio-economic status and traditions) has been identified as an influential factor in the career development of individuals.

In the next section I discuss career adaptability.

## **2.9 Career adaptability**

### **2.9.1 Dimensions of career adaptability (Savickas cited in Hartung, 2007:110; Savickas et al., 2009: 245)**

In this section the four dimensions of career adaptability: career concern, career control, career curiosity and career confidence, mentioned in chapter one, will be discussed briefly. This section is based almost entirely on the work of Savickas *et al.*, (2009) and Hartung, (2007). Therefore large parts of this section were taken as direct quotes from their work to avoid loss of meaning. Career *concern* entails orientating oneself to the future and feeling hopeful and optimistic about it (Hartung, 2007; Savickas *et al.*, 2009). Career *control* involves increasing individuals' self regulating behaviour through career decision making and taking responsibility for ownership of the future, by showing the ability to adjust to the needs of different settings and having some sort of influence and control on the context (Hartung, 2007; Savickas *et al.*, 2009). Career *curiosity* entails engaging in proactive career exploration and curiosity about possible selves and social opportunities, as well as approaching the future

realistically (Hartung, 2007; Savickas *et al.*, 2009). Career *confidence* deals with acquiring problem-solving ability and developing self-efficacy beliefs to stand by one's own aspirations and objectives in the midst of obstacles and barriers (Hartung, 2007; Savickas *et al.*, 2009).

Each dimension is concerned with a career question, attitudes and beliefs, competence, specific career problem, coping behaviours, relationship perspective and career intervention, which are outlined in the table below.

**Table 2.1: Dimensions of career adaptability (taken from Hartung (2007:110))**

Adaptability dimension	Career question	Attitudes & beliefs	Competence	Career problem	Coping behaviour	Relationship perspective	Career intervention
<b>Concern</b>	Do I have a future?	Planful	Planning	Indifference	Aware Involved Preparatory	Dependent	Orientation exercises
<b>Control</b>	Who owns my future?	Decisive	Decision making	Indecision	Assertive Disciplined	Independent	Decisional training
<b>Curiosity</b>	What do I do with my future?	Inquisitive	Exploring	Unrealism	Experimenting Risk-taking Inquiring	Interdependent	Information seeking activities
<b>Confidence</b>	Can I do it?	Efficacious	Problem-solving	Inhibition	Persistent Striving Industrious	Equal	Self-esteem building

Two additional dimensions of career adaptability referred to in recent literature are commitment and cooperation. Cooperation deals with one's ability to engage in activities with others. Commitment entails one's commitment to life projects, not necessarily to one's particular job. Career commitment implies that career indecision could possibly provide new possibilities and experiments in unpredictable scenarios and should therefore be allowed (Savickas *et al.*, 2009).

**Table 2.2: Additional dimensions of career adaptability (adapted from Hartung (2007), Schreuder & Coetzee (2006))**

Adaptability dimension	Career question	Attitudes & beliefs	Competence	Career problem	Coping behaviour	Relationship perspective	Career intervention
<b>Commitment</b>	How do I maintain this?	Dedication Determination	Persevering	Career vulnerability	Resilience Goal-driven	Equal	Career management
<b>Cooperation</b>	Who will be involved in my future?	Supportive	Collaborating	Poor relations with co-worker	Helpful Positive Open-minded	Interdependent	Team-building exercises

Increasing a client's career adaptability is an essential goal in career counselling (Savickas, 2009). According to Savickas (1997), adaptability is not merely readiness for the workplace, as first proposed by Super and Knasel (cited in Stead & Watson, 2006). Instead, in recent literature adaptive individuals are conceptualised as: 1) becoming concerned about their vocational future; 2) taking control of trying to prepare for their vocational future; 3) displaying curiosity by exploring possible selves and future scenarios; and 4) displaying confidence to pursue their aspirations (Savickas, 2009).

O'Connell, McNeely and Hall (2008) further state that adaptability is a key competency for career success, and thus mention a number of factors that are strongly related to personal adaptability. These factors are gender, employability, education and management support. O'Connell *et al.* (2008), state that it is also important to understand the factors intrinsic to individuals; especially those that can be developed within individuals and in the work environment. They conclude that it seems possible to foster the development of personal adaptability in the workplace.

### **2.9.2 Career adaptability as a lifelong competency**

The literature suggests that career adaptability is an important competency at all stages of individuals' lifespan: childhood, adolescence and adulthood, which translates to growth, exploration, establishment, and maintenance, Super's disengagement stages (cited in Watson & Stead, 2006), and developmental stages (Hartung, Porfeli & Vondracek, 2008; Watson & Stead, 2006; Van Vianen, Pater & Preenen, 2009). Like most key life competencies career adaptability should be nurtured and enhanced in individuals from a very young age. Childhood marks the dawn of vocational development, involving developmental tasks, transitions and change: "Children must acquire the rudiments of career

adaptability to envision a future, make educational and vocational decisions, explore self and occupations, and problem solve” (Hartung *et al.*, 2008:63).

Career adaptability should be the focus of both career practice and theory (Van Vianen *et al.*, 2009). Hartung, (2007) postulates that the main career construction counselling goal is to increase individuals’ career adaptability so that they can produce their own development more effectively.

According to Super’s (cited in Stead & Watson, 2006) life-span, life space theory major developmental tasks are associated with each age group or career developmental stage. I concur with Hartung’s (2007) opinion that the career adaptability dimensions are applicable in all Super’s (cited in Stead & Watson, 2006) life stages and developmental tasks as outlined in Table 2.2. The focus of this study is the exploration phase.

**Table 2.3: Life stages and related career development tasks (Hartung, 2007; Stead & Watson, 2006)**

Stage	Career-related developmental task	Applicable career adaptability dimension
Growth (3-14 years)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Becoming concerned about the future.</li> <li>2. Increasing personal control over one’s own life.</li> <li>3. Convincing oneself to achieve both in school and at work.</li> <li>4. Acquiring competent work attitudes and habits.</li> <li>5. Answering the question “Who am I?”</li> <li>6. Forming an initial and realistic self-concept.</li> <li>7. Self-awareness of one’s strengths, limitations, interests, values, abilities, personality and talents.</li> </ol>	Concern Control Curiosity Confidence Cooperation Commitment
Exploration (14-24 years)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Crystallise career choice.</li> <li>2. Specify career choice.</li> <li>3. Implement career choice.</li> <li>4. Gathering information about the self and occupations.</li> </ol>	Control Curiosity Confidence Cooperation Commitment
Establishment (25-45 years)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Stabilising career position of choice.</li> <li>2. Consolidating career position of choice.</li> <li>3. Advancing career position of choice.</li> <li>4. Implementing the self-concept into an occupational role.</li> <li>5. Explore occupations broadly.</li> </ol>	Concern Control Curiosity Confidence Cooperation Commitment
Maintenance (45-65 years)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Holding on.</li> <li>2. Keeping up.</li> <li>3. Innovating.</li> </ol>	Concern Control Curiosity

Stage	Career-related developmental task	Applicable career adaptability dimension
	4. Answering the question "Should I stay in my current position or re-establish in a new one?"	Confidence Cooperation Commitment
Disengagement (65 years onwards)	1. Decelerate work activities 2. Plan for retirement living. 3. Answering "What will retirement mean for me?" and "How will I adjust?" 4. Shifting energies to home and family or other life domains. 5. Pursuing more meaningful leisure activities.	Concern Control Curiosity Confidence Cooperation Commitment

The Life Design Model of career counselling will be discussed in the next section.

## 2.10 Postmodernism

Recent developments in career theory and practice have demonstrated a fundamental philosophical and practical shift from logical positivism to postmodernism (Watson & Stead, 2006). This shift from the 20th century to the 21st century is presented in the table below.

**Table 2.4**      *The shift from the 20<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Source: Savickas et al., 2009: 242-244)*

20 <sup>th</sup> Century	21 <sup>st</sup> Century
Traits and state	Context
Prescription	Process
Linear causality	Non-linear dynamics
Scientific facts	Narrative realities
Describing	Modelling

Post-modern theories of career development focus on an individual's subjective experiences. A number of theories and approaches in career counselling fall under postmodernism, and include contextual theory, narrative approaches and constructivist approaches (Brott, 2004; Niles & Harris-Browlsbey, 2002; Savickas, 2000; Watson & Stead, 2006). Career constructivism is one postmodernism approach, and it will be used in this study. I will focus briefly on career construction in the next section.

## 2.11 Career Construction Theory

Savickas (cited in Watson & Stead, 2006) has revised, expanded and reconstructed Super's (1990, 1983 & 1957) life-span, life-space theory into Career Construction Theory. According to Hartung (2007) Career Construction Theory is an update and advancement of the developmental perspective on vocational choice and adjustment originally formulated by Super in his life-span, life-space theory. Career construction is a comprehensive theory that incorporates the components of Super's life-span, life-space theory. The underlying principle of Career Construction Theory is self reflection on one's career behaviour and on actual events (objective career), or on the meaning of such events (subjective career). The critical focus of Career Construction Theory is on a contextual world view. According to Savickas, (cited in Savickas *et al.*, 2009) Career Construction Theory holds that individuals build their careers by imposing meaning on vocational behaviour.

From a constructionist viewpoint, career denotes a moving perspective that imposes personal meaning on past memories, present experiences and future aspirations, by patterning them into a life theme. The meaning contained in these biographical themes will equip individuals to adapt to the social changes that play out in their work lives. This personal meaning replaces the holding environment once provided by organizations that contained the task of self-integration as they cared for, protected, and interpreted experiences on behalf of their employees. According to Career Construction Theory an individual's life story holds the individual together and provides a biographical bridge with which to cross from one job to the next.

The cornerstones of career construction include: life structure, career adaptability strategies, *life themes* and *personality style*. *Life structure* entails the various social or life roles that individuals enact and that form basis of the human life structure. *Career adaptability* strategies entail developmental tasks, role transitions and the coping strategies individuals use to deal with changes and tasks in their lives. *Life themes* are derived from career stories. *Life themes* concentrate on motives and strivings in the form of needs, values and interests that prompt and instil vocational behaviour with meaning. The *personality style* component of career construction theory addresses individual differences in values, abilities, needs and interests (Hartung, 2007).

The Life Design Model is a new approach to intervention that is envisaged to help individuals design their lives and construct their careers in knowledge societies (Savickas *et al.*, 2009).

## 2.12 Life Design Model (Savickas *et al.*, 2009)

Savickas *et al.* (2009) propose a life-long, holistic, contextual and preventative life-design framework for career counselling intervention. The Life Design Model is useful to help individuals articulate and enact their career stories, as the model relies on stories and activities, rather than on test scores and profile interpretations. This supports adaptive and flexible responses to developmental tasks, vocational traumas and occupational transitions. It is proposed that life design helps individuals develop their capabilities, and anticipate changes and their future in a changing context. In this sense life design is said to be a means of increasing individuals' career adaptability. To be more specific, life design aims to increase the following dimensions of career adaptability: concern, control, curiosity, confidence, cooperation and commitment, as discussed above (Savickas *et al.*, 2009). Furthermore, life design aims to augment, among others, competencies, and individuals' narratability and activity.

The goals of Life Design Model will be discussed in the section below.

*Adaptability:* Savickas *et al.* (2009:245) believe that the "life-designing model aims to help individuals articulate and enact a career story that supports adaptive and flexible responses to developmental tasks, vocational traumas, and occupational transitions". The model helps individuals develop their capabilities to anticipate changes and their own future in changing contexts, and find ways to achieve their expectations through their involvement in different activities. Life-designing intervention therefore aims to increase career adaptability (Savickas *et al.*, 2009).

*Narratability:* Career intervention employs a dialogue between clients and counsellors to assist clients to construct and narrate a story that depicts their career and life with coherence and continuity" (Savickas *et al.*, 2009; 245). The story should facilitate clients to better understand their personal life themes, vocational personality and adaptability resources (Savickas, 2005 cited in Savickas *et al.*, 2009). Subjective identity forms and their underlying cognitive frames are created during the process of narrating (Guichard, 2004, 2005; Guichard & Dumora cited in Savickas *et al.*, 2009).

Life-design counselling includes career construction for the work role, yet goes beyond it. The intention is to help people become fully aware of the ways in which they express their prominent life roles and domains (including major past ones) in relation to some major future expectations in roles. Then it encourages them to find ways such as defining priorities, identifying supports, cultivating resources and engaging in activities to increase their chances of achieving their expectations (Savickas *et al.*, 2009).



*Activity:* “Actual activities in the different domains of life are critical in the process of designing and building one’s own life. Each person constructs reality through verbal discourse, yet what they do, is a major component in the evolution of this discourse” (Savickas *et al.*, 2009: 246). Savickas *et al.* (2009) aver that when individuals perform a variety of activities they discover which abilities and interests they would rather engage in. Through activities, people build new dimensions of themselves, for example self-efficacy beliefs and interaction with other people. Interactions provide individuals with feedback and build collective systems of representations. Together activity and interaction transform the self-concepts and may kindle the re-interpretation of some life themes. Activities must be taken into consideration if counsellors wish to produce significant changes in ‘conclusions’ of the life stories of clients, and particularly those that already seem written, or that might have been easily predictable. Such an intervention sometimes offered in a workshop format is expected to prompt young people to engage in activities that they perceive to be relevant to their future expectations (Savickas *et al.*, 2009).

*Intentionality:* Action is at the core of our thinking, because it entails behaviour and meaning (Malrieu, cited in Savickas *et al.*, 2009). Meaning may stem from future intention or retrospective reflection (Vallacher & Wegner cited in Savickas *et al.*, 2009). Richardson (cited in Savickas *et al.*, 2009) suggests that the intentional process is essential to the broader task of constructing a life, and states further that instead of concentrating on career decision making and career choice, social constructionists express intentions and anticipations regarding possible selves and life in the future. In terms of the work role, career can also be seen as an interpretive construct built by a working person through engaging in activities and then reflecting on the outcomes. This calls for the replacement of the construct of “decidedness” with the construct of “engagement” in the work world, despite uncertainty (Krieshok, 2003 cited in Savickas *et al.*, 2009). Richardson and Kreishok (cited in Savickas *et al.*, 2009) are of the opinion that clients and counsellors focus on meaning making through intentional processes in the ongoing construction of lives, instead of concentrating on choices, when in fact there are limited choices: “In knowledge societies, self and identity are constructs build by the person through continuing reflection and revision” (Duarte, 2010; Savickas *et al.*, 2009: 246).

The Life Design Model consists of six general steps which are adapted to suit the idiosyncratic needs of individual clients (Savickas *et al.*, 2009:246-247).

### *Step One*

The client and counsellor need to define the problem and identify what the client hopes to achieve by consulting the counsellor. A working alliance is established between them as they begin to formulate

goals for counselling, within which the counsellor encourages the client to describe through stories, the history of problems to be addressed. During this process, the counsellor prompts reflection on story themes and meanings, in order for them to determine the main contexts for each problem. The focus is not narrowly on just one context; the dialogue must help clients become aware of main domains of their lives.

### *Step two*

In the second step, the client and counsellor explore the client's current system of subjective identity forms by investigating how the client sees him- or herself on the day, and how the client functions in his or her salient main domains. The counsellor encourages the client to reflect upon, and shape the story by articulating experiences and expectations, action and interactions, relationships to others and future anticipations.

### *Step three*

The third step in the process aims to open perspectives. By narrating the stories, the client can turn something that was implicit into something explicit, making it more objective and obvious. This gives the stories added substance and reality, while allowing the client to study the stories from a distance. This enables the review of own stories, which allows the client multiple perspectives of his or her own stories. By exploring whether the client had to give up any options, or had dreams shattered, the client is able to retell and relive those silenced stories. Through common discovery and re-authoring, stories can be reorganised, revised and revitalized.

### *Step four*

The following step sees the counsellor and the client placing the problem in the context of this new story. Central to this process is putting the problem into the new perspective. By doing so, the client is enabled to think about him- or herself from a perspective provided by the new or expected identity forms. The resolution of problems and client change starts to occur when the client articulates a possible self that was previously unclear. This step comes to a conclusion when the client integrates old and new role identities.

### Step five

The next step sees the counsellor and client specifying some activities to try and actualise the new identity. In order to make the identity concrete, the client needs to draft a plan of activity outlines on how to get involved in new experiences. These activities may move the client from the current experienced self to the currently desired self. Tiedeman (cited in Savickas *et al.*, 2009) refers to this movement as purposeful action. Methods of dealing with current or potential barriers should be included in the plan. The telling of the story should enlist the support of important audiences, like friends, parents, partners and whoever can serve as a good audience to make the story clearer and more coherent. The plan of purposeful action should address the problem the client has brought to the consultation process directly.

### Step six

This step includes both short-term and long-term follow-up. Quality assurance requires the counsellor to evaluate the outcomes of consultation and, as necessary, provide additional consultation.

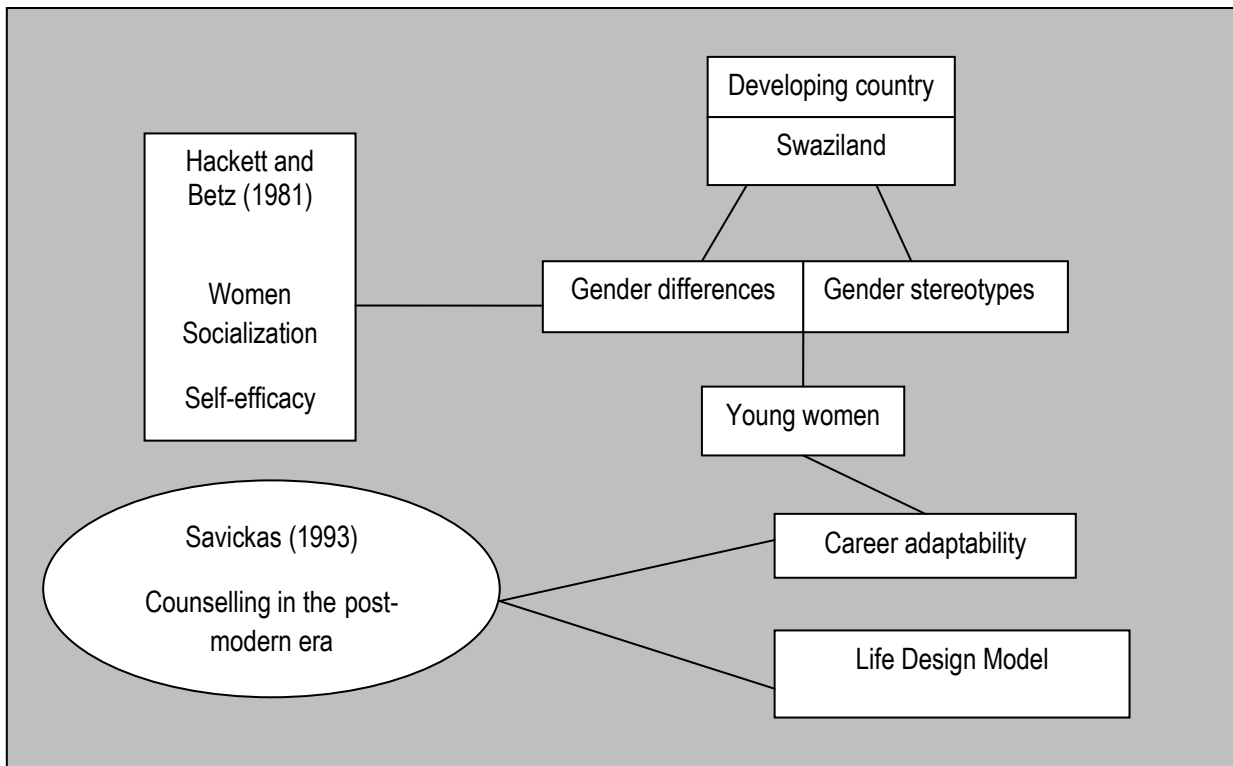
## 2.13 Conceptual framework

Figure 2.1 below summarises the contents of this chapter by providing conceptual links between the different topics covered. I will delineate my conceptual framework in this section.

I concur with O'Connell *et al.* (2008) that enhancing persons' career adaptability is a key aspect of facilitating career success. I sincerely hope that my study will facilitate an understanding of those factors that might potentially contribute to the career adaptability of women in Swaziland. By exploring the career adaptability of women in Swaziland I hope to gain a deep understanding and to be able to make recommendations to enhance their career success competency (career adaptability). I aim to use the Savickas Life Design Model to provide a holistic, preventive model for career counselling intervention with Swazi women to augment, among other competencies, their career adaptability, narratability and activity (Savickas *et al.*, 2009) because:

*Adaptability addresses change, while narratability addresses continuity. Together adaptability and continuity provide persons with the flexibility and fidelity of selves that enable them to*

*engage in meaningful activities and flourish in knowledge societies (Savickas et al., 2009: 245-246).*



**Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework**

## 2.14 Conclusion

There is a significant limitation in terms of the information available on the topic of my dissertation, and this poses a challenge in presenting a comprehensive literature review. Currently the main source of information on career adaptability, career construction theory and life design is the work of Savickas, (1993; 1997; 2002; 2005; 2009). Efforts have been made by Savickas and colleagues to collaborate and develop career theory practice and research that is more applicable to Eastern and African contexts than mainly to Western contexts (Savickas et al., 2009).

On the other hand, there is an escalation in literature on the career development of women globally. It is clear, however, that research on the career development of women is greatly needed in Africa. On a more specific level it is evident that career adaptability and Swazi women's career development are areas worth investigating and documenting, since the literature in these areas is extremely limited.

Chapter three that follows focuses on the research methodology and addresses ethical considerations.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

Chapter three will constitute a detailed discussion of the research paradigm in which this qualitative study is situated, the research design and methodology to be followed in regard to the study, and the instruments, as well as a motivation for the choices.

#### **3.2 Social constructivist-interpretivist paradigm**

Social constructivism, which is often combined with interpretivism is typically seen as an approach to qualitative research. Social constructivism holds assumptions that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work (Creswell, 2009). According to Creswell, (2009) individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences, which are directed towards certain objects or things. These meanings are varied and multiple and this will lead me to look for the complexity of views rather than to narrow meanings into a few categories or ideas. Knowledge about the world is socially constructed and society is made up of feeling, thinking human beings, whose interpretation of the world must be studied (Danermark *et al.* cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

The ontological (view of reality) and epistemological (view of truth) assumptions of this study, which according to Cohen *et al.* (2004), serve to inform a study, are based on a social constructivist-interpretivist paradigm. This research study is based on the ontological assumption that reality is socially constructed by both the researcher and the participant. The epistemological assumption is that the participant constructs meanings based on own experiences and interaction in a social context (Cohen *et al.*, 2004).

#### **3.3 Research methodology**

Due to the above-mentioned assumptions and views, the study will follow a qualitative approach based on interpretivism as it strives to comprehend how individuals experience their reality.

#### **3.4 Research design**

I selected an intrinsic case study design for this research because it will afford me the ability to gain a better understanding of the case in regard to which specific and general characteristics are of great relevance. I followed McLeod's (2004) guidelines for implementing a case study, i.e. a case study should be significant and relevant; provide complete insight to the reader; provide sufficient contextual

information; consider alternative perspectives; supply sufficient evidence and crystallise results through multiple interpretations.

A case study design allows for the use of multiple data collection instruments and will allow me to explore the case of a young Swazi woman's career adaptability in depth (Creswell, 2003). This case is bound by time and activity, and I shall collect detailed information through a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time (Straker, 1995 cited in Creswell, 2003). Another motivation for the choice of a case study design was that it allows for the generation of hypotheses and data regarding the career adaptability of the participant.

### **3.5 Data collection**

The data collection instruments used in this study include the *Career Adapt-Abilities (CAI)*, observations, career style narrative, researcher journal and reflective essay. The use of multiple data collection techniques is in line with my assumption that reality is multiple, subjective and socially constructed by individuals. A brief description of the data collection instruments follows in the next section.

#### **3.5.1 The Career Adapt-Abilities (CAI) (Savickas, 2009)**

The *CAI* is a questionnaire-type instrument that was developed by Savickas (2009) to measure individuals' career adaptability and is currently being standardised for global use. For this reason, and after discussions with professor Mark Savickas, my supervisors and I decided not to elaborate on the psychometric properties of the instrument. Instead, we will administer the questionnaire to the participant and analyse the responses in a qualitative manner.

The *CAI* was created as a collaborative effort by a group of international psychologists whose mission and vision were to develop an international model and measures of career adaptability. The following three processes were involved in the development of *CAI*.

(1) The scholars devised a three-dimensional taxonomic framework for organizing the large number and variety of operational definitions of career adaptability. The three dimensions willing, able and doing. Willing refers to a personality trait, able consists of social competencies and doing denotes coping behaviours.

(2) The scholars identified existing measures for career adaptability as a trait and as coping behaviours and agreed to collaborate in constructing a measure of career adaptability as a social competence. In the initial international research version of the inventory of career adapt-abilities they constructed scales for five hypothesized dimensions, viz. concern, control, curiosity, cooperation and confidence. They then empirically developed a common item format and response format to foster faithful translation across diverse languages.

(3) The scholars are currently investigating the reliability and validity of the *CAI* in more than ten countries. Each country version of the *CAI* contains the same set of 25 international core items and augments the set of 25 with items specific to the local context. After refining the *CAI*, the Career Adaptability International Collaborative plans to use the *CAI* in studies to test and refine the model of career adaptability across the life-span and then devise interventions that foster adaptive responses to life-role transitions.

### **3.5.2 Career style narrative**

As explained in chapter one career style narratives assess individuals' life structure, career adaptability strategies, life themes and personality styles. Hartung (2007) outlines the six domains of the career style narratives as follows:

- *Role models*  
Role models represent ego ideals, a central life goal and provide solutions to a central life problem. Concentrate on what is admired rather than who is admired.
- *Magazines/books/television shows*  
Magazines/books/television shows indicate preferred environments that fit the individual's style. A book reveals a major character that faces the same problem as the individual and shows how that character deals with the problem.
- *Leisure*  
Leisure deals with self-expression and reveals manifest interests.
- *Favourite saying*  
An individual's favourite saying titles the life story.
- *School subjects*  
Preferred school subjects indicate the preferred work environments.
- *Early memories*  
Early memories reveal a core problem the individual faces.

Savickas (cited in Hartung, 2007) suggests the use of an interview during which clients are asked questions concerning lifestyle issues, which include questions on, for example, role models, favourite books and magazines, leisure activities, school subjects, mottoes, ambitions and decision making skills. The interview schedule could be amended, depending on the clients' understanding of the English language and their response to the questions. The interview identifies clients' current career concerns relative to the stages and tasks of vocational development, and subsequently sheds light on the following components of career construction: 1) life structure, 2) career adaptability, 3) life themes and 4) personality style (Hartung, 2007; Sacino, 2007).

### **3.5.3 Observations**

The participant's non-verbal and verbal gestures will be noted for qualitative analysis (Creswell, 2009).

For the sake of being concise, I will not elaborate on the psychometric properties of the assessment instruments used in this mini-dissertation. Suffice it to say that all instruments have been standardized for use in a South African context, but not for use in a Swazi context. All results and conclusions therefore have to be treated with due circumspection.

### **3.5.4 The Values Scale (VS) (Langley, du Toit & Herbst, 1992)**

The characteristics which are measured by the *Values Scale (VS)* (Langley *et al.*, 1992) can be better described as needs. The term value is preferred to prevent certain testees from experiencing the questionnaire as a threat. The *Values Scale (VS)* was developed to measure an individual's needs for each of the following: Ability utilization, Achievement, Aesthetics, Altruism, Authority, Autonomy, Creativity, Cultural identity, Economic security, Own lifestyle, Personal development, Physical activities, Physical prowess, Prestige, Social interaction, Social relations, Spirituality, Variety and Agreeable working conditions. The general concept of values used in this manual, and the different values which are measured, are described in the manual. The VS is intended for use in the individual guidance of high school learners, students and adults, group evaluation, career development programmes and in needs surveys (Langley *et al.*, 1992).



### **3.5.5 Meyers Briggs Type indicator (MBTI) (Briggs & Briggs-Myers 1994)**

The *MBTI* developed by Briggs and Briggs-Myers (1994), is a psychometric questionnaire designed to measure psychological preferences regarding how people perceive the world and make decisions. The South African edition was used for this study.

### **3.5.6 Rothwell-Miller Interest Blank (RMIB) (Hall, Halstead, Taylor, 1986)**

The *RMIB* (Hall, Halstead, Taylor, 1986) is a questionnaire which lists different types of occupations in twelve ranking categories. The ranking categories of the *RMIB* are: OUTdoors, MECHanical, COMPUtational, SCientific, PERSuasive, AESTHetics, LITerary, MUSical, SOCial SERvice, CLERical, PRACTical and MEDical.

### **3.5.7 Career Interest Profile (CIP) (Maree, 2007)**

This 19 category questionnaire provides a starting point for elucidating and discussing a relevant career profile in greater depth (Maree, 2007). According to Maree (2007) the *CIP* could be used in conjunction with other assessment in research to verify (triangulate) the findings.

### **3.5.8 My Systems of Career Influences (MSCI) (McMahon, Patton & Watson, 2005)**

This tool has a potential to elaborate meaning and to facilitate holistic career decisions. Derived from the Systems Theory Framework of career development the *My Systems of Career Influences (MSCI)* provides an opportunity for young people to represent the constellation of influences relevant to their own career story visually at any given point in time (McMahon *et al.*, 2005).

### **3.5.9 Lifeline**

Drawing a lifeline is an activity that allows clients to make sense of their life and work stories and provides the focus for an autobiographical review. Lifelines therefore give counsellor and client an opportunity to engage, reveal and unpack the themes and patterns from which the chapters of the client's life story have been written, and to use them as the foundation for the future life story (Fritz & Beekman, 2007).

### **3.5.10 Collage**

A collage can be used effectively as a form of pictorial storytelling because a client is free to select any combination of pictures, materials, photographs, written words, slogans, cards and symbols that depict

any aspect of the topic. Clients inevitably tell their stories when they discuss the contents of the collage. The pictures, material and experiences they select, and the way they organise and present them in a collage form, express a unifying story of themselves. Through focused inquiry, the counsellor extracts more information, revealing themes on personal characteristics, interests, values and abilities. This process of identification, analysis, interpretation, judgement and evaluation of characteristics, interests or values through the search for pictures that represent the self facilitates self-knowledge through personal confrontation with previously unconsidered information about the self. The whole process therefore has developmental aspects with regard to personal awareness and growth (Fritz & Beekman, 2007).

According to Fritz and Beekman (2007) it is important to inquire about the experience of collating the collage and to allow the client to tell how this experience influenced thoughts about self. Not all clients, however, are capable of expressing themselves through collages, and the counsellor should therefore establish the client's needs and expectations before they decide on a course of action and set goals jointly.

#### ***3.5.11 Informal Interest questionnaire***

This is an informal questionnaire that identifies the participant's common interest and talents.

#### ***3.5.12 Semi-structured follow up interview***

After the data has been collected a semi structured interview will be administered to the participant to clarify questions that arise after the initial data collection.

#### ***3.5.13 Reflective essay***

The participant wrote an essay reflecting on her involvement in the research process and was be requested to elaborate on how the participation benefited her personally.

#### ***3.5.14 Research Journal***

I will keep record of events and reflect on the process as I go about with the research.

**Table 3.1: Data collection techniques**

Data-generating activity	Description	Method of documentation
The <i>Career Adapt-Abilities Inventory (1.0)</i>	The participant will be required to complete the <i>Career Adapt-Abilities Inventory</i> .	The participant will complete the <i>Career Adapt-Abilities Inventory (1.0)(CAI)</i> .
Career style narrative	A semi-structured interview will be conducted with the participant.	Audio-recording and verbatim transcriptions.
Observations	Field notes will be made on the participant's behaviour during the interviews.	Audio-recording, verbatim transcriptions and written notes.
<i>Value Scale</i>	The participant has answered questions from the questionnaire.	Colour in, audio-recording and verbatim transcription
<i>Myer-Briggs Type indicator</i>	The participant has answered questions from the questionnaire.	Colouring in, audio-recording and verbatim transcription.
<i>Rothwell-Miller Interest Blank</i>	The participant has answered questions from the questionnaire.	Colouring in, audio-recording and verbatim transcription.
<i>Career Interest Profile</i>	The participant has answered questions from the questionnaire.	Filling in, audio-recording and verbatim transcription.
<i>My Systems of Career Influences (MSCI)</i>	The participant has answered questions from the workbook.	Filling in responses that were later on discussed.
<i>Lifeline</i>	The participant created a lifeline.	Drawing and labelling. Followed by a discussion, this was audio-recorded and transcribed.
<i>Collage</i>	The participant created a collage.	Cutting and pasting pictures and message.
<i>Informal interest questions</i>	The participant and her guardian has answered questions about interest.	Audio-recording and verbatim transcriptions.
<i>Semi-structured follow up interview</i>	Follow up questions will be asked to clarify responses from other instruments.	Audio-recording and verbatim transcriptions.
<i>Reflective essay</i>	The participant was requested to write a reflective essay on how participation benefited her personally.	The reflective essay will be hand-written or typed electronically on a computer.

### 3.6 Sampling

The sampling method utilized in this study was purposive (Maree & Pietersen, 2009; Cohen *et al.*, 2007). As the name suggests the sample was chosen with a specific purpose in mind: in this instance

the participant was chosen with the aim of exploring distinctive factors of the career adaptability of a young Swazi woman. The Sample does not pretend to represent the entire young Swazi woman population, it is selective and biased (Cohen *et al.*, 2007).

The participant was selected because of particular characteristics and the selection criteria were the following:

1. Nationality: Swazi.
2. Gender: Female.
3. Age: 15-30 years.
4. Life stages (Super, 1992): exploration.
5. Knowledgeable by virtue of her experiences.
6. She is easily available before, during and after the research.

### **3.7 My role as researcher**

In this study I will assume the role of researcher not psychologist, and I will clarify this with the participant. With regard to data collection, I will be responsible for administering, scoring and interpreting the questionnaires. My role will entail fulfilling duties in regard to interviewing, observing, recording field notes, analysing and interpreting results, compiling a report, and lastly, presenting the findings.

It is important to note that my role will be that of researcher only, and not psychologist. My training at masters level however, has alerted me to the fact that negative thoughts and emotions might arise within the participant during or after my research. I am trained to identify these thoughts and emotions and, should they arise, I will refer the participant to a qualified educational psychologist. To address the issue of researcher bias I will also keep a researcher journal.

### **3.8 The research site**

The research site was the participant's workplace, a place in which the participant and I felt comfortable.

### **3.9 Ethical considerations**

I will explain the research purpose and research process to the participant, after which I will obtain informed consent. Since I will be working with a human being, great care will be taken to ensure that

the participant is not placed at risk or harmed in any way. I will at all times adhere to the guidelines stipulated by the University of Pretoria, Faculty of Education, Research Committee and the Health Professional Council of South Africa. It is essential for every study to adhere to the ethical guidelines (Maree, 2009; Maree & van der Westhuizen, 2009; Cohen *et al.*, 2007). Therefore, before commencing the study, I obtained ethical clearance from the Ethics Committee, Faculty of education, University of Pretoria. Please refer to the ethics clearance certificate in the addendum.

I considered and addressed the following ethical issues:

- *Social responsibility*, in terms of which researchers accept the responsibility to address, where possible, by research and technology development, the pressing problems in the broader southern African communities.
- *Justice*, in terms of which researchers accept the responsibility for the equitable treatment of all individuals and organizations involved in the research process.
- *Benevolence*, in terms of which researchers should be inspired not only to protect others from harm, but also to ensure and promote the well-being of all those affected by research.
- *Respect for the individual*, where the focus is on the interaction between the researcher and all people s/he may encounter during the research process. The researcher is required to recognize the dignity and autonomy of all individuals and to maintain humanity, as well as freedom of choice in all situations.
- *Professionalism*, in terms of which it is recognized that researchers form part of a specific profession and therefore should exhibit professional responsibilities such as integrity, quality and accountability.
- In regard to *plagiarism*, all sources consulted will be listed correctly.
- *Voluntary participation* in research, implying that the participant has the right to withdraw from the research at any time.
- *Informed consent*, meaning that research participant must at all times be fully informed about the research process and purposes, and must give consent to her participation in the research.
- *Safety in participation*, put differently, that the participant shall not be placed at risk or harm of any kind, e.g. especially regarding research with young children.
- *Privacy*, meaning that the *confidentiality* and *anonymity* of the participant will be protected at all times.
- *Trust*, which implies that the participant will not be subjected to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

- *Reporting results:* the participant was informed that the research results would be used as part of the requirements for completion of a masters degree in educational psychology. The chapters of the research results will be made available to the participant before being submitted (University of Pretoria, 2010).

### 3.10 Data analysis and interpretation

I coded the data manually and interpreted the data in the preliminary analysis phase. The data was categorised into themes and sub-themes and the preliminary data analysis was discussed with the participant, as recommended by Cohen *et al.* (2004) and Northcutt and McCoy (2004) to ensure that the focus was on meanings constructed by the participant rather than my subjective biases and experiences.

### 3.11 Quality assurance: Data verification

The strategies and criteria used to verify the data in this study will be presented in this section. Data will therefore be interpreted according to standard protocol to ensure (in as much as this ideal is viable and attainable) that the outcomes achieved were facilitated and moderated by the intervention only and not by other factors. In Table 3.2 below (Creswell, 2009), threats to validity as well as steps to be taken to minimize these threats are listed. Richardson (cited in Janesick, 2000: 392) suggests that the term crystallization should be used rather than triangulation in qualitative research, because crystallization is a better lens through which to view the components in qualitative research. I will therefore implement multiple data gathering strategies and methods to enhance the trustworthiness of my study.

**Table3.2: Quality assurance strategies (adapted from Creswell (2009))**

Strategy	Description
Triangulation	This is the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals, e.g. the researchers and participant, and different methods of data collection, e.g. the <i>Career Adapt-Abilities Inventory (1.0) (CAI)</i> and interviews, used to build a coherent justification for themes, that add to the validity of the study.
Member checking	I will check the findings with the participant in the study to determine if the findings are accurate.
Rich descriptions	I will use rich, complete descriptions to convey the findings can add further validity to the findings.

Strategy	Description
External audit	During this process I will obtain the services of an individual <i>outside</i> the project to conduct a thorough review of the study and report back in order to enhance the accuracy and validity of the study.
Crystallization	Crystallization will provide a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial, understanding of the topic.

In terms of generalisability and transferability (external validity) of my study the following can be said. Generalisability is the extent to which data and context of a research study can be transferred to other contexts (Durrheim & Wassner, 2001). According to Creswell (2003) and Mayan (2001) in order to ensure transferability, it is essential to provide rich descriptions of the participant and their context through clear and detailed information on the topic and participants as well as their living setting. Nonetheless the aim of my study as a social constructivist was not to generalise the findings to other contexts, but rather to provide rich descriptions of the perceptions of a young Swazi woman.

### 3.12 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a description of the research process, procedures and instruments. I have also addressed quality assurance criteria, my role as a researcher and ethical issues. I align myself with the social constructivist-interpretivist paradigm, which informs the entire research study: my approach to engaging with the participant, the choice of research design and data collection methods, as well as quality assurance strategies are greatly influenced by my research paradigm.

Chapter four that follows will provide the results of the study.

## 4. RESEARCH RESULTS

### 4.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter described the research design, methodological approach and the process followed in the study. This chapter presents the research results and findings of the study. The results obtained by means of the data collection instruments discussed in chapter three are outlined below.

### 4.2 Method of data analysis

This section will discuss data analysis methods implemented in this study according to guidelines suggested by Creswell (2009).

#### 4.2.1 Data organisation and coding (practical steps of Creswell's (2009) approach)

Creswell (2009) suggests that researchers should look at qualitative data analysis as a process of following steps from the specific to the general and as involving multiple levels of analysis. I will analyse the data collected from the various instruments according to the steps provided by Creswell (2009), as set out in Table 4.1 below and supported by McMillan and Schumacher (2001) and Lincoln and Denzin (2000).

**Table 4.1:** *Data organisation and coding (adapted from Creswell (2009), McMillan & Schumacher (2001) and Lincoln Denzin (2000))*

Steps	Coding
Step 1	Organise and prepare the data for analysis – transcribe interviews.
Step 2	Meticulously study all the available data to gain a holistic image.
Step 3	Identify and list themes from the data.
Step 4	Compare themes to avoid duplication.
Step 5	Colour code and evaluate the themes There are three set of themes in this text. Whereas text that was colour-coded refers to those themes that appear in Table 4.4, highlighted text refers to themes that appear in the biggest change narration and those that appear in Figure 4.1. However, some of these themes do overlap, hence they appear in more than one set.
Step 6	Identify the most common themes in addition to the most important themes.
Step 7	Identification and verification of themes and sub-themes by external coder.



The above refers to inductive data analysis; "Categories and patterns emerge from the data rather than being imposed on data prior to data collection" (McMillan & Schumacher (2006: 462).

However, as far as the five Cs of Career adaptability are concerned, I followed a deductive analytic style (McMillan & Schumacher (2006), i.e. I started with five predetermined categories found in the literature, applied these categories and investigated whether I could find evidence to fit these categories in Mukelwe's narratives.

#### **4.2.2 Participant's background**

Mukelwe (pseudonym), the last-born in her family, is 24 years old and has four siblings. Her mother tongue is SiSwati, her second language is English and she has a basic understanding of French. She never met her late father, her mother used to be a domestic worker and her family members tend to become entrepreneurs. Mukelwe currently resides in a township in the Manzini region, Swaziland with her sister and two nephews. Mukelwe obtained a diploma in environmental health sciences with distinction and is currently enrolled for a degree in environmental health sciences.

### **4.3 Results**

This section will constitute a discussion of the results obtained through the various data collection instruments outlined in the preceding chapter.

#### **4.3.1 Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Briggs & Briggs-Myers 1994)**

##### **4.3.1.1 Overview**

According to the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* Mukelwe's profile is **ENTP**: the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*, describes individuals with this type of personality as having the following to offer, they are: driven to start new projects and to think of new ways of doing things; stimulated by complex and challenging problems; partial to choosing careers that provide them with a stream of fresh challenges (they are consequently often found in careers where trouble-shooting plays a role); not inclined to sit still for long; inclined to enjoy careers that continually test their ability to analyse, debate, persuade, improvise and succeed; nonconformist and resist excessive rules and structure in their environment; enjoy work that offers them autonomy and the opportunity for variety, creativity and innovation, where ideas are important; fond of work

where they can interact with many different people, where they can be action oriented and where competence is important to them.

#### *4.3.1.2 General comments and reflection*

Mukelwe was relaxed during this activity. She would occasionally ask for clarification on the meaning of some words. When her profile was read to her Mukelwe smilingly nodded her head in agreement. She then stated that the profile was accurate, except for the “nonconformist” and “resist excessive rules” descriptors. Mukelwe said she abided by all rules even though she would question rules she did not resist.

### **4.3.2 Values Scales (Langley et al., 1992)**

#### *4.3.2.1 Overview*

Mukelwe scored very high on the following values:

*Ability utilisation*, which entails the extent to which a person wishes, wants or needs the opportunity to develop her talents and skills. *Aesthetics*, which refers to enhancing and enjoying the beauty of processes, products and surroundings, both natural and man made. *Creativity*, which means to develop or make something original, such as an object, writing, painting or other artwork, an idea a new method or an organisational innovation. *Personal development*, which means to develop and to plan what she wants to do with her life. *Pleasant working conditions*, which entail working under agreeable circumstances, for example, good lighting, comfortable space and temperature.

#### *4.3.2.2 General comments and reflection*

Mukelwe was relaxed during this activity and would occasionally ask for the meaning of some words to be clarified. She appeared embarrassed when she asked for the meanings and displayed a shy grin. Mukelwe agreed that the profile is reflective of her.

### **4.3.3 Rothwell-Miller Interest Blank (Hall, Halstead, & Taylor, 1986)**

#### **4.3.3.1 Overview**

According to the *Rothwell-Miller Interest Blank* Mukelwe's best occupations are: doctor, geologist and environmentalist. The SCientific category was the most preferred category, followed by the MEDical category and the third preference was PERsuasive and Social Sciences categories.

#### **4.3.3.2 General comments and reflection**

Mukelwe agreed with this profile and emphasized medicine as her dream career.

### **4.3.4 Career Adapt-Abilities Inventory (1.0) (CAI) (Savickas, 2009)**

#### **4.3.4.1 Overview**

The Career Adapt-Abilities Inventory (1.0) (CAI) yielded the following results in regard to Mukelwe, who rated the following strengths as very strong:

- ✓ Thinking about what my future would be like
- ✓ Realising that today's choices shape my future
- ✓ Expecting the future to be good
- ✓ Becoming aware of the educational and vocational choices that I must make
- ✓ Keeping upbeat
- ✓ Being concerned about my career
- ✓ Making decisions by myself
- ✓ Directing my future
- ✓ Taking charge of my future
- ✓ Imagining what my future will be like
- ✓ Learning how to make better decisions
- ✓ Observing different ways of doing things
- ✓ Probing deeply into questions that I have
- ✓ Becoming curious about new opportunities
- ✓ Co –operating with others on group projects

Mukelwe rated the following strengths as weak:

- Being persistent and patient
- Counting on myself
- Exploring my surroundings

**Table 4.2: CAI scores**

Career adaptability dimension	Score
Concern (items 1-11)	47
Control (items 12-22)	40
Curiosity (items 23-33)	37
Cooperation (items 34-44)	44
Confidence (items 45-55)	42
Career adaptability total	210/220 = 94.45%

The qualitative interpretation of the scores is discussed under section 4.8 Summary of themes.

#### 4.3.4.2 General comments and reflection

Mukelwe confirmed that all the items of the CAI were clear to her, but I clarified some of the statements. She thought the CAI was good, especially the aspects of group work. She believes group work play plays a major role in the work environment. She thought that the fact that it focuses on strengths, such as decision making and thinking before acting, was also good. She said “*many times we just forget to question ourselves ... Is this an appropriate decision? Should I be doing this ...?*” Mukelwe said the CAI revealed to her where she is heading in terms of her career. She indicated, however, that she expected the CAI to ask more specific career related questions/or contain more specific career related statements, for example: “*Do you do well in ... or, Are you good with ...*” Her low curiosity score could explain her lack of exploration of other fields of study, institutions and funding.

#### 4.3.4.3 Biggest change or transition

Mukelwe’s biggest change or transition narration will now be presented.

RESEARCHER: Okay Mukelwe, I would like you to please identify the biggest change or transition that you have ever experienced, and tell the story of how it came about, how you prepared for it, and how you coped with it and how it turned out and how it changed you as a person.

MUKELWE: Okay.

RESEARCHER: Because all of us at times face difficult turns in life roles, please think of your most confusing, troubling and discouraging transitions either from school to work, or from one job to another. Just tell us the story of that change in your career, or your life. Be sure to identify the most challenging aspects and how you dealt with them.

MUKELWE: Okay, I think one of the most challenging times in my life **was when I had to apply for tertiary qualification, like tertiary education.** Because, initially *I had always wanted to do medicine or something to do with the health sector.* But then after having completed my high school I, *I had to at least further my studies,* do um matric and I couldn't do that, because *there were no funds for me to pursue matric.* So I had to settle for the second best or for anything available. *I only wanted to be in varsity (raised voice) or to be, to do something, not to remain idle.* So and then without having consulted anyone or talking to a counsellor to look or weigh what other qualification can I apply for, I just decided to apply for the current course I'm doing, which is environmental health sciences. But If I wanted things to go my way I would have done BSc cause maybe after BSc I would have gone further and done medicine. Looking at the current situation most of the people who have done BSc end up being teachers and things like that. **So I decided to do environmental sciences.**

But in my first week during the orientation week, um **I met some people,** um I met some guy, he works for UNICEF he is a nurse by profession. So he asked me, "OH wow so you're doing ..., you are in Mbabane?" I'm like "yeah". "Congratulations at least you qualified". "Thank you". "So you are doing nursing". "No I'm doing environmental sciences". And he was like "Oh my goodness". "Why did you do environmental sciences?" "I like it, I think it's a good course and I think it is marketable, and looking at this century I think everyone is, everything is about the environment". So the guy was like "Oh! I can take the whole day to tell you what you have got yourself into, you will be stranded you will finish your degree and will find yourself without a job. Your parents will still have to buy you umm underwear and you already have a degree. I know someone who is doing umm masters degree now and he's funding himself just because this profession of yours is useless". That's how he put it. (giggles)

*I was devastated at that time 'cause it was like, it was the first week you can imagine. So I was stranded and I was confused I did not know what to do. And someone suggested that, somebody told me that you can actually change your course within the first three months. You have to write a letter and change.*

*So I thought maybe really this guy has a point I should just change but I told them that no, I never wanted to be a nurse, I'd rather be a doctor and nothing else, not a nurse.*

*I actually went to the offices I told this woman that I want to be a nurse. (Laughs out loud).*

*But deep down I knew that I didn't want to, just because now I can see that maybe I will be in a dilemma after having completed the course. Unfortunately for me they told me that no way in the nursing department and they can't accept they just can't take me.*

*But I think it was a Blessing in disguise. Because later on I knew that I belonged to this field, even though initially it was my second choice, I continued doing it and got to understand the whole concept behind it. Right now I'm settled down, I'm comfortable I just can't wait to finish and see the opportunities. Fine, in Swaziland there are not that many, but outside they are a lot. Yeah, I think that was one of the hardest or the most challenging.*

RESEARCHER: So can you please just clarify the most challenging aspect of that. What did you identify as: this is challenging for me and this is how I will cope, this is how it has turned out and this is how it has changed me as a person?

MUKELWE: Okay, I think first and foremost not having consulted anyone about the, the field looking at the subjects that I had done. I think it was one of, it was a mistake then.

*But then having trusted my own instincts and I chose this course only to find out that everyone was like, they were criticising me I think that was hard for me that was hard for me what am I going to do now. I got myself into this you can't just back out after a short period of time I talked to people who have done the course who are actually working well. They never lied to me, they told me it is quite hard to get into the market and things like that without the experience, so it's quite difficult. What can I say, I already had my own backup, like I already knew how I was to try and make myself marketable. So I made sure that immediately I started getting the experience some attachment, even if I had to work for free.*

*But then I think it made me rely on my own decisions like to make my own decisions. Not to take people ... to listen to people most of the time cause you just don't know you end up losing your identity. 'Cause deep down I knew I didn't want to do nursing.*

*This man was convincing (Laughs out loud) It was scaring me, but at that time I was naïve and young.*

*So he is working for UNICEF (laughs) and it is a global organisation and when he says that I can make it in nursing I don't have to work in the hospital environment. He might get me somewhere. But now I think I rely on, I trust my instincts ... I do get other people's advice just to weigh or validate what I know already. Now I know that I have made up my mind, I do consult other people just to validate my decisions.*

RESEARCHER: If I can summarise, it was challenging for you to have people criticising negatively what you had chosen. How you dealt with it, was just sticking to your own beliefs.

### Evaluation (adapted from Savickas, 2010)

Mukelwe's narrative can be rated as follows in regard to the items listed below:

- A. **sense of agency:** Mukelwe provided limited evidence of a sense of agency, as can be seen from the narrative above;
- B. **change of relation of self to world:** There was evidence of change of relation of self to the world;
- C. **narratability of story:** Mukelwe provided evidence of narratability, as can be seen from the narrative above;
- D. **intentionality:** Mukelwe provided sufficient evidence for as can be seen from the narrative above;
- E. **coherence:** Mukelwe provided evidence of coherence as can be seen from the narration above coherence
- F. **active mastery:** Mukelwe provided sufficient evidence for active mastery as can be seen from the narrative above;
- G. **spiritual growth:** Mukelwe did not elaborate on her spiritual growth, but there was a spiritual slant when she narrated her traumatic incident;
- H. **working through of negative feelings:** Mukelwe exhibited, some negative feelings were but she seemed to have dealt with them;
- I. **adopt a new perspective:** Mukelwe adopted new perspectives while narrating her biggest

transition;

- J. complexity:** Mukelwe's narrative had evidence of some level of complexity as can be seen from the narrative above.

#### 4.3.4.4 General comments and reflection

Mukelwe's biggest change and transition narration was relatively long and it appeared that she had long been waiting for an opportunity to acknowledge that she had made a mistake. She used this opportunity to vent her worries about her career aspiration. She was able to reframe her challenge from a mistake to a learning opportunity through her narration. Mukelwe was very subjective when narrating her biggest transition. She elaborated her feelings and reactions successfully and sought meaning through the interpretation and conceptualization of her own narration.

#### 4.3.4.5 Mental imagery journey

**Description of the road:** *I see myself walking through this road. It's, I think it goes in circles like, you just don't know which turn to take, but it has all this - it's like it's in loops. It's like I can get there, it's like I am getting there, but I just seem to find , to get to my destination and along the way there are some signs - the kilometres so far so far . But it seems like it is taking ages to reach that place. It's frustrating. There comes a time when you hardly get those signs 'cause at least when you get one, hopefully you are on the right track. But sometimes I feel lost. And I need some sort of, some sort of umm, a compass or map, just to make sure that I'm not in actual fact lost. I am still on the right track things like that ...*

**How Mukelwe crossed the river:** Describing how she crossed the river, Mukelwe said:

*... this river wasn't that um deep, eh, so I could easily swim through. It was quite wide – eh, I could see the other end, and inside I could grab on some few support, eh, rocks, so I swam to the other end.*

For a person who has achieved as much as she has, Mukelwe clearly minimizes her success and thinks that she relies on others: "rocks and supports", for her achievement.

**The house:** Mukelwe described the house as beautiful, she said: *... the one I've been dreaming about .... It is big and white and has big windows. I like the colour white it just shows that, it has to do with purity and new beginnings ... the sun is shining through.* This implies that Mukelwe views



her resources and support structures in a positive light. “White”, “purity”, “new beginnings” could also be an indication that Mukelwe desires a new start in her career path, which could be to study medicine. It seems as if she believes that she will move forward and achieve only if she has a new start. One could assume that she currently views herself as ‘impure’, small or insignificant, and that Mukelwe values contact (openness) with the outside world.

**Obstacle on the road:** ... *you know when the road becomes a one lane road and you’re so scared that maybe there might be a car coming and you’re in that position where you have to be cautious and look up just to make sure that you won’t cause some sort of an accident. Sometimes you can’t just cross, you have to wait a couple of minutes to get your senses right before you can actually cross that small bridge, that one lane road, and after that you get that relief that oh, I have gone past that last pole and there’s that one there. Ok – how do I get to my – then I see that all the obstacles, the one lane, the whole feeling inferior and the anxiety...*

#### 4.3.4.6 General comments and reflection

Mukelwe seemed very uncomfortable during this activity and said that she found the activity difficult. She giggled and took a while before she started. While interpreting the imagery journey the psychologist in me could not completely adhere to the stipulated interpretation guideline for the CAI. Even though intuition is preferred by some psychologists, I realized that it is important for a psychologist to adhere to guidelines, especially in research.

### 4.3.5 Career Interest Profile

#### 4.3.5.1 Overview

The information presented in this section was obtained through the Career Interest Profile. Mukelwe mentioned that at school she enjoyed science-based subjects such as physics, maths and biology, and she did not enjoy subjects that required a lot of reading, such as English and history. She is currently not certain of the field of study she would like to follow in building her career, but five careers that fascinate her are: marketing, because she believes she has a persuasive ability to sell products or services; civil engineering or architecture, since she feels they would allow her to express her creativity (she believes that designs would be the perfect outlet for her passionate creativity and allow her to be admired for generations); environmental studies or research, because she has an inquisitive mind and she has a desire to know reasons and answers regarding the world around her.

The careers in which she knows she has no interest are firstly, being a truck driver or mechanic, because of the dirty environment. Secondly, being office-bound, doing desk-work, such as being a secretary, because she wants to be outdoors, interact with different people daily and have a consistently changing environment. Lastly, she has very little interest in sports activities - she does not like sport at all.

Mukelwe is not really sure which career path she should take. In response to the career style questions she answered as follows:

RESEARCHER: How can I be useful to you in constructing your career?

MUKELWE: *Sometimes I like my profession and I think this is it, but sometimes I then get confused – like through my studies I get stuck. You try to find the time to do it practically so sometimes you feel like it's useless, because I think currently our country doesn't appreciate our profession, they don't understand what it's all about. They ask, an environmental scientist – what do you do, do you work in a zoo, in a game reserve? You feel less appreciated, and you just feel like maybe I should change, but maybe they should give us a first priority or maybe they should give us opportunities, then maybe I would enjoy my career more.*

RESEARCHER: What are your skills and talents?

MUKELWE: *"Apart from talking, I'm very talkative and I think, yes, I've been into debates, and other things, I think I'm good in the kitchen – if there's anything like that? (giggles) I can cook! I'm a great cook.*

Mukelwe also enjoys arts and singing choral music. She has, however, always dreamt of being a medical doctor and her teachers and sister also advised her to study medicine.

The things she values the most in life are to be happy and successful in whatever she does.

When she was younger Mukelwe's biggest challenge was: *having to compete with boys. Class, things like that and then being the best, like everyone is looking up to me.*

RESEARCHER: What do or did your parents advise you to study?

MUKELWE: *My sister wanted me to be a doctor – my mother wanted me to just have a job. (Her sister walks in and says "she just wanted you to have a baby".)*

RESEARCHER: What is your motto in life, e.g. unity is strength, etc.?

MUKELWE: *Anything is possible if you put your mind to it!*

RESEARCHER: How do people see you, for example, do they say 'she never despairs'?

MUKELWE: *I'm not sure, but I notice I'm always high. I'm never down or sad – stuff like that – always happy.*

RESEARCHER: Who was your role model growing up?

MUKELWE: *Prof Makhubu, I think where me, coming from a family where none of my siblings were able to go through varsity – I think maybe it's impossible, I won't do it, but having said this, this woman has said anything is possible and I can do whatever I want to be so, I think she has been very influential and she was once a vice chancellor of the University of Swaziland so she just showed me that women can do it.*

*Internationally, hmmm, what's her name ... but that's the, hmmm, can't remember ... She was the first prime minister of Norway and she did a lot for sustainable development. She was like the first woman to make environmental sustainability to be known ... Lindiwe Gwebu current minister of housing, she is a pastor ... very successful businesswoman.*

RESEARCHER: What are your favourite books and magazines and why?

MUKELWE: *I like O Magazine because it's full of inspirational and motivational stories and one of those magazines that never go out of date. Each time you read it you find something new. I'm not really into books.*

RESEARCHER: What is your favourite song?

MUKELWE: *So many! I like Trey's songs – any of his songs I like.* What did she like about the songs?

RESEARCHER: What are your biggest successes so far?

MUKELWE: *Obtaining a distinction for my diploma, having finished high school without getting pregnant and, dropping out of school, and getting my driver's licence.*

RESEARCHER: What are your strengths?

MUKELWE: *I think I am very open and assertive and I'm not a shy person. I can actually address public gatherings – I'm not scared of people.*

RESEARCHER: What are your weaknesses?

MUKELWE: *Sometimes I can be impatient and overbearing. Some people find me to be very bossy – I like to do things my way. I'm soft sometimes – I cry easily. I get easily touched.*

RESEARCHER: What do you enjoy doing?

MUKELWE: *I enjoy reading magazines and biographies.*

RESEARCHER: What don't you enjoy doing?

MUKELWE: *I don't enjoy dancing because I cannot dance.*

RESEARCHER: If you were to write your life story, what would be the title of your book?

MUKELWE: *The woman who never gave up!*

The headings of the various chapters about Mukelwe's life story are:

Chapter 1, *New beginning*; Chapter 2, *The storm*; Chapter 3, *The dawn has come* (this is where she feels she is in her life currently); Chapter 4 *The sunrise* and [Chapter 5 The epitome](#)

RESEARCHER: Is there anything else about you that I need to know?

MUKELWE: *I am a very loyal and trusting person.*

#### 4.3.5.2 General comments and reflection

The general comments and reflections for this session will be discussed after the career style narrative because of the similar content in the sections.

### 4.3.6 Career story interview

#### 4.3.6.1 Overview

RESEARCHER: Who would you like to pattern your life on? Response similar to above.

RESEARCHER: Do you read any magazines regularly?

MUKELWE: Yes.

RESEARCHER: Which magazines do you read?

MUKELWE: *I like O magazine and then Drum and Cosmopolitan.*

RESEARCHER: Why do you like these magazines?

MUKELWE: *They have some interesting things like, cooking tips, recipes – I like those and then motivational stuff, I like things like that and real life stories. Yes, I like that kind of stuff.*

RESEARCHER: What about TV – do you have any shows you really enjoy?

MUKELWE: *I won't say I am a TV fanatic, but I watch, but I don't keep up with the all the soapies. (Sigh) I would say Generations.*

RESEARCHER: What do you enjoy about generations?

MUKELWE: *I think it's a real soapie; it's based on real life experiences. It just shows us things that we deal with in our everyday lives.*

RESEARCHER: What is your favourite book or movie?

MUKELWE: *A movie – it has to be a movie – I watched it a long time ago – August rush.*

RESEARCHER: Tell me the story – what happens in the movie?

MUKELWE: *It's about a little boy who got adopted and he never knew both parents. But he used to say he can hear something, he can hear the music, and all his friends would say, "what are you talking about". And he would say "I can hear music, I can feel it, it's all over, even when the birds fly, even when the wind blows, I can hear the music". And they would ask him where did he get it and he would say he thought he inherited it from his parents. Then they would say "you don't know your parents", then he would say "but I think one thing that connects me with my parents, is the feelings, I think I can feel the music", only to find out that both parents were musicians. The woman was an orchestra musician and the father was a guitarist in a band. So what happened was these two people who met and it was just a one night stand. The woman had gone to New York for a performance. And they met at some after party because the girl was very conservative and her father was very strict. One thing led to another and she fell pregnant and the father took the child for adoption. She never knew that she gave birth to the child alive, she thought the child died in birth. She never knew about the child until later on, but then it was so interesting because the child inherited this talent.*

RESEARCHER: In which ways is your situation like that of the boy in this movie?

MUKELWE: *Uhm there is nothing similar. I think it has to do with having this (pause) in these genes connect you back to your family it just has to do – we may try to suppress all these feelings - we do say we're actually from generation to generation. So, inherited.*

RESEARCHER: You mentioned that you never met your father and this boy never met his parents, I picked up that similarity.

RESEARCHER: In which ways are you like the boy in this movie?

MUKELWE: *I like his spirit. The way he was optimistic he has never been shown love ..., I like his positive attitude ... at the foster home he endures this hardship ... was such a fighter...*

RESEARCHER: How are you like the boy in the movie?

MUKELWE: *I see good in people no matter how evident it seems that they have bad intentions. There must be a reason behind all that hatred, the way they are behaving.*

RESEARCHER: In which ways does your situation differ from the situation of the boy in this movie?

MUKELWE: *I am not lost. Actually I do have a family (giggles) the single parent relationship I have is fulfilling. The fact that I am not an orphan being educated he was like, he was fighting for his existence and people did not understand him. I think I have people who understand me (giggles)*

RESEARCHER: Tell me your favourite saying

MUKELWE: *The sky's the limit.*

RESEARCHER: What is your motto?

MUKELWE: *Reach for the stars. Anything you do, no matter how minor it might seem, I believe you must give it your best. Whatever you do give it your utmost.*

RESEARCHER: What do you like to do with your free time?

MUKELWE: *Reading.*

RESEARCHER: What are your hobbies?

MUKELWE: *I like the outdoors, going out with friends when I get the time*

RESEARCHER: And what do you enjoy about these hobbies?

MUKELWE: *Well I get to interact with people, share ideas, be free.*

RESEARCHER: What were your three favourite subjects in high school?

MUKELWE: *Maths, biology and physics.*

RESEARCHER: What did you love about these?

MUKELWE: *They involve critical thinking, analysing. You have to use your head a lot.*

RESEARCHER: What were the subjects that you didn't like, that you hate?

MUKELWE: *I hate history, English literature and religious studies.*

RESEARCHER: What did you hate about these three subjects?

MUKELWE: *I am not good in memorising events and stuff like that, having to write precisely – I am not good at that – I really hate it.*

RESEARCHER: Now I am going to ask you about your earliest recollections. I am interested in hearing three stories about things you recall happening to you when you were three to eight years old. Can you tell me three stories about that?

MUKELWE: *What sort of stories?*

RESEARCHER: Anything that you can remember from your childhood when you were very young.

(The participant shared these anecdotes with the researcher and afterwards made up the titles jointly with the researcher.)

**TITLE: *THE GIRL IN A JUMPSUIT HAD A FALL***

MUKELWE: *I think when I was in pre-school I used to be a tom boy, wearing pants like that. I was 3 when I was in pre-school. I had this, we used to call it 'Samson' it's like a pull over I used to like it so much. It was black and had a Mickey Mouse on the front. So I would make sure that I wore it twice a week and when I wore the outfit I thought I was the most beautiful girl. So one day when I was on my way to school, I took a short cut and there was this township in Malkerns, They call it Mangozeni, I went through the place. The people there don't have sanitary facilities, like ablutions and toilets, so they just spill the water on the streets. I slipped and fell and I was so dirty and I was filthy, but I didn't want to go back home because if I go back home they will change my outfit and I really wanted to go to school with that outfit on. So I continued to go to*

*school with that dirty thing and I was crying all the way. When I got to school I couldn't attend class. I wanted my jumpsuit so my teachers had to wash it and I had to wait for it to dry and then put it on. I think that was funny. What do you make of this story: attachment favourite possession in reality naïve and that you wouldn't think the best thing for you is to be clean the fact this particular outfit I am the best.*

**TITLE: *WHEN THE BRAINY KID OF THE CLASS GETS A HIDING OF A LIFE TIME.***

MUKELWE: When I was in grade 1, I was very naughty.

RESEARCHER: How old were you in grade 1?

MUKELWE: *I think I was 7. So I didn't have, ok. I was naughty and I used to use vulgar language without my parents knowing, obviously. There was this boy in my class, he was a thief – he used to steal our pencils, we used to call him Sicelo. I was very good in class. The teachers used to love me so much because they thought "this girl is very brilliant". I never used to get a hiding. One day this boy stole my pencil and my friend's pencil and then I started shouting at him and I just forgot I was at school and I used vulgar language. I was calling him all sorts of names, stealer, thief all sort of names. And I got a hiding not from the class teacher but from the head teacher so I thought because I was young, that I had really disappointed my teachers. She couldn't even hit me, she took me to the head teacher. I tried to apologise. She just didn't want to hear my story. She said I must go back to my mum and" tell her that you use vulgar words". I cried until 1 pm outside the office until the Head Teacher said "I won't tell your mum, forget about it go back to class".*

RESEARCHER: Another one?

**TITLE: *THE BOSSY BUSINESS-LADY WHO ALWAYS GOT HER WAY***

MUKELWE: *It has to do with me being business minded. I used to sell my lunch box at school so when I carry my bread I would make sure that I don't just slice it in one, but in 2 or 4 and I would sell it for 20c. That small piece of bread I sold for 20c in class. So everyone would wait, I was not even persuasive, I was like, coercive, saying "you will buy the bread today" and make them buy my food until my class teacher told my sister that "this girl was always forcing people to buy her lunch box", and then they stopped preparing lunch boxes for me. From that day onwards I hated carrying a lunch box. I don't carry one now.*

RESEARCHER: How old were you?



MUKELWE: *Grade 2, about 8.*

#### 4.3.6.2 General comments and reflection

By looking at her favourite books and television shows, one can easily deduce that Mukelwe enjoys learning more about and interacting with other people's life stories. This confirms her Social Sciences preference in the *Rothwell-Miller Interest Blank*. Mukelwe's favourite film reveals the main character who faces a similar situation and problem, even though Mukelwe did not realize it at first, she, in a similar way to the main character of her film, has experienced adverse challenges, wonders what she inherited from her parent, a foster custodian/guardian, strives for independence, has a generally positive outlook and is resilient through difficult times. Her favourite magazines, *O Magazine* and *Drum* correlate with her *Myers Briggs Type Indicator* results, as she says they are full of inspirational and motivational stories and never go out of date. Mukelwe's role models indicate that her central life goal is to be educated, become a woman of substance, make a difference in her community, and provide solutions to a central life problem. She believes education is the key to her success. While describing her collage, she said that with education she could *do anything*. I have used italics consistently to indicate Mukelwe's words, but without inverted commas. Magazine and book titles are also italicised.

#### 4.3.7 Collage

##### 4.3.7.1 Overview

The collage concept and idea was explained to the participant and she created a collage (refer to the appendices). Mukelwe's collage contained food, a lady exercising, young ladies having a good time, a lady writing something, aeroplanes, a stack of books, a laptop, a car, a holiday resort/luxurious mansion, as well as items of clothing and accessories.

**Table 4.3: Collage interpretation**

Item	Mukelwe's account	Mukelwe's reflections on her collage
Food	<i>I love food so much. Anything!</i>	Mukelwe expressed a love for cooking well as one of her talents in the Career Interest Profile. Mukelwe could be seeking comfort in food for the hardships she has endured in her life.
Lady exercising	<i>The lady who's working out - it has to do with</i>	Mukelwe might be preoccupied with body image. This

Item	Mukelwe's account	Mukelwe's reflections on her <i>collage</i>
	<i>body image, like, I'm always fascinated with weight loss I would like doing something about it. It's always on my mind, I have to lose weight, I have to lose weight, but it never happens.</i>	could imply a low self-concept or be an indication of simply keeping up with international health trends.
Young ladies having a good time	<i>I like to mess around with people who make me happy, and laugh and all that, so I like having a good time with my friend.</i>	Mukelwe's support system consists mainly of female individuals, viz. her sister and a few loyal friends. This support structure seems to help foster resilience in her career development and life in general. Mukelwe could be described as extroverted.
Lady writing Something	<i>This woman looks like she's writing something in the diary. I like to organise things, about my dreams, things I would like to do.</i>	Mukelwe is very organised and seems to have impressive insight. She is very ambitious and optimistic about her future. Her diary could be her avenue for expressing her innermost feeling and thoughts, because of the age gap between her and sister.
Aeroplanes	<i>... it has to do with travelling it has to do with the places I like to go to so maybe in the near future I'll be one of those. In the near future</i>	This item could symbolise a need to escape current life circumstances.  Mukelwe is studying environmental sciences she finds pleasure in exploring the environment.
Stack of books	<i>The books, I think the books have been my best friend and have played a crucial role in my life. One of the best advices I have ever got is that education is the key to success. I can do anything with that.</i>	Mukelwe values education this is evident in most of the instruments. Mukelwe said on p. 10: . <i>I'm not really into books.</i> She also mentions on p10: <i>I enjoy reading magazines and biographies.</i> Mukelwe seems to be contradicting herself with regard to reading and books. Upon further perusal it was clear that she dislikes fictional books. She stated that she enjoys reading textbooks because she get factual information and magazines and biographies because they are based on real life experiences and real people. Mukelwe clarified that she does not like reading fictional books.
The laptop	<i>The laptop is one of the best gifts I have ever had. It has everything there, my assignments, my music, movies so I think even at home once I am tired then they know am on my laptop. I listen to my music, watch movies with my earphones. It has everything there for me.</i>	From this item it is evident that Mukelwe values education, material possessions and leisure.

Item	Mukelwe's account	Mukelwe's reflections on her <i>collage</i>
The car	<i>... It's not my dream car but I would like to have it a really nice car in red...</i>	This item also implies that Mukelwe might value material possessions. The car might imply a need to escape from her current situation. The car has a symbolic meaning for escape (driving away). On a different note, Mukelwe is studying environmental sciences and she finds pleasure in exploring the environment.
A holiday resort/luxurious mansion	<i>Then there's a lodge, a getaway place. I would like to do that sometime when I can afford to. Going out and just have me time.</i>	The need to escape emerges again in this item, which indicates that Mukelwe could be overwhelmed by her current life circumstances. Her pleasure-seeking/leisure need is evident in this item.
Clothing items and Accessories	<i>Clothes – ok I love stuff – I'm not a fashionable person but I love things. All the things that all women like.</i>	Mukelwe seems to value material possessions or she could also simply be in touch with her feminine self.
Girlfriends	<i>Then the girlfriends are there. It's like a sisterhood. It's nice having loyal friends, that they've got your back.</i>	Mukelwe's support system consists mainly of female individuals, her sister and a few loyal friends. This support structure seems to help foster resilience in her career development and life in general.

#### 4.3.7.2 General comments and reflection

Mukelwe was very careful and took her time creating the collage. She was provided with a variety of magazines and she would occasionally say which picture she wanted as she paged through the magazines. She was excited while creating and presenting the collage, and in her reflective essay she wrote *creating the collage was interesting and I think it is one of the best exercises I enjoyed doing*. Mukelwe and I co-constructed interpretations regarding the collage.

#### 4.3.8 Lifeline

The lifeline concept and idea were explained to Mukelwe, who then created a lifeline (in appendix F). She included the following events in her lifeline:

##### 4.3.8.1 Overview

##### POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

*First day of school.*

*My sister getting married.*

*My favourite nephew Skhu was born.*

*Top of grade 7 (first class with merit).*

*High school in a girl's school.*

*Doing well in O-level academic programme.*

*Getting accepted in university.*

*Getting the most expensive gift from a special friend.*

*Graduation for my diploma (distinction).*

#### **NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES**

*The father that I never met dies.*

*I undergo appendicitis operation and miss a whole term of school.*

*My brother-in-law dies in a car accident.*

*Not being selected for the International Baccalaureate at Waterford.*

#### **4.3.8.2 General comments and reflection**

Upon completion of the lifeline Mukelwe was asked the following questions: What do you remember about these events? What themes emerged? What responses did you have? A table outlining these can be found in appendix F. Through the culmination of both the positive and negative experiences, Mukelwe expressed that she had developed the following skills and traits of independence, bravery, leadership, nurturance, responsibility, friendliness, open-mindedness, working hard, meeting others' expectations, dedication, socializing and gratitude. Mukelwe became slightly emotional when narrating her negative experiences and her tone was lower than when she spoke of her positive experiences.

Mukelwe reflected that she discerned the following trends in her lifeline, i.e. her highest points have to do with academic achievement and her lowest points mainly with the passing away of someone in her family. Her family and her friends are the most significant people throughout her lifeline.

### **4.3.9 Informal values and interest checklists**

#### **4.3.9.1 Overview**

From the informal interest and values checklists it emerges that Mukelwe is interested in: science, biology, numbers, socialising, and nature. She values creativity, routine, sociability, aesthetics and security. Mukelwe is extroverted, disciplined, sensitive, energetic and punctual.

#### **4.3.9.2 General comments and reflection**

Mukelwe's responses were in line with results from the other instruments. Perhaps you could name the instrument you are referring to here again. There was, however, a discrepancy between her responses and those of her sister. When asked to comment on this, Mukelwe attributed the discrepancy to the fact that her sister was commenting on her behaviour at home, while she herself focused on career-related scenarios. We then co-decided that for this section we would consider only the strengths they both agreed.

### **4.3.10 My System of Career Influences (MSCI) (McMahon et al., 2005)**

#### **4.3.10.1 Overview**

The following results were obtained from the *My System of Career Influences*.

#### **MUKELWE'S PRESENT CAREER SITUATION**

1. Career decisions Mukelwe has to make in the future:

- "Field of specialization in my current program"
- "Whether to do a second degree or further my current qualification"

2. Part-time or volunteer work she has done

- "Peer education and counselling"
- "Hairdresser"
- "Health promotion and education"
- "Babysitter"

3. Life roles you have other than that of a student

- "Class captain, chairperson in charity work"

4. List of jobs you have considered for your future

- "Doctor, civil engineer, environmentalist, vet"

5. Previous career decisions you have made
  - “Choosing what course to do at university”
  - “Choosing to get rid of toxic friends “
  - “Getting involved in charity work”
6. Strategies or approaches used in previous decision making
  - “Weighing the pros and cons of my decision”
  - “Getting an insight of an older person”
  - “Follow my instincts and trust my judgment”
7. People who helped or provided advice with previous career decisions
  - “school counselor career guidance counselor”
  - “my family”
  - “teachers”

#### THINKING ABOUT WHO SHE IS

Mukelwe considers the following personal factors to be her influences in her future decision making: coping mechanisms, health, beliefs, culture, age and values. The most influential factors are: personality, abilities, gender and interest.

#### THINKING ABOUT PEOPLE AROUND HER

Factors that Mukelwe considers to be influential on her career decisions are: *my teachers, a show on TV about sustainable environment and global warming, my friends and my parent.*

#### THINKING ABOUT SOCIETY AND HER ENVIRONMENT

The following environmental factors are most influential:

- *the cost of my options*
- *employment opportunities*
- *financial support*
- *location of university*
- *pay and opportunities*
- *opportunities to work overseas*
- *availability of preferred courses*
- *how society perceives appreciate the preferred course*

### THINKING ABOUT HER PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

The factors Mukelwe considers to be most influential are: *the lifestyle I anticipate, I want to combine family and work, I want to work overseas and I don't want to move away from where I live.*

### MY SYSTEM OF CAREER INFLUENCES

Her first diagram of career influences included the following:

- *My teachers can be very influential and persuasive*
- *Me, I love my personality*
- *I want to live a satisfying life*
- *Location of universities and course offering*
- *What my family approved or not approved*

### REFLECTING ON HER SYSTEM OF CAREER INFLUENCES

- *The opinions of my teachers and family stand out the most*
- *The opinions from friends stand out the least*
- *What surprised me about system of career influences is that the environment we live in can be so influential*
- *I have not been previously aware of the role that family plays in my personal decisions*
- *It has been confirmed for me that as an individual have to make your own decision*
- *I would like to consider what others say(good listener)*
- *I would like my personality to remain the same*
- *I feel like I'm in control of my life as I look at my career influences*
- *As I have located closest influences, I think family is the most important because I feel like I shouldn't disappoint them*
- *I have encountered influences of teachers of being persuasive to do what they think is best for you, they helped me consider their opinion and research more.*

### MY ACTION PLAN

- *I would talk to my family and friends about my system of career influences diagram and I would like tell them that they are important aspects in my decision making but that they can't live my life.*
- *Now that I have completed my system of career influences diagram, I would like to think and analyze before decision making.*

- *I would like to find out more on what career best suit me, I would speak to the researcher for that information.*
- *Resources I would use to find out more is; surf the internet and speak to a professional career guidance specialist.*

#### **MY SYSTEM OF CAREER INFLUENCES**

- *Me, I love my personality*
- *Being a woman*
- *Teacher's opinion*
- *Financial support*
- *What my family approved*

#### **4.3.10.2 General comment and reflection**

Mukelwe engaged freely with the My System of Career Influences. She seemed to be intrigued by the work book as she preferred to fill in her own responses instead of being interviewed orally by me. Mukelwe was focused during this activity, and she took her time to complete both diagrams.

#### **4.4 Debriefing on incident<sup>2</sup>**

Mukelwe was involved in a violent attack in an incident that unfolded one morning when Mukelwe was on her way to open her sister's salon for business. A man armed with a metal rod greeted Mukelwe and without hesitation hit her head with the metal rod twice, which made her collapse, the attacker took Mukelwe's mobile phone and fled the scene. Mukelwe lost consciousness for a short while and managed to crawl to the main road where neighbours found her and rushed her to hospital. She sustained mild head injuries and attributed the fact that she had not been killed by her attacker to God. She stated:

*God somewhere, there is a supernatural power in you know I think that, looking at how it happened and the way that guy knocked me, I couldn't feel the pain, I could hear that, I couldn't hear that bang going inside. And you the doctors said they are surprised that I wasn't I didn't, I wasn't unconscious cause I could still, I could still crawl to the road and ask for some help, so just, it made me realise ... there is a God there, like a God is always on our watch.....some*

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<sup>2</sup> During the time of writing this report Mukelwe had fully recovered and stated that she was more than ever determined to pursue her goals and nurture her spiritual growth.



people they might find it funny, I was saved by God, cause even the place where the guy attacked me, I think If I had, umm If I had laid there unconscious, I think the next person would have found me after long, maybe after, maybe around 10, because the road, they no longer use it the bridge just collapsed, so the cars no longer use that road, so it's quiet ... I wish the Holy Spirit can touch him and change, and change his ways 'cause seemingly I think maybe he is used to...

The next section will present a summary of the themes that emerge from the data.

The data collection techniques were used to elicit narration from Mukelwe as per the Life Design Model, which follows a non-linear process. The next section presents Mukelwe's Life Design Model.

## 4.5 Applying the Life Design Model

### 4.5.1 Procedure

A total of eight sessions of about an hour each were held. Two sessions were held in each of the first two stages; one in each of the third and fourth stages, and two in the fifth (the follow-up sessions (sixth stage) have not yet commenced). Self-reflection was facilitated during every session. Even though my role in the study was solely as a researcher, I will refer to myself as counsellor as per the Life Design Model.

### 4.5.2 Stages

**During the first stage** (constructing a working alliance) we attempted to facilitate understanding Mukelwe's stated problem for seeking career counselling. She stated:

*Sometimes I like my field of study and I think this is it! but sometimes I then get confused – like through my studies I get stuck ... especially when you try to find the time to do it practically, so sometimes you feel like it's useless, because I think currently our country doesn't appreciate our profession, they don't understand what it's all about... maybe they should give us a first priority, or maybe they should give us opportunities then maybe I would enjoy my career more.*

It was explained to her that she was the sole expert on her own life; the master of her own destiny. She and the counsellor would, however, work together to co-construct her future and co-design her life. In other words, the notion of co-constructing a working alliance was founded and agreed upon. Agreed upon aims included enhancing her self-awareness and career knowledge and arriving at a mutual understanding of what it meant to *enjoy my career*. Mukelwe, an undergraduate student, was confused,

devastated and unsure whether her career path would in future yield the *happiness and comfort* she desired.

**During the second stage** (mapping and exploring the system of subjective identity forms) (Guichard, 2005; 2008) we discussed the connection between Mukelwe's past experiences (e.g. coming top of grade 7; losing the father she had never met; undergoing an appendicitis operation and missing a school term; her brother-in-law's death; not being selected for the International Baccalaureate (IB) at Waterford), and the establishment of her own identity and realization of her potential. Mukelwe, who expressed a desire to become a doctor, a geologist, or an environmental researcher, showed a keen interest in the career of marketing). Her role models are professor Lydia Makhubu (the first Swazi woman to earn a doctorate), Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland (the first female prime minister of Norway) and Lindiwe Gwebu (minister of housing in Swaziland, who is also a pastor).

**During the third stage** (opening perspectives, discovering and re-authoring, reorganizing, revising, and revitalizing stories) Mukelwe's life story was re-narrated (based on the data that had been obtained during sessions one and two). Subsequently the rewriting of Mukelwe's life story commenced. It was respectfully highlighted that leaving her country might not be the best alternative, for a variety of reasons. It seemed more important at this stage to enhance Mukelwe's sense of self-identity, as well as her hope and optimism regarding career opportunities in her country. These aspects were explored and jointly assessed. I was at pains to ensure that Mukelwe would not view herself as *lost and confused* but, indeed, that she would work on realizing her identified assets and strengths and consider her weaknesses as potential strengths.

**During the fourth stage** (placing the problem in the new story and putting it into the new perspective) Mukelwe and I re-interpreted her situation. We 'rediscovered' personal strengths that presented an exciting new perspective and led to a 'twist in the plot'. Her ability to realize her desired identity was affirmed: *I am not lost. Actually I do have a family. The single parent situation in which I find myself is fulfilling. The fact that I am not an orphan, but educated, inspires me ... It is good to know that I do have people who understand me.* Mukelwe discovered a number of existing assets and support structures in her life: *It's like a sisterhood. It's nice having loyal friends, who have one's best interests at heart. I am by no means lost. I think I can rely on and trust my trust my instincts and work on my confidence.* She also remarked that it still seems possible to find a career path she will enjoy.

**During the fifth stage** (specifying some activities that trying on and actualize that identity), Mukelwe and I decided on a road map that would help her actualize the jointly agreed upon, co-constructed life designing strategy. Mukelwe and I decided to work on improving Mukelwe's capacity to utilize her

existing support structures, to consider various options before making decisions and to learn from her mistakes. It was agreed that Mukelwe would benefit from sharing her experiences with her family and friends, informing them that they are important in regard to her decision-making, but confirming that they cannot *live my life or choose for me*. Furthermore, she expressed an intention to think and analyze before making a decision, to take time to consider and explore various career options (including surfing the Internet and speaking to professional career guidance specialists to obtain more information). Mukelwe was requested to peruse the co-constructed plan of action (drawn up by the Mukelwe and myself) and judge whether this plan of action was in fact truthful and feasible.

She stated:

*Okay, initially I just knew if I needed a job, any kind of job, as long as I got paid and relieving, I didn't mind. But through this interview and the assessment I have realised how important it is to first find out which path or which career is really suitable for you in order not to be stuck in a profession which doesn't make you happy or you don't feel like you're really constructive or effective in any way. So it was like an eye opener to reflect what I have chosen so far. I have the option to move forward or maybe diverting to a more suitable career which would suit my personality and give me the satisfaction and fulfilment in life. I still want to ... pursue my ...academic goals. But you just need to keep the balance being spiritual the same time and being grateful and not thinking that you are doing all this things because you are smart because you can do it or because you are able. God has given us the brains, thinking capacity.*

#### 4.6 Mukelwe's reflective essay

Mukelwe related:

*I enjoyed being part of the study intensely. I felt like I was rekindling that burning desire I used to have when I was younger. Talking about my career made me question what really does it (career) mean to me? Do I really like my career? Is it what I intend to do? The interview made me reflect on my goals and desires.*

*However, there were times when I felt stuck when the answers didn't just flow or come straight. The whole exercise showed me how important it is to have role models or mentors, whom to look up to. In a way they give you some sense of direction and focus as you persevere to fulfil your goals.*

*Creating the collage ... The imagery journey was quite difficult for me, because it involved visualising the journey and its obstacles.*

*Looking as to what extent does the surroundings, family and friends influence me in decision making was also interesting. I will always consider these aspects in future when making personal decisions.*

## 4.7 Summary of themes

### 4.7.1 Overview

Various themes emerged from the data collected. For the purpose of this study, however, the main themes which will be focused upon are those that fall within the career adaptability dimensions explained in the preceding chapters. McMillan and Schumacher (2001) use the term “etic categories”, and they postulate that these are essential in the later phases of data analysis to formulate a distinctive social situation that is comprehensible to other researchers for knowledge development. The career adaptability dimensions will be presented according to Mukelwe’s scores in the *Career Adapt-Abilities Inventory (1.0)*.

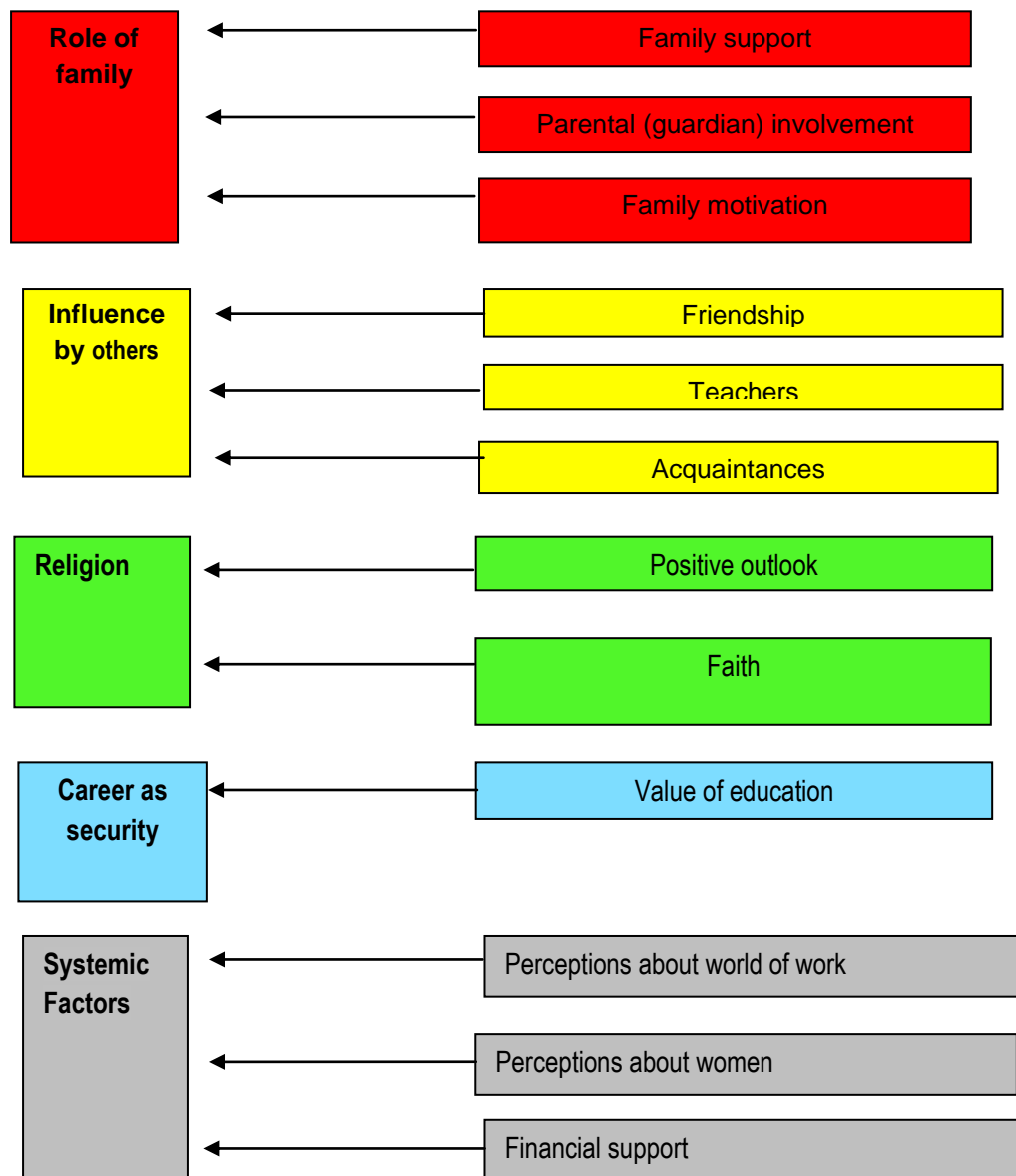
**Table 4.4: Summary of themes**

Career adaptability dimension	Assessment technique that contributed to the identification of the relevant theme
<b>1. Concern</b>	<p><b>Career Adapt-Abilities Inventory (1.0) (CAI):</b> Mukelwe scored 47.</p> <p><b>Collage:</b> <i>I like to organise things, about my dreams, things I would like to do.</i></p> <p><b>Value Scale:</b> <i>Personal development, which means to develop and to have plans about what she wants to do with her life.</i></p>
<b>2. Cooperation</b>	<p><b>Career Adapt-Abilities Inventory (1.0) (CAI):</b> Mukelwe scored 44.</p> <p>Group work/teamwork in the workplace is important to Mukelwe</p> <p><b>Collage:</b> <i>... It's like a sisterhood. It's nice having loyal friends, that they've got your back.</i></p> <p><b>Myers Briggs Type indicator:</b> <i>They enjoy work where they can interact with many different people.</i></p>
<b>3. Confidence</b>	<p><b>Career Adapt-Abilities Inventory (1.0) (CAI):</b> Mukelwe scored 42.</p> <p><i>But now I think I rely on, I trust my instincts...</i></p> <p><b>Collage:</b> <i>... I can do anything with that ...</i></p> <p>Chapter 5 <i>The Epitome</i></p> <p><b>Lifeline:</b> <i>I think being independent and brave, and mm, what else um setting an example, being a leader.</i></p>

Career adaptability dimension	Assessment technique that contributed to the identification of the relevant theme
4. Control	<p><b>Career Adapt-Abilities Inventory (1.0) (CAI):</b> Mukelwe scored 40.</p> <p><b>Career Story Interview:</b> <i>I was not even persuasive I was like coercive, saying 'you will buy the bread today'.</i></p> <p><i>I always wanted to be like her, she always had things going her way. This might need some context – 'her'?</i></p>
5. Curiosity	<p><b>Career Adapt-Abilities Inventory (1.0) (CAI):</b> Mukelwe scored 37.</p> <p><i>I talked to people who have done the course who are actually working well.</i></p> <p><b>Lifeline:</b> <i>... ask him all the questions I had in me.</i></p> <p><i>At the time I wanted to get some sort of confirmation – I just wanted an explanation.</i></p>

The themes reveal that Mukelwe has high career adaptability as she scored 94.45% on the inventory. She is concerned about her future, cooperative in team projects and confident about her career. Mukelwe's control dimension was second from the lowest. From my observations and interaction with her it seems that her lack of control is subjective. In my view she seems to be in control of her life. She has actively gone out on her own to seek part time job opportunities, financial aid and has approached people in her field to make sure she is ready and well prepared for the world of work. Even though Mukelwe scored low on curiosity in the CAI, other data collection instruments indicate that she is inquisitive and persistent, and striving to obtain answers and assurance regarding her field of study. Mukelwe is industrious and strives for excellence in her work. This confirms the use of both qualitative and quantitative data collection instruments yields a more comprehensive picture of the participant.

The follow-up questions and reflection after each activity enabled me and Mukelwe to reach to an agreement and understanding of her career profile more especially her career adaptability. In fact, many scholars have proposed a comprehensive assessment that the use of both qualitative and quantitative assessment techniques, especially in instances where culture is a factor or where international instruments have been adapted for the participant (De Bruin & De Bruin, 2005; De Bruin, 2005; Savickas, 1993; Stead & Watson, 2005). During the transcription process other themes emerged, which I surmise are significant to Mukelwe's career adaptability, i.e.:



**Figure 4.1: Presentation of general themes and sub-themes**

#### **4.7.2 The role of family**

Throughout Mukelwe's career story her family has always been there to support her, her sister, who has also been her guardian since childhood, has been involved in advising her about career choice and facing general challenges. The fact that Mukelwe's siblings were illiterate inspired her to pursue an academic career.

#### **4.7.3 External support**

Mukelwe values friendship, her friends have been there to offer her emotional support, fun and career advice. Her teachers always encouraged her to do her best, and even advised her to pursue a career in medicine. Their belief in her abilities boosted her confidence and made her more concerned and curious about her career future.

#### **4.7.4 Religion**

Mukelwe values God (Jehovah) she believes that God has a plan for her life. Even though Mukelwe's spirituality was not prominent during the earlier sessions it was the core of her narrations in the second or latter set of sessions. When my supervisor advised me to do a debriefing session with Mukelwe about her attack I was sceptical. After the debriefing session, however, I realized that I would have missed an important aspect regarding Mukelwe if I had not conducted the debriefing session. Mukelwe seeks the Lord's guidance in all she does, and she shared that the incident made her appreciate life more, made her more grateful for her Blessings and motivated her to prioritize her future goals. This emphasizes the role of chance in individuals' career development, as chance events are a key component in the formation careering context, and have an imperative function regarding vocational aspects (Chen, 2006).

#### **4.7.5 Career as security**

Mukelwe believes a stable job will secure her a comfortable future. She appreciates and values material or monetary success. Mukelwe believes she can achieve greater things in her life with good quality education. As she aspires to be a professor, her career anchor could be considered as *general managerial competence* (Schreduer & Coetzee, 2006). Individuals who regard general managerial competence as a career anchor enjoy high levels of responsibility, thrive on challenge and leadership and tend to measure themselves by their salary level. One of the rewards characteristic of this career anchor is promotion to higher responsibility, rank, title and salary.

#### **4.7.6 Systemic factors**

The systemic factors that have shaped Mukelwe's career adaptability include: financial support, job opportunities, society's view of her current field of study and pay. Contrary to my assumption that a number of socio-cultural factors especially traditional practices and beliefs have an influence on the participant's career development, Mukelwe did not elaborate much on socio-cultural factors that might influence her career development.

## 4.8 Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the results from the instruments and techniques that were used to facilitate a life designing approach to depict Mukelwe's career story. The data was analysed and interpreted in order to explore factors that may hinder or augment the career adaptability of Mukelwe, a young woman in Swaziland. The results of the study were triangulated and discussed in relation to the relevant literature. In chapter five, which follows, an outline will be provided of possible contributions and limitations of the study, and in addition, recommendations concerning further research, training and practice will be indicated.



## **5. CONCLUSION**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The results of the study were presented in chapter four. Chapter five concludes the study, provides a chapter overview, answers the questions posed in chapter one, makes recommendations based on the findings and finally draws conclusions based on the findings.

### **5.2 Chapter overview**

#### **5.2.1 Chapter one**

Chapter one provides an introductory overview of the study, elaborates a number of issues related to the research design and delineates the framework for the rest of the mini-thesis. My brief discussion of a global perspective on career adaptability, the career development of women, and the discussion of a local perspective on issues surrounding the career development of women in Swaziland set a conceptual and theoretical backdrop for my study.

#### **5.2.2 Chapter two**

Chapter two contains a comprehensive literature review and explores relevant theories and concepts. In chapter two I focus on literature that relates to the career adaptability and career development of women, as well as gender related issues, and I propose a link between these various aspects of the literature.

#### **5.2.3 Chapter three**

Chapter three comprises a description of the research process, procedures and instruments, and also addresses quality assurance criteria, my role as a researcher and ethical issues. The research process is described in detail to enhance the quality and accuracy of the study and to ensure ethical accountability. The social constructivist-interpretivist paradigm which informs the entire research study is an integral part of the chapter, encompassing my approach to my engagement with the participant, the choice of research design and data collection methods.

#### **5.2.4 Chapter four**

In chapter four I provide an overview of the results and findings of the study, in which a Life Design Model was used to present Mukelwe's career story. The data was analysed and interpreted to explore factors that may hinder or augment the career adaptability of Mukelwe, a young woman in Swaziland.

Dimensions of career adaptability were identified in the data and translated into major themes, while sub-themes also emerged. The sub-themes identified and elaborated on in chapter four include the role of family, influence of others, career as security, religion, and systemic factors.

### **5.2.5 Chapter five**

In chapter five, I describe the possible contributions and limitations of the study and in addition, offer recommendations regarding further research, training and practice.

## **5.3 Answering the research question**

The following questions were posed:

- **What are some of the career adaptability needs of a young woman in Super's (1957; 1983 & 1990; Super cited in Watson & Stead, 2006) exploration life stage?**

From the results of the study the identified career adaptability needs of a young woman in the exploration stage are as follows: career counselling and more job opportunities are required for young women who experience feelings of inadequacy, or perceive themselves as less suitable for job opportunities than men.

The participant in my study indicated that she had to rely on her own resources to obtain information regarding her course. The findings of this study highlight a need for formal mentorship or internship programmes in Swaziland, which could be incorporated into the scope or requirements of rare and specialised fields, such as environmental sciences.

- **How do socio-cultural factors influence the career adaptability of a young woman in Swaziland?**

The participant indicated that culture influenced her career decision and choice. She also indicated that her family's socio economic circumstances propelled her to select an alternative field of study, instead of studying medicine, which she could not afford at the time. Religion, especially her faith in God, could be a factor that contributes to increasing her career adaptability, especially her career confidence.

- **How does a young Swazi woman experience the lack of career counselling in Swaziland?**

From this case study it was evident that the participant perceived the lack of career counselling to have an adverse effect on her progression in her career and she repeatedly verbalised her frustrations about it.

- **Which strategies might augment the career adaptability and self-realisation of Swazi women?**

Career counselling following a combined traditional/post-modern approach should be introduced in Swaziland to facilitate accountable career counselling. Women in particular are in dire need of career counselling, therefore practitioners could be trained in this paradigm and encouraged to use methods and instruments that are consistent with the combined approach referred to above. Women can create their own vicarious learning opportunities by approaching their prospective employers for internship or learning opportunities. The findings of this study suggest a need for mentorship or internship programmes for women in particular, in Swaziland. As Hackett and Betz (1981) postulate, women ought to have vicarious learning experiences to boost, among other aspects, their self-efficacy beliefs. Similarly a study conducted in Australia (Tharenou, 2005) suggests that mentor career support is a useful support to help women's overall hierarchical advancement.

Career intervention needs to focus on enhancing the career adaptability dimensions concern, control, curiosity, confidence and cooperation, by means of: orientation exercises, decisional training, information seeking activities, self-esteem building activities and group work activities (Hartung, 2007).

Lastly, and of paramount importance, the main research question addressed was:

- **How does a young woman in a developing country (Swaziland) adapt to transitions in her life?**

From the data gathered it is evident that for a young woman to adapt to transitions in her life she ought to take charge of her career development actively, for example, seek funding for her studies, be determined and exercise self control, and also display high levels of resilience in the midst of socio-cultural factors that are often not conducive to the negotiation of career-related transitions.

#### 5.4 Reflections on the research process (extracts from my research journal)

As an educational psychologist in training it was very challenging for me to maintain a pure researcher role. The nature of the Life Design Model, which entails active listening (rephrasing, summarising and asking for clarity) and facilitating reflection, also propelled me to consider my therapeutic role. I often had to consciously remind myself of my role as researcher, rather than therapist.

Reflecting on the Life Design Model which was used with the aim of simultaneously exploring and increasing the participant's career adaptability, narratability and activity, I would say it was surprisingly applicable to the Swazi context. Through engaging in meaningful activities the participant and I continued to co-construct her life story. By means of my facilitation of a reflection exercise at the end of each activity in the different phases the participant was able to adopt new perspectives and reframe her career story. As partners, we (re-)designed her life by investigating and negotiating her preoccupations and past experiences. This was feasible, and because the model is non-linear (it does not have a set of stages to follow), it allowed me to adapt in terms of tools and techniques. Engaging in the Life Design Model was a meaningful experience to me and the participant in the sense that interpretations were subjective.

Most of the assessment techniques and instruments used with the client were non-threatening and facilitated storytelling well. The participant, however, found the imagery journey exercise difficult. A possible reason could be the fact that she had shared with me that sometimes when she closes her eyes she is unable to stop seeing images of the perpetrator who assaulted her. The experience could possibly be explained by the fact that using imagery in this way was an extremely foreign idea to her. In this light the use of indigenous instruments and techniques in the Life Design Model is an area worth exploring.

I wish to state tentatively that the Life Design Model can be applied in different contexts, because it allows the use of post-modern techniques and is based mainly on the narrative approach, stories are in fact a universal way to share experiences, teach and provide guidance (Chope & Consoli, 2007).

#### 5.5 Limitations

The limitations regarding this study include the limited possibility of making generalisations, since a single case study is not representative of the entire population of young women in Swaziland. The specific focus in the study was the **career adaptability of young women in Swaziland**. The results are

therefore unique to this context and might not be transferable to other contexts. As a result of having only one participant in the study, most of the findings are based on her experiences, perceptions, beliefs and knowledge. The findings might in fact not be a true reflection of the experiences of all, or even most women in Swaziland. For example, women in rural areas, women who have not received formal education, women with children and women in other life stages, to name but a few.

A further limitation to the study is that the scientific literature on the career development of women in Swaziland and Africa in general is limited. Studies conducted on women in Swaziland are usually in the area of HIV & AIDS. As most of these studies were not relevant to my research I was obliged to rely mainly on Western literature.

## **5.6 Contribution of the study**

The study could be useful in various fields of scholarship, namely human resources/industrial psychology, educational/career psychology, education, gender studies and political studies, as well as to the general public.

Psychology practitioners can benefit from the study by becoming aware of the career adaptability needs of clients who consult them in regard to career management, job burnout, or for general career guidance and counselling. Using the Life Design Model, practitioners can enable and empower clients to manage their lives by facilitating the adoption of new and positive perspectives. Educators may benefit from the findings in that they may be able to incorporate some of the strategies suggested in the study into their training to enhance career adaptability. The findings of the study can also be useful to gender and political activists and other stakeholders who need to inform, advise or develop training or employment policies in Swaziland, and perhaps in other developing countries too.

## **5.7 Recommendations**

The following recommendations are suggested regarding training, further research and practice.

### **5.7.1 Recommendations for training**

The study has shown that career adaptability is a lifelong competency that must be nurtured to avoid job-burnout and other career issues later in the career life span. Training institutions should incorporate activities that stimulate the necessary career dimensions in learners into their programmes. A number of examples are presented in the table below:

**Table 5.1: Career intervention at various education levels**

Education Level	Example of career intervention
Pre-school, kindergarten, Montessori	Take a child to work days
Primary school	Career education, career counselling
High school, college	Career expositions, career counselling
Tertiary institutions (universities)	Career counselling, job shadowing
Adult education centres, community skills development centres and vocational centres	Career expo, career management

I believe that if the above career interventions presented in Stead & Watson, (2006) were offered at various training institutions they could stimulate and sustain career adaptability in their various contexts.

Savickas *et al.*, (2009: 247) have identified a research-practice gap globally and I agree with their recommendation that the gap between the world of research on the one hand, and training and application on the other, should be closed. They suggest that *“the training should keep to the following plan: (a) presentation of the crucial points from current scientific literature about the life-designing model, methods, and materials; (b) demonstration of life-designing interventions so that students participate in observational learning; (c) carefully evaluated homework assignments that require students to apply the theory and rehearse its techniques; (d) systematic analysis of results of student practica, service learning, and internship outcomes; and (e) competency assessment as a graduation requirement”*.

### **5.7.2 Recommendations for research**

The following possibilities are suggested for further research:

1. More extensive studies focusing on the career development, career advancement and career adaptability of individuals in Swaziland.
2. A comparative study in which more than one case is discussed, for example, comparing men and women, or old and young populations.
3. A longitudinal research study focusing on the implementation and evaluation of post-modern approaches in career counselling.

4. A longitudinal study focusing on the career adaptability of individuals, say from Super's growth stage to the establishment stage (Super, 1990, Super, 1983; Super, 1957 and Super cited in Watson & Stead, 2006).
5. An investigative study to determine the link between career adaptability and other career development competencies, such as career choice, career decision-making, career knowledge, career planning, career commitment and career motivation.

Such further research will benefit scholarship and extend knowledge regarding the career development of women and men in Swaziland. Since in most cases research and practice are interlinked, Reynolds-Dobbs, Thomas and Harrison (2008) suggest that researchers and practitioners should investigate areas of practice that may better support the career development of disadvantaged women.

### **5.7.3 Recommendations for practice**

It is evident from the data that there is a dire need for career counselling specialists to offer a variety of services, including career education, career guidance, career management and career counselling. It is strongly suggested that practitioners continue strive to be innovative in their assessment and intervention and to be wary of contextual factors that might hinder career adaptability and inevitably, career success. Psychologists are not usually cognisant of possible erroneous interpretations and decisions based on Western, American and European standardized instruments or tests that might discriminate in the Swaziland context against individuals who wish to pursue particular career paths or make informed career decisions.

## **5.8 Ethical aspects**

The participant gave permission and consent for the findings of the study to be published. While conducting the research I made every effort to ensure the protection of the participant, and she was constantly reminded that she could withdraw from the study at any point.

## **5.9 Conclusions**

This study focused upon career adaptability with specific reference to the career adaptability of a young Swazi woman. In the discussion of the research results the research questions were used to guide a synthesis of the findings, which imply that the Life Design Model can be implemented successfully among women in the Swaziland context. However, a far larger study is needed before this tentative conclusion can be confirmed.

The literature (Naidoo & May, 2006; Reynolds-Dobbs, Thomas & Harrison, 2008) highlights that barriers hindering the forward progression of women in the workplace are not being adequately addressed, and I am of the opinion that this will continue to pose threats to the career adaptability of women, especially in the Swazi context, where scholarly literature and research are limited.

I acknowledge that this study has explored a mere fraction of the career situation of women in Swaziland. I conclude that the findings indicate a possible useful strategy to enhance the career adaptability of young Swazi women on the one hand, and a dire need for further research in the area of the career development of women in Swaziland, regarding improvement in training as well as practice, on the other.



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## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

APPENDIX C: LETTER FROM EXTERNAL CODER TO CONFIRM HIS INVOLVEMENT

APPENDIX D: COLLAGE

APPENDIX E: LIFE LINE

APPENDIX F: VERBATIM TRANSCRIPTS OF LIFE LINE QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

APPENDIX G: EXTRACTS FROM JOURNAL





UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

**CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

**DEGREE AND PROJECT**

**INVESTIGATOR(S)**

**DEPARTMENT**

**DATE CONSIDERED**

**DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE**

**CLEARANCE NUMBER :**

EP09/11/03

MEd: Educational Psychology

The career adaptability of a young Swazi Woman.

TLC Nkambule

Department of Educational Psychology

01 August 2010

APPROVED

Please note:

*For Masters applications, ethical clearance is valid for 2 years*

*For PhD applications, ethical clearance is valid for 3 years.*

**CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS COMMITTEE** Prof L Ebersohn

DATE

01 August 2010

CC

Prof J.G. Maree

Ms Jeannie Beukes

This ethical clearance certificate is issued subject to the following conditions:

1. A signed personal declaration of responsibility
2. If the research question changes significantly so as to alter the nature of the study, a new application for ethical clearance must be submitted
3. It remains the students' responsibility to ensure that all the necessary forms for informed consent are kept for future queries.

Please quote the clearance number in all enquiries.

## The Career adaptability of young women in Swaziland

Dear Participant

I am currently enrolled to complete a Masters degree (Educational Psychology) at the University of Pretoria. As part of my Masters degree in Educational psychology, I am investigating the career adaptability of a young woman in Swaziland. The research aims to explore how you experienced a career transition or transitions in your career path and aims to gain an in-depth understanding of your career adaptability.

You are invited to participate in this research study. The following information regarding the study is provided to help you decide if you would like to take part.

Your participation in this research project is **voluntary** and confidential. You may decide to withdraw at any stage should you wish not to continue to participate in the research. You will not be asked to reveal any information that will allow your identity to be established by people who read the research.

As a research participant, you will be asked to:

- Complete questionnaires;
- Take part in an interviews;
- Write a reflective essay; and
- Take part in a follow up meeting to discuss the research findings, to ensure that I am giving accurate accounts of your opinions, views and feelings.

These activities will take place over 4 meetings and will take approximately 6 hours of your time. I will provide you with guidance for all these activities.

The discussion and interviews would be audio–recorded for research purposes.

The results from this study will be submitted to the University of Pretoria in the form of a dissertation, as part of the requirements for the Masters degree in Educational Psychology.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign this letter as a declaration of your consent, that is, you participate in this research project willingly and that you understand that you may withdraw from the research project at any time. Participation in the first phase of the project does not obligate you to participate in subsequent phases. However, should you decide to participate in follow-up interviews your participation is still voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. Under no circumstances will your identity be made known to others.

By signing this letter of informed consent you are giving permission for the following sources of data to be released (*please indicate your agreement to each statement by ticking the block, e.g. ☒* ):

- ☐ The verbatim transcription of the content recorded during interviews and discussions.

- ☐ The analysis, interpretation and reporting of the content discussed during the focus group interviews.
- ☐ Notes and reflections made by the researcher throughout the research process.

The following ethical principles apply:

- Participation is voluntary.
- You are free to withdraw from the project at any stage if you wish to do so.
- All information provided by you will be treated confidentially and anonymously.
- Participants will not receive any monetary compensation.
- No participating party will be harmed or placed at risk of any kind.
- No reference will be made to any information that may convey any particular personal or identifiable information.
- You reserve the right to access any information that has been collected throughout the research process at any time.
- You reserve the right to withdraw any information or data that you wish not to be released for publication.
- The research findings might be published in an accredited research journal, but confidentiality and anonymity will be honoured.

If you have any queries before or during the study, or after its completion, you are welcome to contact Prof. Maree, my Supervisor (012 420 2130) or myself (076 651 0807).

Yours sincerely

Temnotfo Lenhle Cartland Nkambule

### **Informed consent**

Having read the attached request for informed consent, I declare that I am fully aware of the nature and purpose of the study conducted by Temnotfo Lenhle Cartland Nkambule. I understand that all information will be treated anonymously and as strictly confidential. I further understand that all ethical considerations, as outlined in the request for consent, will be adhered to.

I hereby agree to: (a) participate in the study and (b) make myself available for interviews if required. I also consent to the publication of the research findings, subject to anonymity and confidentiality.

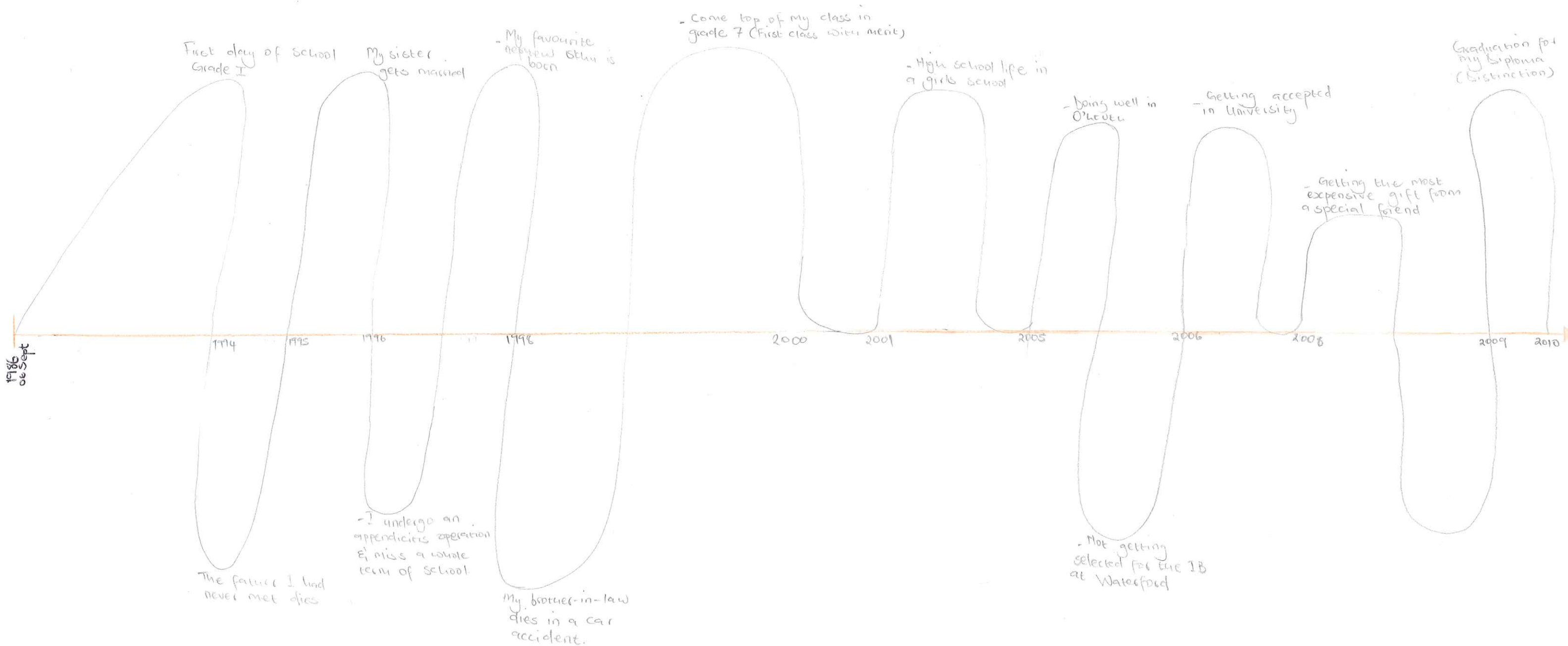
Participant's signature: ..... Date: .....

Supervisor's signature: ..... Date: .....

Researcher's signature: ..... Date: .....







APPENDIX F: VERBATIM TRANSCRIPTS OF LIFE LINE QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

Positive experiences	What do you remember about this event	What themes Emerge	What responses did you have	What skills emerge
First day of school	I think I was brave, I was brave, I never cried, when all the other children were busy crying for their parents, but I was too excited for the day	Education	From, okay, my mom was really happy, and relieved, that I didn't, you know, cry for her, and I think even my teacher, I think it was Mrs Teacher was, she kept on commending me, and telling the other kids that, "look at her, she isn't crying, why are you all crying" I think my mom was proud of me.	I think being independent and brave, and mm, what else mmm setting an example, being a leader.
My sister getting married	I remember it was, okay, she got married through the traditional, the kuteka system. I had never witnessed it, and she was caught by surprise, we had gone for Christmas, and we slept over, it happened on the 26 <sup>th</sup> of December, so I think her cries woke me up, and only to find that, you know, that cattle byre, where they do it, in the Swazi way, it was quite exciting, giggle funny, she was a grown up person who I have been looking up to crying, didn't understand the whole thing,	Family	Okay, first cause I was like, I was, I was the oldest amongst the other kids. My nephew, my nephews, they came up to me cause they needed answers and I didn't have any answers. The grannies, the older people, they didn't even want to entertain us. So they were trying to make me explain to the kids, and get them away from the whole thing.	Umm, it was, uh, being like a caregiver like, I had to comfort them, even though....., I didn't want to say it, I had to, you know, console them and tell them that no, everything is okay, they are not killing their mother, um, everything was fine. I was like a mother to them in a way, ya, I think being a, umm, what can I say, like this nurturing person like trying to console them, make them you know, calmer, something like that.
My favourite nephew Skhu was born	Mmm, on that day, it was on the 26 <sup>th</sup> December 98, we had to, it was Christmas the previous day and the Mother was heavily pregnant, but she was just pushing herself, trying to make you know, prepare the meals and everything else, the next morning, she just left without telling us that she was on labour, she just left	Family	Mmm, you know cause you know, everybody wanted to know what you receive for Christmas that year. And when we tell them that we have a new nephew, or there is a new baby in the house, the others were like wow, how did that happen, was it born on Christmas day, just like Jesus, like we were the talk of the class, when the other kids were talking about all of their	Umm, being like that you now have to be responsible, you now you have to help him, cause even when he wears a little bit pants on, trying to take care of him, ya, being responsible. I think in their own words, I was his nanny up to now.

	<p>with her car. During the day at around half past one, so she comes back, she's already, she had already delivered the child, but she had left it at around six and she's coming back with,...this bundle of joy, I was excited, it was like um, it was cold, cause it was the Boxing Day, the day of opening presents, it was, it was like the best gift to receive, even on that day, there was more of like the new toy of the house, it was exciting</p>		<p>exciting presents, and we got to tell them of the baby, yha.</p>	
<p>Come top of grade 7 (first class with merit)</p>	<p>Mmm, ok, actually, you know, I went to umm, I think it wasn't one of the best schools in Malkerns, everyone was looking down upon it because there is Malkerns valley there and that one was like the best school. And then we have more merits than them. I think there were three of us back then, and there were no failures at all. I was like in my class, the A Class, I was the only one who managed to get, you know, the good grade, so I remember when I went to get the newspaper, before I could even buy it, people had already calling to tell me that we saw your name, youve got a merit, ya</p>	<p>Education</p>	<p>Everyone was happy for me, especially my teachers, because they didn't ide do so well, and me coming top student, it was, its like I made a name for my school and the teachers, and I think even the local community started appreciating the school, you know. Umm, ya.</p>	<p>Umm, what can I think of, but I think from then on, from that day onwards, I found myself trying to live up to peoples expectations, you know, to always try to please people, cause you know that, there are so many people you would disappoint by not performing up to standards, cause people will always say things like " hy wena, your son is brainy, even when you did something dumb, that im no longer the same person they know, you know", maybe im no more, im no more um, what can I say, a book worm or something like that. But everyone is expecting me to do the same thing. And I had to be more responsible, or more dedicated, just to please people.</p>
<p>High school in a girl's school</p>	<p>Sigh, I remember, ok when i, was coming through the gate. Before you get in (through the gate), when you get into the gate, there is a wall fence and I could hear these voices. People screaming and I already; they've already</p>	<p>Education Friendship</p>	<p>It was like, people asked you: where you from; what school did you go to. Most of them have been to girls schools before, St Theresa, most of them, like, were from town and they were welcoming. There was no discrimination or feeling</p>	<p>Mmm, I think it was to be, you know?, being friendly, open in a new place you know nobody, you trying to make friends, mingling with others and ja! Sigh, I think...., Friendly relationships. Being able to make friends so</p>

	<p>told me that in high school, you get bullies and things like; how can I put it. Uhhh (initiation), its some sort of initiation, you know thing when you get to high school you do some sort sort of initiation just to welcome you, so when I heard all these people screaming and I was terrified thinking that oh my God! "whats happening in there and when I walked through the gate, and I saw all these "gals", it wasn't that scary like the way I had expected it to be. They were all like happy and welcoming each other. When I got there likely, there was not from my school but then just hit-it-off with a couple of "gals" and before the end of the day, I knew that things were going to be exciting in an all girls school.</p>		<p>like you out of place, sigh.</p>	<p>quickly and a new place.</p>
<p>Doing well in O'Level academic programme</p>	<p>Sigh, ja! You know, when you're in uh O-levels, you know that this is your breaking point, like either you make it or you don't. And this might determine your future prospect of getting to tertiary. Ok! I knew maybe I have a good chance of making it; but at the same time I was anxious cause everyone; was/ had gotten their results and were telling me how terrible it had all gone. And then I couldn't even go see them by myself. I asked my sister to get them for me. Only to find that I</p>	<p>Education</p>	<p>People were happy for me; congratulating me; asking me how many credits did you get and when I told them that I credited everything, they were like wow! That great!</p>	<p>At that place, at that time I told myself that from now on, I'll try to work harder and do my best, my utmost best, to achieve academically.</p>



	had done very well, and I was so relieved.			
Getting accepted in university	Ja, you see, during my year, my final year I think a lot of people had done exceptionally very well. We had in the top 10 or top 50, so many had done so well. People were getting like 7 credits, you know, 6, and know that I was in a tough competition so when I applied for a courses, for the same course. And then you knew that its going to be very tough and when they accepted mw I was over-joyed that I made the target point, maybe they would have chosen the cream, like the best and maybe I would have been left out. So it was a happy moment for me.	Education	My family was very excited that I will be the first one to go to tertiary. They were so happy they actually made a small braai, just to show how, how much they appreciate me into varsity.	I think its quite like the same one like, hey? It made me more serious and telling myself that when I get there, i'll just have to work hard and maintain my grades and more on, ja!
Getting the most expensive gift from a special friend	I remember my friend had gone overseas and I had asked her to bring me a gift, uhm, a laptop, cause I needed it for myself. I never thought she was going to bring it. When she brought it back, I think she kept it for some time and when I asked her later, she was like, "but you never asked me emmediately, I thought like you didn't want it, I bought it anyway". I was so excited, it just came handy, even up to now, I use it for my assignments and all	Friendship	My friends were like wow, oh! Its so nice; where did you get it and I said overseas, all the way from Japan. At that time, non of my friends and school mates had a laptop with a webcam. I think most of them, I inspire them; they were envious, others were happy.	Now I have computer skills, I now have a laptop handy, so many things I was experimenting with. Downloading stuff trying to put on; uhm what you call? Broadband through my phone, it made things much easier. I think my computer skills just became more pronounced, I got introduced to technology I learned more things I didn't know; like, you know, I never used to experiment with downloading stuff. I didn't know that viruses

	other academic work.			can crash your system.
Graduation for my diploma (distinction)	I think it was a happy moment for me, in my room we had all done so well. Ag, at first I didn't feel like for the graduation at the same time I thought it would be nice just to celebrate my accomplishment, its my qualification, I should be excited about it. It was a great to be past of that crowd. Your name being called upfront and everyone hearing it.	Education	People were happy for me; like you've done well, you'll do it, hang in there and you must always keep up your good work. And the lecturers were excited about it especially the department was happy.	Mmmm....., what skills emerged at that time? I can't think of it, uhm? I think what, ok! What it was just to, okay, as a person I hardly ever commend myself, I thought at that time I didn't find as being something for now, you have to celebrate it. But it just made me appreciate every little achievement that i've accomplished and to be grateful for having gone this far.
<b>Negative experiences</b>				
The father that I never met dies	Father: I think I was in grade two then and then my sister told me, I never thought I would, you know, be hurt so deeply. I was thinking I use have all these....., and he has never been there for me, done anything for me. He has fulfilled his role as a father. But I actually surprised myself cause I cried. I felt like, I felt cheated. I think that death cheated me of having an opportunity or a chance as a child of having a father/daughter relationship. So he was just snatched away from me before I could actually grow up, maybe get old enough to actually, you know, ask him all the questions I had in me. An eight year old couldn't voice all those	Family	Sigh, my mom was trying to comfort me, my sister, they were like comforting me telling me that now the future's alright , that I shouldn't even feel so much pain because I won't even miss him anyway because he wasn't really a father, you know those things like that.	I thought with him dying he would actually be the role model, you know, like the father , the man figure in my life. I hardly had that man figure I just had to pick from my brother-in-law and my brothers, which I don't even know if they are the perfect role models. So I think I just, even from today, I feel like I still don't really know what the best role model like in a man, what should he be like. I didn't have that opportunity to get to know all those kinds of things about men in particular or that relationship that a father and a daughter have. I don't know really, what did I learn from that, one thing is coming to my mind and that is just to appreciate what I have at my disposal, like to complain about not having a father around and thinking that maybe appreciate what my mom and sister had done for me, - I think

	concerns.			they have been the mother and father in one.
I undergo appendicitis operation and missed a whole term of school	Yes, I was in Gr 4 then and you know Gr 4 is like your a big person now – you're learning the big stuff. Its exciting, you do things like ..... and things you never used to do in Gr 3 and then I had to miss school and then having to be told that I will be having major surgery, I was terrified and after the operation I couldn't walk. I had to learn how to walk all over again using a ..... I was devastated at not being in school and playing with my friends ..... I don't know – I remember my school mates would come to visit me and tell me all about all the things they are doing at school. Even my teachers would come by just to let me feel like I am not alone.	Education and health		I think at that time I was a solidarity ..... and I was all by myself, being a little brave – knowing I was by myself and not being scared. Even having to endure that op I never cried because I knew it was going to save my life.
My brother-in- law dies in a car accident	When he came into my life I think the role of being a father and just when I was getting to know – that feeling of a male figure around and then he died. I think it was in '98 in November and during that time when you're approaching the first ..... and then he dies instantly without having been sick and thing like that, it was devastating. Yes, it was one of my lowest points but I gained the ..... of having, you know, a male figure again in my life.	Family	My family were trying to comfort me – everyone was there – they were supportive. Yes, trying to tell me that you will pass, telling me that it will never be the same again because you are like a ..... now but they were there you know. The family were trying to console us and make us feel better .	You know at that time, ..... I was the eldest and I was the only girl I had to be brave for the young ones. I wouldn't cry in front of them – I had to pretend that everything was ok to try to make them feel better. I think it just made me more mature for my age. I was already acting like a responsible mother to them than just being a carefree child. Things had changed over night
Not getting the selected for the IBM at Waterford	I was so devastated, I felt very bad. I kept on asking myself what went wrong, what did I	Education	At the time I wanted to get some sort of confirmation – I just wanted an explanation so	At the time it just made me realise that you can't be sure. Not all things in your life can be true and

	<p>do? I felt so disappointed in myself. It was so brief and short and having gone there and having done the interview you feel like you are already in and then I just get a brief phone call and a lady (the receptionist) says hello I am so sorry I just wanted to tell you that you didn't go through so there was no explanation as to why. They tell you that the competition was too high. I couldn't understand – I was so devastated</p>		<p>I had a .... with some of the people that I had gone with to the interview and there was one boy who was one of the top students in the country. He was from ... When he called ... to congratulate me, because I know that he got it only to find that he wasn't selected too and I was surprised because he had aggregate 6 so when he told me that he didn't get it, he said maybe they didn't see the good in me, they didn't see all the thing I had .... lost . He made me look at myself and made me think how come he is the best student in the country but he's not selected and yet not beaten up about it and he was just telling me that I must move on, something else will come around. He wasn't like .... make me feel better, like oh, this thing is just like a wind, if you didn't get it, it doesn't matter – it won't make any difference. There are so many things waiting for you and it made me feel better.</p>	<p>it just made me accept failure and not to be too short with myself like thinking I want things always my way. Yes, so it made me know that not every time things will always go the way I plan them to go, in other word, things will get twisted.</p>
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## APPENDIX G: EXTRACTS FROM JOURNAL

### ....Lost my proposal draft and most research material for chapter 1-3

This made me aware how crucial safe keeping research material is. I have decided to e-mail every single section immediately after saving it. I realised that if I had lost the participant's responses I will be in real big trouble. From now on I have decided to send electronic copies to my email (I hope this will decrease my chances of losing a lot of valuable information)....

### Got ethical clearance

...My ethics application was successful, I was delighted to receive such great news, at least something was going right....

### Literature review

...The literature review is a bit daunting especially since finding material on the career development of women in Swaziland.

Some of the constructs which seem related were becoming a bit confusing and challenging to integrate...

### Interpretivism to critical realism

...The proposal defence panel suggested that I consider changing my paradigm from interpretivism to critical realism. This was a very frustrating I was under extreme time pressure. Getting articles and material on critical realism or example of similar studies was difficult. I was glad when my supervisor and I decided that for such an exploratory study it is best to work with Social constructivist-Interpretivism paradigm.

### Meeting with Prof Mpofu

Prof Mpofu suggested that I use rural women from a village because they have "unique" career paths and dynamics. For example one woman might be a chicken farmer, dressmaker and a member of a women fellowship program. While another woman might

be only a homemaker. He said I should look at the factors that make one women focus on one aspect and not the other.

He said the study should be unique to the African, Swazi context. These women's life designs are different from the life designs of women's typical westernised formal careers.

Focusing on the unique issues faced by traditional/typical Swazi women is more meaningful in the African context and these are typical women cases. He said the stories of these women are rich and will yield useful, practical and original findings and recommendations.

He suggested that I look up articles in other fields of study on gendered roles

### *Methodology*

He suggested that I should stick to interpretivism for now and only consider critical realism for doctoral studies. He said my aim should be to explore the various issues that play a role in the career adaptability of the women

### *Sample*

Prof Mpofu suggested that I use at least 3 participants for my studies at different life stages to see the interplay between career and life stages among other factors. He said that I should provide a full description of the participants to interest the data.

### *Qualitative research and Ethics*

He also spoke to me about bracketing which he explained as trying ones best not to overly influence the research because of preconceived knowledge and experiences.

### *References*

Prof Mpofu suggested that I look articles on rural sociology, agriculture, reports by United Nations organisations, rural development and women studies. Since those are areas where I will find authentic cases about Swazi women. Even though I did not follow most of Prof Mpofus advise I believe what he suggested was very useful especially in a context such as Swaziland and South Africa...