

**THE INFLUENCE OF LIFE DESIGN-BASED COUNSELLING ON LEARNERS
WITH CAREER INDECISION FROM RESOURCE-CONSTRAINED COMMUNITIES**

by

Che Jude

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR

Department of Educational Psychology

Faculty of Education

University of Pretoria

Supervisor

Prof J.G. (Kobus) Maree

PRETORIA

April 2022

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Che Jude, student number 15264042, hereby declare that this dissertation, “**The influence of design-based counselling on learners with career indecision from resource-constrained communities**”, submitted in accordance with the requirements for the Philosophiae Doctor degree at the University of Pretoria, Faculty of Education in the Department of Educational Psychology, is my original work and has not previously been submitted to any other institution of higher learning. All sources cited or quoted in this research paper are indicated and acknowledged with a comprehensive list of references.

Che Jude

Date

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
Faculty of Education

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

CLEARANCE NUMBER: **EP 19/06/02**

DEGREE AND PROJECT

PhD

The influence of design-based counselling on learners with career indecision from resource-constrained communities

INVESTIGATOR

Mr Che Jude

DEPARTMENT

Educational Psychology

APPROVAL TO COMMENCE STUDY

30 August 2019

DATE OF CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

09 November 2021

CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS COMMITTEE: Prof Funke Omidire



CC

Ms Thandi Mngomezulu
Prof J.G Maree

This Ethics Clearance Certificate should be read in conjunction with the Integrated Declaration Form (D08) which specifies details regarding:

- Compliance with approved research protocol,
- No significant changes,
- Informed consent/assent,
- Adverse experience or undue risk,
- Registered title, and
- Data storage requirements.

DECLARATION FROM LANGUAGE EDITOR

DECLARATION

I herewith declare that I,

Isabel M Claassen (APSTrans (SATI)),

full-time freelance translator, editor and language consultant

of

1367 Lawson Avenue, Waverley, Pretoria
(cell 082 701 7922)

and

accredited member (No. 1000583) of the South African Translators' Institute (SATI)

completed the *language editing** of the thesis entitled

THE INFLUENCE OF LIFE DESIGN-BASED COUNSELLING ON LEARNERS WITH CAREER INDECISION FROM RESOURCE-CONSTRAINED COMMUNITIES

which had been submitted to me by

Mr Jude Che

Student number 15264042

in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

PhD Educational Psychology

University of Pretoria

E-mail: che.jude@yahoo.com

Cell 071 466 8229 / 071 466 8229

Date completed: 18-11-2021

**Please note that no responsibility can be taken for the veracity of statements or arguments in the document concerned or for changes made subsequent to the completion of language editing. Also remember that content editing is not part of a language editor's task and is in fact unethical.*

DECLARATION FROM EXTERNAL CODER

LETTER FROM THE EXTERNAL CODER



education
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

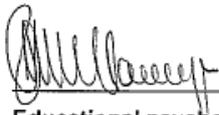
Ikhamanga Building, Government Boulevard Riverside Park, Mpumalanga Province
Private Bag x 11341, Mbombela, 1200
Tel: 013 766 5552/5115, Toll Free Line: 0800 203 116

29 NOVEMBER 2021

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Hereby I, Peter Patrick Mahlangu confirm that I have acted as Mr Che Jude's external coder. I have checked his data analysis and agree with the findings. I believe that the themes and subthemes identified in his study have been reported accurately.

Yours sincerely



Educational psychologist (PR NO: 0294713)

B.Ed, M.ED (UP)

Email: mahlangu peter10@gmail.com

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the following people:

- ❖ Prof J.G. Maree, my research supervisor, for his invaluable advice, guidance, and inspiring motivation during difficult times of the research.
- ❖ My siblings – Ngum, Fru, Fon, Nche, Anye, Bih, Cheh Tibu, and Lum – for their continuous support in multiple forms.
- ❖ The principals and governing bodies of the schools involved for permitting me to conduct this research.
- ❖ Each participant who willingly and enthusiastically participated in the life design intervention and took the courage to share their stories. You inspired me more than you can imagine.
- ❖ Mrs Isabel Claassen, for language editing of this document.
- ❖ Mrs Mardeleen Müller, for her technical editing of this document.
- ❖ Mrs Joyce Jordaan of the University of Pretoria's Department of Statistics for her assistance in analysing, interpreting, and presenting the quantitative results generated during the research process.
- ❖ The Focolare of Taung for hosting me throughout the data gathering process.
- ❖ Messrs Walafrid Mhagama and Oliphant Lebogang for their exceptional support as research assistants.
- ❖ Dr Charles Abaaba, thanks to whom the last stages of the research were accomplished.
- ❖ Fr. Marc de Muelenare for supporting me all along with prayers.

ABSTRACT

The positivist approach, which dominated career counselling in the second half of the twentieth century in South Africa, has not adequately addressed clients' career concerns. Innovative ways are required to address career counselling challenges for learners in resource-constrained communities who often do not have access to relevant career counselling. Top among clients' concerns in career counselling is career indecision.

This study explores how life design-based counselling influences high school learners from resource-constrained communities when faced with career indecision. Embedded in social constructionism, the research questions are addressed using a mixed-method group-based intervention in a pre-test/post-test quasi-experimental design. A total of 91 learners (intervention group: N = 71, mean age of 18.00; standard deviation = 1.06; comparison group: N = 74; mean age of 17.41; standard deviation = 1.47) participated in the study.

Quantitative data was generated using the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS) and the Career Decision Difficulties Questionnaire (CDDQ). Drawings, reflective journal entries, semi-structured interviews conducted with the Career Interest Profile (CIP, version 6) (Maree, 2017a), and focus group interviews were sources of qualitative data. The *p*-value approach to hypothesis testing was employed to analyse the quantitative data, and inductive thematic analysis was used for analysing qualitative data in the current study.

The quantitative results indicate that life design-based counselling did lower participants' career indecision but there was an increase in the curiosity subscale of the CAAS. As for the qualitative outcomes, the intervention programme enhanced the career adaptability resources of participants in the intervention group and improved their ability to make career decisions. The overall results suggest that participants who took part in the life design intervention benefitted in planning for their future and preparing to leave school.

Key concepts: Career indecision, life design counselling, career adaptability, learner, resource-constrained community.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY	i
ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE.....	ii
DECLARATION FROM LANGUAGE EDITOR.....	iii
DECLARATION FROM EXTERNAL CODER.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
ABSTRACT.....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xiv
LIST OF TABLES	xv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xvii
CHAPTER 1: GENERAL ORIENTATION OF THE RESEARCH STUDY	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 BACKGROUND.....	2
1.2.1 Inequality and unemployment in South Africa	2
1.2.2 Career development/counselling challenges in marginalised contexts.	4
1.3 RATIONALE	6
1.3.1 Why I believe the research is worth conducting	6
1.3.2 Personal justification for doing this research	7
1.4 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE	8
1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	9
1.5.1 Primary research question.....	9
1.5.2 Secondary research questions	9
1.6 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS	9
1.6.1 Career indecision.....	10
1.6.2 Life design-based counselling	10
1.6.3 Career adaptability	10
1.6.4 Learners	11
1.6.5 Resource-constrained communities	11
1.7 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	11
1.7.1 Research design and sampling	11
1.7.2 Data generation and analysis	13

1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND THE RESEARCHER'S ROLE	13
1.9 THE STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION	13

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	14
2.1 INTRODUCTION	14
2.2 THE CHANGING WOLRD OF WORK.....	14
2.2.1 The 21st century and work	15
2.2.2 Economic waves and approaches that have guided career counselling	17
2.2.3 Postmodern approaches, merits of qual + quan assessment and concerns.....	18
2.3 CAREER INDECISION.....	20
2.3.1 Career indecision and adolescent development.....	22
2.3.2 Factors influencing and effects of career indecision	23
2.3.3 Career influences in low resource communities	25
2.3.4 Ways of dealing with career indecision.....	26
2.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	27
2.4.1 Narrative counselling	27
2.4.2 Career construction theory, principles, and practices	28
2.4.3 Self-construction.....	29
2.4.4 Career adaptability	29
2.4.5 Life themes.....	30
2.5 THE LIFE DESIGN FRAMEWORK.....	30
2.5.1 Presuppositions of the life design framework	32
2.5.2 The goals of life design-based interventions	32
2.6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	33
2.7 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE	36
2.8 OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY	37

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	38
3.1 INTRODUCTION	38
3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN	38
3.2.1 Mixed methods design.....	38
3.2.2 Mixed methods approach	39
3.2.3 Experimental design	39
3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	40
3.3.1 Sampling	41
3.3.2 Data gathering	42
3.3.2.1 Quantitative data gathering	45
3.3.2.2 Qualitative data gathering.....	48
3.3.2.3 Intervention strategy	50
3.3.2.4 Quantitative data analysis	51
3.3.3 Data analysis	51
3.3.3.1 Qualitative data analysis	52
3.3.3.2 Trustworthiness and credibility	53
3.4 ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER	55
3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	56
3.6 SUMMARY	57

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH RESULTS	58
4.1 INTRODUCTION	58
4.2 PARTICIPANT PROFILE	58
4.3 RESULTS OF QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS	59
4.3.1 Internal consistency/reliability	59
4.3.2 Descriptive statistics	60
4.3.2.1 Pre-intervention data analysis	60
4.3.2.2 Results of pre- and post-intervention data analysis within groups.....	62
4.4 RESULTS OF QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS	67
4.5 DISCUSSION OF QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS	83
4.5.1 Deductively identified themes and subthemes	83
4.5.2 Inductively identified themes and subthemes	84
4.6 CONCLUSION.....	86

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS	87
5.1 INTRODUCTION	87
5.2 QUANTITATIVE RESULTS	87
5.2.1 CAAS results	88
5.2.2 CDDQ results	90
5.3 QUALITATIVE RESULTS	92
5.3.1 Career adaptability resources	93
5.3.1.1 Concern	94
5.3.1.2 Control	94
5.3.1.3 Curiosity	95
5.3.1.4 Confidence	96
5.3.2 Career decision difficulties	97
5.3.3 Lack of readiness	97
5.3.4 Lack of information	98
5.3.5 Inconsistent information	99
5.3.6 Other career decision influences	101
5.3.6.1 Socioeconomic aspects	102
5.3.6.2 Subject combination choices	103
5.3.6.3 Academic achievements	103
5.3.6.4 Psychosocial issues	104
5.3.6.5 Language challenges	105
5.3.6.6 Helplessness and despair	106
5.3.6.7 Hope to succeed and help family	107
5.3.7 Value of the intervention	108
5.3.7.1 Changes due to the intervention	108
5.3.7.2 Cause of the changes	109
5.3.7.3 Preparedness to leave school	110
5.3.7.4 Additional help required	111
5.3.7.5 Improving the intervention	112
5.4 SOCIAL ACTOR, MOTIVATED AGENT, AND NARRATIVE AUTHOR...	113
5.5 OVERVIEW OF QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS	116
5.5.1 Divergent findings	117
5.5.2 Convergent findings	118
5.6 SUMMARY	118

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	120
6.1 INTRODUCTION	120
6.2 REVISITING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS	120
6.2.1 Descriptive questions	120
6.2.1.1 What are the factors contributing to career indecision among learners from resource-constrained communities?	120
6.2.1.2 What are the essential aspects of programmes currently utilised to help learners deal with career indecision?	121
6.2.1.3 What are the essential aspects of the life design-based counselling intervention utilised in this research?	122
6.2.2 Exploratory questions	123
6.2.2.1 How did the participants in the current study experience life design-based counselling?	123
6.2.2.2 How did the intervention influence participants' career indecision?	124
6.2.3 Primary research question	125
6.3 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	127
6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	128
6.5 PERSONAL REFLECTION ON THE STUDY	128
6.5.1 What would I have done differently?	129
6.5.2 Findings that were anticipated	129
6.5.3 Surprising findings	130
6.5.4 Disappointing findings	130
6.5.5 Unexpected findings	130
6.5.6 Personal meaning of the study to the researcher	131
6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS	132
6.6.1 Recommendations for the improvement of practice	132
6.6.2 Recommendations for further research	132
6.6.3 Recommendations for theory building	133
6.6.4 Recommendations for policy makers	133
6.7 CONCLUSION	134
REFERENCES	136
ANNEXURE A: LETTERS OF CONSENT/ASSENT	159
ANNEXURE B: PERMISSION LETTER FROM SCHOOLS	160
ANNEXURE C: INFORMED CONSENT	161
ANNEXURE D: PERMISSION LETTER FROM DISTRICT OFFICE	163
ANNEXURE E: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS	164
ANNEXURE F: EXEMPLAR PIECE OF CODED TEXT	165
ANNEXURE G: CD CONTAINING RELATIVE QUALITATIVE DATA	171

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework	35
Figure 3.1: A schematic representation of the research design.....	39
Figure 3.2: A schematic presentation of the research design.....	40
Figure 3.3: The Pre-test/Post-test comparison group design	42
Figure 4.1: Example of a participant’s drawings depicting how she felt about her career and how she should feel and think when the problem is resolved.....	78
Figure 4.2: An example of a lifeline indicating psychosocial challenges faced by a participant.....	81

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1: Data-gathering plan	12
Table 2.1: Development of career counselling in approximately the last two centuries.....	17
Table 2.2: Adolescent identity statuses	23
Table 3.1: Mixed methods data collection plan	43
Table 3.2: Links between research questions and data collection techniques.....	44
Table 3.3: Life design-based intervention activities	50
Table 4.1: Demographic information about participants and groups.....	58
Table 4.2: Cronbach alpha scores (for CAAS) for quasi-experimental and comparison groups.....	59
Table 4.3: Cronbach alpha scores (for CDDQ) for intervention and comparison groups	60
Table 4.4: CAAS pre-scores across the comparison and intervention groups	61
Table 4.5: CDDQ pre-scores across the comparison and intervention	62
Table 4.6: CAAS pre- and post-test scores for intervention group.....	63
Table 4.7: CAAS pre- and post-test scores for comparison group.....	63
Table 4.8: CDDQ pre- and post-test scores for comparison group	64
Table 4.9: CDDQ pre- and post-test scores for intervention group	65
Table 4.10: CAAS post-test scores for intervention and comparison groups	66
Table 4.11: CDDQ post-test scores for intervention and comparison groups	66
Table 4.12: System of reference (deductive analysis): Group and participant number	69
Table 4.13a: Themes and subthemes identified through thematic analysis.....	69
Table 4.13b: Inclusion and exclusion criteria utilised for Theme 1 (deductive analysis)	70
Table 4.14: Inclusion and exclusion criteria utilised for Themes 2, 3, and 4 (inductive analysis).....	71
Table 4.15: Inclusion and exclusion criteria utilised for Themes 5 and 6	72
Table 4.16: Findings relating to career adaptability resources.....	74
Table 4.17: Findings relating to career decision difficulties.....	75

Table 4.18: Findings relating to other career decision influences 79

Table 4.19: Findings relating to participants' experiences of the intervention 82

Table 5.1: Summary of the intervention regarding psychological self 116

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAAS	Career Adapt-Abilities Scale
CCI	Career Construction Interview
CCT	Career construction theory
CDDQ	Career Decision Difficulties Questionnaire
InclInfo	Inconsistent information
Iu	Unreliable information
LA	Lack of ways of obtaining additional information
LDC	Life design counselling
Ie	External conflicts
Ii	Internal conflict
Lo	Lack of information about occupations
LP	Lack of information about the career decision making process
LS	Lack of information about the self
Rd	Dysfunctional beliefs
Rm	Lack of motivation
Ri	General indecisiveness
SCT	Self-construction theory

CHAPTER 1: GENERAL ORIENTATION OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

“The trouble with our times is that the future is not what it used to be”. This statement by Paul Valery in 1938 is still valid today – in both the career counselling field and the world of work. The advancement in information communication technology and the increased speed at which information is spread worldwide have led to new realities in the work world, which caused career information to become redundant (Schwab, 2016) quickly. Over the last two decades, this progressive change has resulted in more significant numbers of individuals becoming increasingly uncertain about their future (Savickas, 2013). People are uncertain about their career decisions and find it difficult to recall what guided them in making their choices (Lease, 2004). Consequently, they increasingly feel alienated, frustrated, anxious and generally dissatisfied with their jobs (Maree, 2016a).

It seems that young people are an at-risk group (Lindstrom et al., 2013). They are exposed to unemployment early on in life and the early exposure instils feelings of hopelessness about the future. This exposure impacts their future career aspirations and lives in general (Rankin & Roberts, 2011). According to Cohen-Scali et al. (2018), industrialised countries are concerned because youths and young adults do not always master the social and psychological resources required to facilitate significant life transitions.

Career counsellors around the world (also in South Africa) are trying to address the challenges that career counselling clients face, despite having to deal with insufficient clarity about what the concept of work will soon mean. Unpredictability regarding what the future of work will entail is becoming increasingly arduous because traditional jobs are rapidly fading away and employers and employees views about the meaning of work and career are also changing (Maree, 2017b). Since it is a nation that embodies a multicultural and diverse socioeconomic population, South Africa (SA) stands out among countries where variances in career decision-making processes are most apparent. The significant disparity in socioeconomic status and income levels among South Africa’s population groups

poses a challenge to career practitioners, researchers, educators, and theorists. The career counselling field faces various emerging career issues that contradict traditional career conceptions. The complex nature of the work world, which is characterised by scarce job opportunities, poor working conditions, lack of decent work for many, challenges in making career decisions, and matters relating to social justice. These are all linked to the bigger issue of facilitating employability (in other words, facilitating entry into the job market and switching from one job to another within the context of fluctuating macroeconomic variables) (Maree, 2016b; Watson, 2013).

The current study seeks to support professionals in career counselling by advocating that people can acquire career adaptabilities or competencies that can enhance their ability to confront the unpredictability of what the future of work may hold. People with higher levels of resilience are theorised to have enhanced career adaptability skills and higher levels of employability (Nota & Rossier, 2015). The set of competencies that constitute career adaptability enhances an individual's readiness to weather challenges they will encounter to meet the demands of the evolving world of work (Savickas, 1997). Resilience and wellbeing are also promoted by traits that are associated with career adaptability. Some researchers have linked career adaptability to optimism, hope, future orientation (Santilli et al., 2016). Therefore, the competencies associated with career adaptability will bring forth resources from within individuals that will allow them to overcome barriers to securing and maintaining employment notwithstanding the unstable circumstances that the world of work presents.

1.2 BACKGROUND

Subsections 1.2.1 and 1.2.2 below provide a background to the current study.

1.2.1 Inequality and unemployment in South Africa

The appalling nature of South Africa's unequal society was depicted on the cover of *Time Magazine* on May 13, 2019 (Oxfam, 2013). The magazine refers to a considerable challenge to understand career development and provide career services. In 2019, Statistics South Africa reported that the rate of unemployment stood at 31%, which is exceedingly high compared to global standards. Close to half of South Africa's population of 55 million people live in chronic poverty.

Approximately 3.4 million South Africans aged 15 to 24 were not employed, not studying, or undertaking some form of training (Africa, 2019). That is the environment in which career development researchers are operating. Blustein et al. (2017) conclude that the South African economic context has given rise to significant questions about the utility of conventional wisdom in career psychology and unemployment studies, much of which is rooted in Western knowledge bases. Concern has been expressed by many researchers, including Akhurst and Mkhize (2006), Bischoff and Alexander (2008), Maree (2016c), Stead and Watson (1998), and Watson (2013), regarding the indiscriminate application of career counselling theory and practice where such practice is inappropriate. Therefore, researchers in South Africa must reflect on developments and consider the appropriateness of these Western perspectives for the construction of career development in the local context (Blustein et al., 2005; Stead & Watson, 2017).

Unemployment significantly affects many young South Africans who live in rural areas and townships; places most disadvantaged by the era of apartheid and its lingering legacy. A certain preconceived belief is strongly rooted in the minds of many people who live in townships and rural areas that pursuit of academic-based careers will end up in high paying jobs and occupations that will end their misery (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Hlatshwayo & Vally, 2014; Phasha, 2010; Tebele et al., 2015; Theron & Phasha, 2015; Theron & Theron, 2013; Van Breda, 2017). This belief means that young people's preconceived education and career aspirations have become scripted into the culture and manifest as something of importance that directs the choices and expectations of a group (Elwood & Murphy, 2015). Most parents and adults living in these rural areas and townships persistently persuade young people to invest in academic and professional career trajectories. Thus, these youths tend to neglect other possible routes that can lead to sustainable and decent employment, such as entrepreneurial and technical-vocational occupations. Interestingly, studies reveal that only 1% of young people who have graduated with a tertiary degree are not employed. Statistics, therefore, indicate that success in tertiary-level studies increases people's chances of finding a job, strengthening the cultural script of educational and career aspirations.

A cost comes with implementing the script mentioned above (i.e., educational trajectories as an antidote to hardship): young people's success depends on their capacity to provide financial support to their parents. This convention is referred to

as 'Black tax'. Young people must adhere to the process of 'Black tax' even though they live in a South African society that sustains structural inequity (Mhlungu, 2015; Ratlebjane, 2015). In South Africa's diverse context, structural injustice is what VanderPlaat (2016) and Young (2015) refer to as tangible and systemic; they predict adverse outcomes, and individuals have very little or no control over them. Although the 'Black tax' convention is not unique to the Black population group, its application is more prevalent within this group.

This convention remains strongly applicable among Black South Africans due to the disproportionate discrimination and marginalisation that people living in rural areas and townships have suffered in the past and continue to suffer (Mhlungu, 2015). There is a limit to the career-related decisions that young people from Black communities can make: the responsibility for their families' financial upkeep. This responsibility is associated with increased psychological pressure. Savickas (2012, p. 232) purports that the career constructions of young people from disadvantaged communities sustained by structural inequities are influenced by 'social expectations'. Concurrently, structural injustices within their communities are obstacles that hinder young people from realising the career aspirations imposed on them.

1.2.2 Career development/counselling challenges in marginalised contexts

When he visited South Africa in 1988, Super stated that "[c]areer development, for example, in some of the African and South Asian countries is a matter of fitting into what the family needs" (Freeman, 1993, p. 263). Career development researchers and theorists are better placed to take the lead in bringing about new ways in which career development in South Africa can be made more context-relevant. Their contribution will go a long way in addressing macrosystemic influences on individual career development. Career counsellors need to modify the practice of their profession in ways that will assist young people who live in marginalised communities. This support from career counsellors will assist the young people in designing lives that will enhance their adaptability and lead to positive outcomes and facilitate participation in economic activities and boost their self-esteem (Theron, 2017). In South Africa, as in most Western and industrialised societies, Rankin and Roberts (2011) argue that early exposure of young people to unemployment instils feelings of hopelessness about their future career trajectories.

Such feelings are not helpful to these young people, considering that psychological and social resources are needed to make major work-life transitions.

The psychosocial resources required to negotiate major transitions are not fostered in young people for various reasons. It is crucial to find ways to address these challenges because career counsellors – like other psychologists and helping professionals – are better placed to tackle the career adaptability of young people and challenge realities that perpetuate risk (Acevedo & Hernandez-Wolfe, 2014; Hart et al., 2016). Advocating career adaptability in circumstances where negative outcomes in young peoples' development are predictable (Masten, 2014) includes providing the support necessary for people to be able to negotiate different career and life transitions. In this regard people will have the capacity to withstand and accommodate career barriers and/or career turbulence that threaten to derail their career journeys (Arora & Rangnekar, 2016).

Del Corso and Rehfuss (2011, pp. 336-337) note that “the capacity for flexibility does not reside completely in individuals, rather [it is] formulated and developed through relationships with others. The attitudes or beliefs of family members, co-workers, supervisors, clients, organisations, government and the media, all impact and influence individuals' attitudes and beliefs concerning career-related decisions”. Communities could be assisted to reconsider the way young people are influenced. They should become supportive of young people in planning their futures and negotiating transitions in their lives. Providing psychosocial and psycho-educational support to expand adults' understanding of current occupations is one way of supporting the community. Introducing role models who embarked on diverse career journeys despite structural challenges is another way of supporting communities to reconsider how they influence young people.

Individuals, especially young people, could be assisted to reflect on their career stories and their decisions. According to David Tiedeman (Savickas, 2008), young people should give meaning to their vocational behaviour to understand where they are going. Imposing meaning on career behaviour requires young people to know their own story, which provides them with a sense of identity. Besides identity, career adaptability resources (concern, control, curiosity, and confidence) enable individuals to change chapters and how to go about the change. Career interventions can serve an important role in redirecting learners in rural and resource-constrained communities. Life design counselling can be used as a model

approach to assist high learners to tell their own stories, guiding families to support learners, and guiding learners to make appropriate choices. Against this background, the following section states the rationale of the current research.

1.3 RATIONALE

According to Bak (2004) and Leedy and Ormrod (2005), the purpose of a rationale is, firstly, to indicate how a researcher became interested in a particular topic. Secondly, it explains why s/he believes the research is worth conducting.

1.3.1 Why I believe the research is worth conducting

Narrative career counselling has been proven to be of value over the past three decades. Clients have consistently reported that the approach is respectful and valuable (Cook & Maree, 2016; Maree, 2015; Reh fuss & Sickinger, 2015) hence my decision to implement it. The narrative counselling approach is culturally sensitive, but more evidence is needed to confirm its effectiveness among marginalised populations. Researchers have been called upon by Blustein (2011), Eshelman and Rottinghaus (2015), Maree (2016b) and Theron (2017) to conduct research and report on narrative counselling with marginalised populations. The current study aims to respond to the international call to provide empirical evidence on narrative career counselling. It also tests the effectiveness of group-focused career intervention by modifying the career script that marginalised communities typically urge young people to enact.

Career construction as a science generally needs meticulous analysis of praxis (Maree, 2016c; Savickas et al., 2009). Equally important: implementing career construction will place career counsellors in a vantage position to support young people to develop resources required for optimal development and help to design successful lives that will enable them to make social contributions. Implementing a group-based career intervention will address the implicit challenges in restricted community-communicated career expectations by broadening the perspectives of youth within the community. This approach will allow career counsellors to engage meaningfully in championing the career adaptability of young people in marginalised communities who feel helpless and have been rendered vulnerable by disabling factors such as structural violence.

1.3.2 Personal justification for doing this research

I, as the researcher¹, was born, raised, and have worked in marginalised communities. My interest in the topic under investigation derives from familiarity with patterns of challenges regarding the career aspirations of young people living in such marginalised contexts. Peers and parents significantly influenced my career choice, which, considered retrospectively, reflects the desires and needs of the family and community in which I lived: a career in science would guarantee me a lucrative professional job and change my life. It was and still is quite common for parents and other adults (such as teachers) in my country of birth to insist that young people study hard to become successful in life. There is also a tendency among these adults to hold in high regard young people who do well at school and role models who work in academically oriented occupations. The attitude of adults towards people who make a living through developing other talents that are not based on school success does not enjoy the same esteem as those who excel at school. Theron (2016) argues that Basotho culture (as is the case with many other cultures, including the culture of the communities in the current study) values community, shared identity, and a sense of unity (referred to as ubuntu). She argues that, just as the values of that community guide the identities of young people living in a specific community, so too will their career aspirations be influenced by what is deemed important in the community in which they live. I also believe that quality of education, parents' level of education, and information, play an essential role in what learners decide to do in the future.

I experienced multiple challenges in times of transition and career decision making as a student. Working as an educator in low-resourced communities that offer limited career support services and few or no career counsellors, I struggled to guide students who faced difficulties deciding what to do once they graduated from high school. Further motivation for me to conduct this research stemmed from (on the one hand) the pain of listening to stories of high school graduates who made it through school but, due to lack of counselling, could not decide what field of study to pursue at the tertiary level and (on the other hand) students who dropped out due

¹ From here on (unless purposely specified otherwise), the term "the researcher" will refer to me, Che Jude

to a lack of guidance to follow different career trajectories based on training or work experience.

My option for using a mixed-methods approach has also been guided by my experience working as an educational psychologist and administering psychometric tests to learners from disadvantaged backgrounds. My observation, albeit limited to an internship period of one year, was that learners are often inclined to respond to questionnaires with a limited understanding of what is asked. When prompted or when certain concepts were explained, they would usually provide further essential information. The same learners who struggled to complete questionnaires were able to narrate stories upon which they could reflect, build a sense of identity and possible future self. Furthering research on life design-based counselling within a group context could contribute to developing alternative and appropriate counselling approaches that could be more suitable to and appropriate for South Africa's marginalised populations. It could successfully address some of the challenges that learners face in these marginalised communities.

1.4 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Research shows that for many students dropping out and changes in one's field of study among undergraduate students are related to career indecision (Albien & Naidoo, 2017; Maree, 2012c, 2016a; Morgan & Ness, 2003; Picard, 2012). High school learners (Grades 9 and 11) from marginalised communities face a point of transition that can result in career indecision. Most South African youth hardly receive any counselling, and they face the challenge of career indecision due to a lack of counselling services in their marginalised contexts (Albien, 2019; Albien & Naidoo, 2018; Alexander et al., 2009; Maree, 2016a; Maree & Beck, 2004b; McMahon & Patton, 2002; Theron, 2017). Rehfuss and Sickinger (2015) (writing from a North American perspective) argue that interventions can help promote growth in disadvantaged learners struggling with career decision making and career adaptability. For learners with higher levels of career adaptability, meaningful career decision-making is both an attainable standard and related to an enhanced sense of well-being (Hirschi, 2009).

Because of the above, the purpose of the current study was to explore the influence of life design counselling on learners struggling with career indecision who hail from resource-constrained communities.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions are discussed in the subsections that follow.

1.5.1 Primary research question

Based on the rationale of the study, the primary research question is formulated as follows:

- ❖ How does life design-based counselling influence learners with career indecision who hail from resource-constrained communities?²

1.5.2 Secondary research questions

Descriptive questions:

- ❖ What are the factors contributing to career indecision among learners from resource-constrained communities?
- ❖ What are the essential aspects of current programmes to help learners deal with career indecision?
- ❖ What are the essential aspects of the life design-based counselling intervention utilised in this research?

Exploratory questions:

- ❖ How did the participants in the current study experience life design-based counselling?
- ❖ How did the intervention influence participants' career indecision?

1.6 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

Important concepts, and how they apply to the current study are explained in this section.

² The reader is advised that this research question, while only referring to "career indecision", also talks to "career adaptability". Here the researcher agrees with Nota et al. (2016) and Hartung and Cadaret (2017), all of whom agree that enhancing people's career adaptability contributes to a decrease in their career indecision.

1.6.1 Career indecision

Career indecision, as referred to by Gati et al. (1996), involves difficulties that decision-makers encounter in the process of decision making. These can result in the learner avoiding a phase of career decision-making. The individual feels disoriented and can neither choose a career nor begin to pursue a professional pathway (Miller & Rottinghaus, 2014). Indecision can manifest in the form of doubt in previous choices or simply not knowing what to choose. In the current study, learners with career indecision were regarded as uncertain or struggling to decide on a career or study pathway after high school.

1.6.2 Life design-based counselling

Savickas (2010, p. 3) defines life design counselling as “an identity intervention that cultivates intention and action through storytelling. When people seek career counselling, they have a story to tell. They bring old stories to counselling, and they want to compose a new story with the counsellor. Life design interventions assist clients in elaborating and revising their identity narratives to comprehend and confront the traumas and transitions that a previous version of their life story could not accommodate”. Life design counselling interventions in the 21st century (Guichard, 2018, p. 237) has as its purpose, to assist individuals to respond to the general question: “By what kind of active life may I give meaning and perspective to my existence?” In the current study, life design counselling intervention is aimed to assist learners with career indecision to be less undecided and to create and act on possible future selves and career paths and aspirations.

1.6.3 Career adaptability

Career adaptability conveys the idea of change, which is inevitable in an individual’s life trajectory (Savickas, 1997). “Career adaptability as employed in career counselling enables career counsellors to work with individuals at various stages of their life trajectory to facilitate skills aimed at promoting a better anticipation of their choices; management of transitions; exploration of possibilities and choice of directions to increase fit and develop the self” (Maree, 2017b, p. 2). In the current study, career adaptability referred to how learners could address challenges they were facing. Such challenges included career indecision.

1.6.4 Learners

The South African Schools Act, Act 84 (1996), states that learners receive or are obliged to receive an education. Maree and Beck (2004b) refer to learners as individuals who are in or out of school, at the phase of transition between school and work, or who intend to proceed with further education. For the current study, learners included individuals between the ages of 16 and 23 who were in high school (public schools in resource-constrained communities) and at the phase of transition between school and work, or individuals who intended to proceed with further education.

1.6.5 Resource-constrained communities

These are urban, township or rural communities disadvantaged by South Africa's apartheid-era policies and its ongoing legacy. According to VanderPlaat (2016) and Young (2015), there are barriers (systemic and tangible) that set people up for a negative life outcome. Individuals living in resource-constrained communities have little or no control over the obstacles that stand in their way. Inferior schooling, lack of available caregivers, crime/violence, marginalisation and various forms of stereotyping are challenges experienced by people living in disadvantaged communities (Theron, 2016). They complicate the way young people in these communities negotiate their life paths. The resource-constrained communities in the current study (inhabited mainly by unemployed Black people) are affected by structural disadvantages – services such as quality education and career counselling are either lacking or people are unable to afford them.

1.7 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This section provides an overview of the research design used and the methodology applied in the current study. A detailed description of the research design, methodology, data collection, etc., is provided in Chapter 3.

1.7.1 Research design and sampling

A quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test comparison group design was used in the current study to assess the extent of change in the career indecision and adaptability of participants exposed to the intervention. The research project

represents a QUALITATIVE-QUANTITATIVE mode of inquiry, with equal priority given to both data sets.

Non-probability, purposive sampling was utilised in the current study. Participants were chosen based on specific criteria to allow me to engage with the research questions and interact with the dominant themes. I implemented life design-based intervention strategies in which all Grade 11 learners at selected schools (Friendly and Oasis High Schools – not the actual names of the schools) from resource-constrained communities could participate voluntarily. I was interested in exploring experiences of learners from marginalised communities that faced career transition. Grade 11 learners were targeted as they were likely to have many career needs. Learners' academic achievement in Grade 11 is the measure that is considered for provisional acceptance at South African universities. Table 1 below describes the data collection process and the planned activities and research sites.

Table 1.1: Data-gathering plan

Order	Planned activities /techniques	Research site	Approximate time frames
Step 1	Explanation of the research project and recruitment of participants from selected schools. Obtaining written informed consent/assent	School	60 minutes
Step 2	Planning of the intervention with participants	School	60 minutes
Step 3	Pre-test administration of CAAS and CDDQ (quantitative data collection techniques)	School	55 minutes
Step 4	Intervention – qualitative data collection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life design-based counselling techniques • Interviews • Observations • Conversation/Narratives • Focus group discussions 	School/community hall	Eight sessions of 50 minutes
Step 5	Post-test administration of quantitative data-gathering techniques (CAAS/CDDQ)	School	55 minutes

1.7.2 Data generation and analysis

Quantitative data for the current study was generated from pre- and post-test scores on the *Career Adapt-abilities Scale (CAAS)* South African Form (Maree, 2012b) and *Career Decision Difficulties Questionnaire (CDDQ)* (Gati et al., 1996). Quantitative data analysis was carried out by comparing participants' CAAS and CDDQ scores between and within groups prior to and after the experimental group's participation in the life design counselling intervention. I collaborated with the Department of Statistics at the University of Pretoria to analyse the quantitative data using various statistical procedures and comparisons.

Qualitative data was generated from participants' responses to structured interviews, drawings, reflective journal entries and focus group interviews. The data was subsequently analysed following a process outlined by Nieuwenhuis (2007), which required that themes be identified in the qualitative data before applying inductive reasoning.

1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND THE RESEARCHER'S ROLE

Ethical guidelines that apply to qualitative and quantitative research apply to mixed methods research (Caruth, 2013). The current study involved human beings and necessitated my adherence to guidelines that would safeguard the wellbeing of all role players. The ethical steps followed, and the procedures I believe in and stick to (as specified in the Ethics and Research Statement of the Faculty of Education of the University of Pretoria and The Professional Board for Psychology) are discussed in depth in Chapter 3.

1.9 THE STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

The layout of this dissertation is as follows:

Chapter 1: General orientation of the research study

Chapter 2: Literature review

Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

Chapter 4: Results of the research

Chapter 5: Discussion of the findings in relation to the existing literature on life-design counselling

Chapter 6: Findings, conclusions, and recommendations

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

An exploration of the influence of life-design counselling on learners who struggle with career indecision is the focus of the current study. Important constructs of the theoretical framework of the present study are examined, explained, and described in this chapter. The main concepts which provide a basis for the current study are discussed within the context of the relevant literature. The conceptual framework follows an explanation of the main theoretical concepts.

2.2 THE CHANGING WORLD OF WORK

McMahon et al. (2012) argue that the accelerated nature of change in work has made it necessary for people to reconstruct their vocational identities. Shifts in labour market arrangements and workplaces brought about due to competition and globalisation of the economy are compelling firms and employers to hire more employees on a contract basis than on permanent and long-term arrangements (McMahon & Yuen, 2009). The career path in many fields and occupations are no longer the same. Changes are taking place in various occupational fields and workplaces. Guichard (2009) contends that it is the individual's responsibility to design a life and manage transitions, not that of the organisation or employer. According to Mäkinen and Vanhalakka-Ruoho (2018), managing changes is problematic, especially so for learners in high school and young adults who are at the early stages of their career lives and most often still grappling with their vocational identity in times of career/subject choice and decision making.

Lindstrom et al. (2013) consider young people an at-risk group since the rapid changes in the work world have exposed them to the reality of unemployment at an early age. A sense of hopelessness regarding the future is inculcated in young people due to this early exposure and affects their future work trajectory (Rankin & Roberts, 2011). Such despair concerns Western societies because individuals are expected to draw from their psychological and social resources to address challenges when facing major work-life transitions. Cohen-Scali et al. (2018) claim that these resources are still developing in adolescents and young adults. Researchers in Africa, and South

Africa in particular, are obliged to reflect on progress in Eurocentric career research to better adapt to or adopt for their local context. This is because the situation of young people in Africa is more precarious than that of their European contemporaries. Blustein et al. (2005), Kuit (2006), and Stead and Watson (2017) argue that an examination or exploration of career construction of South African adolescents would help to narrow the gap in the knowledge base and practice of career development in the country.

2.2.1 The 21st century and work

Savickas et al. (2009) argue that, an understanding of the genesis of the life design approach fully warrants deep reflection on the events that have led to its development as a possible paradigm for career construction. Researchers have paid attention to the recent (dramatic) changes in the occupational world and the marked influence such changes have had on the careers of individuals (Sharf, 2010). Guichard (2015) argues that the past's social, organisational, and moral frame is no longer guaranteed in societies in transition. Workers of this century are increasingly becoming insecure, and the factors that contribute to this insecurity are numerous. Difficulties in predicting the changes in the occupational world have also made career choices more complex. The following statement backs up this assertion by Bańka and Hauziński (2015, p. 34): "Making life-changing decisions in a chaotic reality is increasingly difficult, and there is always a risk of failure, be it simply the assessment of pursued goals and sought-after values or in the goals themselves. Therefore, it is no surprise that nowadays people link the most important life issues with a career decision."

Nota and Rossier (2015) also maintain that career counsellors, just as their clients, face the challenges of insecurity and unemployment caused by the latest shifts in the work world. In the past decades, work arrangement was different in that employers guaranteed secure employment for their employees within the same company until they reached retirement age (Chen, 2007). Nowadays, job seekers must take on short-term contracts and ensure that they remain employable, as was predicted by Handy (1995) and Hughes (1997). Put differently, employees no longer have the assurance of lifelong employment and regular advancement they used to have from their employers. The concept 'dejobbing' has been used by Aswathappa (2005) to describe the practice whereby 21st century employers tend to specify the skill

set they require from potential employees instead of putting out adverts for particular jobs.

Various terms have been used to describe work situations in the current century. Of interest here are portfolio and protean careers which are descriptions attributed to people who, according to Fenwick (2004), contract their skills in various contexts and prefer to be self-employed. People rely more and more on themselves and what is important to them personally than on finding employment for career and life success. To help people deal with change and uncertainty, make important career-related decisions and self-manage, every person should have access to career counselling – regardless of the stage of their working lives (Verbruggen et al., 2013).

Doyle (2019) explains that people's inability to maintain a balance between work and social/private life, and the fact that specific skills and abilities that were useful once are no longer needed, account for one of the reasons why people move from one job to another rapidly and more frequently. The United States Bureau of Labour Statistics (BLS) (Doyle, 2017) has it that, on average, Americans switch jobs 12 times throughout their career lives. To help clients deal with the precarious situations in which they find themselves, counsellors and psychologists should arm themselves with the relevant practical skills and expertise. According to Hartung (2013), in a distinct period of history when there is a decline in economic activities and 'dejobbing' where jobs are replaced by assignments, the relationship between individuals' mental health and their work is detectable as they face up to and deal with ways in which they plan their careers, search for work opportunities, start new jobs, manage and adjust to work-related stress. The continual decrease of stable organisational structures that serve as a holding environment implies that people are expected to adapt to changes in the workplace continually. Therefore, workers must acquire skills that will assist them in managing their careers and self-regulate. People ought to become holding environments for themselves and others. Savickas et al. (2009) maintain that career counselling theory and practice have of necessity been influenced by significant shifts in the world of work. Hence, those responsible for supporting clients must develop prompt adaptive responses to these changes.

2.2.2 Economic waves and approaches that have guided career counselling

The prevailing economic situation around the world at any point in time influences the evolution of career counselling theories and practice generally. The gradual development of career counselling can better be comprehended within the context of the various economic waves that have characterised roughly the past two centuries (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Development of career counselling in approximately the last two centuries (Compiled from Maree, 2013a)

	Economic wave	Approximate era/period	Dominant workplace activities
1.	Agricultural	1850-1910	The land was used to make a living
2.	Industrial	1900-1950	Mass fabrication of goods – jobs were created (Molitor, 2000; Savickas, 2007)
3.	Service	1940–1990	Third-party expertise rendered specialised services.
4.	Information Communication Technology	1994-present	Rapid changes in the workplace and work content made more manageable by modern means of communication and computer technology (Hartung, 2011; Savickas, 2011a)

Savickas (2007) explains that the concept ‘jobs’ appeared during the second economic wave. The notion of ‘career’ (which developed within the third economic wave) was understood as a worker pursuing an occupation during their working life. Other aspects of a career involved being promoted and assuming complex responsibilities in an organisation (Savickas, 2000). However, this concept of progressing through the ranks to senior positions in organisations is fading away very quickly in many parts of the world (Bimrose, 2010).

The disintegration of jobs in the current century, Savickas (2011b) argues, has left career counsellors and psychologists in the vocations field asking some questions: “The employment premise of matching individuals to jobs is fading as the digital revolution produces jobless work. In response to the frequent transitions that they will

face as they move from project to project, individuals cannot maintain their employment, so they must maintain their employability” (2011b, p. 6).

Maree (2012c) contends that in the past, the work environment was structured such that people were matched to jobs, and the person-environment fit approach of career guidance worked well. Nowadays, people are required to take the responsibility of delineating a career journey, setting goals, and guiding themselves on how they will make their career aspirations come true. Maree argues further that the approach used in a stable environment does not adequately address the circumstances 21st-century workers have to deal with. The practice of administering psychometric tests to objectively assess, guide or counsel clients concerning career concerns in relative isolation has come under scrutiny, as this approach was not designed to assess subjective counselling experiences and variables (Hartung, 2011). In support, Hartung (2011), Nauta (2010), and Savickas et al. (2009) hold that people, just like their interests, are not static – they change over time. Borchard (1995) affirms that career choices that are guided exclusively by outcomes of objective assessment can let clients down in the long run.

2.2.3 Postmodern approaches, merits of qual + quan assessment and concerns

Hergenbahn and Henley (2013) used the term ‘postmodernism’ to refer to theories and approaches with close peculiarities such as qualitative, narrative, or storied perspectives. From the postmodern approach, reality comes into existence when different variables such as personal, historical and cultural contexts are taken into consideration (Taber et al. 2011). To make appropriate career choices and be successful in life designing, it is necessary to incorporate both the objective and subjective meanings that clients attribute to their career and life stories. Career counsellors who subscribe to a postmodern approach are as intent on understanding the subjective facet of career counselling as they are in explaining client’s objective test results (Watson & Kuit, 2007). Maree and Morgan (2012) reported that in recent years the design, development and implementation of narrative career counselling theories, techniques and instruments enhanced the value of and accorded considerable recognition to such theories.

An unavoidable and major paradigm shift in career counselling theory has taken place, one that has been brought about by the magnitude of changes in the world of work as discussed by some scholars such as Kuhn (1996), with its point of highest development being an integration of qualitative and quantitative approaches. According to Duffy and Dik (2009), clients' distinctiveness is ignored when quantitative methods are implemented in isolation. In contrast, more trustworthy and reliable results can be ensured if an integrated approach is implemented. To ensure greater reliability, the triangulation and crystallisation of assessment results can be attained by integrating quantitative and qualitative techniques. Clients are also assessed at different times to determine if their interest profiles have changed (Maree & Morgan, 2012).

The combined approach to career assessment, which entails integrating a quantitative approach with qualitative aspects, is increasingly being embraced by career counselling researchers and practitioners (Maree & Che, 2018; Maree, 2020a; Savickas, 2019). Career counsellors claim that combining the qualitative and quantitative (assessment, data-gathering, and counselling) approaches allows them (counsellors) to guide their clients make meaning in their lives, take ownership of and act on their career and life stories. Hence, they can empower their clients to become more adaptable, resilient, employable, and lifelong learners (Maree, 2013a). Maree (2013a) argues that combining qualitative and quantitative techniques demonstrates how 21st-century approaches to career counselling can provide a feasible supporting structure for understanding, interpreting, and channelling career-related behaviour. Savickas (2011a) avers that this combined approach holds the skills that will enable counsellors to assist their clients in constructing meaningful careers for themselves, designing their own lives and contributing to society.

Some scholars and practitioners (Fouad, 2001; Prediger, 1994; Subich, 2001) have expressed their disapproval of the switch from the entirely positivist approach to an integrated one, claiming there is inadequate evidence that necessitates the change, notwithstanding the reasons advanced in the preceding paragraphs. According to Maree (2013b), those who oppose the combined approach to career counselling are convinced that the qualitative paradigm has not been tried and tested appropriately. They believe that there is not enough scientific proof of it yielding better counselling outcomes than the traditional approach.

2.3 CAREER INDECISION

For the past 100 years, career indecision has featured prominently in career development and career counselling (Hacker et al., 2013; Lipshits-Brazilier et al., 2019; Lipshits-Brazilier et al., 2016; Pillay, 2019, June). This assertion of the prominence of career indecision in career counselling and career development reflects the persistent theoretical proposition made by Super (1994). Super pointed out the significant but challenging task that career decision making presents across different stages of development. Scholars such as Chartrand et al. (1990), Gati et al. (1996), Germeijs and De Boeck (2002) and Saka et al. (2008) paid attention to the structural models and measurement of career indecision. They found that the structural models of career indecision play an essential role in career counselling. Xu and Bhang (2019) reviewed progress in theory and practice made over the past twenty years. Their work provides the most recent review of career indecision structure and measurement.

Career decision making remains an important developmental task for adolescents and young adults. Making career decisions features among the most important decisions people make in the course of their entire life (Chuang et al., 2020; Lipshits-Brazilier et al., 2019). Nowadays, making a career decision is even more challenging, given that there are more career transitions to be negotiated (Kulcsár, Dobrean, and Gati (2020)). The process of career decision making involves a series of changes in the organisation of young peoples' lives (Gati et al., 1996). Feelings of uncertainty and insecurity may delay or even arrest the career decision-making process. The delay or stoppage of the process can partly be attributed to the economic and employment crises to which young adults are exposed these days.

Lipshits-Brazilier et al. (2016) and Osipow and Gati (1998) suggest that career indecision features among the most common issues regarding career counselling. Career indecision is a situation when a person cannot make a specific choice regarding education or a particular career trajectory due to various reasons such as anxiety or lack of information (Maree, 2020b). Osipow and Gati (1998) add to this definition by referring to career indecision as the inability to decide (when it is time to do so) about one's education or occupational interest. Some researchers believe that this definition of career indecision comes across as a linear concept and depicts it as an obstacle in an individual's career development. In contrast, current definitions of career indecision highlight the positive role of indecision and conceive it from a

normative perspective. According to Savickas (2011b), career indecision can be considered as a time when the client hesitates, wavers or observes a pause in the process of career development. Whereas Krumboltz (2009) considers career indecision as a time when a client becomes open to different career paths, Kreishok et al. (2009) prefer to see it as a state of adaptive uncertainty. Savickas (2015c) contends that the meaning of career indecision depends on the individual's objective circumstances and subjective narrative of career indecision. A definition proposed by Xu and Bhang (2019), which states that career indecision is "a state of being undecided about one's educational, occupational, or career-related path", seems to be the most inclusive.

Career decidedness is defined as the degree of an individual's confidence to pursue a specific career journey, and it is not considered a counselling goal in contemporary career counselling (Krumboltz, 2009; Savickas, 2015c). Career indecision, instead, is often regarded as a concern for career counselling clients. Gati et al. (1996) and Osipow and Gati (1998) point out that researchers have indicated that the nature and sources of career indecision are limiting factors in trying to lower career indecision. Whilst career decidedness shows a client's level of indecision, with decided and undecided as the opposite poles, career decision-making difficulties point directly to the origin or sources of career indecision (Gati et al., 1996; Osipow & Gati, 1998). Put differently, career decision-making difficulties delineate the factors that lead to career undecidedness, and their measurement could assist in providing valuable information for diagnosis and counselling (Gati et al., 1996; Xu & Tracey, 2017). Besides career indecision, there are other constructs that are close to, but differ from career decision-making. These constructs include Tracey's (2010) career choice certainty and Blustein and Flum's (1999) career commitment. Even though the constructs (career choice certainty and career commitment) are like career decidedness in assessing the status of career decision making, their assessment is limited to the perceptual level of a client's career choice.

An important first step to career counselling for career indecision is exploring and identifying clients' career decision-making difficulties. Lack of information and disapproval from significant others are two of many reasons individuals encounter decision-making difficulties, given that the individuals are at different stages of life. Gati et al. (1996) and Osipow and Gati (1998) conclude that different intervention strategies are needed for various problems of career indecision. The importance and

necessity of assessing the causes of career indecision to assist in designing appropriate interventions for each client cannot be overemphasised. Most of the psychometric tests and qualitative strategies and techniques employed in career assessment were developed in Global North contexts (North America and Western Europe). Few of these assessment measures have been adapted and re-standardised for use in non-European and non-Western countries. It is, therefore, imperative to conduct research at the local level, such as in South Africa and other developing countries, to come up with models and intervention strategies that will address local career counselling needs (Maree, 2020a, 2020b)

2.3.1 Career indecision and adolescent development

Erikson's (1968) theory on psychosocial development identifies eight different stages and describes the main psychosocial task as 'identity formation' during the adolescent stage. Erikson defines adolescence as the period when children transition into adulthood (12 to 18 years) (Sokol, 2009). During adolescence, appropriate career decision-making is an important developmental activity. While some adolescents experience challenges in making a career decision as passive (they are tagged as undecided), such challenges for others are rather pervasive and pathological (Gati et al., 2011). For others, the challenges linked with career decision-making arise from other sources. Maree (2019b) suggests that identity diffusion is among the five different types of career indecision challenges that are the basis of considering changing career decisions.

Identity diffusion is one of four different identity statuses, which, according to Marcia (1966, 1980), are ways in which adolescents (those in the later stages) deal with identity issues and identify their career development. The four statuses are hinged by the various levels of adolescents' commitment (high or low) to work roles and exploration (via examining of occupational roles). Based on the work of researchers such as Erikson, Marcia's explanation of the statuses is provided in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Adolescent identity statuses (Adapted from Maree, 2019)

Status category	Description
Identity diffusion (low commitment, low exploration)	Individuals in this category have neither decided on nor have clear career or philosophical goals –irrespective of whether they have gone through a career decision-making period.
Moratorium (low commitment, high exploration)	People in this group are in a career crisis and struggle to deal with career or conceptual issues.
Identity foreclosure (high commitment, low exploration)	These people have committed themselves to distinct career, occupational and ideological choices. Parents or significant others have chosen for them rather than they.
Identity achievement (high commitment, high exploration)	The individuals in this category have been exposed to career opportunities and have gone through a decision-making process, committed to a few distinct careers, jobs, and identify with certain ideas and perspectives.

2.3.2 Factors influencing and effects of career indecision

The definition of work as an activity primarily oriented at survival is still relevant for some population groups in contemporary South Africa. This is partly because access to education and economic opportunities for White people has remained more or less the same as in the apartheid years (Naidoo et al., 2017; Perry & Smith, 2017). This is strikingly different from the central supposition of career development (Blustein et al., 2017), which assumes that a career is a means of self-determination or activity that fulfils the individual. Another core premise of career development that is highly debated in developing world contexts holds that individuals have multiple career options from which they can choose (Perry & Smith, 2017). Unequal access to career choice implies limitations to career exploration, which further reduces opportunities for the individual. De Bruin and De Bruin (2017) emphasise the importance of exploring career barriers (real and imagined) as perceived by adolescents and young adults during counselling. The fact that 36.6% of young South Africans within the age bracket 15 to 34 are unemployed (Africa, 2019) is evidence of their vulnerability in the labour

market. I fully concur with Nicholas et al. (2006), who argue that it is important to carefully analyse concepts of access, choice, and careers with deprived community members. Some of these community members may have limited or no experience regarding access to or choice of a career.

A challenge facing career counselling in South Africa is seeking to contextualise persistent unemployment within the framework of the country's history and trends of unemployment (Blustein et al., 2017). The mining and agricultural sectors are the leading employers of people with low skills. Labour practices in the apartheid era forced low-skilled workers to migrate to find work and these migratory patterns of employment are still common today (Naidoo et al., 2017). A pernicious cycle of low employment was developed within specific communities and has persisted over generations. Darkey and Visagie (2013) assert that despite the end of apartheid, individuals with a low skill set in low employment communities have not been integrated into available jobs. Racial discrimination has hindered the absorption of people with low skills into the job market, because most Black people had no access to quality education. The International Labour Organisation (2014) claims that the challenge of historically marginalised community members finding work has been exacerbated by an ever-increasing dependence on information communication technology and similar skills in the world economy.

The educational and career development opportunities for youths are limited in South Africa in general and in townships and rural areas specifically. These limited opportunities are due to the poor quality of schools in townships and rural areas in South Africa, where attrition rates and grade repetition are very high (Albien, 2019; Graven, 2014). Vocational, technical, and career services are inadequate in schools situated in historically disadvantaged communities (Watson et al., 2014). There has been progress in promoting quality education, but many schools in South Africa still provide substandard education. This is evident in low levels of achievement in the Grade 12 exams in disadvantaged schools (Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010). Poorly qualified teachers, overcrowded classrooms, high teacher/learner ratios and limited resources are characteristic of poor schools (Townsend et al., 2007).

2.3.3 Career influences in low resource communities

Many South Africans who live in resource-constrained environments strongly support the idea that pursuing education pathways will subsequently lead to well-paying occupations and careers that will provide an escape from the hardship in which they find themselves (Theron, 2017; Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Hlatshwayo & Vally, 2014; Phasha, 2010; Tebele et al., 2015; Theron, 2015; Theron & Phasha, 2015; Theron & Theron, 2013; Van Breda, 2017). In other words, within resource-constrained communities, young people's educational and career aspirations are dictated or directed by the expectations and values of the community (Elwood & Murphy, 2015). The career choices made by young people from such communities have been scripted to determine the actions and what can be expected from the group. According to Theron and Phasha (2015), this script can enhance the resilience of both individuals and the group to adversities such as structural inequity. However, decisions made by young people to study at the tertiary level are very often not guided by career counsellors and, in most cases, are frustrated by the legacies of disadvantage (Education, 2010). This fact stands in the way of young people's efforts to pursue and achieve their educational aspirations.

Confirmation that academic and career-related success is believed to be a remedy to poverty has been reported by various South African scholars (Albien & Naidoo, 2016; Mhlongo & O'Neill, 2013; Phasha, 2010; Tebele et al., 2015; Theron, 2015; Theron et al., 2014). This belief is held by teachers, parents, older people, and the youth. Black South African youth, especially those affected most by apartheid and its legacy, are hardest hit by unemployment. However, of those young Black people who have obtained a degree or diploma at a tertiary learning institution, only a minimal number (1%) are not employed (Albien, 2019; Theron, 2017). This proves that a completed tertiary qualification buffers against unemployment and therefore strengthens or reinforces the cultural script of education and career aspirations in poor communities.

It is a challenge to enact this script – that pursuing an academic career will culminate in alleviating poverty – because young Black people are obliged to provide financial support to their parents (Theron, 2017). Black tax, as it is called, is a convention that places the responsibility of the financial care for their families on the shoulders of young professionals. Mhlungu (2015) and Ratlebjane (2015) argue that

young people are expected to take on the duty of meeting the financial needs of their parents and other family members, despite a South African society that is plagued by structural inequities. VanderPlaat (2016) and Young (2015) explain that structural inequities are substantial systemic barriers that anticipate adverse outcomes. Young people and adolescents have little or no control over systemic obstacles. The Black tax convention is not unique to Black South Africans, but it is more common in this population group. Their disadvantaged situation (past and present) has forced them to adopt it as a means of survival (Mhlungu, 2015). There is a limit to the career-related decisions that young people from Black communities can make: the responsibility for their families' financial upkeep. This responsibility is associated with increased psychological pressure. Savickas (2012) purports that the career constructions of young people from disadvantaged communities sustained by structural inequities is influenced by 'social expectations'. Concurrently, structural injustices within their communities are obstacles that hinder young people from realising the career aspirations imposed on them.

2.3.4 Ways of dealing with career indecision

Different strategies and interventions have been developed by researchers in the field of career development to address challenges related to career indecision. Some advocate a two-step approach to dealing with career indecision: firstly to identify and arrange (in order of importance) the courses and sources of career indecision, and secondly to implement strategies and interventions that will deal with the specified courses and sources (Forner, 2007; Gati et al., 1996; Lent et al., 2019; Picard, 2012). Career indecision has been linked to self-efficacy, a client's belief that they can successfully make appropriate career decisions (Betz & Luzzo, 1996; Citarella et al., 2020). Taking from the new social cognitive career theory of career self-management (developed by Lent and Brown in 2013), Lent et al. (2016) examined how career exploration and career indecision are related. Career self-management is a concept that covers several different career-related behaviours from which individuals draw to adapt to work and personal contexts. Scholars such as Heppner et al. (2004), Penn and Lent (2019), Masdonati et al. (2009) have been cited by Hartung (2015, p. 3), contending that "individual career counselling is effective in decreasing career indecision and increasing career decidedness". The argument put forward by Whiston

and Rose (2013) is that identifying career decision-making difficulties is a fundamental step in designing and scaffolding strategies and interventions. For Kelly and Shin (2009), the negative impact of lingering career indecision may be moderated by a blend of developmentally and cognitive-based interventions. Whereas developmentally based interventions will enhance an individual's adaptability, undesirable or adverse career decision making, choice and feelings will be decreased by a cognitive-based intervention. Jantzer et al. (2009) argue that career indecision should be considered a 'standard' facet of adolescents' development and that young people's sense of self will augment if their career decision-making self-efficacy is bolstered. In none of the above intervention strategies, a consensus was reached on a theoretical approach to addressing career indecision (Miller & Rottinghaus, 2014).

2.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework that underpins the current study is discussed in this section under the subsections below.

2.4.1 Narrative counselling

Hartung (2013) claims that theorists and practitioners in the field of career counselling have in recent decades experienced an increase in the utilisation of narrative methods to assist their clients in drawing on the inner resources they need to face the challenges of the contemporary world of work. Savickas (2019) further explains narrative methods in terms of a reflexive process of construction, deconstruction, co-construction (a collaboration between the client and counsellor), and reconstruction. The core of the narrative approach to career counselling hinges on the principle that clients are the main protagonists (McAdams & Olson, 2010) in their career and life stories. Therefore, it is crucial to draw from and build on the multitude of clients' stories (micro and macro) during the counselling process to assist clients in arriving at sound decisions relating to their careers. In this process, the main events in clients' storyline are identified and drawn on to help them construct themselves and their careers adequately (Cochran, 2011; Savickas, 2011a).

Sharf (2010) likens the narrative approach to a theatre where the clients perform the story of their lives. In the process of enacting this story, clients take responsibility or become agents as they address their career obstacles. At the same

time, their emotions and passions are attended to (Savickas, 2019). Cochran (2011) explains that career counsellors participate in helping people confront and deal with the distinctive challenges intrinsic in deciding on a suitable career and crafting their career and life stories. The process of crafting is appropriate to discuss personal meanings in detail, to tackle points at which challenges in making crucial career decisions with far-reaching consequences are experienced, and to find a purpose in life. Next, the close association between the narrative approach and career construction theory is explained.

2.4.2 Career construction theory, principles, and practices

Initiated by Savickas, career construction theory (CCT) enhances the interpretive model (Hartung, 2007; Hartung, 2010; Savickas, 2002, 2005, 2007). Career construction theory (CCT) (2005, 2013) focuses on how people design their career using the narrative or the storied self. Whereas Duarte (2009) believes that personal and career interventions for the current century should aim at assisting clients in responding to concerns regarding the direction their lives should take, Rottinghaus et al. (2017) postulate that “interpretive and interpersonal processes explain how individuals construct themselves, find vocational direction, and make meaning of their careers”. Career interventions should seek to fit clients to work environments or careers and understand the interplay between clients and work environments/careers (Savickas, 2005). The process of constructing a career, Savickas (2005) argues, is psychosocial and calls for a certain degree of harmony between the individual and the society in which they live. Departing from Super’s (1957, 1983; 1990) theory of career development, Savickas went on to formulate career construction from whence a new paradigm for careers (life design) developed (Savickas et al., 2009). The following three career-counselling traditions are incorporated in career construction theory.

- ❖ Differential approach (focus is on individual differences – mostly on traits)
- ❖ Developmental approach (focus is on teaching people to advance following a predictable sequence over time, which culminates in a mature end state)
- ❖ The psychodynamic/storied approach (focuses on autobiographical narratives and professional identity)

According to Rottinghaus et al. (2017), the three paradigms listed above constitute the main domains of CCT, namely self-construction, career adaptability, and life themes. Cochran (2011); Rottinghaus et al. (2017) further argue that career counsellors combine these domains in a story or narrative, which is constructed and deconstructed during the career counselling process. From the perspective of CCT, an individual's vocational behaviour is a function of their psychological resources and life themes.

2.4.3 Self-construction

From the perspective of Savickas' (2019) career construction theory, "individuals construct their careers by imposing meaning on their vocational behaviour and occupational experiences" (p. 43), and "occupation provides a mechanism for social integration" and for contributing to society. Savickas et al. (2009) claim that individuals' knowledge about themselves (identity) is shaped through interaction with the social environment. Savickas (2005) argues that this shaping begins from infancy when the individual takes on the role of 'actor' within the family context. Rottinghaus et al. (2017) maintain that the interaction (social) through discourse enables individuals to construct themselves by assimilating cultural norms and values that create an identity in the context of the family of origin. The authors say that this identity is further enhanced as the individuals interact in other social settings outside the family. The suggestion that individuals' identities are continually unfolding (Guichard, 2005, 2009) and that the active construction of the self by conversing during social communication plays a role in forming people's identity is fundamental to self-construction. The career construction interview (CCI) (Savickas, 2019) may be used to involve people's selves in a process that engages them to envision possible future selves. After establishing goals the client wants to attain, the counsellor can "reconstruct a life portrait" that creates possibilities concerning how the client can move forward and develop (Savickas, 2013, p. 176).

2.4.4 Career adaptability

An individual is regarded as career adaptable in adjusting to and coping with unexpected challenges that arise in their career (Stringer et al., 2012). Rottinghaus et al. (2017) explain that after an individual's identity/character has been created within

the family context as an actor, further interaction in the community to extend the self is ensured using agency. The authors maintain that in interacting with the community, the individual sets goals that eventually become their career. According to Rottinghaus et al. (2017), the ‘actor’ develops into a self-regulating ‘agent’. These scholars add that “in CCT, this agency is examined primarily in the context of adapting to transitions. Career adaptability, or the individual’s psychosocial resources for coping with present and expected vocational change, shapes the agent’s self-extension into the social environment” (Rottinghaus et al., 2017, p. 93). Hartung et al. (2008) define the four resources that underlie career adaptability as follows:

- ❖ **Concern:** Career concern relates to clients’ ability to demonstrate a positive attitude towards a future goal, which could be a future career. The primary question here is, “Do I have a future?”
- ❖ **Control:** Control refers to clients’ ability to make decisions about future careers and to act towards making it happen, knowing that it goes on to impact their lives further. Here the fundamental question is, “Who owns my future?”
- ❖ **Curiosity:** Curiosity is related to clients’ interest and ability to explore available career and educational opportunities actively. They ask, “What do I want to do with my future?”
- ❖ **Confidence:** Confident clients have an elevated self-efficacy and believe that they can attain their career goals by solving the problems they encounter and carrying out necessary actions. They answer the question, “Can I do it?”

2.4.5 Life themes

In the process of their growth and development in society as ‘actors’ and ‘agents’, individuals become prepared to put together their plans and desires into a logical narrative (Rottinghaus et al., 2017). “They are able to become the ‘author’ of a narrative that solves the problems of career transitions. This narrative outlines goals, guides adaptive behaviour, and fosters meaning, which takes shape in a repeating thematic pattern” (Rottinghaus et al., 2017, p. 93).

2.5 THE LIFE DESIGN FRAMEWORK

The current study applies career construction theory to the life design counselling discourse. According to Savickas (2015a), life design counselling is an

intervention guided by certain principles that counsellors may utilise when assisting their clients in negotiating career transitions. In helping clients design their lives, career counsellors become more deliberate in their actions to bring about change in their clients. Counsellors also deliberately assist clients in understanding the reason for doing what they (clients) do (Savickas, 2015b). When researchers conduct treatment studies, life design intervention principles help to enhance coherence within the life design discourse. The career construction theory of vocational behaviour in applied psychology (Savickas, 2013) is distinguished from life designing as a discourse in the counselling profession (Savickas, 2011b). There have been three major paradigms or traditions for career intervention. The first paradigm was used by counsellors to guide clients about their careers, the second was more about educating clients, and life design signifies the third paradigm (Savickas, 2015d).ⁱ

The works of researchers such as Cadaret and Hartung (2020), Cardoso et al. (2016), and Savickas and Lara (2016) are examples of research within the Global North context, while Albien (2020), Maree et al. (2018), and Wessels and Diale (2017) conduct their research within the Global South context. The researchers' work from both contexts indicates a growing interest in investigating the benefits of life design interventions. Lopez Levers et al. (2011) and Maree and Taylor (2016) discuss the criticism levelled against the application of Global North career counselling theories and intervention in Global South contexts. The argument is that researchers working in Global South contexts should do more than adapt and re-standardise specific measures and models from the Global North before they are used in developing countries. Designing and developing strategies and instruments to address the needs of career counselling in the global South is equally important. The researchers (from both the Global South and Global North contexts) affirm that the life design paradigm can assist in preparing and empowering young people from various countries with skills and knowledge that will help them navigate and thrive in the contemporary world of work. Savickas et al. (2009) claim that this type of counselling intervention puts Guichard's (2005) self-construction and Savickas' (2005) career construction theories into practice. Self-construction theory presumes that individuals actively take part in their self-construction in telling their story in a social context. The central tenets of the life design framework are discussed next.

2.5.1 Presuppositions of the life design framework

Savickas et al. (2009) explained that the life design framework is structured to be lifelong, holistic, contextual, and preventative.

- ❖ **Lifelong:** Career counselling intervention is a lifelong process. Therefore, the focus of life design should be on assisting clients to acquire skills and knowledge to deal with changes in the work environment and help them determine what skills and expertise are essential in their lifelong development.
- ❖ **Holistic:** In developing throughout life, career counselling clients also must develop holistically. Holistic development implies that clients' other roles (e.g., as family members and citizens) should be equally important – the emphasis should not be on growth in terms of their careers only.
- ❖ **Contextual:** From the social constructionist perspective of life designing, emphasis is placed on the role of the environment in assisting people in designing their careers. It is vital to consider past and present environments and the significant role played by the interaction between the individual and the environment in designing the former's career.
- ❖ **Preventative:** Life design interventions should preferably occur at an early stage in people's lives. In this way, problems or challenges relating to careers can be addressed before any transitions, thus serving a preventative purpose.

Co-evolution of the individual, the economy and society are emphasised in the life design framework (Savickas et al., 2009). Individuals become empowered in trying to make meaning of their scripted life stories. The emphasis on meaning-making is a significant shift in perspective from traditional person-environment fit theories. This is achieved in “emphasizing the meaning-making process that enables individuals to construct rather than choose their careers” (Maree, 2009, p. 84). The five presuppositions are (1) from traits and states to context; (2) from prescription to process; (3) from linear causality to non-linear dynamics; (4) from scientific facts to narrative realities; and (5) from describing to modelling (Savickas et al., 2009).

2.5.2 The goals of life design-based interventions

Savickas et al. (2009) affirm that there is value in career counselling when it contributes towards bringing about positive changes to the life stories of career

counselling clients. The affirmation is expanded on in the goals of the life design process that are outlined below:

- ❖ **Adaptability:** Counsellors should guide their clients to augment the four career adaptability resources; concern, control, curiosity, and confidence. These resources will enhance individuals' ability to cope with current and possible future tasks, work traumas, and life or career-related transitions.
- ❖ **Narratability:** The use of dialogue allows counsellors to assist their clients in constructing and telling coherent stories about their lives. During life design intervention, life themes and vocational personalities emerge from the stories that clients tell the counsellor. These stories assist the clients to understand their life themes, vocational character, and adaptability resources. When clients tell their stories, they formulate a subjective identity about themselves, other people, and their contexts. Self-construction takes place in the process of getting to know the self and exploration of the self and the relationship between the self and the environment.
- ❖ **Activity:** People are exposed to learning about themselves, their abilities, and their interests when they engage in various activities. In the process of engaging in activities, they interact with other people who give them feedback about their actions, and together they develop a system of representation.
- ❖ **Intentionality:** The focus of clients and counsellors should be on making meaning by engaging in intentional processes rather than merely making career choices. This should occur in an ongoing process where lives are being constructed.

2.6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework of a research project is a researcher's thinking instrument that serves as a guide to the admissible questions and types of evidence that must address the research questions (Athanasou et al., 2012). To address the primary research question, *what is the influence of life design-based intervention on learners with career indecision from resource-constrained communities?*, a conceptual framework is proposed within the theoretical paradigms of career and self-construction.

The paradigm of social construction served as the starting point in my research since life design-based intervention is grounded in social constructionism. Savickas

(2012) argues that the career construction of youth who hail from disadvantaged communities mainly reflects their community's social expectations. These expectations, Theron (2017) explains, are sustained by structural inequity, which (in South Africa) stands in the way of young people's capacity to realise their (imposed) career aspirations. The current research was supported by social constructionist theory, which is seen as the theoretical base that underpins the endeavour to reduce the career indecision of learners during an intervention within a group context.

Consideration of factors and influences on career indecision of adolescence was essential for the current study. An understanding of adolescents' career aspirations and an awareness of the aspects influencing their career choices and decision making informed my interaction with the participants. I believed that in as much as learners should make their own decisions about their future career journeys and aspirations, a focus on self- and career construction was beneficial to reduce career indecision. Career construction and self-construction principles were thus integrated in the intervention process.

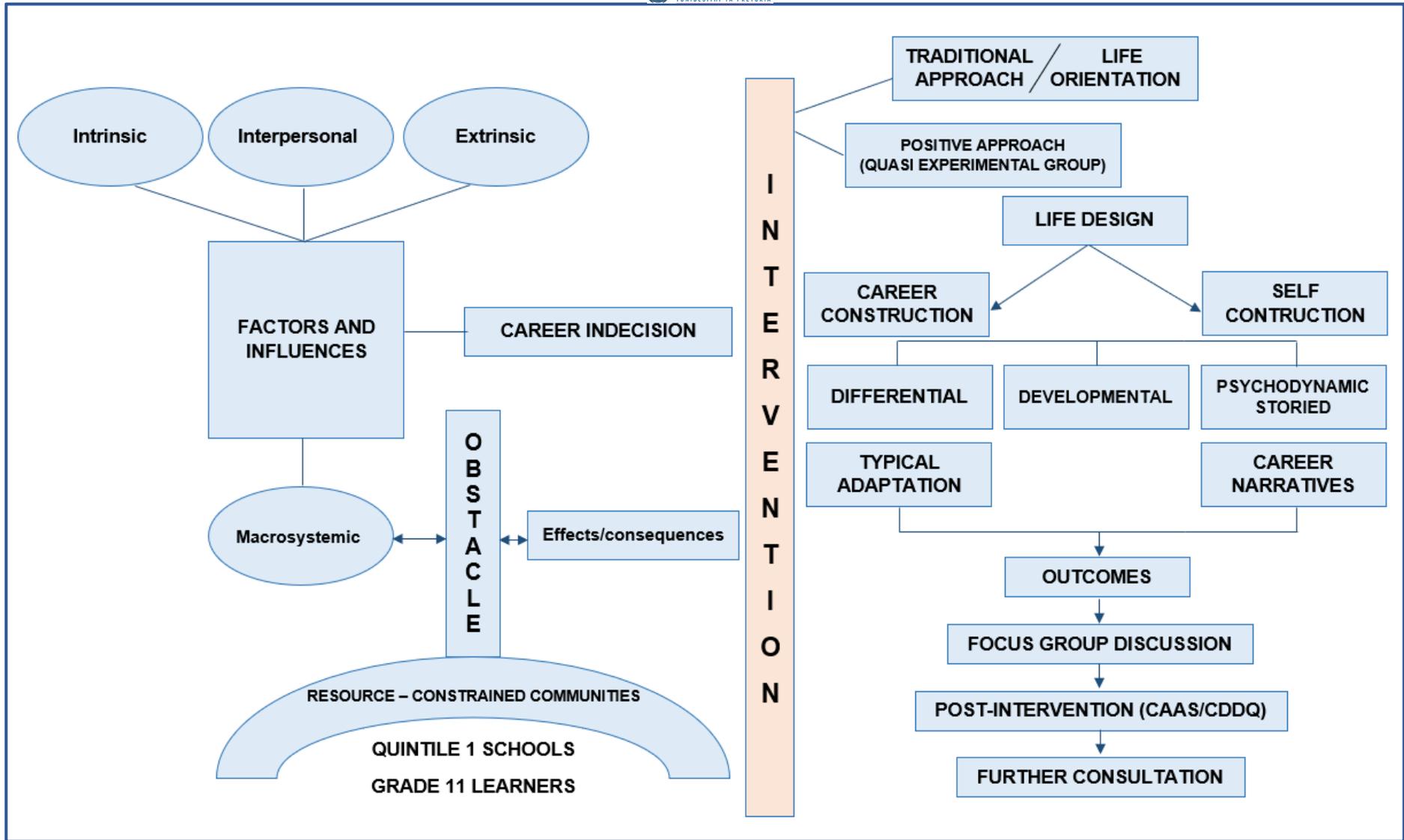


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework (developed by the researcher)

Figure 2.1 is a visual representation illustrating the conceptual framework that guided the study. Underpinned by theories related to the current research topic, the above framework conveys how my thoughts developed and how important concepts are linked to the study.

2.7 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE

A research paradigm is “a set of assumptions or beliefs about aspects of reality which gives rise to a particular world-view” (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). According to Terre Blanche et al. (2006), a paradigm can be referred to as a network that connects thoughts and practice comprehensively and defines the inherent features of an inquiry. The selected paradigm also serves as an organising principle (Nieuwenhuis, 2007) that guided me philosophically in selecting techniques, instruments, participants and methods used in a study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

The selected paradigm for the current study is social constructionism. Social construction is part of the study because career decision making in the context of this research (resource-constrained communities) derives/originates not only from individual agency to adapt to the changing context but also from the environment and social interactions that constitute the point of departure in social constructionism. There is less emphasis on the counsellor who was previously seen as the expert provider of vocational information and interpreter of psychometric assessments (McIlveen & Patton, 2007). The postmodern approach in the current study emphasizes participants’ narratives, unlike quantitative career assessment, where test scores are used exclusively to provide guidance (Hartung, 2005). Social constructionism provided a backdrop for in-depth exploration of how participants gain an understanding of their social context and taking into consideration what certain experiences, events and states mean for participants (Smith & Osborn, 2004). This approach allowed me to examine the life world of participants in detail. I could also explore the personal experiences of the participants and how they subjectively perceive the object or event, rather than just trying to produce an objective statement of the object or event itself (Smith & Osborn, 2004).

2.8 OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY

This chapter reviewed the literature for the current study, beginning with the changing world of work and followed by a summary of the literature on career indecision (i.e., factors influencing and effects of career indecision; career influences in low resource communities; and ways of dealing with career indecision). Much has been published about career indecision topics, and many valuable contributions have been made. However, the purpose of providing information on career indecision, career influences and ways of dealing with career indecision was to create an adequate background for the reader's understanding of how these challenges are experienced in resource-constrained communities. Section 2.4 discussed the current study's theoretical framework and emphasised the life design counselling framework, its presuppositions, structure, and goals. The conceptual framework and paradigmatic perspectives were discussed in sections 2.6 and 2.7.

The next chapter discusses the methodology and design of the career intervention that aimed to reduce the career indecision of participants in the current study. The intervention was based on the knowledge gathered from the literature study as reported in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The focus of this chapter was on important aspects such as the methods used in the data-gathering process and justification for the choice of methods. An overview of the intervention process is provided, data analysis is explained, and reliability, validity and trustworthiness issues are discussed. The researcher's role is described, and the ethical and methodological limitations are elaborated on in the concluding sections of the chapter.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

A plan and strategy that reflects the procedures a researcher employs to gather, analyse, interpret, and report data is referred to as a research design (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011; Nieuwenhuis, 2010). Methods used during the research process are guided by the research design. At the end of the research project, the logic that guided me as the researcher in interpreting the data is also outlined by the research design (Creswell, 2015; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). A mixed-methods design was used in the current study. The underlying concepts in the mixed methods design are explained next, focusing on sampling style, data gathering and analysis, and interpretation.

3.2.1 Mixed methods design

Creswell (2015) describes a mixed methods design as one in which both quantitative and qualitative approaches are applicable, and findings are integrated. It is also a design informed by a specific set of philosophical assumptions. A quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test comparison group design was used (in multiple phases) in the current research study to assess how participants' career indecision and career choices changed after they took part in the intervention.

Grade 11 learners from Oasis and Friendly High Schools (pseudonyms) respectively participated in the intervention. The other learners who did not participate in the intervention constituted the comparison groups. As the researcher, I believed that gathering and drawing on quantitative data and qualitative data would add value

to the identified themes and subsequent conclusions derived from the study. The study used qualitative and quantitative designs on an equal basis to facilitate better triangulation of results. The research project represented a QUALITATIVE-QUANTITATIVE mode of inquiry with equal priority given to both data sets.

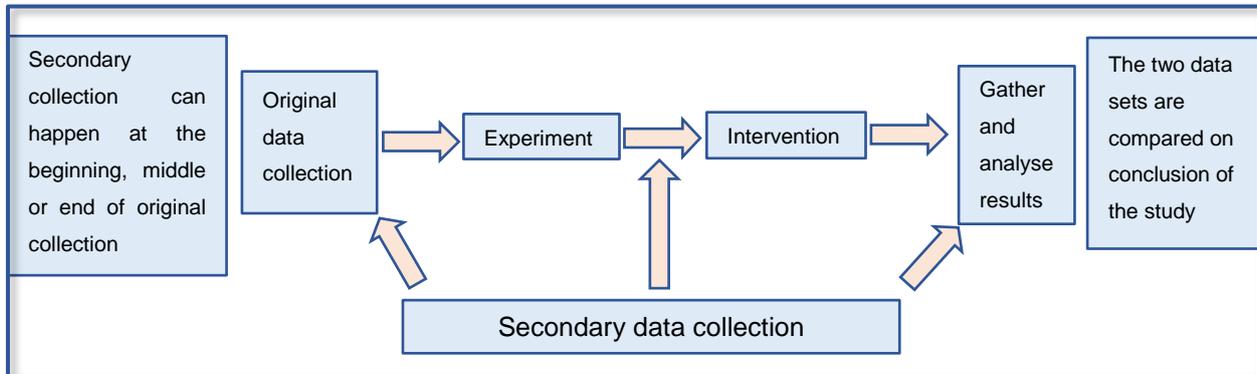


Figure 3.1: A schematic representation of the research design (adapted from Creswell, 2015)

3.2.2 Mixed methods approach

Qualitative and quantitative methods are used in mixed methods research for data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Whereas quantitative research focuses on numbers and objective collection of information, bias and the researcher's viewpoint are the focus in qualitative research. Mixed methods attempt to blend numerical data with qualitative data. Research shows that each type of data has its worldviews and assumptions. I opted for a mixed-methods design in the conviction that qualitative and quantitative results would complement each other, provide breadth and depth in perspective, and thus augment the value of the results. Fetters et al. (2013) explain that quantitative data helps explain the results obtained from qualitative data and that qualitative data serves well to assess the validity of quantitative findings.

3.2.3 Experimental design

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) argue that an experimental design would be the most effective approach to assessing an isolated variable's effect in an experimental study. In the current study, a life design-based intervention is the dependent variable that was made available to Grade 11 participants at two public high schools. A quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test comparison group was utilised to determine the extent of change in the career adapt-abilities and career decision-making difficulties of

participants exposed to the intervention, compared to the extent of change in participants who did not take part. A small sample of participants from each of the high schools who volunteered to participate in the intervention constituted the experimental group. Participants' scores on the *Career Adapt-Abilities Scale* and *Career Decision Difficulties Questionnaire* constituted the dependent variables. The scores were obtained by administering the CAAS (Maree, 2012b) and CDDQ (Gati et al., 1996) before and after participants were exposed to the counselling intervention. The effect of the intervention was derived from a comparison of the pre- and post-intervention scores of the CAAS and CDDQ within and between the groups in the study. This process is outlined in Figure 3.2.

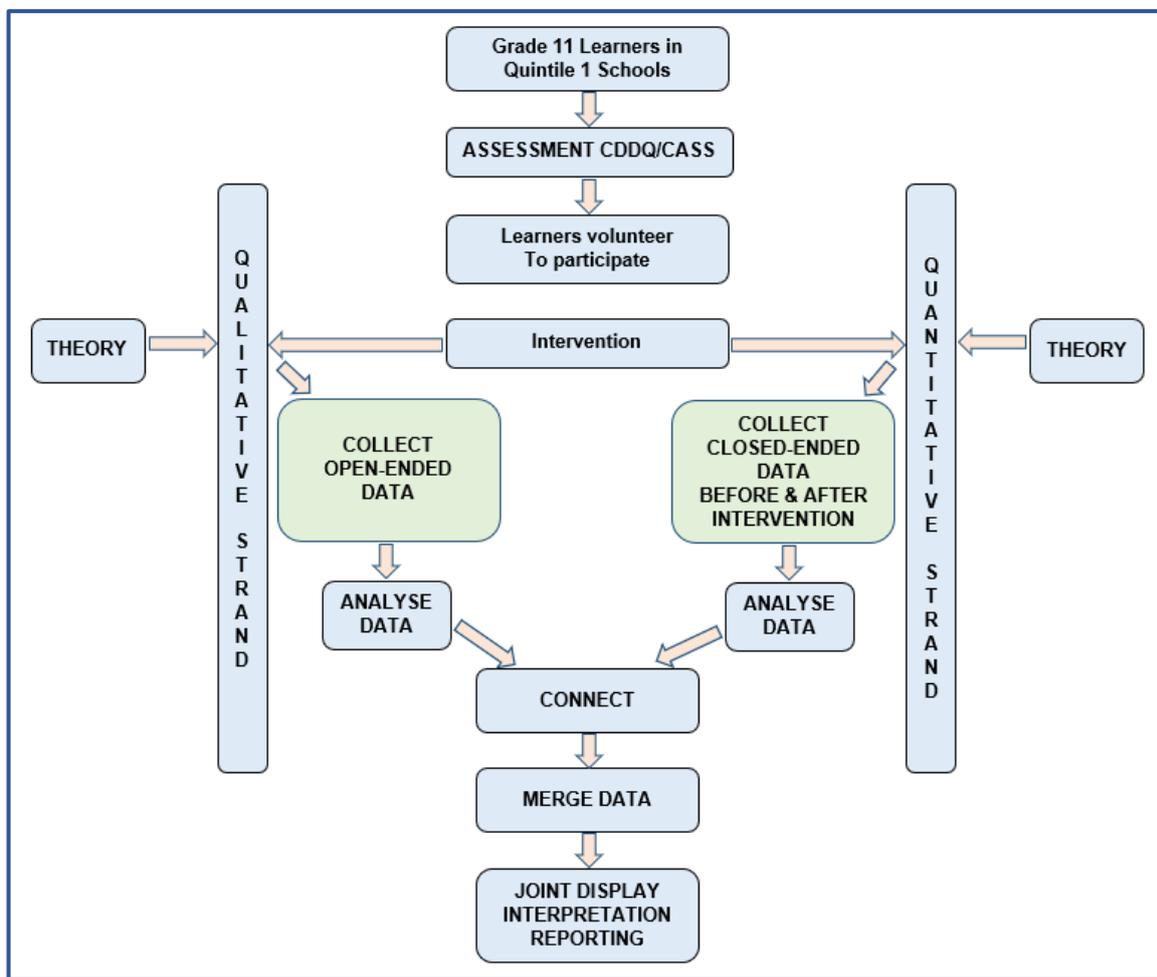


Figure 3.2: A schematic presentation of the research design (adapted from Pienaar, 2017)

3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Various aspects of the research methodology are elaborated on in this section.

3.3.1 Sampling

Non-probability sampling was applied in the current study. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001), in this sampling procedure (which is commonly used in educational settings), participants are not assigned to groups randomly (Maree & Pietersen, 2015). The types of non-probability sampling utilised in the current study were convenience and purposive sampling. Convenience sampling is appropriate when participants are selected because of their accessibility. In my research study, participants were also selected purposively when they were suitable for the research topic under study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The selection of participants was at my discretion.

The participants in the current study were Grade 11 learners from two public schools in a school district where I had worked as an educator. I was also knowledgeable about the career challenges learners face and had access to the schools. A few criteria had to be met to include learners in the study. The learners had to

- ❖ be between the ages of 16 and 23 years,
- ❖ be high school learners in Grade 11 at a public school located in a resource-constrained community,
- ❖ struggle with career decision making or subject choice, and
- ❖ be willing to engage in the process of life design-based counselling.

Five participants from both the intervention and comparison groups were selected for focus group discussions.

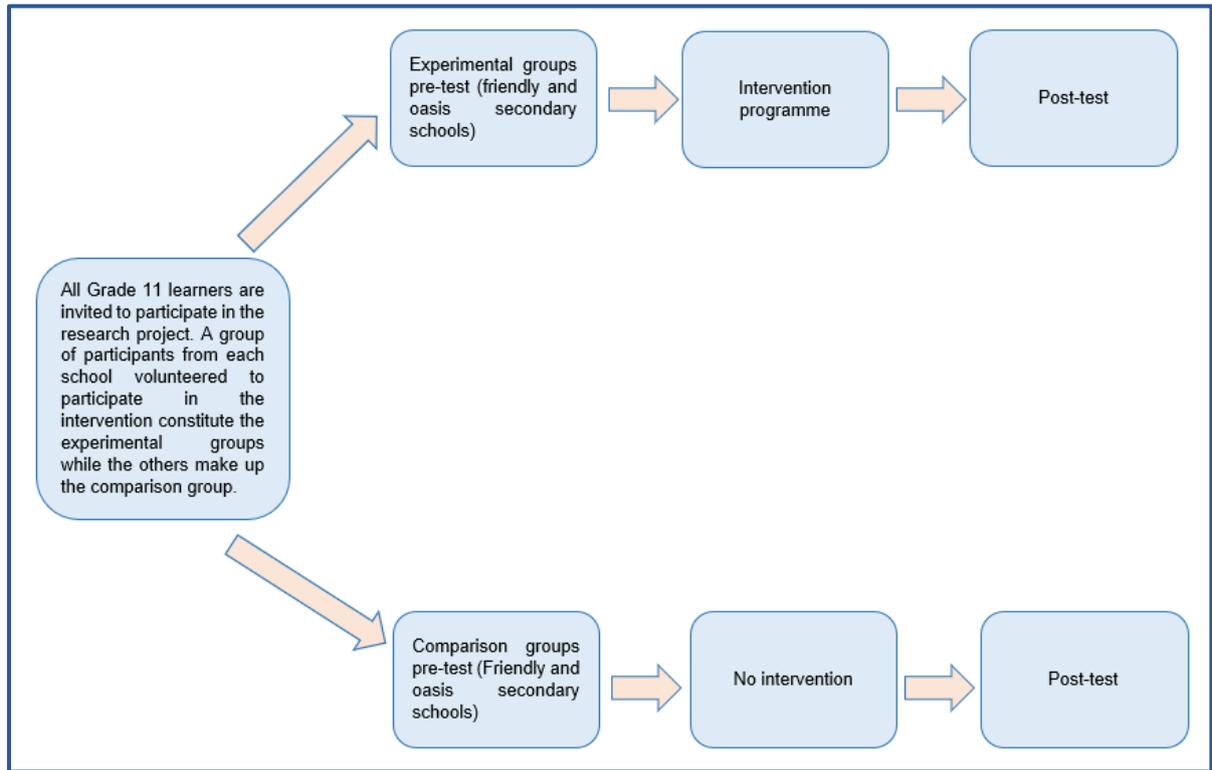


Figure 3.3: The Pre-test/Post-test comparison group design (adapted from Cook, 2015)

3.3.2 Data gathering

Qualitative and quantitative data was gathered concurrently for the purpose of the current study. Creswell and Plano-Clark (2011) suggest that both quantitative and qualitative strands be implemented during a single phase of the research study. They recommend that the researcher proceed with integration analysis only after completing the data gathering. Fetters et al. (2013) explain that the two forms of data should be analysed separately before they are connected and merged. Table 3.1 shows how mixed methods data-gathering techniques were implemented in my study.

Table 3.1: Mixed methods data collection plan

Techniques for gathering data		Methods for gathering data	Sources of data
Quantitative: Standardised tests	CAAS	Questionnaires to be completed before and after intervention	Responses to questionnaires
	CDDQ		
Qualitative	Pictorial narratives	Participants draw, write, and tell	Drawings, written text, and audio recordings/transcription
	<i>CIP</i>	Structured open-ended questions based on the career construction interview	Written responses
	Reflective journal	Participants' reflections based on intervention activities	Written journal entries
	Focus group interviews	Audio recordings after intervention	Transcription
	Observation	Researcher's written observations	Fieldnotes

Table 3.2: Links between research questions and data collection techniques

Research questions	Research techniques: qual/quan	Purpose
<p>Primary question: How does life design-based counselling influence learners with career indecision from resource-constrained communities?</p>	<p>Administration of quantitative measures (<i>CAAS</i> and <i>CDDQ</i>) and open-ended questions. Intervention: life design-based counselling Field notes, journal entries and observations</p>	<p>To compare and investigate the correlation between scores from the two questionnaires and between schools, before and after the intervention. To investigate the correlation between the qualitative data gathered before, during, and after intervention To arrive at conclusions and gain better insight</p>
Secondary questions:		
<i>Explanatory</i>		
What are the factors contributing to career indecision among learners from resource-constrained communities?	Administration of <i>CAAS</i> and <i>CDDQ</i> Biographical information from the <i>CIP</i>	To select participants and to guide the process of life design-based counselling intervention
What are the essential aspects of current programmes to help learners deal with career indecision?	Administration of <i>CAAS</i> and <i>CDDQ</i>	To understand the specific focus and how to direct the intervention
What are the essential aspects of the life design-based counselling intervention utilised in this research?	Qualitative reflection by participants, drawings, narrative part of the <i>CIP</i> and reflective journal entries	To distinguish between more and less helpful and effective life design-based counselling-related activities
<i>Exploratory</i>		
How did the participants in the current study experience life design-based counselling?	Qualitative evaluation by researcher and participants	To shape the future application of life design-based counselling intervention
How did the intervention influence participants' career indecision?	Administration of questionnaires and focus group interviews	<p>To examine the nature of responses and scores from the questionnaires before and after the intervention To explore and compare the nature of responses from qualitative data against quantitative data To draw conclusions regarding the effect of life design-based counselling and gain better insight into the impact of career indecision and possible changes in the career adaptability of participants</p>

3.3.2.1 Quantitative data gathering

The choice of measures a researcher selects for a study is guided, for the greater part, by the purpose of the measurement and the basic constructs they are interested in (Theofilou, 2013). Finestone (2013) argues that the effectiveness of an instrument relies on its ability to produce outcome criteria with solid theoretical links to the outcomes that the researcher seeks. For the current study, two measures were selected to gather quantitative data. The one was the *Career Adapt-Abilities Scale-South African Form (CAAS-SA)* (Maree, 2012b). The other measure was the *Career Decision Difficulties Questionnaire (CDDQ)* (Gati et al., 1996), retrieved from www.cddq.org on 18 May 2020.

a) **The Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS)**

The CAAS originates from Donald Super's Vocational Psychology (Salomone, 1996). The concept of adaptability surfaced when Super paid greater attention to developmental stages. Adaptability is a more inclusive term and focuses on maturity. Therefore, the CAAS is suitable for use in the current research project as it focuses on individuals, their future career aspirations, and their psychological resources.

Standardisation of the CAAS

A research-based version of the CAAS-International developed by Savickas and Porfeli (2012) consists of four scales, with six items per scale. To manage transitions, developmental tasks, and work traumas, the four scales (Concern, Control, Curiosity, and Confidence) are needed to measure an individual's psychological resources. Participants from 13 countries developed the CAAS-International (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

Maree (2012b) conducted a study on the psychometric properties of the CAAS in South African schools. A sample of 435 Grade 9 and 11 learners with a mean age of 15.49 years (SD=1.32) voluntarily participated in the research project. The home languages of the participants were amongst the 11 official languages in South Africa. The participants in the study were from three English-medium high schools in the Molo area of Mafikeng. Of the three schools sampled, two were public schools.

Validity of the CAAS

The CAAS-International (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) provided initial evidence for the measure's validity. Scale scores of the CAAS-International were compared to scores of the *Vocational Identity Status Assessment* (Darkey & Visagie, 2013). A consistent pattern of association between the subscales of the VISA and the CAAS-International was found in the correlation coefficients. At a level of $\alpha=.01$, five of the six correlations were significant.

Maree (2012b) compared the CAAS-SA to the CAAS-International. He reported that item means indicated that typical responses ranged from strong to very strong. A similarity was found between the subscale means of the CAAS-SA and the CAAS-International, and there was statistical significance with all the loadings at $\alpha=.01$ level. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) showed that data for the CAAS-SA fit the theoretical model very well. Based on the results of the statistical analysis of the CAAS-SA, I was satisfied that the coherent multidimensional, hierarchical structure which the CAAS-SA demonstrates is proof that the instrument measures the constructs it was designed to assess.

Reliability of the CAAS

The Career Adapt-abilities Scale (CAAS)-International Form 2.0 has demonstrated excellent reliability and appropriate cross-national measurement equivalence (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Internal reliability of .91 for the total score was recorded after item descriptive statistical analysis of the CAAS-SA. The reliability score of the CAAS-International, .92, is slightly higher than the .91 of CAAS-SA. The reliability for the subscales of the CAAS-SA was marginally lower than the reliability for the total score, namely .77 for the subtest 'Concern', .71 for the subtest 'Control', .78 for the subtest 'Curiosity' and .80 for the subtest 'Confidence' (Maree, 2012b). Overall, the internal consistency estimates that were demonstrated were good to excellent. The researcher was therefore satisfied that the CAAS-SA would give reliable results.

b) The Career Decision-making Difficulties Questionnaire (CDDQ)

The CDDQ was developed by Gati and colleagues and published in 1996. The instrument was initially designed to test the theoretical framework of a taxonomy (Gati et al., 1996), based on Decision Theory, which uses the model of 'ideal career decision

maker'. The *CDDQ* (Gati et al., 1996) is composed of 34 items, representing ten domains that are placed into three categories: Lack of Readiness; Lack of Information; and Inconsistent information. For each item, participants rate their beliefs regarding their ability to make decisions. A nine-point scale is used, which ranges from (1) 'Does not describe me', to (9) 'Describes me well'. The measure was introduced to cover all areas related to difficulties in career decision making. Although the *CDDQ* was developed initially to empirically test the theoretical framework, Gati et al. (1996) felt there was potential for the questionnaire to become an important instrument for career counselling. However, to use the *CDDQ* as a valid clinical instrument, the measure would have to show adequate reliability and validity. The studies that investigated the reliability and validity of the *CDDQ* have provided promising evidence.

Reliability and validity studies

The initial reliability study on the *CDDQ* was conducted by Gati et al. (1996). A sample of 563 individuals aged 17-23 years from Israel and the United States of America participated in the study. The analysis showed the reliability of each of the ten scale scores to be satisfactory, except that the Dysfunctional Beliefs scale showed a reliability of .40. There were no systematic or meaningful gender differences in the scale scores. The Israeli sample showed a median scale Cronbach alpha reliability of .78 and a median test-retest total scale reliability of .65. The American sample yielded a median scale Cronbach alpha reliability of .77. The study also concluded that the Cronbach alpha reliability of the total *CDDQ* score was .95 in both samples.

A subsequent study by Osipow and Gati (1998) examined the construct and concurrent validity of the *CDDQ*. This study used an American sample of 450 university students and provided positive evidence for convergent validity. Lancaster et al. (1999) examined concurrent validity and found that the correlation between the total score of the *CDDQ* and the Career Decision Scale was .82. Predictive validity was confirmed by Gati and Saka (2001) in a study of 1772 high school students. Students who perceived themselves as 'undecided' were found to have more significant difficulties than those who held the perception that they were 'decided'. Mau (2001) confirmed the cross-cultural equivalence of the *CDDQ* in a study in which participants were drawn from the United States (514) and Taiwan (947). Mau also reported that the structures of difficulties in the *CDDQ* were the same as the theoretical structure.

The psychometric results of the initial reliability study by Gati et al. (1996) described above, together with the results of other studies, convinced me as the researcher of the reliability of the *CDDQ* and that it can be used for the current research project.

3.3.2.2 *Qualitative data gathering.*

There is a fundamental difference between qualitative and quantitative data gathering. Qualitative data gathering focuses on people's accounts and put together information on their experiences of the phenomenon under investigation (Pearsall & Pierce, 2017; Polkinghorne, 2015). Trainor (2018) argues that qualitative data gathering is often challenging, given its purpose of solving a problem and gathering information simultaneously. Qualitative data collection techniques aim to understand individuals' beliefs, attitudes, experiences, and perceptions – all of which enrich data construction. This dimension added from qualitative data cannot be attained via measuring observable variables alone (Pathak et al., 2013; Stigberg et al., 2015). Jackson (2015) postulates that the uniqueness of qualitative research techniques derives from their foundational features, as pathways are created to a deeper understanding of the unvoiced challenges that most people must deal with. According to Mukeredzi (2011), the following are some of the challenges associated with qualitative research:

- ❖ Access to participants: Sampling participants can be difficult, especially if the topic is sensitive or the environment is classified as volatile (Abrams, 2010).
- ❖ Time limitations: Qualitative research often requires long-term involvement, which means that researchers depend on participants to commit to the process. Therefore, data gathering can be affected if environments change, participants move, time frames are extended, etc.
- ❖ Emotional challenges: Frustration and fears can set in, both from the researcher or the participant's perspective, due to factors such as quality of information, anxiety, and demotivation.

Although qualitative research focuses predominantly on the trustworthiness of data constructed, I believe that gathering and drawing on quantitative data (in addition to

qualitative data) would add value to the identified themes and subsequent conclusions derived from this study.

The qualitative data gathering techniques that I employed as part of life design-based counselling were participant friendly and developmentally appropriate and are explained below.

a) Drawings: Drawing has certain advantages over other visual methods of data gathering (Horne et al., 2017):

- ❖ It has the potential to offer a way of communication other than speech.
- ❖ Collaborative meaning making is encouraged.
- ❖ It offers a way of exploring the diversity and complexity of the human experience.

Edgar (1999) adds that “drawings offer an opportunity to access material which may be suppressed and repressed by the conscious mind”.

b) Observations: Mason (2013) states that observations can play a crucial role in qualitative research to support reflexive analysis of data, and Maree(2016f) agrees that observations contribute significantly in clarifying an insider’s perspective into various dynamics.

c) Conversations: Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2008, p. 590) state that conversations promote “detailed examination of the actual actions of the actors rather than subjective explanations”. Formal and informal discussions were held with the participants in this study, and these conversations took place before, during, and after each session.

d) Interviews: According to Maree (2016f), interviews involve an important data collection technique where the interviewer can learn more about the participant’s ideas, beliefs, views, and opinions. In the current study, interviews were mainly structured in the Career Construction Interview, a supplementary section of the *Career Interest Profile (CIP)* (Maree, 2016c). Focus group interviews were also conducted with a select group of participants towards the end of the study.

e) Educational-psychological interventions: These are life design-based counselling techniques.

3.3.2.3 Intervention strategy

The intervention strategy used in this research study, life design-based counselling, aims to enhance career adaptability and lower the career indecision of participants. I, as the researcher, worked with the participants and implemented various techniques from different sources to fit this specific research context. Life design-based counselling followed the general rules and format (with its underlying presuppositions) as discussed by Savickas et al. (2009). The planned intervention strategies and objectives sequence is presented in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Life design-based intervention activities

Step	Activity	Process	Data collection and documentation
	Joining in and goal setting	The researcher establishes rapport, explains the purpose and benefits of the intervention, and allays doubts or concerns from participants	Researcher observation and journal entries
1.	Assessment, lifeline, and drawings	The researcher administers quantitative measures and defines the problem through subjective experiences, graphical and cognitive representation. Participants explore the self and current career challenges.	Journal entries, drawings, and lifeline
2.	Completion of <i>CIP</i> parts I- III	Participants provide biographical information and career interest-related information.	Journal entries
3.	Completion of <i>CIP</i> part IV	Participants complete the career construction section, which includes the early recollections and self-advice, to construct their own career story with the facilitation of the researcher.	Journal entries
4.	Focus group interviews	Selected participants (5 each) from experimental and non-experimental groups participate in a focus group interview facilitated by the researcher.	Journal entries Audio recordings
5.	Post-intervention	Administration of the <i>CAAS</i> and <i>CDDQ</i>	Hard copies of the questionnaires.

3.3.2.4 *Quantitative data analysis*

Data analysis was carried out between and within schools by comparing the learners' scores in the *CASS* and *CDDQ* before and after the intervention group had participated in the counselling intervention programme.

The following statistical procedures and comparisons were carried out in collaboration with the Department of Statistics at the University of Pretoria.

- ❖ One-way frequency tables were drawn up as an organising and summarising technique to analyse response frequency. Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of participant responses.
- ❖ Two-way frequency tables were compiled to analyse relationships between variables.
- ❖ Inferential statistics were used to make further comparisons within and between the groups. The type of statistical comparison that was used depended on the data distribution.

The results were expected to show whether the mean rank of pre- and post-intervention results differed and if the differences were statistically significant with $p < .05$ (Field, 2009).

3.3.3 Data analysis

The final step in the research process involves analysing and interpreting data from which meaning can be generated. A mixed-methods study necessitates statistical data analysis of numerical values and an interpretive analysis of participants' experiences, pre- and post-intervention (Morgan & Skar, 2015). Therefore, data analysis took place in two different strands, namely qualitative and quantitative data analysis. The analysis for integration only took place after completion of the intervention sessions (Fetters et al., 2013), i.e., after 12 weeks. The scientific process followed in both strands of analysis is described in the following sections.

3.3.3.1 Qualitative data analysis

Qualitative data analysis is a process with specific features (Creswell, 2008), and it is *inductive*. This refers to starting with detailed data and progressing to general themes. Data collection and data analysis often need to happen *simultaneously*. It is an *iterative* process that rotates between data collection and analysis. In my study, the same data was read and analysed *several times*. Furthermore, the data was *interpretive*, implying that the individuals/researcher brought their perspective to data interpretation (Creswell, 2008). The written reflections, the *CIP* (Maree, 2016c), written life stories, and transcribed data from focus group interviews served as qualitative data sources. The collected data included written narratives or stories based on the learners' experiences.

Narrative analysis was done to analyse the qualitative data. In narrative analyses, the researcher searches for narrative strings (commonalities that run through and across texts), narrative threads (major emerging themes), and temporal themes (past, present and future contexts) (Nieuwenhuis, 2016).

The qualitative data in the current study was analysed according to the following six steps as described by Creswell (2008):

- ❖ The data was prepared and organised by transcription of all field notes, including participant responses and the researcher's comments.
- ❖ The researcher read through the data several times to familiarise himself with the content.
- ❖ Main themes or categories derived from the research aim (i.e., exploring the influence of career indecision) were identified.
- ❖ Phrases, sentences, and units of meaning used by participants were identified by reading the text thoroughly.
- ❖ Identified phrases, sentences and units of meaning were categorised under the identified themes.
- ❖ Subthemes related to the main themes and contributed to a deeper understanding, and new insights were identified for each central theme.

Descriptive statistics is an all-encompassing term that describes how data can be organised and summarised in a meaningful way (Maree & Pietersen, 2012). The validity of the qualitative part of a research project is the degree to which the

concepts and interpretations are mutually meaningful to the researcher and the participants. Therefore, the researcher had to ensure that data analysis follows a specific scientific process. A combination of a recommended six-step plan (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2008) was employed in the current research project to analyse the qualitative data.

3.3.3.2 *Trustworthiness and credibility*

In this section, constructs of trustworthiness and credibility in the context of the current study are discussed, as well as transferability, dependability, and confirmability as aspects of trustworthiness.

Trustworthiness

To establish trustworthiness in qualitative studies, the researcher must ensure that the data gathered is credible (Sinkovics et al., 2008; Stewart et al., 2017). Trustworthiness in qualitative research fundamentally poses the question of whether the research findings and conclusions can be trusted (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Sutrisno et al. (2014, p. 1337) state that “to maintain the trustworthiness of the qualitative research, it is necessary to minimise translation errors, provide detailed accounts of the translation process, involve more than one translator, and remain open to scrutiny from those seeking to access the translation process”. Williams and Morrow (2009) delineate three aspects to which any qualitative study must adhere:

- ❖ The integrity of the data must be proven and maintained.
- ❖ There must be a balance between reflexivity and subjectivity throughout the study.
- ❖ Results and findings should be clearly communicated.

Throughout the study, I tried to maintain the trustworthiness of results using a thorough audit trail, reflective journals, observation notes, and detailed and continuous feedback discussions with the supervisor. The concept of trustworthiness in qualitative research has both internal and external validity (Maree, 2016e). Stewart et al. (2017, p. 9) state that trustworthiness often presents itself in qualitative research as “authenticity, dependability, conformability, and relative to credibility”. The following constructs are related to the trustworthiness of qualitative research:

- ❖ Transferability is concerned with a thick description of the participants and the research process and whether the results and findings can ultimately be transferred to other settings.
- ❖ Dependability is concerned with the consistency of research findings.
- ❖ Confirmability is concerned with the neutrality of research and whether it is based on sound research practice and data rather than on the researcher's subjective views.

Credibility in qualitative research, which forms only a tiny part of the internal validity, will be discussed in more detail next.

Credibility

Quality assurance and the validity of results in qualitative studies relate to credibility as an essential dimension of the qualitative research process. Credibility in qualitative research points to the importance of portraying the participants' authentic experiences and meaning-making (Whittemore et al., 2001). Gordon and Patterson (2013) concur with this by stating that credibility refers to the researcher's attempts to correctly describe and interpret the participants' reality. Besides just relaying results, credibility also involves ensuring that the true essence of the emic perspective is captured (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Whittemore et al., 2001). According to Cope (2014, p. 89), "to support credibility when reporting a qualitative study, the researcher should demonstrate engagement, methods of observation, and audit trails".

Credibility cannot be discussed without briefly referring to transferability, dependability, and confirmability, which all play a role in establishing quality control within qualitative research. All three constructs are critical in establishing trustworthiness (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Sinkovics & Alfoldi, 2012). I implemented triangulation throughout the study to ensure credibility to gain a holistic and comprehensive view of the phenomenon and the various constructs under investigation. Triangulation is achieved when more than one source is used to address the research question – this, according to Maree (2016f), minimises the risk of chance associations and systematic bias.

The researcher's effort to ensure credibility also included maintaining a reflexive journal. Thomas and Magilvy (2011) refer to reflexivity in qualitative research as an effective means of ensuring credibility. Attention is drawn by Thomas

and Magilvy (2011) to the importance of a comprehensive audit trail, transcripts, and frequent reference to the words of the participants to ensure credibility. The current study included all the techniques mentioned above to safeguard and enhance credibility. The research was also conducted under the constant supervision of my supervisor.

3.4 ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

Maree (2016f) states that actively engaging with participants and demonstrating understanding as part of a collaborative partnership are essential elements of the research process. As the researcher, one needs to observe and record information sensitively and unbiasedly (Maree, 2016f). During this study, I fulfilled the following roles as a researcher:

- ❖ Creating an environment conducive to therapeutic interventions and, in the process, ensuring that the participants always felt safe and comfortable (this included creating a safe environment where participants could reflect on their processes and journeys)
- ❖ Ensuring that I competently used the various instruments and techniques and was fully prepared to engage with the process and participants during the research project
- ❖ Administering media and intervention techniques
- ❖ Preparing and structuring interviews
- ❖ Analysing and interpreting the data
- ❖ Ensuring that a strict ethical standard was maintained as delineated by the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA)
- ❖ Facilitating (complementary) external psychological services to all participants, should any adverse effects occur following their participation in the research, or should they request or need such services

I did not blend in with or confuse the participants regarding my role as researcher and psychologist. Participants were informed at the outset about the research relationships and the limits. A transparent process was created, and all participants were fully informed.

3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

When considering ethical issues in qualitative research, the focus should be on producing moral and ethical research that ranges from how one frames the research questions to how observations are made in the field (Mason, 2013). Smythe (2015) avers that as a researcher, one should do justice to people's experiences and understanding of a phenomenon to expand their prior knowledge of a particular part of reality. He subsequently advocates that we engage with ethics to ensure continuous reflection on all aspects of the research process and, in this way, ensure social justice to all participants. The most important ethical considerations in a study concern confidentiality, anonymity, informed consent, and protection from harm (Maree, 2012a; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Smythe, 2015). Like any other research study, the study in hand had a particular degree or element of risk inherently associated with it. However, it was guided by respect for people's dignity, moral and legal rights; non-maleficence; and beneficence (Allen, 2011). With the concepts of confidentiality, anonymity, and harm in mind, the above principles always directed me to emphasise the participants' right to privacy. This resulted in participants sharing information more freely and added depth and richness to the information obtained. Furthermore, in line with the principle of non-maleficence, all reasonable steps were taken to ensure that no harm would come to any participant. I furthermore promised to take all reasonable steps to ensure that, should unintentional harm come to any participant, the effects of such harm would be minimised – thereby complying with the principle of beneficence (Allen, 2011).

Fisher et al. (2012) state that qualitative research does not necessarily translate into intrinsic value for participants, especially if the participants are part of vulnerable groups. To ensure that the current study was ethically sound, the researcher

- ❖ obtained informed consent after informing the participants of the nature of the study, the process that would be followed, the nature of the research project, the type of media and intervention strategies that would be implemented, as well as the intended usage of the information gained;
- ❖ fostered a balanced qualitative research relationship between myself, the participants, and the parents/guardians of the participants;

- ❖ saw to it that confidentiality and anonymity remained intact throughout the research and when the results and findings of the study were communicated;
- ❖ ensured that all participants were protected from any harm; and
- ❖ discussed the voluntary nature of participation with all participants and their right to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences.

3.6 SUMMARY

The methodology, research design, data analysis, and interpretation used in the current study were discussed in this chapter. A discussion of various strategies taken by the researcher to enhance the data's reliability, validity, and trustworthiness was also provided.

In Chapter 4, both qualitative and quantitative data analysis and results are presented.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This research study aimed to explore the influence of life-design counselling on learners from resource-constrained communities, who are experiencing career indecision. Assessments were conducted before and after the intervention programme. The participants comprised 91 Grade 11 learners from two Quintile 1 schools. Seventeen participants volunteered to join in the life-design counselling intervention sessions, which took place over three months. The sections that follow detail outcomes of the pre- and post-assessment.

4.2 PARTICIPANT PROFILE

For the current study, I selected participants employing convenience and purposive non-probability sampling. Grade 11 learners (boys and girls) from Friendly and Oasis Secondary Schools (not the actual names of the schools) were invited to participate. Data was constructed from two groups, namely an intervention group and a comparison group from each of the two schools. The intervention group from each school participated in a life-design intervention programme. The comparison groups participated in a career programme designed according to the prescribed Life Orientation curriculum. The mean age of the participants was 17 years six months (rounded off to the nearest entire month), with a standard deviation of 1.54. Whereas the minimum and maximum ages for the females were 16 years and 20 years respectively, the males were aged between 16 and 23. Distribution according to gender was not considered for the descriptive statistics because only one male and 16 females participated in the intervention from the beginning to the end. For the comparison group, there were 26 male and 48 female participants.

Table 4.1: Demographic information about participants and groups

Group	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation
Intervention	17	16	20	18.00	1.06
Comparison	74	16	23	17.41	1.47

4.3 RESULTS OF QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

The *Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS)* (Maree, 2012b) and the *Career Decision Difficulties Questionnaire (CDDQ)* (Gati et al., 1996) were administered before and after the intervention. Analysis of data gathered from the four subscales of the *CAAS* and the 10 subscales of the *CDDQ* constituted part of the study.

4.3.1 Internal consistency/reliability

Calculation of Cronbach alpha scores was used to evaluate the internal consistency of participants' responses to items of the two questionnaires, *CAAS* and *CDDQ*. Methodologies using Cronbach's alpha prefer a minimum of 0.56 to 0.8, and coefficients lower than 0.5 are usually regarded as low and even as potentially unacceptable (Goforth, 2017). Tables 4.2 and 4.3 provide the Cronbach alphas (internal consistency) on each subscale and overall for the *CAAS* and *CDDQ* respectively. The scores obtained were equal to or greater than 0.61, which can be interpreted to imply that the test items were acceptably reliable and internally consistent for the study.

Table 4.2: Cronbach alpha scores (for *CAAS*) for quasi-experimental³ and comparison groups

	Intervention and comparison groups
	Pre-test
Concern	0.607
Control	0.636
Curiosity	0.658
Confidence	0.728
<i>CAAS</i> total	0.838

³ Quasi-experimental group is henceforth referred to as intervention group

Table 4.3: Cronbach alpha scores (for CDDQ) for intervention and comparison groups

	Intervention and comparison groups
	Pre-test
Readiness	0.643
Lack of information	0.898
Inconsistent information	0.729
CDDQ total	0.888

4.3.2 Descriptive statistics

The results of the quantitative data analysis are presented in the tables that follow. A summary of the information is provided and associated with descriptive statistics. The p -value approach to hypothesis testing was employed in the current study. In other words, when the p -value is less than the specified level of significance, α , the null hypothesis is rejected. In the current study, the level of significance, α , was set at 5%. (The p -value approach involves determining the probability of change assuming that the null hypothesis is supported.)

4.3.2.1 Pre-intervention data analysis

To assess whether the distribution of pre-intervention scores was the same across groups (comparison and intervention), 19 different hypotheses were formulated. The hypotheses were tested by performing the independent-samples Mann-Whitney U tests. These tests are analogous to the independent two-sample t -test. The p -values that appear in Tables 4.4 and 4.5 were half of the values obtained from the data analysis since a one-sided alternative hypothesis is stated throughout.

The hypotheses stated that the distribution of pre-intervention values would be the same across the different groups.

❖ Hypotheses for CAAS:

It was hypothesised that the Pre-CAAS scores would be the same for both groups, i.e.,

$$H_0: \mu \text{ Pre-Intervention} = \mu \text{ Pre-Comparison (two-tailed testing)}$$

The hypotheses were formulated for each of the four CAAS subscales and for the total. The other null hypotheses are not stated here because of space constraints.

❖ Hypotheses for CDDQ:

It was also hypothesised that the Pre-CDDQ scores would be the same for both groups across the three subscales, and the sub-subscales and the total, i.e.,
 $H_0: \mu \text{ Pre-Intervention} = \mu \text{ Pre-Comparison}.$

The hypotheses were formulated for the overall CDDQ, for the three major career decision-making difficulty subscales (Readiness, Lack of Information, Inconsistent information), and for each sub-subscale (each subscale contains several specific difficulty subcategories). The null hypotheses are not stated here because of space constraints. Descriptive statistic tables discuss the initial findings for the pre-intervention scores on the CAAS and CDDQ.

Table 4.4: CAAS pre-scores across the comparison and intervention groups

Subscale	Test	n	Mean (Std Dev)	Median	IQR	p-value	Effect size
Concern	Pre	74	3.51 (0.67)	3.58	1.17	0.411	0.09
	Pre	17	3.55 (0.73)	3.50	1.17		
Control	Pre	74	3.69 (0.68)	3.75	0.90	0.234	0.05
	Pre	17	3.57 (0.68)	3.67	0.75		
Curiosity	Pre	74	3.19 (0.72)	3.17	1.08	0.260	0.06
	Pre	17	3.09 (0.65)	3.00	0.75		
Confidence	Pre	74	3.52 (0.79)	3.67	1.00	0.226	0.05
	Pre	17	3.37 (0.70)	3.50	1.00		
CAAS total	Pre	74	3.48 (0.56)	3.58	0.76	0.247	0.05
	Pre	17	3.40 (0.47)	3.58	0.88		

* $p < 0.05$ **Significant at the 5% level**

** $p < 0.01$ **Significant at the 1% level**

* $r = 0.2$ (Small effect; 0.2 – 0.5 = small to medium effect)

** $r = 0.5$ (Medium effect; 0.5 – 0.8 = medium to large effect)

*** $r = 0.8$ (Large effect)

(This list of symbols and associated meanings applies to all four tables and is not repeated below.)

Table 4.5: CDDQ pre-scores across the comparison and intervention

Subscale	Test	n	Mean (Std Dev)	Median	IQR	p-value	Effect size
Rm	Pre	74	4.44 (1.90)	4.50	3.33	0.187	0.04
	Pre	17	3.96 (1.50)	3.67	1.83		
Ri	Pre	74	6.37 (1.70)	6.33	2.33	0.326	0.07
	Pre	17	6.26 (1.75)	6.33	3.00		
Rd	Pre	74	6.80 (1.64)	7.00	2.00	0.381	0.08
	Pre	17	6.66 (1.51)	7.00	2.63		
Readiness	Pre	74	5.87 (1.27)	6.03	1.86	0.189	0.03
	Pre	17	5.62 (1.22)	5.39	2.15		
Lp	Pre	74	4.99 (2.31)	5.00	3.67	0.451	0.10
	Pre	17	4.90 (2.65)	4.33	5.00		
Ls	Pre	74	4.93 (2.17)	4.75	3.56	0.362	0.08
	Pre	17	4.78 (2.56)	3.75	4.63		
Lo	Pre	74	5.10 (2.03)	5.00	2.88	0.347	0.07
	Pre	17	5.37 (2.44)	4.33	4.50		
La	Pre	74	4.59 (2.21)	4.50	2.75	0.452	0.10
	Pre	17	4.62 (1.91)	4.50	4.00		
Lack of Info	Pre	74	4.91 (1.82)	4.88	2.44	0.467	0.10
	Pre	17	4.92 (2.10)	4.29	3.63		
lu	Pre	74	4.86 (1.90)	5.00	2.67	0.396	0.08
	Pre	17	4.84 (1.94)	4.33	2.33		
li	Pre	74	4.68 (2.04)	4.90	3.30	0.176	0.04
	Pre	17	5.28 (1.60)	5.20	2.10		
le	Pre	74	4.14 (2.33)	4.25	3.13	0.423	0.09
	Pre	17	4.12 (1.75)	4.00	2.25		
Incons Info	Pre	74	4.56 (1.64)	4.44	2.30	0.284	0.06
	Pre	17	4.75 (1.31)	4.82	2.37		
CDDQ	Pre	74	5.09 (1.31)	5.29	1.89	0.465	0.10
	Pre	17	5.08 (1.4)	4.78	2.79		

None of the 19 null hypotheses for the CAAS (5) and CDDQ (14) was rejected because none of the p -values was less than or equal to the significance level, namely 0.05. Descriptive statistics comparing scores before and after the intervention within the groups are displayed in the following section.

4.3.2.2 Results of pre- and post-intervention data analysis within groups

Statistical hypotheses (38) were formulated to compare pre- and post-intervention scores for both the CAAS (10 hypotheses (5) within the intervention group and (5) between the intervention and comparison groups), and the CDDQ (28 hypotheses (14) within the intervention group and (14) between the intervention and

comparison groups)⁴. The Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test (similar to one-way ANOVA) was performed to test the hypotheses. The hypotheses stated that the median of differences between pre- and post-scores equals 0. Descriptive statistics are provided in Tables 4.6 to 4.9.

Table 4.6: CAAS pre- and post-test scores for intervention group

Subscale	Test	n	Mean (Std Dev)	Median	IQR	p-value	Effect size
Quasi-experimental group							
Concern	Pre	17	3.55 (0.73)	3.50	1.17	0.224	0.18
	Post	17	3.76 (0.70)	3.67	0.92		
Control	Pre	17	3.57 (0.68)	3.66	0.75	0.091	0.33
	Post	17	3.83 (0.53)	3.67	0.50		
Curiosity	Pre	17	3.09 (0.65)	3.00	0.75	0.048*	0.41**
	Post	17	3.34 (0.52)	3.17	0.75		
Confidence	Pre	17	3.37 (0.70)	3.50	1.00	0.408	0.06
	Post	17	3.33 (0.90)	3.33	1.33		
CAAS total	Pre	17	3.40 (0.47)	3.58	0.88	0.118	0.29
	Post	17	3.57 (0.49)	3.58	0.86		

*p < 0.05 Significant at the 5% level

**Medium effect size

Table 4.7: CAAS pre- and post-test scores for comparison group

Subscale	Test	n	Mean (Std Dev)	Median	IQR	p-value	Effect size
Comparison group							
Concern	Pre	74	3.51 (0.67)	3.58	1.17	0.130	0.13
	Post	74	3.62 (0.65)	3.58	1.00		
Control	Pre	74	3.69 (0.68)	3.75	0.90	0.043*	0.20
	Post	74	3.52 (0.72)	3.67	0.83		
Curiosity	Pre	74	3.19 (0.72)	3.17	1.08	0.295	0.06
	Post	74	3.24 (0.69)	3.33	0.87		
Confidence	Pre	74	3.52 (0.79)	3.67	1.00	0.161	0.12
	Post	74	3.47 (0.67)	3.50	0.88		
CAAS total	Pre	74	3.48 (0.56)	3.58	0.76	0.481	0.01
	Post	74	3.46 (0.55)	3.56	0.67		

⁴ Of course, the alternative hypotheses should for instance be:

(i) $H_0: \mu_{\text{Post-Intervention CAAS}} > \mu_{\text{Pre-intervention CAAS}}$ for the CAAS, and

(ii) $H_0: \mu_{\text{Post-Intervention CDDQ}} < \mu_{\text{Pre-intervention CDDQ}}$ for the CDDQ and so on and so forth. However, because of space constraints, the rest of the alternative hypotheses are not stated.

Table 4.8: CDDQ pre- and post-test scores for comparison group

Subscale	Test	n	Mean (Std Dev)	Median	IQR	p-value	Effect size
Comparison group							
Rm	Pre	74	4.44 (1.90)	4.50	3.33	0.035*	0.21
	Post	74	3.98 (1.90)	4.00	3.08		
Ri	Pre	74	6.37 (1.70)	6.33	2.33	0.220	0.09
	Post	74	6.17 (1.90)	6.33	2.42		
Rd	Pre	74	6.80 (1.64)	7.00	2.00	0.009*	0.28
	Post	74	6.32 (1.44)	6.70	2.25		
Readiness	Pre	74	5.87 (1.27)	6.03	1.86	0.005*	0.30
	Post	74	5.49 (1.16)	5.68	1.66		
Lp	Pre	74	4.99 (2.31)	5.00	3.67	0.344	0.05
	Post	74	5.15 (2.23)	5.00	3.42		
Ls	Pre	74	4.93 (2.17)	4.75	3.56	0.435	0.02
	Post	74	4.94 (2.12)	5.00	3.50		
Lo	Pre	74	5.10 (2.03)	5.00	2.88	0.201	0.10
	Post	74	5.38 (2.31)	5.67	3.67		
La	Pre	74	4.59 (2.21)	4.50	2.75	0.215	0.09
	Post	74	4.82 (2.30)	5.00	3.50		
Lack of Info	Pre	74	4.91 (1.82)	4.88	2.44	0.023*	0.23
	Post	74	5.07 (1.96)	5.12	2.80		
lu	Pre	74	4.86 (1.90)	5.00	2.67	0.015*	0.25
	Post	74	5.49 (2.09)	6.00	3.17		
li	Pre	74	4.68 (2.04)	4.90	3.30	0.217	0.09
	Post	74	4.88 (1.95)	4.60	3.20		
le	Pre	74	4.14 (2.33)	4.25	3.13	0.116	0.14
	Post	74	4.63 (2.39)	4.50	3.63		
Incons Info	Pre	74	4.56 (1.64)	4.44	2.30	0.048*	0.19
	Post	74	4.99 (1.77)	5.31	2.68		
CDDQ	Pre	74	5.09 (1.31)	5.29	1.89	0.233	0.09
	Post	74	5.17 (1.45)	5.33	1.95		

Table 4.9: CDDQ pre- and post-test scores for intervention group

Subscale	Test	n	Mean (Std Dev)	Median	IQR	p-value	Effect size
Intervention group							
Rm	Pre	17	3.96 (1.50)	3.67	1.83	0.251	0.16
	Post	17	3.78 (1.79)	3.67	2.75		
Ri	Pre	17	6.26 (1.75)	6.33	3.00	0.088	0.33
	Post	17	5.80 (2.03)	6.00	3.17		
Rd	Pre	17	6.66 (1.51)	7.00	2.63	0.472	0.02
	Post	17	6.70 (1.55)	7.00	3.13		
Readiness	Pre	17	5.62 (1.22)	5.39	2.15	0.246	0.17
	Post	17	5.43 (1.05)	5.56	1.60		
Lp	Pre	17	4.90 (2.65)	4.33	5.00	0.500	0.00
	Post	17	4.75 (2.30)	5.00	2.83		
Ls	Pre	17	4.78 (2.56)	3.75	4.63	0.478	0.01
	Post	17	4.27 (1.54)	4.25	2.38		
Lo	Pre	17	5.37 (2.44)	4.33	4.50	0.073	0.35**
	Post	17	4.45 (1.90)	5.33	3.33		
La	Pre	17	4.62 (1.91)	4.50	4.00	0.283	0.13
	Post	17	4.24 (2.01)	4.50	2.75		
Lack of Info	Pre	17	4.92 (2.10)	4.29	3.63	0.232	0.18
	Post	17	4.42 (1.47)	4.38	2.53		
lu	Pre	17	4.84 (1.94)	4.33	2.33	0.112	0.30
	Post	17	5.73 (1.86)	6.00	1.67		
li	Pre	17	5.28 (1.60)	5.20	2.10	0.444	0.03
	Post	17	5.20 (1.77)	5.20	2.50		
le	Pre	17	4.12 (1.75)	4.00	2.25	0.181	0.22
	Post	17	5.03 (2.31)	4.50	3.75		
Incons Info	Pre	17	4.75 (1.31)	4.82	2.37	0.144	0.26
	Post	17	5.32 (1.42)	5.20	1.62		
CDDQ	Pre	17	5.07 (1.47)	4.78	2.79	0.491	0.01
	Post	17	4.99 (1.13)	4.81	1.53		

**Medium effect size

From the results in Table 4.6, a statistically significant difference was found between pre- and post-median scores on the Curiosity subscales of the intervention group. The difference between the pre- and post-scores in the Control subscale for the comparison group is statistically significant as indicated in Table 4.7.

Whereas there is convincing evidence of differences between pre- and post-median scores for Rd and Readiness, statistically significant difference was found for Rm, lu, Lack of Info, and Incons Info, as shown in Table 4.8.

Nineteen hypotheses were formulated to assess whether the distribution of pre-intervention scores was the same across groups (comparison and intervention). Independent-samples Mann-Whitney U tests were performed to test the hypotheses, which stated that the distribution of post-intervention values was the same across the groups, i.e., $H_0: \mu_{\text{Post-Intervention}} = \mu_{\text{Post-Comparison}}$

Table 4.10: CAAS post-test scores for intervention and comparison groups

Subscale	Test	n	Mean (Std Dev)	Median	IQR	p-value	Effect size
Intervention/ Comparison group							
Concern	Post	17	3.76 (0.70)	3.67	0.92	0.138	0.03
	Post	74	3.62 (0.65)	3.58	1.00		
Control	Post	17	3.83 (0.53)	3.67	0.50	0.062	0.01
	Post	74	3.52 (0.72)	3.67	0.83		
Curiosity	Post	17	3.09 (0.65)	3.00	0.75	0.383	0.08
	Post	74	3.24 (0.69)	3.33	0.87		
Confidence	Post	17	3.33 (0.90)	3.33	1.33	0.337	0.07
	Post	74	3.47 (0.67)	3.50	0.88		
CAAS total	Post	17	3.57 (0.49)	3.58	0.86	0.274	0.06
	Post	74	3.46 (0.55)	3.56	0.67		

Table 4.11: CDDQ post-test scores for intervention and comparison groups

Subscale	Test	n	Mean (Std Dev)	Median	IQR	p-value	Effect size
Comparison/ Intervention groups							
Rm	Post	74	3.98 (1.90)	4.00	3.08	0.353	0.07
	Post	17	3.78 (1.79)	3.67	2.75		
Ri	Post	74	6.17 (1.90)	6.33	2.42	0.221	0.05
	Post	17	5.80 (2.03)	6.00	3.17		
Rd	Post	74	6.32 (1.44)	6.71	2.25	0.238	0.05
	Post	17	6.70 (1.55)	7.00	3.13		
Readiness	Post	74	5.49 (1.16)	5.68	1.66	0.376	0.04
	Post	17	5.43 (1.05)	5.56	1.60		
Lp	Post	74	5.15 (2.23)	5.00	3.42	0.303	0.06
	Post	17	4.75 (2.30)	5.00	2.83		
Ls	Post	74	4.94 (2.12)	5.00	3.50	0.109	0.02
	Post	17	4.27 (1.54)	4.25	2.38		
Lo	Post	74	5.38 (2.31)	5.67	3.67	0.062	0.01
	Post	17	4.45 (1.90)	5.33	3.33		

Subscale	Test	n	Mean (Std Dev)	Median	IQR	p-value	Effect size
La	Post	74	4.82 (2.30)	5.00	3.50	0.248	0.03
	Post	17	4.24 (2.01)	4.50	2.75		
Lack of Info	Post	74	5.07 (1.96)	5.12	2.80	0.093	0.02
	Post	17	4.42 (1.47)	4.38	2.53		
lu	Post	74	5.49 (2.09)	6.00	3.17	0.384	0.08
	Post	17	5.73 (1.86)	6.00	1.67		
li	Post	74	4.88 (1.95)	4.60	3.20	0.227	0.05
	Post	17	5.20 (1.77)	5.20	2.50		
le	Post	74	4.63 (2.39)	4.50	3.63	0.285	0.06
	Post	17	5.03 (2.31)	4.50	3.75		
Incons Info	Post	74	4.99 (1.77)	5.31	2.68	0.386	0.05
	Post	17	5.32 (1.42)	5.20	1.62		
CDDQ	Post	74	5.17 (1.45)	5.33	1.95	0.219	0.05
	Post	17	4.99 (1.13)	4.81	1.53		

Calculations of the Mann-Whitney U Test for the post-tests (CAAS and CDDQ) indicate that significant differences were not found between scores of the intervention and comparison groups.

Eight of the 38 null hypotheses for the within-group comparison of pre- and post-test medians were rejected. From these results, significant directional differences were recorded post-intervention on eight of the 19 scales that were assessed. The reason for the differences can only be hypothesised why changes were observed when comparisons were made within the groups and not between groups. Verification would require in-depth and refined comparative analysis of the content of each test and subtest, in other words, precisely what each scale tests. Appropriate hypotheses to justify the possible reasons for change can only be advanced after a thorough qualitative data analysis.

4.4 RESULTS OF QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

There is consensus among researchers that there are multiple ways to analyse and report qualitative research data (Punch, 2009). Qualitative data analysis is considered as an activity that is viewed from multiple perspectives, and hence there is no 'right' way or method. Schumacher and Camp (2010) maintain that most qualitative researchers would rather dissuade the idea of standardising the process to promote the researcher's involvement creatively. That notwithstanding, Castro et

al. (2010) recommend that as small several 'strong' thematic categories as possible can be identified. The authors consider strong categories as those that amount to 20% or more of response codes. This figure accounts for a significant fraction of the clarifying variance.

In the current study, qualitative data was gathered from the intervention participants and the comparison groups. Participants' reflections after completing the two questionnaires pre- and post-intervention, the focus group interviews, as well as life design techniques were included in the data-gathering process. To analyse the qualitative data gathered in the current study, I proceeded through a few steps in which the raw data was studied, carefully organised, prepared, and coded to arrive at a holistic interpretation. Data was analysed and interpreted to better understand how participants made meaning of the phenomena they were exposed to during the intervention process.

To put together a report, the researcher identified and categorised themes, beginning with those described in the literature reviewed in the current study. The data that was gathered was grouped into themes for analysis. The categories and subcategories of the quantitative assessment measures used in this research study served as the starting point for identifying themes. As a matter of fact, qualitative researchers are urged to lean more towards an inductive approach instead of tying theories to hypotheses (Suter, 2011). Given that the mixed methods research encompasses the qualitative approach, I started off with anticipated themes (deductive analysis) while keeping an eye on patterns that could constitute emerging themes and subthemes that had not been expected (inductive analysis). Bernard and Ryan (2010) capture the researcher's thoughts in the following remark: "No matter how hard we try, there are no purely inductive (or deductive) studies." Therefore, the approach employed to analyse data in the current study can best be referred to as deductive-inductive. In the process of analysing the data, some additional themes were identified.

The researcher involved an expert coder, a psychologist and a researcher with several years' experience to verify codes, themes, and subthemes that were identified. Participants' responses (between two and four) were included in a table to substantiate the identified themes and subthemes. A four-digit coding system was employed to report participants' responses from various data sources. Table 4.12 summarises the system of referencing used in my study.

Table 4.12: System of reference (deductive analysis): Group and participant number

	SOURCE OF DATA		PAGE NUMBERS	LINE NUMBERS
1 - 74 75 - 91	1.	Pre-intervention reflections	1– 14	1 - 42
	2.	Post-intervention reflections	1 - 17	1 - 42
	3.	Drawings	1 - 10	-
	4.	Lifeline	1 - 7	-
	5.	CIP reflections	1 - 21	1 - 42
	6.	Focus group interviews	1 - 38	1 - 42

For example, the code 76;2;3;11 signifies that the respondent is participant number 76 of the intervention group. The data source is the participant's reflective journal after completing the *CAAS* and *CDDQ* assessment questionnaires, and their entry is found on p. 3, line 11.

The qualitative data analysis results are presented next, beginning with inclusion and exclusion criteria tables for the subscales and themes that emerged from the data.

Table 4.13a: Themes and subthemes identified through thematic analysis

I	Deductively derived themes	
	Theme	Subthemes
	A. Career adaptability resources	a. Concern, b. Control, c. Curiosity, d. Confidence
	B. Lack of readiness	a. Lack of motivation, b. Indecisiveness, c. Dysfunctional beliefs
	C. Lack of information	a. Decision-making process, b. Self, c. Occupations, d. Ways of obtaining information
	D. Inconsistent information	a. Unreliable information, b. Internal conflicts, c. External conflicts
II	Inductively identified themes	
	A. Other career decision influences	a. Socioeconomic challenges, b. Subject combination choices, c. Academic achievement, d. Desire to make family proud, e. Language issues, f. Hopelessness and despair, g. Psychosocial issues

Inductively identified themes (continued)	
B. Value of the intervention	a. Changes due to the intervention, b. Causes of changes due to the intervention, c. Preparedness to leave school, d. Additional help required, e. Improving the intervention.

Table 4.13b: Inclusion and exclusion criteria utilised for Theme 1 (deductive analysis)

Theme 1: Career adaptability resources		
Subscales and subthemes	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Subscale 1.1: Concern	Participants made remarks or statements indicating that they were ready to plan and explore future work/non-work roles.	Participants made remarks or statements that do not indicate that they are ready to plan and explore future work/non-work roles.
Subscale 1.2: Control	Remarks or statements participants made that refer to strengthening career decision-making and responsibility for their decisions.	Remarks or statements participants made that do not refer to strengthening career decision-making and responsibility for their decisions.
Subscale 1.3: Curiosity	Participants made remarks or statements that referred to an exploratory attitude about themselves and their contexts.	Participants made remarks or statements that do not refer to an exploratory attitude about themselves and their contexts.
Subscale 1.4: Confidence	Participants' remarks referred to their ability to develop problem-solving skills and positive self-efficacy toward work.	Participants made remarks or statements that did not refer to their ability to develop problem-solving skills and positive self-efficacy toward work.

Table 4.14: Inclusion and exclusion criteria utilised for Themes 2, 3, and 4 (inductive analysis)

Theme 2: Readiness		
Subscales and subthemes	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
2.1: Lack of motivation	Remarks or statements participants referred to a lack of willingness to decide at a certain time.	Remarks or statements participants made did not refer to a lack of willingness to decide at a certain time.
2.2: General indecisiveness	Participants made remarks or statements that refer to negative perceptions of self, anxiety related to the decision-making process, diffused self-concept, and identity.	Participants made remarks or statements that did not refer to negative perceptions of self, anxiety related to the decision-making process, diffused self-concept, and identity.
2.3: Dysfunctional beliefs	Participants made remarks or statements that referred to distorted perceptions of the career decision-making process, irrational expectations, and dysfunctional thoughts.	Participants made remarks or statements that did not refer to distorted perceptions of the career decision-making process, irrational expectations, and dysfunctional thoughts.
Theme 3: Lack of Information		
3.1: The stages of the career decision-making process	Participants made remarks or statements that referred to making a career decision wisely and the steps involved in the process.	Participants made remarks or statements that did not refer to making a career decision wisely and the steps involved in the process.
3.2: Self	Participants made remarks or statements about the self, preferences, and abilities.	Participants made remarks or statements unrelated to the self, preferences, and abilities.
3.3: Occupations	Participants made remarks or statements that referred to occupations, alternatives, and characteristics.	Participants made remarks or statements that did not refer to occupations, alternatives, and characteristics.
3.4: Additional information	Participants' remarks or statements referred to obtaining additional information and sources of help.	Remarks or statements participants made that did not refer to obtaining additional information and sources of help.

Theme 4: Inconsistent information		
4.1: Unreliable information	Remarks or statements participants made that refer to contradictory information about the individual and occupations considered.	Participants made remarks or statements that did not refer to contradictory information about the individual and occupations considered.
4.2: Internal conflicts	Participants made remarks that referred to the conflict between an alternative and a preferred characteristic; difficulties in compromising.	Participants made remarks or statements that did not refer to the conflict between an alternative and a preferred characteristic; difficulties in compromising.
4.3: External conflicts	Participants made remarks or statements that referred to conflicts between individual preferences and the preferences voiced by significant others.	Participants made remarks or statements that did not refer to conflicts between individual preferences and the preferences voiced by significant others.

Table 4.15: Inclusion and exclusion criteria utilised for Themes 5 and 6

Theme 5: Other career decision influences		
Subthemes	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
5.1: Socioeconomic aspects	Participants' remarks indicated that finances were an obstacle to career decision-making.	Participants made remarks or statements that did not indicate that finances are obstacles to career decision-making.
5.2: Subject combination choices	Participants made remarks or statements about subject combination choices that impede their career decision-making.	Participants made remarks or statements unrelated to subject combination choices that impede their career decision-making.
5.3: Academic achievement	Remarks or statements participants made relating to the influence of academic achievement as a hindrance to career decision making.	Remarks or statements participants made not relating to the influence of academic achievement as a hindrance to career decision making.
5.4: Psychosocial issues	Participants made remarks or statements relating to the challenging psychosocial issues impacting their studies and career decision-making.	Participants made remarks or statements not relating to the challenging psychosocial issues impacting their studies and career decision-making.
5.5: Language challenges	Remarks or statements made by participants that indicated language difficulties.	Remarks or statements made by participants that do not indicate language difficulties.

Theme 5: Other career decision influences		
Subthemes	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
5.6: Helplessness	Participants' remarks or statements indicated they were helpless in making career decisions. Remarks or statements made by participants indicated they were helpless in making career decisions.	Participants' remarks or statements did not indicate they were helpless in making career decisions. Remarks or statements made by participants indicated they were helpless in making career decisions.
5.7: Hope to succeed and help family	Participants' remarks or statements indicated their desire to succeed and help their families.	Participants made remarks or statements that did not indicate their desire to succeed and help their families.
Theme 6: Value of the intervention		
6.1: Changes due to the intervention	Participants made remarks that referred to perceived changes due to the intervention.	Participants made remarks or statements that did not refer to perceived changes due to the intervention.
6.2: Cause of changes due to the intervention	Participants' statements or remarks referred to the cause of changes due to the intervention.	Participants' statements or remarks did not refer to the cause of changes due to the intervention.
6.3: Preparedness to leave school	Participants made remarks or statements that referred to participants' preparedness to transition from school.	Participants made remarks or statements that did not refer to participants' preparedness to transition from school.
6.4: Additional help required	Participants made remarks or statements that referred to additional help participants needed to make a career decision.	Participants made remarks or statements that did not refer to additional help participants needed to make a career decision.
6.5: Improving the intervention	Participants made remarks or statements related to ways of improving the intervention to support learners in making a career decision.	Participants made remarks or statements that did not relate to improving the intervention to support learners in making a career decision.

Table 4.16: Findings relating to career adaptability resources

Theme 1: Career adaptability resources	
Subscales	Description of inclusion criteria
Concern	<p>Savickas and Porfeli (2012) refer to ‘concern’ as participants’ readiness to engage in planning and exploring future work/non-work roles.</p> <p>Examples of participants’ verbatim responses and codes</p> <p>34;1;6;23-25: “And after completing this, I think that I have to start planning for my future and I have to make decision for myself.”</p> <p>84;1;12;35-37: “This questionnaire for assessment of career adaptability make me start taking my life seriously now because I have been concerned about how am I going to continue it. It also increased my self-awareness as well as self-esteem.”</p>
Control	<p>Control (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) refers to the participants’ strengthening of career decision making and responsibility for their decisions.</p> <p>Examples of participants’ verbatim responses and codes</p> <p>80;1;12;12-14: “Looking at these questions somethings came to my mind that I have to be very clear about what I do today can always be affective to my future. And I should always have control of my life and decisions.”</p> <p>77;2;14;33-35: “After filling this questionnaire I realized many things about myself, from today I won’t be scared of anything. I should be ready to prepare for my future. Now I know what I am going to do after school.”</p>
Curiosity	<p>Savickas and Porfeli (2012) refer to curiosity as an exploratory attitude people have about themselves and their contexts.</p> <p>Examples of participants’ verbatim responses and codes</p> <p>65;1;10;5-6: “Judging from now I never explore my surroundings and observe other ways of doing things.”</p> <p>69;1;10;31-32: “I have to investigate options before making choice.”</p> <p>10;2;3;1-2: “When I filled this questions, it just made me be curious about my future and what I want to do in the nearest future.”</p>
Confidence	<p>Savickas & Porfeli (2012) define confidence as participants’ ability to develop problem-solving skills and positive self-efficacy toward work.</p> <p>Examples of participants’ verbatim responses and codes</p> <p>73;1;11;9-10: “Their more things that am not sure about myself like I have low self-confidence.”</p> <p>14;2;3;33-34: “There is a lot of changes from the starting of this questionnaire. First, I was not able to count on myself, preparing my future and working up to my ability.”</p> <p>19;2;4;30-31: “When I was answering this questions, I feel so confident about my future. The fact that I didn’t know how my future well be.”</p>

Table 4.17: Findings relating to career decision difficulties

Theme 2: Career decision difficulties	
Categories/Subscales	Description of inclusion criteria
Lack of readiness	
Lack of motivation	Lack of readiness refers to statements made by participants indicating a lack of willingness to decide at a certain point in time (Gati et al., 1996).
	Examples of participants' verbatim responses and codes
	08;2;2;27: "Making decisions has always been challenging and it is hard making decisions." 35;2;7;27-29: "I didn't know which career I will choose; career decision making is very hard when you are a learner but this questionnaire helped me a lot." 05;6;2;10-12: "And my weakness is that I procrastinate, I am lazy... And sometimes like... Sometimes I get lazy to think, and I am a critical thinker, for me like, I can think deeply, I can solve problems and too much."
Indecisiveness	Remarks or statements participants made that refer to negative perceptions of self, anxiety related to the decision-making process, diffused self-concept, and identity (Gati et al., 1996).
	Examples of participants' verbatim responses and codes
	82;6;3;10-15: "What has changed since we started? Before, I was so confused, I didn't know after my matric what I am going to do, like to study and stuff like that, not because I don't know what to do, but because I am good at many things. Like I am so confused I didn't know what to choose and what I could choose... but after we did the questionnaires, I have realized my strength and weaknesses." 05;6;6;27-29: "I think because I'm not very serious. Ok sir, let me say... today I will be saying... ok, I'm wanna be a teacher, then tomorrow when I see someone... I will be saying... I wanna be a doctor, but how?... because am not doing physics."
Dysfunctional beliefs	Remarks or statements participants made that refer to distorted perceptions of the career decision-making process, irrational expectations, and dysfunctional thoughts (Gati et al., 1996).
	Examples of participants' verbatim responses and codes
	28;2;6;13-14: "I believe that I do not have to choose the career now because time will lead me to the right career." 77;5;3;5-7: "The problem that I am facing for now it is that I like to listen to my friends when they bad influence my mind. They become Maglomonina to me, they treat me like I don't have dreams for myself and problem is that someone has cursed me so that I will never be successful in life."
Lack of information about:	

Theme 2: Career decision difficulties	
Categories/Subscales	Description of inclusion criteria
The stages of the career decision-making process	Remarks or statements participants made that refer to making a career decision wisely, and the steps involved in the process (Gati et al., 1996).
	Examples of participants' verbatim responses and codes
04;2;1;27-28: "I need help with my career, am not sure about what I need to do and what steps to follow when choosing a career." 23;2;5;12: "I want to choose a career but I don't know which steps to take."	
The self	Remarks or statements participants made that refer to the self, preferences, and abilities (Gati et al., 1996).
	Examples of participants' verbatim responses and codes
59;1;9;7: "Firstly I must know myself very well." 90;2;17;18: "I think I need to be confident with the decisions that I made, to know who I am, the real me."	
Occupations	Remarks or statements participants made that refer to occupations, alternatives, and their characteristics (Gati et al., 1996).
	Examples of participants' verbatim responses and codes
45;1;6;33-35: "I don't have enough information about variety occupation and the training program." 65;1;10;2-3: "Because I do not have enough information about where to complete my career; less of information concerning the career."	
Ways of obtaining additional information	Remarks or statements participants made that refer to ways of obtaining additional information and sources of help (Gati et al., 1996).
	Examples of participants' verbatim responses and codes
16;1;3;15-16: "I've realized that I lack information about my career and how difficult it will be for me to achieve this." 85;2;16;17-18: "I do not know how to obtain additional information about myself."	
Difficulties related to inconsistent information	
Unreliable information	Remarks or statements participants made that refer to use of contradictory information about the individual and occupations considered (Gati et al., 1996).
	Examples of participants' verbatim responses and codes
66;1;10;10: "People will be judging/telling me that this career doesn't suit me and more." 82;5;11;2-3: "My problem is that am so addicted to rap but it's not a career and that's what I want to do."	

Theme 2: Career decision difficulties	
Categories/Subscales	Description of inclusion criteria
Internal conflicts	Remarks or statements participants made that refer to conflict between an alternative and a preferred characteristic, difficulties in compromising (Gati et al., 1996).
	Examples of participants' verbatim responses and codes
80;1;14;8-9: "What worries me about law is that it takes lots of years to study and already spent lots of years in school." 42;2;8;41: "But I don't want to study a long time for that career at least 2½ to 3 years."	
External conflicts	Remarks or statements participants made that refer to conflicts between individual preferences and the preferences voiced by significant others (Gati et al., 1996).
	Examples of participants' verbatim responses and codes
54;1;8;15-17: "It is very difficult for me to choose a career because of what my parent want me to be. The career that I have chosen it is not traditional to my community and they do not like it." 83;2;15;40-41: "I already choose my career. I know it and understand but some people they are not supporting me like my family and friends, they say it's not a good career for me, I must choose better one."	

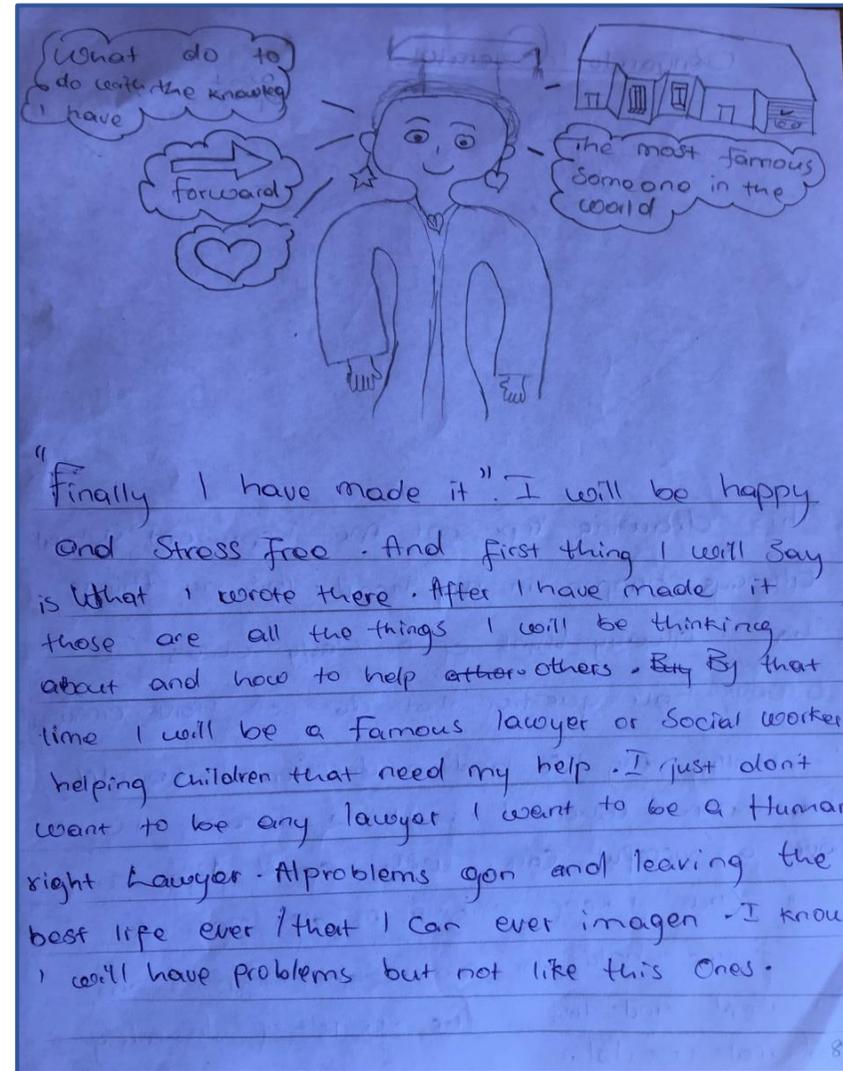
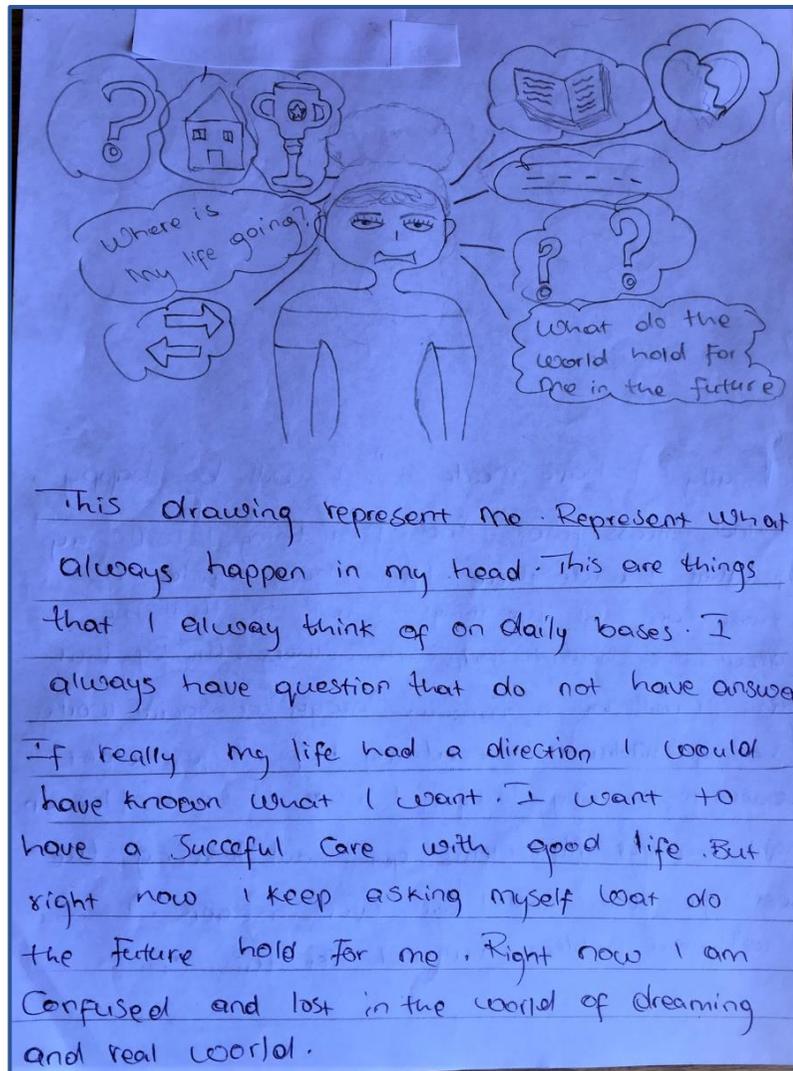


Figure 4.1: Example of a participant's drawings depicting how she felt about her career and how she should feel and think when the problem is resolved

Table 4.18: Findings relating to other career decision influences

Theme 5: Other career decision influences	
Categories/Subscales	Description of inclusion criteria
5.1: Socioeconomic	Remarks or statements participants made that indicate that finances are an obstacle to career decision making.
	Examples of participants' verbatim responses and codes
<p>04;1;1;21-23: "I believe that it is not difficult for me to have my degree. My fear is that I don't have much experience to complete my degree due to difficulties at home. It is possible for me not to have my degree because of the difficulties." 83;2;15;40-42: "I already choose my career. I know it and understand but some people they are not supporting me like my family and friends, they say it's not a good career for me, I must choose better one. The problem is that I don't even have money to go to the varsity, that's the big problem for myself."</p>	
5.2: Subject combination choices	Remarks or statements participants made that refer to subject choice or combination impeding career decision making.
	Examples of participants' verbatim responses and codes
<p>49;1;7;24-25: "I am concerned about my future because the subject that I have chosen I don't even know that whether I will get a job that is suitable for me." 59;2;11;32-33: "I feel I chose difficult subjects for me because I think am lazy and it takes time to understand things that I do in subject that I chose." 21;2;5;3-4: "The thing my worries about is that I wanna be a teacher but I don't know if I choose the correct subjects."</p>	
5.3: Academic achievement	Remarks or statements participants made relating to the influence of academic achievement as a hindrance to career decision making.
	Examples of participants' verbatim responses and codes
<p>24;2;5;23-24: "I want to change all my stupidity and be careful of my work and work hard taking my schoolwork very well." 22;2;5;9-11: "Ever since I attended this section, I have been studying hard so that I can prove on my study. In physical Science, I stragle on it... because I can not understand well. Studying hard is the most thing that I never done it before."</p>	
5.4: Make family proud	Remarks or statements made by participants that indicate desire to succeed and bring pride to their families
	Examples of participants' verbatim responses and codes
<p>3;2;1;23: "All I want to do is to make my parents proud, to help my parents with life problems." 25;2;5;28-30: "After I fill this form I was so heartbroken. I feel like I betrayed myself. I also lied to myself and also my family. All along I didn't even care about</p>	

Theme 5: Other career decision influences	
Categories/Subscales	Description of inclusion criteria
	career choices, I didn't know exactly what I want to be and what I want to be in life."
5.5: Language	Remarks or statements made by participants that indicate language difficulties and poor understanding of questionnaires
	Examples of participants' verbatim responses and codes
	20;1;3;32-33: "Some of the questions were difficult to be answered but I feel confident enough. I meant that some questions I did guess work because I didn't understand them." 89;5;19;20: "Not being able to speak English properly."
5.6: Helplessness and despair	Remarks or statements participants made relating to indicating that they are helpless and desperate
	Examples of participants' verbatim responses and codes
	03;2;1;16-18: "The questionnaire was so simple, because it describe me very well. I don't know what I want to be, I don't know which career I will choose or I will take. It difficult for me to choose the career because I don't know my abilities, I don't know what I should do." 52;2;10;21-24: "I am worried that it is difficult for me to make a career choice. I do not have a confidence on myself because I am such a failure. Nothing I do succeeds. I always fail and fall apart. It is difficult for make a decision in my life because I'm afraid that I might fail. I do not have the have the ability to confide in myself, it is so difficult."
5.7: Psychosocial issues	Remarks or statements participants made relating to the challenging psychosocial issues impacting their studies and their ability to make career decisions.
	Examples of participants' verbatim responses and codes
	80;4;2-: "I was in Grade 10 but I dropped out because I was pregnant." 90;5;20;3-4: "I grow up without a father and there was no guide to tell about life." 79;5;6;23-24: "My father left us and we were struggling because my mother was not working and my father was not helping."

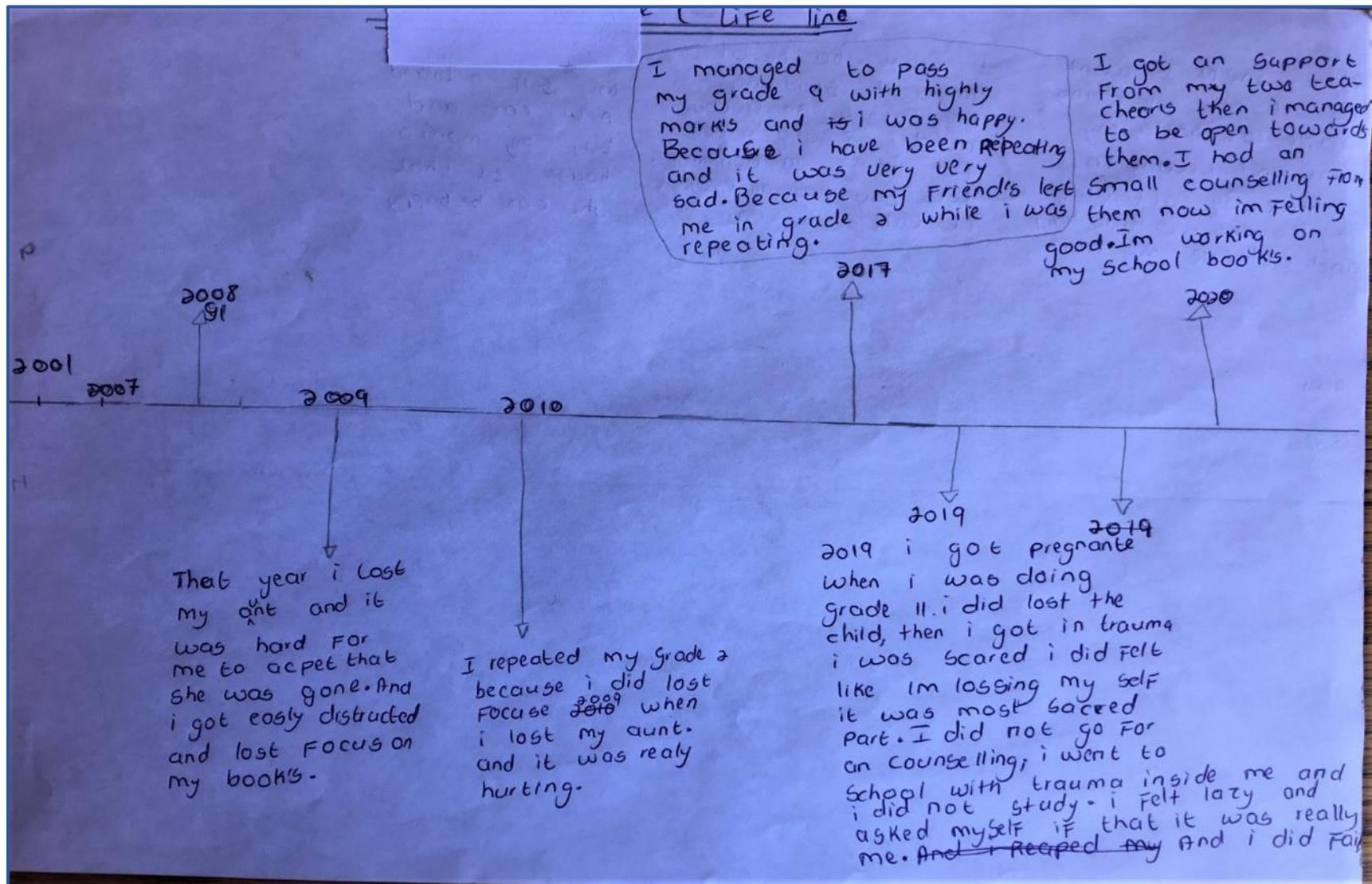


Figure 4.2: An example of a lifeline indicating psychosocial challenges faced by a participant

Table 4.19: Findings relating to participants' experiences of the intervention

Theme 6: Value of the intervention	
Categories/Subscales	Description of inclusion criteria
6.1: Changes due to the intervention	Remarks or statements participants made that refer to their ability to develop problem-solving skills and positive self-efficacy toward work.
	Examples of participants' verbatim responses and codes
<p>80;5;9;2-3: "The thing that has changed is that I am now able to make my career and the thing that I didn't know that I am the only one who can make my career choice. I now know where my life is going."</p> <p>58;6;21;4-7: "To be honest for the career nothing has changed, I have been trying to find the career, but nothing has changed. Umm... at schoolwork something has changed. I have to look at books, study hard so that I can get better marks for the career that I will be able to choose."</p>	
6.2: Cause of changes due to the intervention	Remarks or statements participants made that refer to what participants perceive as changes due to the intervention.
	Examples of participants' verbatim responses and codes
<p>80;5;9;8-9: "The story of my life is the one that changed everything, cause now I can think like someone who has a future to prepare for without a doubt."</p> <p>53;6;27;9-11: "And the reason why my... my work is better now, is because I study hard at home and seeing my classmate doing better than me is putting me under pressure to do better in my studies."</p>	
6.3: Preparedness to leave school	Remarks or statements participants made that refer to their preparedness to transition from school.
	Examples of participants' verbatim responses and codes
<p>66;6;28;16-17: "I think am prepared, because umm... am only prepared only if I pass the matric..."</p> <p>19;6;14;: "Sir, for me am ready to leave school because I know my career and am ready to explore the world. Umm... I am very confident about my career, but, the only thing that am worried about is what if my application does not get approved."</p>	
6.4: Additional help required	Remarks or statements participants made that refer to additional help that they need to make a career decision.
	Examples of participants' verbatim responses and codes
<p>21;6;10;13-14: "I think I don't need any help. I should believe in myself. And tell myself that I can do this."</p> <p>19;6;13;10-11: "Sir, I don't think I need any help, because I have my family and friends. They help me a lot, when am in trouble, I consider them."</p>	

Theme 6: Value of the intervention	
Categories/Subscales	Description of inclusion criteria
6.5: Improving the intervention	Remarks or statements participants made that relate to ways of improving the intervention to support learners in making a career decision.
	Examples of participants' verbatim responses and codes
89;6;34;4-5: "You must attend/meet learners frequently in a way that they will be... they will have confident on school." 21;6;17;5-6: "I think you should attend all schools not only our schools and the primary schools..." 82;6;18;15-17: "Maybe you should bring food, they will participate, yes because maybe sometimes they don't wanna to do because they are hungry, they wanna go home and eat, yes sir."	

4.5 DISCUSSION OF QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Four themes and several subthemes were deductively confirmed, while two additional themes and subthemes emerged inductively from the qualitative data analysis. The two thematic groups (deductive and inductive) are discussed in the following section.

4.5.1 Deductively identified themes and subthemes

From participants' reflections and journal entries before the intervention, it seems that career adaptability resources were low for both the intervention and the comparison groups. The following example for the first subtheme, Concern, illustrates this finding [16;1;3;18-19]: "I have to stay positive, overcome obstacles, solve problems and plan for my future. I am worried about my future." However, there were noticeable differences in participants' reflections and thoughts regarding concerns about their future after the intervention. Most of those who took part in the intervention programme could express their concerns vividly including plans they have about their future, as in the following example [84;1;12;35-37]: "This questionnaire for assessment of career adaptability make me start taking my life seriously now because I have been concern about how am I going to continue it. It also increases my self-awareness as well as self-esteem."

This pattern whereby more participants (between two and five) in the intervention group than in the comparison group indicated enhanced adaptability

resources was consistent across the deductively identified themes. More (nine) participants in the comparison group stated that they were not ready to make a career decision prior to the intervention and lacked information about the self and occupations, but fewer said so after the intervention. More participants (12) in the intervention group reported enhanced motivation, both in deciding on a career choice and in their studies, after they participated in the intervention programme. Lack of information, in general, stood out as the most recurring reason why participants were undecided about their future. Although fewer participants (three) in the comparison group than in the intervention group reported positively in their post-intervention journal entries, apparently, the assessment served as a form of intervention for all the participants. Several participants in the comparison group indicated that the assessment had made them aware of what they should be doing about their future aspirations. The following two examples support this [10;2;3;1-2]: “When I filled this questions, it just made me be curious about my future and what I want to do in the nearest future”, and [19;6;68-12]: “I have made a lot of research... about my career, where I am going forward and what choices I can make umm umm... in my future... forth. That if, I am a fashion designer, ... I will become a fashion designer, I am sure of it and I... because I trust myself, I have researched that.”

Participant reflections from the intervention group indicated that participants were more determined, confident, and ready to manage challenges in constructing their future. For instance [77;2;14;33-35]: “After filling this questionnaire I realised many things about myself, from today I won’t be scared of anything. I should be ready to prepare for my future. Now I know what I am going to do after school.”

4.5.2 Inductively identified themes and subthemes

In the process of analysing the qualitative data, two themes emerged inductively. The first theme had to do with other factors that affected the career decision making of the participants. The factors appeared across the data sources before, during, and after the intervention and somehow reflected the contextual factors that impeded participants’ career choice decisions. Language challenges, for example, were evident from participants’ responses before the intervention. Some of the participants also mentioned this in their journal entries such as [03;1;1;13-14]: “Some of the questions were too difficult to answer and I didn’t have

the answers for it just because the question paper said, “please do not skip any question”, and [89;5;19;20]: “Not being able to speak English properly”. Other than language difficulties, some participants were concerned about the combination of subjects they chose in Grade 10, considering that they were striving to be successful in their school performance and bring pride to their families. The financial situation at home, combined with serious psychosocial issues, left most of the participants helpless and desperate as expressed by this participant [52;2;10;21-24]: “I am worried that it is difficult for me to make a career choice. I do not have a confidence on myself because I am such a failure. Nothing I do succeeds. I always fail and fall apart. It is difficult for me to decide in my life because I’m afraid that I might fail. I do not have the ability to confide in myself, it is so difficult.”

The last theme emerged mostly from the focus group interviews and journal entries of the intervention group participants. Whereas most participants in the intervention group stated that their future career decisions, academic achievement, and self-knowledge had changed, the corresponding number in the comparison group was relatively small. For example [91;6;24;14-16]: “The main cause of that change is that we did have... we did have career choices (intervention sessions) and that has led me to study hard and make sure I pass all my subjects and follow the career that I want.” In contrast [05;6;8;12-15]: “Sir, yoh... there is no change. Yes, because every time when I leave school with confidence, it drops at home. I don’t wanna talk a lot more about it here.” The intervention group participants mostly attributed change to the intervention, whereas the comparison group attributed change to the assessments from the questionnaires.

Relatively more participants from the intervention group than from the comparison group indicated that they were better prepared for the transition facing them (leaving school) [91;6;27]: “Maybe next year, as I can see now, I will not be able to get scores that I want to get at the university. So, if I finish Matric, then the result does not satisfy me, I am going to.... like my aim is to make some small business and sell some unique products that at my community does not sell. After that, I use the money to take myself to college to study for boiler maker.” The following is an example from a participant who is not ready to leave school [58;6;27;25-26]: “I’m not that much prepared. I’m not ready to face the world out there. Like I said first, I’m not able to choose a career, yeah.”

Some participants thought that spending more time and having frequent sessions with the researcher would improve their participation and ensure better outcomes for them [89;6;34;4-5]: “You must attend/meet learners frequently in a way that they will be ... they will have confident on school.” Other suggestions had to do with the contextual factors discussed in the previous paragraph [82;6;18;15-17]: “Maybe you should bring food, they will participate, yes because maybe sometimes they don’t wanna to do because they are hungry, they wanna go home and eat, yes sir.”

The qualitative results imply that there is much change that is captured in the quantitative data. A table summarising the findings of the qualitative and quantitative results pre- and post-intervention is presented next.

4.6 CONCLUSION

Results of the analysed data sets were generated from various sources for the current study and reported in this chapter. The presentation of the qualitative findings follows the quantitative findings. I analysed the quantitative data and deductively identified themes and subthemes. Also, themes and subthemes that emerged from the qualitative data were identified (inductively) and analysed. Also, I tried to illustrate the possible effect of the intervention on the participants by including some of their verbatim remarks.

Chapter 5 discusses the results from both the quantitative and qualitative data sets and critically links them with the theoretical framework and literature reviewed in the current study.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This research project aimed to generate and report on the mixed methods research approach as guided by the theoretical framework discussed in the first three chapters. The study's findings were subsequently reported in Chapter 4, where the researcher aimed to investigate the influence of life design counselling on learners who struggle with career indecision and who hail from resource-constrained communities. In this fifth chapter, I compare, link, and interpret the current study's findings within the literature framework to answer the main research question and other research questions. The themes identified in Chapter 4 are next explored and discussed regarding both quantitative and qualitative data. The approach adopted seeks to know whether the findings of the current study concur with or differ from the findings of previous studies. Further to that, I report findings in the current study that have never been reported before and any specific trends that have emerged from the findings. **It is worth mentioning that only a few investigations that are similar to the current study have been published, hence additional literature (other than relevant studies identified in the literature review) will be referred to in this chapter.**

5.2 QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

Results based on the quantitative data were generated from the administration of two assessment measures, namely the *Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS)* (Maree, 2012b) and the *Career Decision Difficulty Questionnaire (CDDQ)* (Gati et al., 1996). Administration of these tests happened in two stages of quantitative data generation – prior to and after the intervention. This was followed by a third stage in which the pre- and post-intervention data was analysed to determine if there were any statistically significant differences or practical applicability within and between the intervention and comparison groups. The pre-intervention scores were analysed to determine if there had been any initial bias between the two groups. The overall results of the two assessment measures were examined in general, together with the outcomes of the categories and subscales.

5.2.1 CAAS results

In trying to understand how individuals employ their self-regulating capacities in response to the changing nature of careers, collaboration among a group of researchers has led to the development of the CAAS. According to (Tolentino et al., 2014), individuals' willingness and ability to adapt would augment their chances of transitioning and adapting in changing environments. Career counsellors have been implored to facilitate the improvement of clients' career adaptability resources (concern, control, curiosity, and confidence) (Savickas, 2010). This led to the administration of the CAAS (Maree, 2012b; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) to participants of the current study. Quantitative data was generated from each of the subscales and a total score was calculated for the scale.

No statistically significant or practically meaningful differences were found either in the pre- or post-intervention scores between the two groups. The absence of statistically significant or practically meaningful differences in the pre-intervention scores between the groups was an indication that they were on par at commencement of the intervention. Moreover, no statistically significant or practically meaningful difference was observed after the intervention. The fact that there were no statistically significant changes in the post-intervention scores on all four subscales as well as the CAAS total between the two groups, indicates that the intervention did not enhance the career adaptability of intervention group participants. This result supports the conclusion reached by Maree et al. (2018) who found that career construction intervention was less successful (from a statistical perspective) at improving the career adaptability of participants from disadvantaged backgrounds enrolled in a public school. However, the intervention resulted in some significant differences in the outcomes for participants from affluent communities who attended an independent school. According to Savickas (2012) the career construction of young people from disadvantaged communities reflects the 'social expectations' of their communities (p. 232). Moreover, the results of the current study of the CAAS seem to support Elwood and Murphy (2015) who stated that in contexts of vulnerability, young people's educational and career aspirations are directed by the expectations and values of the community in which they live. The results of the current study possibly reflect the effect of a script (expectations of the

communities or families) that renders career adaptability challenging for the participants in the current study.

Statistically significant differences were found in the pre- and post-intervention scores on Concern and Curiosity within the comparison and intervention groups respectively. Despite the observation of these statistically significant differences, there were no practically meaningful effect sizes in any of the outcomes within and between the groups. Various reasons could be advanced for this and it might be argued that the composition of participants in the intervention group (16 females and a male) partly accounted for the negligible effect sizes observed. Women who live in male-dominated contexts and who are not recognised as equal to men are often less assertive (Maree, 2018a), which seemingly was the case in the current study.

The absence of any practically meaningful effect sizes in this study also seemed to support Panter-Brick (2015) who stated that people's behaviour, who they are, and their attitude towards challenges are shaped by the beliefs, expectations, and what is of value to the group they identify with – whether in an explicit or implicit manner. In a similar vein, families and communities play a role in constructing the thoughts and desires that young people bring into the counselling situation (Savickas, 2012). The participants in the current study were all Black youths who were living in disadvantaged communities, and they were familiar with South Africa's past concerning what Nkomo et al. (2015) described as the reality that "job discrimination lingers in the collective psyche(p.63)". Savickas (2021) contends that vulnerable people do not have concerns about the future and are often among hopeless clients who, compared to helpless or dependent clients place their hope in the counsellor and counselling session. The participants in the current study were probably among the group of learners who implicitly doubted whether the researcher's intervention would have any meaningful impact on their career choice prospects at the time of assessment.

The absence of any practical applicability or statistical significance of the results had both psychological and educational implications for the participants. It can be argued that despite the comparison group's statistically significant pre-test–post-test score differences, low confidence scores psychologically negatively affect concern the participants have about their future. Also, there is not sufficient motivation to study or set goals without confidence. Hence, one ends up with what

Maree (2017b) refers to as those learners among the group of people who drop out of high school, graduate with results that do not reflect their potential or fail to learn either important life skills or acquire some knowledge of business. Whereas the statistically significant pre-test–post-test findings within each group indicate that, after the assessment, participants in the comparison group seemed to develop an interest in their future, the intervention group had already started exploring their environment and the options available to them. Still there were no statistically significant differences when outcomes between the two groups were compared, implying the intervention was not as successful as had been hoped for.

Factors that could account for the variances in career adaptability found in the current study are considered in identifying reasons for the differences between the subtest scores. The results in the current study differ from previous research (Maree, 2019a; Maree et al., 2018) in that the negligible effect sizes observed in the pre- and post-intervention differences between groups (intervention and comparison) on the CAAS total and on all the subscales indicate that the intervention had a negligible impact on participants' willingness to view their future with renewed hope and confidence and to plan appropriately (Hartung & Cadaret, 2017). The participants in both groups – intervention and comparison – expected/hoped to be told what to do, so efforts at enhancing career adaptability hardly impacted them. If Savickas (2021) assertion of scripted careers is true in this case, then that could explain the reason for lack of success in the intervention, as not much change was observed in participants' career adaptability. The findings in the current study may be attributed to the fact that the investigation was conducted in a predominantly rural area where the situation of women is different to that of women in urban areas. Consequently, the female participants in the current study may have demonstrated less assertive behaviour, autonomy, and self-regulation regarding career decision-making. They may not be inclined to take ownership of their future.

5.2.2 CDDQ results

Whereas statistically significant differences were not found in the pre-/post-test scores of the experimental group, significant statistical differences were found in the comparison group's scores in the categories Lack of Readiness, Lack of Information, and Inconsistent Information. Significant statistical differences in pre-

/post-test scores within the comparison group were also observed in the subcategories Rm, Rd, and Iu. Although statistically significant differences were found in some pre-post results of the comparison group, the negligible effect sizes indicate that they were not practically meaningful. This could well be an indication that the statistical significance of the outcomes was due to the number of comparison group participants, which was way more than the intervention group. However, these findings did indicate that the intervention was not successful in lowering the career decision difficulties of participants in the intervention group.

Disadvantaged people (low socioeconomic status (SES) individuals in particular) have less chance of choosing and succeeding in appropriate careers because of their lack of information about careers (Brown, 2002). In such contexts, their perception of their skills and preferences and what is achievable and what not, may well be inaccurate and biased (Gati & Levin, 2014). Apparently, the results found in the current study demonstrate what Xu and Tracey (2014) describe in their study. They found that ambiguity tolerance (individuals' perception of and response to ambiguous situations or stimuli (Furnham & Ribchester, 1995) play a significant role in their decision making. Notwithstanding the statistically significant outcomes of the assessment observed within the comparison group, the negligible effect sizes of both groups and the absence of statistically significant scores of the intervention group probably suggest that participants were low on ambiguity tolerance. Participants in the intervention group were inclined to depend on the researcher to indicate the 'perfect or right' career for them, rather than to explore areas for growth. Rigidity of thought and compulsive pursuit of an optimal choice is a core characteristic of general indecisiveness and dysfunctional beliefs (Schwartz et al., 2002; Turner et al., 2012). The pre-/post-test scores for the comparison group showed some statistically significant differences but were not practically applicable as observed in the effect sizes, probably because of the beliefs participants held at the time of the assessment. This could also explain why no changes were observed for the intervention group, despite the intervention.

Some researchers (Fouad et al., 2009; Gati et al., 2013) report that acquiring more information to lower clients' indecisiveness and dysfunctional beliefs is not enough. This might suggest that there are more issues about the characteristic information processing style that need an adjustment. Counselling for career construction promotes career adaptability, which enhances career decidedness

(Nota et al., 2016). Although the intervention group received an intervention that could address the issue of information processing, there was still no change in the participants' ability to make career decisions. This suggests that it might be useful to rethink the matter of the specific assessment measures that were administered in the current study.

The CAAS and CDDQ measure constructs related to career education and how participants should change (adaptability), which is more in line with what Savickas (2021) refers to as 'the motivated agent'. The CDDQ explores decision-making that has to do with career education and the steps the motivated agent requires to prepare for the future. The current intervention was about narrating micro-stories and establishing a sense of individuality to help the participants construct their career future and pursue it from the perspective of reflecting on and linking their past and present. Thus, it aimed to set up the narrative author. Research suggests that career construction should enhance people's future perspectives, predict their career decidedness, and clarify their future perspectives (Cadaret & Hartung, 2020; Motlova & Honsova, 2021; Santilli et al., 2019). The beliefs and expectations of participants in the current study were most likely at the level of the social actor (one who is lost and alone and needs advice and guidance about problematic issues to get moving towards solution (Savickas, 2021) and hence the effect of the intervention could not be assessed quantitatively with the measures that were employed. Hartung (2013), among others, states that it is now generally accepted that 'objective' (psychometric) tests do not adequately assess subjective facets of clients' career counselling experiences and variables. Scales and scores are not as important as meaningful conversations about their future with young people (Savickas, 2021).

In the next section, the qualitative results are discussed, beginning with deductively confirmed themes.

5.3 QUALITATIVE RESULTS

As recommended by Ivankova et al. (2016), the current study's qualitative strand focused on gathering subjective data in the form of participants' written responses, recorded interviews, and images. The researcher next discusses the themes and subthemes (where possible) that were confirmed deductively, followed

by inductively identified themes from the qualitative data. The discussion mostly comprises comparing findings that cut across the two phases of data gathering (participants' reflections prior to and after completing the quantitative assessments) and the researcher's reflections on the different techniques utilised in the current study. Changes noted in the participants' thoughts and feelings because of the intervention or assessments are highlighted. Themes and some subthemes guide the discussion of the qualitative findings, and comparisons are made between the findings and any relevant qualitative research. Where themes overlap in the discussion of the qualitative data, they are highlighted. It is worth mentioning that, to date, few researchers have used career construction to address career indecision and hence there is not much literature available in this regard.

In the section that follows, the deductively identified themes and some subthemes are discussed, starting with career adaptability resources and themes related to career decision difficulties. First, a general introduction is provided before the themes and subthemes are closely examined.

5.3.1 Career adaptability resources

Participants' responses in all four subthemes of the career adaptability resources theme diverged somewhat from findings of the quantitative analysis of the current study, namely that the life design intervention programme was not successful in enhancing their career adaptability resources. Some participants in the intervention group clearly displayed signs of self- and career construction and started to verbalise plans for their future in their post-intervention reflections as described by Savickas et al. (2009). The current study's findings are in contrast with results of a research conducted by Maree et al. (2018) involving Grade 11 participants at a private and at a low-resourced public school. These researchers reported positive qualitative adaptability results for participants from the public school but not for those of the private school. The findings of the current research were also in contrast with some aspects of a study by Maree et al. (2018), which did not record positive qualitative results in a life design counselling intervention programme conducted to improve peer supporters' sense of self of participants who attended an affluent independent school for girls. Maree et al. (2018) reported that their intervention was not successful (as expected) in enhancing aspects of participants' career adaptability, such as taking control of their future. Results of my

study concur with findings of a qualitative case study research by Setlhare-Meltor and Wood (2016), where narrative intervention assisted an adolescent participant in designing and narrating a different future as another possibility or choice. Setlhare-Meltor and Wood's (2016) study was conducted with a participant who formerly had been homeless.

5.3.1.1 *Concern*

Participants in the current study started showing interest in their careers (concern) after completing the quantitative assessment measure which preceded the intervention. The qualitative data analysis after the intervention confirms that both groups of participants' concerns grew during the programme as they became more reflexive. The pre- and post-test reflections of participant 79 of the intervention group is an example [79;1;12;3-4]: "This questionnaire made me aware of my future. I have to make decision by myself and plan how to achieve my goal", and [79;2;15;7-8]: "I have realized that I have a future to plan. ... has helped me a lot with my career, now I am preparing for my future. I took a decision about my career". From the comparison group, one participant reflected as follows, after completing the pretest [26;1;4;31-32]: "I know that I have to choose a career and I know I have to count on myself, but I don't have the motivation to make a decision now. And again, it is usually difficult for me to make a decision", and after the post-test [26;2;6;5-7]: "I am very concern about my future and am preparing for my future. I really like to stick up for my beliefs. I am not good on problem solving and on career choices but I hope to get professional help from those who know it". This finding agrees with that of Brown et al. (2012), who concluded that among other resources, the development of concern is fostered in the process of self-reflexivity. The findings also correspond with the definition of the construct 'concern' in the literature by some researchers (Galvin, 2015; Hartung et al., 2008). It is interesting to note that participants of the comparison group also reported increased concern as they thought about their future.

5.3.1.2 *Control*

The extent of control that participants perceived to have over their future is another adaptability subtheme that was confirmed in the current study. Here again

there is indication from participants' responses that those who were involved in the intervention programme seemed to have benefited in terms of personal agency regarding their future careers. The following reflections of two participants each of the comparison and intervention groups respectively illustrate to an extent the difference that was observed between the two groups after they had completed the post-test assessment [19;2;4;30-31]: "When I was answering these questions, I feel so confident about my future. The fact that I didn't know how my future well be. Now I know that 'the future is in my hands'", and [80;2;15;18-21]: "I have been thinking a lot about my future and taking all the information that I give you about myself. Putting it together and I have seen that really I want that career and for my plan B if I don't get to study Law, I can study to be a social worker as long as it deals with helping people who are in need and giving something positive out of what I do". The quoted examples are an indication that participants who were exposed to the intervention programme had the opportunity to go through a reflexive process, suggesting that they became more aware of who they are, what is important to them, and what is preventing them from achieving their career goals. Participation in the programme seemed to have helped them to take control and become more responsible for their own success and to work towards realising their future aspirations. It can be reasoned that the current study confirmed emphasis by researchers (Fritz & Beekman, 2007; Watson et al., 2010) who stated that career counselling clients with decision-making difficulties become aware of alternative opportunities and prospects when they are skilfully guided in the direction of subjective meaning making.

5.3.1.3 *Curiosity*

The subtheme curiosity was confirmed in reports from participants on how they had been engaged in exploring information about who they are and the careers they aspire to pursue. Such exploratory behaviour about the self and occupations is evident in participants' reflections in the post-intervention assessment for both the comparison and quasi-experimental groups. It suggests that the assessment as well as the intervention programme motivated participants from both groups to engage further in exploratory behaviour. This finding agrees with the statistically significant difference in the pre-/post-intervention scores of the intervention group. The thoughts of a participant in the intervention group prior to and after the intervention

were [91;1;14;1-3]: “The reason for my thoughts is that I have to make some investigation before I make choice. It’s hard to make investigation because we sometimes found different answers and I will start to be confused”, and [91;4;21;16-19]: “I had a problem of choosing only one career not knowing what obstacles will I face, for example, there will be a time where my points will not manage to be colified [qualify] for that career then I will have to choose other career. Career categories helped me to think about other careers for example marketing. I found it more interesting, and I want to make it or achieve it”. This finding concurs with that of Reh fuss (2009), that “such changes are expected as individuals begin to embrace and enact career exploration and specification”. Participants in the intervention group – more than in the comparison group – reported initiating their own career exploration activities following the life design intervention.

5.3.1.4 *Confidence*

Prior to the intervention, fewer participants in both groups indicated that they were confident of their ability to achieve the career goals to which they aspire⁵. Responses provided by participants in the intervention group suggest that the intervention programme increased their confidence levels. It also motivated them to imagine a future for themselves beyond obstacles and challenges (such as financial constraints, low motivation to study and goal setting) that stood in the way of achieving their career aspirations. For example, one participant stated the following as her presenting problem in the career construction interview [89;4;18;32-33]: “Help me gain confidence to achieve everything I want to do, and also guide me through the way I want to read my grade 11 so that I can get a bursary”. In the focus group interview, after the intervention, she said [89;5;20;48]: “What has changed in me is that I have gained more confidence in myself. I am now able to choose everything like my career... the career... I am able to choose the career that I want. I know everything about that career, but at first, I didn’t know which way to go when choosing the career. I have researched about that career, what I will be doing in that career”. Her remark seems to support the assertion by Hirschi (2009), who concludes that individuals who are adaptive also feel empowered. One participant from the comparison group stated that the pre- and post-assessments prompted her

⁵ See section 4.4 pp. 72 Table 4.14

to think deeply about her abilities and enhanced her confidence levels as she became more concerned about her future. Savickas (2011b) states that concern (for one's future) develops in response to the individual making connections between their past, present, and future.

5.3.2 Career decision difficulties

Three of the four deductively confirmed themes are grouped under career decision difficulties (Lack of Readiness, Lack of Information, and Inconsistent Information). The qualitative results regarding career decision difficulties in general diverge somewhat from the quantitative results in the current study. Whereas statistically significant differences were recorded in the pre-/post-test results for the comparison group in several areas of career decision difficulties, the intervention group reported better outcomes in the qualitative data than the comparison group. The researcher observed what Schwartz et al. (2002) described as 'choice maximising anxiety'. This situation generally arose from a maximising decision strategy as the participants were seeking the best career options, leaving some of them more confused' as they experienced more decision difficulty. To some extent, the current study's findings resonate with those of Grier-Reed and Skaar (2010) who researched the effect of a constructivist career course on college students in the United States. The outcome of the study showed that participants were empowered, as was measured by an increase in their career decision self-efficacy, but it did not lower their career indecision.

5.3.3 Lack of readiness

Assisting young people with interventions that can help them gain a better understanding of who they are is important in helping them move on in career decision-making (Savickas, 2001; Super, 1957). There is evidence in literature that self-efficacy is among the important career barriers that adolescents in resource scarce environments face (or perceive) when choosing or aspiring for future careers (Alexander et al., 2009; Hendricks et al., 2015; Maree & Che, 2018). Participants in the intervention group of the current study were involved in activities that seemingly put them in a position to understand themselves better and acquire self-knowledge [75;4;2;4-5]: "...knowing more about my career is what has changed about my

career is understanding my strengths and my weaknesses”. Another remark was made [77;4;5;6-7]: “...is that today’s session made my life easy. Now I know who I am. I should stay true and have trust in me”.

Indecisiveness is one of the reasons why individuals are not ready to make career decisions. The developmental approach career choice or decision claims that young people’s interest in the world of work increases along with the relevance and usefulness of information that they acquire about themselves and various occupations. Participant number 90 (just as a few others in the intervention group) is clearly in the developmental stage where the intervention seems to have assisted her move away from the indecisive state in which she finds herself [90;1;13;30;31]: “I think that the career I choice is not for me. Causes: I don’t have self-confidence about myself. I keep thinking about myself how people look at me”, and [90;2;17;18-20]: “I think I need to be confident with the decisions that I made, to know who I am, the real me, what kind of skills I have and how they are related to the career I have chosen. To do something now in life, to take steps to my career choice”. Going by Super’s (1957; 1990) findings, participants in the current study who took part in the intervention programme began the process of constructing their careers through acquiring self-knowledge. Knowledge about the self would assist the participants in responding to questions such as, “Who am I?” (Hartung et al., 2008). Attempts by participants in the current study to answer the afore-mentioned question regarding their identity exemplify what Super (1983) refers to as the active exploration in which adolescents engage during the curiosity stage of career development. Xu and Tracey (2014) contend that causes of the three subcategories (lack of motivation, indecisiveness, and dysfunctional beliefs) of the lack of readiness category could have been different, which suggests that different people experience the difficulties at different times or in an order different to that on the difficulties scale. Indecisiveness could represent a chronic issue related to negative personality traits, while lack of motivation and dysfunctional beliefs could point to developmental issues.

5.3.4 Lack of information

Most young people do not have adequate information about careers and are inclined to depend on adults for such information (Del Corso & Briddick, 2015). According to these authors, some adolescents receive the information as fact, and

they do not question it or verify its validity. The researcher observed that contrary to the quantitative findings in the current study, participants in the intervention group apparently benefited more from the intervention. They had been exposed to career information included in one of the assessment measures that was used in the intervention. The reaction of Participant 89 in the intervention group is an example of how exposure to career information assisted in alleviating her difficulties with career decidedness. She stated her goal as to what she hoped to achieve at the end of the intervention as follows [89;4;18;29-32]: “At the end I should be able to choose my career without being struggling to choose it. I must also know what to do when I am struggling with my future and solve my career problems. Help me gain confidence to achieve everything I want to do, and also guide me through the way I want to read my grade 11 so that I can get a bursary”. The same participant (89) reflected after completing the CIP, saying [89;4;19;23-27]: “While I was going through the CIP, I realized that I did not know much about the career choice and also about the career category, and the work you do and also the job on that type of career category. I also underestimated other career because I did not know the jobs of that career. And work through them, and I also have to know myself in order for me to be able to choose a career. I have to change my home situation, change it gives me confidence on how to work on my challenges”. This finding is in line with Abrams et al. (2015) and Roche et al. (2017) who pointed out the significance of culture in career decision making with individuals from Eastern cultures who had salient concerns regarding their need for information at the beginning of their career exploration process. Participants in the current study hailed from disadvantaged backgrounds where access to career information was limited and could be an obstacle in their career decision-making process.

5.3.5 Inconsistent information

The constructivist approach to career counselling emphasises clients’ meaning making of their career stories, unlike in the positivist perspective which reduces indecision into the various subtypes and does not pay sufficient attention to the individual or factors within the context that are influencing the indecision. Participant 82 is stuck in the decision-making process because of stereotypes regarding certain occupations that are upheld in his community [82;4;11;1-5]: “The problem that I face now is that I don’t know which career I will choose at the future.

I see myself as a police officer. My problem is that am so addicted to rap but it's not a career and that's what I want to do. I decided to be a police officer not because I don't know who exactly I need to be but because South Africa is the highest crime rate so I need to decrease that rate that's where I need somebody to help me". After the intervention his thoughts were different [82;2;15;37-38]: "I feel great because all along I didn't believe on myself but now and forever I will always believe on myself. And am confident on whatever am doing". He continued [82;4;7;23-27]: "Yes, sir about career. I wasn't confident doing it. I was thinking... 'what will be people say'? Like things they saying to me when I... they are judging me. But ever since, I realize... it more about myself and not them. I know myself more than they do, so, I don't have to explain myself to them why am I doing this, and stuff... So, there's been a change on me".

The positive changes reflected in some of the intervention group participants indicate that they benefited to some degree from the intervention regarding the inconsistent information difficulty category as well. This finding is consistent with Lief's (2009) findings that career decision-making is enhanced when counsellors facilitate the process whereby clients reflect on their strengths, areas for development, and work values. The findings also confirm a study conducted with university students in Italy by Di Fabio and Maree (2012) and another study with students in Iran (Pordelan, Hosseinian, & Lashaki, 2021) that counselling for career construction intervention enhances career decision-making self-efficacy and resilience, and reduces career decision-making difficulties.

Individuals' indecision is also understood in terms of the stories that they tell and not only from psychometric measures (Stead & Watson, 2017). These stories narrated by the client and reflected by the counsellor, mirror the clients' central life theme and its relationship to career indecision. These stories include the client's past, present and future. Stead and Watson (2017) agree that the narrative approach underscores the importance of the meaning derived from stories and they argue that one's career problems can only be meaningfully and coherently understood if they are linked to one's life theme.

The examples here of Participant 83 are a case in point. In response to the introductory question of Part 4 of the *CIP* which states: "How can I be of help to or of use to you?", she replied [83;4;12;4-8]: "I don't know which way I will take when am finished my Grade 12 because my parent they don't have money to take me to

the school. And I don't trust myself that am going to achieve with a higher level that can help me to go to the university for free because of my levels".

In response to "I experienced the following challenge/problem when I was young and don't want others to go through them as well" (Early Recollections), the same participant stated: 83;4;12;9-10 "I didn't know how to read at the school some other children they was laughing at me they was telling me that I am domkop".

From her lifeline [83;4;3...]: "I move to another place in P... I was going to Grade 11 but I was sick because of the things I was doing with my friend. My aunt take me to the traditional healer, ... I was getting worse ... I ...join the church ...but in April my aunt kick me out of her house because I was attending the church that she didn't like it. I spend the whole year without the school living with my sister".

Reflection after completing the CCI [83;4;13;1-5]: "My last story is that now I know and understand when am finished my matric which way I will take. The thing is that in my life I struggle too much but now I know what was the problem, the problem is that my grandmother, from my father's side who has died long long ago she's not sleeping well at her grave because she was a healer, so now she want me to heal people like she was doing when she was alive".

It is evident that understanding Participant 83's life world from her narratives provides clearer insight into her difficulties about deciding her career future than can be captured by questionnaires and inventories. It supports the assertion by Hedges (2010) and Panter-Brick (2015), namely that values, beliefs and expectations endorsed by the community from where participants hail, shape who they are and the choices they make. Life design counselling assists clients to narrate their own life stories by taking into consideration the past, present and future (Savickas, 2001, 2005).

During the pre- and post-intervention assessments, participants were invited to reflect on and write what had changed about their career aspirations. The following section discusses the inductive themes that emerged and mostly constitute other influences that hindered participants' decision about what they want to do in the future.

5.3.6 Other career decision influences

Researching career indecision can be a daunting task because, as Slaney (1988) states, the extensiveness of career indecision research renders a summary

of the subject impossible. It is plausible that career indecision research is confusing and contradictory because studies on the topic have been conducted using different measures for the construct and different sample sizes. Another reason is that various researchers have carried out research on career indecision in contexts that differ historically and culturally. Regarding the matter of context, for instance, the current research was conducted in an environment where (as it is the case with the majority of South Africans) participants do not have the privilege of deciding on a tertiary institution for further studies or selecting an occupation. The divergence in the findings resulting from the qualitative and quantitative data discussed so far can partly be accounted for by the context of the current study. The subthemes discussed below add to the reasons why participants struggled to decide on a future career or tertiary study choice. Factors hindering or influencing participants' choices were inclined to be contextual or ecological – over which participants had no control (Theron, 2017) – as opposed to the individual factors discussed earlier in this chapter. From the discussion of the subthemes in this section it became evident that indecisiveness is not only a result of psychological barriers that prevent the individual from making career decisions (Hartman et al., 1985); it also includes contextual or structural factors. This issue of contextual barriers further supports Savickas (2015c) who contends that the meaning attributed to career indecision depends on the individual's objective circumstance and subjective narrative of career indecision.

5.3.6.1 *Socioeconomic aspects*

This research was conducted in an environment where unemployment is very high and poverty in the community is real. Of the 17 participants whose biographical information is on record, only four had parents who were educated beyond high school. Ten of the participants either lived with grandparents who are on pension, or their parents were not employed. One of the dominant challenges that participants indicated as a barrier to choosing a career was lack of funds to pursue studies after graduating from high school [01;02;01;1-4]: “I just wish I could just pass with flying colours in Grade 12 so that I can get a bursary, because my parents don't believe in me becoming a doctor because they do not have the money to support me on my career. And that makes me feel like even if I do not produce enough on my result it won't matter because there would be nothing more to be done about

pushing my future and career forward”. The concerns of this participant, which represent the concerns of many youth from low socioeconomic families, are in line with Statistics South Africa’s (2019) findings that close to half of the country’s population of 55 million live in chronic poverty. The participants in this study were clearly concerned that they were most likely on the way to joining the approximately 3.4 million South Africans (aged 15 to 24) who were reported to be not in employment, education or training (Africa, 2019).

5.3.6.2 *Subject combination choices*

In an article on ‘How to decide which career to choose’, the *Post* newspaper of 14 December 2016 (Maree, 2016d) states that many students nowadays still choose a field of study and enrol for it without knowing what exactly the career entails, only to discover later that they had made an inappropriate choice. Learners are advised in the article (Maree, 2016d) as follows: “First, they should have explored fields of study and careers thoroughly long before. It is irresponsible and short-sighted to wait until the crisis is upon you”. Not only was the crisis upon the participants in my study, but Maree (2009) lamented the situation of the majority of learners in Black communities who had neither access to, nor could they afford the services of career counselling. Research shows that many student dropouts and change of study fields among undergraduate students are related to career indecision (Albien & Naidoo, 2017; Maree, 2012c, 2016a; Morgan & Ness, 2003; Picard, 2012). High school learners (Grades 9 and 11) from marginalised communities are facing a point of transition that can result in career indecision. Most South African youth hardly receive any help when they face challenges of career indecision, due to the lack of counselling services in marginalised contexts (Albien, 2019; Albien & Naidoo, 2018; Alexander et al., 2009; Maree, 2016a; Maree & Beck, 2004b; McMahon & Patton, 2002; Theron, 2017).

5.3.6.3 *Academic achievements*

The context in which the current research was conducted (Quintile 1 schools) can be likened to the academic under-preparation reported by Graven (2014) and Mdepa and Tshiwula (2012). This under-preparation is related directly to poverty in schools where teachers are underqualified, the morale is low, and rampant

inequality in funding is commonplace. The participants in this study were aware of how their academic performance would impact their chances of securing entrance to tertiary institutions or competing with their peers from more resourced schools. They were at a significant disadvantage and race was inevitably tied to these conditions, given that they attended a homogenous school of all Black students in a rural area. Educational and career planning are clearly important to emphasise the connection between learning or schoolwork on the one hand, and future success on the other hand. Learners need to be made aware of, understand, and acknowledge the value of their learning regarding the satisfactory construction of their academic sense of self. By becoming more aware of their career goals and of the importance of dedication and commitment towards the attainment of these goals, learners were more likely to engage actively in educational activities and tasks regarded as important in realising their aspirations and goals (Turner & Lapan, 2013). Pajares (1996) argues that “[r]esearchers have established that self-efficacy beliefs are correlated with other self-beliefs and with academic changes and outcomes and that self-efficacy is a strong predictor of related academic outcomes” (p. 545). The participants in my study, too, realised the relationship between their self-efficacy beliefs and their academic self-construction (as evidenced in their discussions during the post-intervention interview).

5.3.6.4 *Psychosocial issues*

Poor quality education and learners’ low self-efficacy as discussed in Section 5.3.6.3 above have a psychosocial effect on learners. When learners struggle to cope with the school’s educational programme, they become demotivated and drop out (Adler, 1936). According to Adler, learners will look for strengths outside of the school in other activities when they perceive that the educational programme stands in the way of preparing their future or when they receive negative feedback from teachers and significant others. Adler’s assertion agrees with some scholars who suggest that youth in low-income communities tend to engage in risky behaviours (substance abuse; sexual activity; violent behaviour) (Jordan, Mireles, & Popkin, 2013). Biographical information of three participants in the intervention group shows that they were mothers. Their studies had been interrupted in one way or another for a period of at least eight months. One participant recounted in the lifeline activity how traumatic it was for her when she had her baby [91:4;6;1-4]: “I got pregnant

when I was doing Grade 11. I lost the child, then I got in trauma, I was scared, I felt like I was losing myself, it was the scariest part. I did not go for counselling; I went to school with trauma in me and I could not study. I felt lazy and I asked myself if that was really me... and I failed”. Pillay (2019) links high dropout rates at university and other tertiary institutions to lack of success, which gives rise to feelings of worthlessness and depression among students.

5.3.6.5 *Language challenges*

All the participants in the current study were in Grade 11 and it was expected that they had been exposed to English, the language of instruction, for at least seven years. That notwithstanding, the researcher observed how most participants struggled with items in the assessments and concluded that language could partly have contributed to some of the less beneficial outcomes of the intervention. Participant 3's reflection after completing one of the questionnaires is an example [03;01;01;13-15]. “Some of the questions were too difficult to answer and I didn't have the answers for it just because the question paper said, “please do not skip any question”. I just answered without understanding because I didn't have choice”. This finding differs from that of Maree et al. (2018), where participants from low-resourced school did not complain about the intervention, probably because they did not have any other form of support for their career development. The participants were probably at ease and could relate to the researcher and talk openly about this challenge they were experiencing. This study showed that language of instruction at school could be considered one of the barriers that negatively impact the learning and career decision-making of individuals living in resource-constrained communities. These barriers – over which they had little or no control (Theron, 2016) – complicated the way young people in these communities negotiated their life paths. It seems that the opportunity for self-development in this research study was a novelty for participants, due to the limited resources in their schools. A similar situation was the case in Maree et al. (2018), where learners from disadvantaged backgrounds did not complain that the activities had been difficult to complete.

5.3.6.6 *Helplessness and despair*

The definition of work as an activity primarily oriented at survival is still relevant for some population groups in South Africa. This is partly because accessibility to education and economic opportunities for some people have remained pretty much the same as in the apartheid years (Naidoo et al., 2017; Perry & Smith, 2017). This assumption is in striking contrast to the main supposition of career development (Blustein et al., 2017), which assumes that career development is a means of self-determination or an activity that fulfils the individual. Rankin and Roberts (2011) argue that young people's early exposure to unemployment instils in them feelings of hopelessness about their future career trajectories. This is problematic, considering that psychological and social resources are needed to make major work-life transitions. Although they reported from a European context, (Rankin & Roberts, 2011) believed that the sense of hopelessness regarding the future that was inculcated in young people due to this early exposure, negatively affected their future work trajectory. This situation of hopelessness among young people is even a greater concern in disadvantaged communities in South Africa, because individuals are expected to draw from their psychological and social resources to address challenges when facing major work-life transitions. Subjectively, most of the participants in the current study demonstrated identity statuses that most likely ranged between foreclosure and moratorium. This concurs with Erikson (1968) argument that at this stage, the young person's concept of self has not yet crystallised and they are likely to be in a state of confused identity. Savickas (2021) explains that career-counselling clients who struggle to identify a role model or who randomly name role models that do not correspond with the individual, have not had time to develop themselves or think about the future. They are preoccupied about what they want to do. The participants in the current study were in a situation which is identical to Savickas' assertion regarding identity issues. The matter of identity and context corresponds to a recent study conducted by Ribeiro et al. (2020) on the perception of decent work and future among low educated youth in Brazil and Portugal. They found that work is not perceived as a source of self-determination and social recognition in contexts of greater vulnerability, which is an important point for understanding the identity construction of young people in disadvantaged communities. Salomone (1982) statement is also

supported, namely when counselling career indecisive clients, the counsellor has to pay attention to aspects of personal counselling – including identity issues, which were evident among participants in the current study. Maree (2019b) suggests that identity diffusion is among the five different types of career indecision challenges that are the basis of considering changing career decisions.

5.3.6.7 *Hope to succeed and help family*

This subtheme aligns with the ‘Black tax’ convention prevalent in Black communities in South Africa – as discussed in Chapter 2. Researchers such as Turner and Lapan (2013) suggest that when parents expose their children to various career-related experiences, they play a significant role in guidance and support for the children’s career development. The context in which the current research was conducted is somewhat different to the claims made by Turner and Lapan (2013). Notwithstanding the fact that young people live in disadvantage, they are expected to go through the process of ‘Black tax’, which means success in their career choice depends on their capacity to provide financial support to their parents (Mhlungu, 2015; Ratlebjane, 2015). As stated by two participants [03;02;01;24]: “All I want to do is to make my parents proud, to help my parents with life problems”, and [63;02;12;29-30]: “...so that I can become a better person in future and make my parents proud”, it is clear that there is extra pressure on young people from low socioeconomic backgrounds when it comes to making career decisions, because of this additional burden. It is one of those typical examples of structural inequity within South Africa’s diverse context. VanderPlaat (2016) and Young (2015) refer to them as tangible and/or systemic; they predict negative outcomes and individuals have very little or no control over them.

It is obvious that career counselling cannot address all the challenges discussed in this section, but the complete lack of counselling is equally problematic. Despite the unexpected outcomes of the quantitative analysis and the above barriers to participants’ career decision-making, the qualitative data from the focus group interviews shows that the intervention in the current study positively impacted the participants (as is discussed in the next section).

5.3.7 Value of the intervention

The data discussed under this theme and the various subthemes were mostly derived from the focus group interview. Thirteen participants in all were selected from the intervention and comparison groups – five and eight respectively. Participants responded to questions on what had changed in their career decision, the cause of the change and what further help they required. The career intervention programme seems to have facilitated a shift in the thinking of participants from both groups in terms of how they have decided about their future. Such changed thinking occurred marginally in the case of the comparison group and even more so with the intervention group. The traditional approach towards resolving career indecision, which generates quantitative data from objective psychometric tests to elicit information about clients' interests, was used to identify and resolve career indecision (Maree & Beck, 2004a; Maree, 2016a, 2018b; Niles, 2003; Rafael, 2007; Ribeiro, 2018). The discussion of the subthemes that emerged from participants' responses in the focus group interview clearly indicates how the intervention group differed from the comparison group and how the qualitative data gathered in the current research diverges from the quantitative data.

5.3.7.1 *Changes due to the intervention*

Regarding changes brought about in participants from both groups because of the research, their responses testify to the experience for them. Whereas all five participants in the intervention group reported varying degrees of positive change in their career indecision, only Participant 19 of the eight participants of the comparison group indicated that she benefited positively from the pre-and post-intervention assessments. An improvement in their academic performance and work ethic stood out as the most remarkable effect for participants from both groups [89;2;17;6-12]: “Ever since I have been attending the class, I can now see the difference in my schoolwork. I realise that there was this cloud covering my books, but now things are easy because now I know why I am at school. I can already think about my future in the next coming 5 years. These classes have helped me a lot, am very grateful that I have seen the light before it is too late. My schoolwork has improved in a way that am even surprised myself that how I did it because at first, I always

told myself that passing or getting a bursary has its people, but now I know that if I can improve my work, I can apply for a bursary so that I can complete my studies”.

Participant 89’s experience (intervention group) is in stark contrast to that of Participant 52 of the comparison group [52;6;24;26-29]: “Nothing has changed for me. What I have to do is... like I need to upgrade my marks, to make sure that I study hard make time for my books. I need a guidance, to do more research so that I get more information about the career that I want to do, so that I can be so sure about what I want in future”. Perry and Wallace (2015) maintain that there is a compelling body of evidence indicating that career programming and education in various forms can positively impact academic outcomes such as grade point average, school attendance, and tertiary education enrolment. The findings in the current research agree with Tripney and Hombrado’s (2013) meta-analysis of technical and vocational training interventions for young people in low- and middle-income countries, predominantly from Latin America, which found significant (though small) effect sizes in terms of their impact on outcome employment and earnings.

Reducing indecisiveness and developing intentionality – one of the goals of the life design counselling approach (Savickas et al., 2009) – were demonstrated in the current study. Participants accorded priority to their schoolwork and engaged in activities that validated who they were and what was important to them. The purposeful action on the part of the participants corresponded with what McMahon et al. (2015) referred to as clients’ striving to actualise their identities in the process of self and career construction. In other words, in as much as the intervention programme motivated participants to work hard at school, it also enhanced the process of self-construction according to Guichard (2005). The change brought about by the life design intervention diverges from the quantitative data reported in the current study.

5.3.7.2 *Cause of the changes*

A participant who was involved in the life design intervention stated the following as what he perceived had brought about a change for him [82;6;12;26]: “Your advice, yes! Your advice made a change”. Despite international consensus that career education (among others) is a pivotal mechanism towards reducing poverty and achieving social equity, South Africa continues to experience a shortage

of such services in schools, especially within impoverished, rural communities (Watson et al., 2014). To offer rigorous and relevant education, career and vocational learning should be integrated into students' overall sense of purpose in school (Powell, 2013). To some extent, the life design career counselling intervention served the purpose of enhancing participants' sense of attending school and being persistent through hard work to achieve their future goals. A participant in the comparison group [58;6;24;26-29] remarked as follows: "To be honest for the career nothing has changed, I have been trying to find the career, but nothing has changed. Umm... at schoolwork something has changed. I have to look at my books, study hard so that I can get better marks for the career that I will be able to choose. Yeah, I think that is it..."

5.3.7.3 *Preparedness to leave school*

All five of the participants who took part in the life design intervention indicated that they were now ready to leave school or had become aware of what they ought to do to prepare for the future. Remarkable in their responses was that the plans they had for the future were realistic within their context. This finding further affirms those of scholars such as Del Corso and Briddick (2015) who contend that the career intervention programme allowed participants of the intervention group to construct themselves and their careers. They did this through their experience of engaging in (sometimes difficult) activities such as planning for a future after having left school. According to Savickas et al. (2009), the career intervention programme seemingly allowed participants to gain insight into and new perspectives on their respective interests (and abilities) by actively engaging them in the tasks in which they participated. The finding that the intervention programme facilitated self-knowledge, enhanced awareness of career interests and consequent forward movement in their career aspirations, also confirmed the benefit of career construction as reported by other researchers (Barclay & Wolff, 2012; Maree, 2015). Facilitating career adaptability in circumstances that predict negative developmental outcomes (Masten, 2014) (as in the case of the current research), involves assisting clients' capacity to negotiate career and life transitions so as to overcome career barriers and/or career turbulence that threaten to derail their career journeys (Arora & Rangnekar, 2016).

5.3.7.4 *Additional help required*

Individuals' career journeys/ trajectories and behaviour derive from a combination of factors that are both individual and contextual (Nota & Rossier, 2015). These authors further maintain that neither individual nor contextual factors are under the control of the client and they cannot be rapidly modified through intervention. The current research confirms that the participants' context and individual factors contributed to shaping their experience of the intervention. This finding is consistent with Hirschi (2009) in that participants experienced supportive interaction with the researcher, which enhanced their ability to adapt. The evidence in adaptability came across in the reflections from participants of the two groups and was in contrast with those of the comparison group who still had challenges with deciding about a future career. One part of the *CIP* which contains information about different occupations could have given participants of the intervention group an advantage. In this regard, incorporating aspects of Holland's person-environment fit in school-to-work transition programmes would be ideal (Swanson & Fouad, 1999). Acquisition of knowledge about the self and careers/occupations seemed to have enhanced participants' career development in the current study. Such information seems to have been acquired through participation in the career intervention programme. This self-awareness and gaining information about the world of work agrees with what Hartung (2007) believed, namely that clients' vocational maturity developed, as was the case with participants in the current research, as they became more curious about the world of work. Responding to the need for additional help, a participant stated [21;6;10;14-16]: "Sir, umm... I think I don't need any help. I should believe in myself. And tell myself that I can do this. You know the only help I need from you is to ... maybe advise me with something like, for example, I have low self-esteem". Although this participant was from the comparison group, her response seemed to acknowledge that the intervention had the potential to provide comprehensive support to career development. Once again, this finding concurred with research that demonstrated the efficacy of career intervention in positively impacting clients going through a period of transition (Turner & Lapan, 2013; Wood & Dahl, 2015). The above reflection of Participant 21 concurs to an extent with the view held by Hartung et al. (2008) who argued that the primary aim of career construction counselling was to increase clients' career adaptability so that they

could “effectively produce their own development in changing opportunities and constraints” (p. 72).

5.3.7.5 *Improving the intervention*

Asked what the researcher can do to improve the research programme, a participant from the comparison group did not hesitate [21;6;17;5-10]: “I think you should attend all schools not only our schools and the primary schools... you see? Maybe the Grade 7s or 6s and tell them more that you know... when you go to secondary, what you should do, or and what should you not do, you see? Maybe our village will improve. You... I have... most... learners or let me say people, when they finish school, they will do changes in our village, eh yeah”. This suggestion reminds of Donald Super’s (1957) developmental approach to vocational choice and acknowledges his supposition that at different stages of development, individuals are expected to fulfil different developmental tasks that correspond with the stage in which they are. For instance, learners in Grade 9 should focus primarily on self-concept development – the growth stage during which they acquire knowledge of who they are. Super (1957) maintained that as learners grew older (Grade 11, for example) and entered the exploration stage, they became more involved in planning for their future.

Participant 82 [82;6;16;19-22] stated: “I think there is nothing we can do sir, because as you said before, it is up to us to decide whether we pay... we give you our attention or not, yes sir. Is not... you have played you part right sir and you have helped us, and we appreciate it sir. There are not many people who can do what you did for us sir, yes sir”. Participant 82 suggests that attending poorly resourced schools implies a lack of access to resources for career development for the participants. Participants in the current study were simply grateful for the career support they received through this intervention because they had probably not expected much. Here the difference in context comes to the fore in the current study, as the finding deviates somewhat from the definition of career indecision – that is, a time when the client hesitates, wavers or observes a pause in the process of career development (Savickas, 2011b). The opportunity to tell their stories, which was inherent in the intervention programme, apparently had the effect of what Chen (2007) called, to “go above and beyond the surface scenes of the narration, probing and clarifying the deeper thoughts and emotions”. In a similar vein, Savickas

(2011a) encouraged career facilitators to allow their clients to express thoughts and emotions as a short-term goal of career construction to give clients the opportunity to normalise the challenges they face. Participants' responses in the current study confirmed the benefit of expressing their feelings as immediate holding space as they pondered about the future.

Participant 19 [19;6;16;29-30] stated: "Sir, I don't think you must change anything because umm... the questionnaire you gave us really help us. Is only more of thinking more about yourself, knowing what you want, being confident about yourself. So, I think this program is very good, you must not change anything". Participants in the intervention group accepted responsibility for their actions after participating in the career intervention programme. Taking responsibility is a principle inherent in career counselling, according to Herr et al. (2004). When clients are perceived as the experts of their lives, Savickas et al. (2009) argue, such clients become responsible for the stories they narrate and facilitate their own adaptability. Put differently, when individuals are given the opportunity to recount and reflect on their career and life stories, they are better placed to be in touch with their authentic selves. Delving deep and being in contact with the authentic self, helps people to adapt, negotiate transitions, and overcome challenges, which were among the goals of the current career intervention. After participating in the research, the participants in the current study seemed to be finding ways (in varying degrees) around the challenges of career indecision they were facing.

Holland and Holland (1977) refer to indecisiveness as "the outcome of a life history in which a person has failed to acquire the necessary cultural involvement, self-confidence, tolerance for ambiguity, sense of identity and self- and environmental knowledge to cope with vocational decision-making as well as with other common problems". In the next section, the researcher provides a summary in the form of an assessment of the intervention, which involves the three different conceptualisations of the psychological self by McAdams (2013).

5.4 SOCIAL ACTOR, MOTIVATED AGENT, AND NARRATIVE AUTHOR

In this study, the psychological self (actor, agent, and author) as conceptualised by McAdams (2013) and Savickas (2019) can generally be used to assess the effect of the intervention. In other words, to distinguish the different types

of career interventions people receive, namely guidance, education, and counselling (Savickas, 2019). The three parts that constitute the career construction theory as implemented in the current study are discussed next.

Vocational personality (self as social actor derived) is from Holland's theory of vocational types and theories of person-environment fit. Adolescents are helped to identify their interests, values, and skills. The participants in the current study mentioned that they became aware of their strengths and areas for growth and improvement. In the post-intervention assessment and in the focus group interviews, participants in the intervention group demonstrated that self-exploration and career information had enhanced their self-concept, self-efficacy and confidence, and lowered their career indecision.

Career adaptability (self as a motivated agent: developmental tasks, Super's lifespan and life space theory, work traumas and transitions, theory of work adjustment (how one adapts to the work environment – doing something that matters to the self and to others)). The participants benefited as they became aware of how they should plan the transition they were facing, namely that of school-to-work/further studies. They did this by identifying what attitudes, beliefs and competencies were necessary as they acquired and developed the career adaptability resources of concern, control, curiosity, and confidence. Participants in the intervention group benefited in the sense that they were well on their way and took practical steps to deal with their own development by creating a structure and discussing their plans of what they hoped to achieve in the future. The *CDDQ* assessed the career decision-making difficulties of the participants and their reflections on the pre- and post-assessments provided an idea of the challenges (besides personal or psychological barriers) they were experiencing. The reflections brought to light ecological and/or structural barriers that were preventing them from making career decisions. These were evident/reflected in the quantitative outcomes of the assessments. The *CAAS* assessed participants' adaptability resources and reflections and gave an idea of the challenges they were experiencing in planning the transition from school to work/tertiary study. Apparently, the greatest benefit for most participants from both groups was the opportunity to think about themselves, start planning for their future, and take their studies seriously.

Life themes helped participants identify what mattered to them, what they already perhaps passively suffered, what they were trying to master, and how they

were seeking to strive for power, security, and/or significance. Life themes with the self as narrative author also helped them to identify role models that reflected the ideal self. Adler's lifestyle psychodynamic theories involved striving towards security, power and/or significance, and making sense through narrative life themes. Here, participants in the intervention group also demonstrated the ability to say out loud what they wanted to do and state their goals. Savickas (2021) contends that saying out loud what they want to do makes aspirations more real, and they become more true and more sustainable. This was clearly the case with the five participants in the intervention group who were part of the focus group interview. Autobiographicity was linked to the *CIP* where participants completed the *CCI* incorporated therein. Many participants struggled with identifying role models and had a difficult time with early recollections. Because their expectations were most probably removed from the career construction approach, not much was done about this aspect of their narratives. Most of the micro-stories were inconsistent, indicating they had never had time to think about themselves and their stories.

The current intervention specifically targeted exploratory behaviour, career adaptability (concern, control, curiosity, and confidence), decision making, narratability, as well as autobiographicity. Participants' expectations were mostly at the level of social actor where they expected to identify a career that would fit them. Planning, preparation for future career and adapting to change were challenging, given that few of the participants had a reasonable concept of who they are, and most would be within the stages of foreclosure or moratorium as far as their identity development was concerned. Table 5.1 provides a summary of the intervention regarding the psychological self involved, according to the career construction theory.

Table 5.1: Summary of the intervention regarding psychological self

Intervention mode/data-gathering instrument	Psychological self involved	Distinct career intervention	Theoretical underpinning	Envisaged outcome
CAAS	Agent	Education	Differential	Planning and adaptability
CDDQ	Agent	Education	Differential	Planning
Lifeline	Author	Counselling	Storied	Narratability
Drawings	Author	Counselling	Storied	Narratability
CIP Part 1	Agent	Education	Developmental	Developmental
CIP Part 2	Actor	Guidance	Differential	Developmental
CIP Part 3	Actor	Guidance	Differential	Developmental
CIP Part 4	Author	Counselling	Narrative	Narratability

Reh fuss and Sickinger (2015) (writing from a North American perspective) insist that interventions can help promote growth in disadvantaged learners who are struggling with career decision making and career adaptability. Meaningful career decision making is both an attainable standard and related to an enhanced sense of well-being for learners with higher levels of career adaptability (Hirschi, 2009).

5.5 OVERVIEW OF QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

In mixed methods designs, triangulation (“a means of mutual measures and validation of findings”) (Nieuwenhuis, 2016 p. 122) is used as a dialectical process between data sets (qualitative and quantitative) to understand the findings better and clarify the divergence of results between the data sets. Triangulation is used in the analysis stage of mixed methods research by combining or converting the qualitative and quantitative data (Fielding, 2012). Fielding (2012, p. 4) describes the data analysis stage as “the heart of mixed methods” design.

The strategy that was followed (adopted) to compare the data sets is based on two parts of the hypothesis for the study. First, significant findings within the group (quantitative: pre-/post-test of CAAS and CDDQ, and qualitative: reflections and journal entries) were discussed. Then, significant findings between the groups (quantitative: pre-/post-test of CAAS and CDDQ, qualitative reflections, journal entries and focus group interviews) were compared to explore outcomes of the differences between the pre- and post-test results and to determine whether the

intervention did make a difference to the career adaptability and career indecision of the participants.

5.5.1 Divergent findings

Prior to the intervention, participants found themselves in a place of confusion which could cause them to experience foreclosure and diffused identity. They did not know what the future had in store for them as they lacked information about occupations and were keen on making a career choice that would land them an ideal job. Among the challenges that they mentioned were lack of financial support, low academic achievement, inappropriate subject combination choice, and pressure from the family to succeed and assist financially. These challenges left most of them hopeless and desperate, given the poor quality of education they were receiving.

The career adaptability resources available to participants to make career decisions resemble the situation in which they found themselves – as is portrayed in the absence of statistically significant differences in the pre-/post-scores between the comparison and the intervention groups in the *CAAS* and the *CDDQ*. After completing the two questionnaires, participants' qualitative written reflections (prior to the intervention) correlated positively with the difference in outcomes in the quantitative measures before and after the intervention. This indicated that the intervention did not bolster participants' career adaptability, except for the curiosity subscale of the *CAAS*, nor did it lower their career indecision.⁶ The effect sizes were negligible throughout. They reflected small practical meaning in terms of the impact of the intervention on the career adaptability as well as decreasing the career decision difficulties of the participants.

Within the group, however, the pre-/post-intervention outcomes recorded statistically significant results for the comparison group on the one subscale of *CAAS*, namely Concern. Statistically significant results were also recorded on the *CDDQ* in the following categories and subcategories: Motivation (Rm) and Readiness, Lack of information, and Unreliable Information (lu) and Inconsistent Information. For the intervention group, the only statistically significant result within the group was recorded on the Curiosity subscale of the *CAAS*. The qualitative results differed from the quantitative in that the participants in the intervention group

⁶ See Table 4.8

mostly reported enhanced career adaptability and lowered decision difficulties, compared to the comparison group.

5.5.2 Convergent findings

The statistically significant results on the Curiosity subscale for the intervention group alluded to the self-perception of the participants from an objective perspective, after taking part in the intervention. The fact that participants reported how they were actively searching for information and making plans and preparing for their future careers, also supports the divergence between the qualitative and quantitative results for the intervention group. In the focus group interview, the participants stated that they had acquired self-knowledge through self-discovery, that their self-efficacy and confidence were bolstered, and that they were ready to leave school. This testifies to the participants' identity and individual growth but also to their view of the self to fit into the world of work – which qualitatively confirmed the Curiosity development. Participants gained insight into new perspectives on their personal future, which served as an inspiration to change their attitude towards life. In contrast, most participants in the comparison group indicated that they still had difficulty deciding and or making plans and preparing for the future.

By the time the focus group interview was conducted, the researcher had become aware of the life stories of several of the participants and was quite amazed by the resilience in many of them. This could lead to a halo effect in making certain assumptions about participants because of perceived attributes (Sarniak, 2015) that the researcher could have developed during the research process. A small number of the participants could not clearly articulate their life career goals or suggest a plan to realise that purpose. It was clear that they needed individual career counselling, which was not a part of the research project.

5.6 SUMMARY

This chapter focused on a discussion of the findings as related to the literature reviewed and similar studies conducted regarding career indecision and life design. First, the quantitative results were summarised and discussed, and the insignificant statistical results and negligible effect sizes revealed that the intervention had not had the desired influence on participants in the intervention group. Second, a

discussion of the themes that were confirmed and identified from the qualitative data suggested that the intervention had some benefit for the participants. Third, the structural and ecological barriers affecting career indecision within the context of the research were highlighted, followed by benefits of the research for the participants. The chapter concluded with an overview of how participants experienced the intervention from the point of view of career guidance, education, and counselling.

For a view of the overlap between the quantitative and qualitative findings, see my discussion of the main similarities and differences in terms of my research questions⁷.

Chapter 6 reviews the research questions in view of the results obtained. The researcher explores and discusses ethical considerations and the limitations of the study. The chapter concludes with my reflection on the study and recommendations for further research.

⁷ See Section 5.5.

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, first, I attempt to link the findings of the current study to the research questions. Next, a summarised explanation is provided of ethical considerations that guided the study, followed by limitations of the study. The chapter continues with a reflection in terms of what I would have done differently. This is followed by recommendations for practitioners, theorists, further research, and policy makers, and then lastly, a conclusion of the chapter.

6.2 REVISITING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In the subsections that follow, the research questions are discussed.

6.2.1 Descriptive questions

(The reader is alerted to the fact that only qualitative findings are discussed in the following three subsections, namely 6.2.1.1, 6.2.1.2 and 6.2.1.3)

6.2.1.1 *What are the factors contributing to career indecision among learners from resource-constrained communities?*

The participants in the current study were all Black people who were living in communities with disadvantages, and they were familiar with South Africa's past where "job discrimination lingers in the collective psyche". Early exposure of these young people to unemployment instils feelings of hopelessness about their future career trajectories. The case with female participants is exacerbated, as they demonstrate less assertive behaviour, autonomy, and self-regulation regarding career decision making and may be less inclined to take ownership of their future.

As discussed in Section 5.3.3, there is evidence in the literature that self-efficacy is among the important barriers that adolescents in resource-scarce environments face or perceive when choosing or aspiring after future careers. Lack of motivation and dysfunctional beliefs were found to be characteristic factors that

contributed to the career indecision of participants in the current study. As in Eastern countries, participants in the current study had salient concerns regarding the need for information from the beginning of the intervention, which highlights an aspect of culture. Some participants were stuck in the process of deciding because of stereotypes attached to certain occupations within the communities in which they live.

Disadvantaged people (low socioeconomic status (SES) individuals in particular) have less chance of choosing appropriate careers and succeeding in them because of a general lack of information about careers (Brown, 2002). In such contexts, people's perception of their skills and preferences and what is achievable and what not, may well be inaccurate and biased. Many participants complained about the level at which they were achieving academically and their subject combination choice as part of the challenge in deciding on a career. Rigidity of thought, compulsive pursuit of an optimal choice, and ambiguity tolerance are some of the hindrances that participants seemed to experience.

Many learners in Black communities have neither access to, nor can they afford career counselling services. Still, they choose certain career fields and enrol for without researching properly to know what exactly the careers entail. In the long term they discover later that they had made an inappropriate choice. Participants in the current study did not have the privilege of deciding on a tertiary institution for further studies or for the selection of an occupation. The definition of work as an activity that is primarily oriented at survival is still relevant for some population groups in South Africa. This is partly because their access to education and economic opportunities has remained just as limited as in the apartheid years. Furthermore, since young people have a responsibility to provide financial assistance to their parents, the choice of careers available to them is acutely impacted.

6.2.1.2 What are the essential aspects of programmes currently utilised to help learners deal with career indecision?

Researchers and theorists (Xu & Bhang, 2019) have not reached consensus on a theoretical approach towards addressing career indecision. In the literature reviewed in Section 2.3.4, various approaches were discussed on how to deal with career indecision. Some researchers underscore the identification of causes and

sources of career indecision as a step that should precede intervention strategies (Lent et al., 2019; Picard, 2012). The belief that an individual can successfully make appropriate career decisions, otherwise known as self-efficacy, has been closely linked to career decision making. A client's self-efficacy and career self-management are also important aspects to be included in programmes that are currently used to assist learners in dealing with career indecision.

Whereas individual counselling plays an important role in lowering career indecision (Hartung, 2015), identifying an individual's difficulties in making career decisions is considered a fundamental step in designing and scaffolding strategies and interventions (Whiston & Rose, 2013). Kelly and Shin (2009) believe that blending developmentally and cognitive-based interventions will address the negative impact of lingering career indecision. On the one hand, the developmentally based interventions will enhance the client's adaptability, undesirable or adverse decision making. On the other hand, the cognitive-based intervention will address choice and feelings. According to Jantzer et al. (2009), career indecision should be considered a 'standard' facet of adolescents' development, and young people's sense of self will augment if their career decision making self-efficacy is bolstered.

6.2.1.3 What are the essential aspects of the life design-based counselling intervention utilised in this research?

Life design-based counselling hinges on career construction theory, which incorporates three career counselling paradigms.

- ❖ The differential approach which focuses on traits and individual differences.
- ❖ The developmental paradigm, which teaches people to advance following a predictable sequence over time to culminate in a mature end state.
- ❖ The psychodynamic or storied approach, which focuses on autobiographical narratives and professional identity.

Career counsellors combine these domains in a story narrative that is constructed and deconstructed during the career counselling process (Rottinghaus et al., 2017). From the perspective of the CCT, an individual's vocational behaviour is related to their psychological resources as well as their life themes.

The CCI was used to involve participants' selves in a process that engaged them to envision possible future selves. After establishing goals that the participants hoped to attain, I reconstructed a life portrait that created the possibility for participants to move forward and develop (Savickas, 2013). Presuppositions of the life design framework as explained by Savickas et al. (2009) were also taken into consideration. The intervention assisted participants in acquiring knowledge and skills to deal with their current indecision and to be used in their lifelong development. The process of development throughout life should assist participants to develop holistically and not just in the line of their careers. Context, or the role of the environment, was considered in assisting participants to design their careers. Activities such as the lifeline and drawings nudged participants to consider their past and present environments and stressed the significant role played by the individual and the environment in designing a career.

6.2.2 Exploratory questions

6.2.2.1 How did the participants in the current study experience life design-based counselling?

(The reader is reminded once more that this question addresses qualitative findings in the study only.)

Savickas et al. (2009) affirm that there is value in career counselling when it contributes to positive changes in career-counselling clients' life stories. During the intervention, participants' stories assisted them in understanding their own life themes, vocational personality, and adaptability resources. Participants formulated subjective identities – in relation to themselves, other people, as well as their context – and the exploration of the self and the relationship between the self and the environment as self-construction progressed. They learned about themselves, their abilities, and interests as they engaged in the life design activities. Feedback from peers and the researcher led to the development of a representation and identity development system.

As the researcher, I guided them to make meaning of their life stories, the participants engaged in intentional processes rather than just trying to figure out a career that they will pursue. Participants expressed themselves clearly and vividly,

indicating their plans about their future, as was the case in the focus group interviews. They reported enhanced motivation in deciding on a career and pursuing their studies after having participated in the intervention. Apparently, narratives assisted participants and provided clearer insight into their difficulties about future careers than could be captured objectively in the questionnaires. Positive feedback from the me, the researcher, seemed to have encouraged participants to believe in themselves and find ways to overcome obstacles that stood in their way. Despite the extra pressure from the community or significant others on some of the participants to make a choice, they indicated that participating in the intervention gave them the opportunity to find themselves and take control of the decisions they had to make.

Participants struggled with some activities, such as identifying role models. Recounting early recollections was also difficult for participants and I ensured that they only shared their stories if they felt comfortable to do so. Many eventually told stated that they had felt embarrassed having to share their story with everyone. They would have preferred a smaller audience or one-on-one sessions to tell their stories. Probably the expectations of the participants were removed from the career construction approach as not much was done. Most of the micro-stories were inconsistent, indicating that participants never had time to think about themselves and their stories.

6.2.2.2 How did the intervention influence participants' career indecision?

In this section, I briefly discuss the qualitative findings. I also differentiate between the influence of the intervention on participants' career adaptability and their career indecision and briefly address the link between these two concepts.

i. Summary of qualitative findings

My interaction with the participants was informed by an understanding of adolescents' career aspirations and an awareness of the aspects that influence their career choices and decision making. I believe that in as much as participants should make their own decisions about their future career journeys and aspirations, focus on self and career construction would be beneficial to attain lower levels of career indecision. Most participants reported enhanced motivation (both in deciding on a career and in their studies), self-regulation, time management, study skills, improved

academic achievement and enhanced work ethic. They reported having initiated career exploration once they had participated in the life design intervention.

Through the acquisition of self-knowledge, the intervention enhanced participants' sense of attending school and being persistent and patient through hard work to achieve their future goals. Many participants became aware of the fact that they had made wrong subject choices that would not lead to their dream careers, that their current academic achievement was inadequate to secure a place at a tertiary institution, and that community and family influence left them helpless and desperate – which could explain the reasons for the less meaningful quantitative results. However, their responses during the focus group interview painted a different picture, as the intervention seemingly had a positive impact on the participants. The career intervention programme apparently facilitated a shift in the participants' thinking in terms of how they now decided about their future, albeit marginally. The study results demonstrated reduced indecisiveness and the development of intentionality. The latter is one of life design counselling goals, as participants accorded priority to their schoolwork and engaged in activities that validated who they were and what was important to them. They stated clear future, and possible alternatives of what they were intending to do after they have left school.

Feelings of uncertainty and insecurity apparently still hindered the decision-making process for some of the participants – probably because of the beliefs they held at the time when the research was conducted. The researcher observed what Schwartz et al. (2002) described as aspects of choice-maximising anxiety, a situation that arose when the participants sought the best career option, leaving them even more confused. This situation is understandable, given the definition of work in this context as an activity that is primarily oriented towards survival, rather than towards self-fulfilment.

6.2.3 Primary research question

How does life design-based counselling influence learners with career indecision who hail from resource-constrained communities?

The reader is advised that this research question, while only referring to 'career indecision', also talks to 'career adaptability'. Here the researcher agrees with Nota et al. (2016) and Hartung and Cadaret (2017), all of whom agree that

enhancing people's career adaptability contributes to a decrease in their career indecision. The findings from the current study suggest that the analysed quantitative data did not indicate that the life design counselling intervention programme enhanced participants' career adaptability or lowered their career indecision. These results emerged across all four subscales of the *CAAS/CAAS* total, and across the categories and subcategories of the career decision-making difficulties questionnaire, *CDDQ*.

The null hypotheses, namely that the intervention would not cause a significant change within the intervention group and between the intervention and comparison groups, were not rejected – except the one for curiosity within the intervention group. In other words, the intervention neither improved the career adaptability nor lowered the career indecision (measured quantitatively) of participants in the intervention group as compared to the comparison group – except for the pre-/post-test results for curiosity of the intervention group⁸. The reader is also reminded that the effect sizes, though negligible to small, indicated that the intervention caused some practically meaningful change⁹. However, considering the qualitative results, participants of the intervention group seemingly reported that they had gained insight into who they were and knowledge about careers/occupations. They managed to do this through self- and career construction, which was implicit in their narratives and subsequently informed the decisions they made.

Information on different occupations in the *CIP* was of great value to those who took part in the intervention, as it expanded their limited knowledge of the world of work. Thus, the intervention met the need for information in resource-constrained communities. To actualise their identities and construct themselves, participants became motivated to take their studies seriously so that they could improve their academic performance. Self-construction, which is inherent in life design counselling, therefore revealed the motivated agent in the participants when they became aware of their strengths, values and interests (the social actor).

My observation throughout the intervention was that the participants gradually became more focused and self-directed. According to Savickas (2011b),

⁸ See Table 4.6 on page 6

⁹ See Tables 4.8 and 4.10

life design counselling allows clients to reflect on a problem and engage in actions that are necessary to enact the image of a future self they have conceived. The participants valued the skills that they had acquired during the intervention, namely, to consider various options when deciding about a future career. They were motivated to take their studies seriously and to work hard to make their dreams come true. They investigated various careers and made concrete plans of what they would do as soon as they graduated from high school.

Narrating their career and life stories put the participants in a better place to be in touch with their authentic selves. Delving deep and being in contact with the authentic self, helped them to adapt, consider ways of negotiating the imminent transition from high school, and overcome the multitude of challenges that stood in their way. In varying degrees, the participants seemed to be finding ways around the challenges of career indecision that they were experiencing. It can be argued that the statistically significant results for the curiosity scale on the CAAS for the pre-/post-intervention results of the experimental group clarified the contradictory findings that were reached. They confirmed that participants' career adaptability resources had been enhanced and that their state of undecidedness changed after participating in the intervention programme.

6.3 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Throughout the research project, I adhered to ethical considerations as detailed in Chapter 3 and summarised below:

- ❖ Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the Department of Education (Annexure A) and from the principals of the respective schools (Annexure B). Informed consent was also obtained from parents/guardians or assent for participants who were still minors at the time of the research (Annexure C).
- ❖ I only reported coded data and so ensured that participants could not be identified. All information they provided remained confidential and anonymous. This practice was maintained when the results of this study were communicated in this report.
- ❖ Besides ensuring that participants were protected from harm, I guarded the best interests of those who took part, throughout the entire process. I by the moral

and ethical rules of beneficence (always showing goodwill and generosity) and fidelity (loyalty and trustworthiness).

- ❖ The findings of the study were communicated to participants and any possibility of misinterpretation was resolved.
- ❖ All participants were made aware that getting involved in the project was voluntary and that they could withdraw whenever they wished. I ensured that my role as researcher was not confused with that of psychologist. An experienced educational psychologist was made available on site to attend to any participants who manifested emotional behaviours or trauma due to their participation in the research. In this way, the wellbeing of participants was safeguarded. Furthermore, arrangements were made with an experienced psychometrist to always oversee the process on-site.

6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following factors were considered as limitations to the study:

- ❖ The relatively small number of participants in the intervention group, compared to the comparison group, could have affected the quantitative outcomes.
- ❖ Participants for the intervention group were selected purposively (non-random), which implies that it will not be possible to generalise the findings of the current study to the South African population.
- ❖ The learners who constituted the current study participants hailed from a homogenous background in a rural setting, which raises the question of what the results would have been if the study had been conducted in a resource-constrained community within an urban setting.
- ❖ The subjective nature of the qualitative data in the current study necessitated subjective interpretation and analysis, which according to Darlington and Scott (2003) raises doubt on how valid participants' views and opinions could be.
- ❖ Familiarity with the context in which the study was conducted could lead to biased judgment by me, the researcher, even though steps were taken to avoid the possibility of halo or horn effects.

6.5 PERSONAL REFLECTION ON THE STUDY

Within this section a reflection on the current study is presented.

6.5.1 What would I have done differently?

I regret the fact that the intervention did not happen as initially planned, due to the timing of the intervention at the beginning of the Covid 19 pandemic. Involving parents/guardians of participants as well as community members in a session where they would be provided psychoeducation on how to guide their children on career choice and decision and receive feedback from the children about their experiences of the intervention would have been an aspect of the intervention. The possibility of exploring the influence of the intervention for a longer period, say six months, is also something I would have been interested in.

Something else I would have done would have been to spend time with participants and guide them to explore who they are – for example, getting to know who they are from their parents in the “Did you know?” (Duke et al., 2008). Some participants know little about their parents and it is a challenge for them to develop their identity if they do not know where they come from.

Providing more information about careers, study skills and self-regulation or time management was something else I would have worked on with the participants. Perhaps I would also have made use of a qualitative measure to assess participants’ experience of the intervention, rather than to use just the quantitative instruments. Lastly, it would have been my wish to involve learners’ parents in the life design-based counselling intervention. Some parents and caregivers indicated they would have appreciated a session that empowers them with skills to assist their sons and daughters. They stated that career guidance and counselling is an urgent matter to help prepare their children’s future. Individual feedback to the parents of each participant would most probably have been beneficial as well.

6.5.2 Findings that were anticipated

Participants’ responses and reflections from both groups, indicating commitment to and improvement in their studies, affirmed what I expected, that the intervention would assist them to notice the connection between their studies, conceiving a possible future self and certain career fields. I expected participants to have limited information regarding the work world and knew that providing career information to them would be of great value. It was furthermore anticipated that participants’ career choices and decisions would be influenced by the community in

which they live. The perceptions that participants had regarding certain careers were expected to change due to the influence of the life design-based intervention. Self- and career construction would unfold, and participants would gain from the experience in varying degrees, as I expected the intervention would impact on the participants to varying extents, some more than on others. Language challenges were expected, and I foresaw that this barrier would affect the quantitative results.

6.5.3 Surprising findings

It surprised me that the *CAAS* and *CDDQ* (over and above their intended use as measurement instruments) also served as intervention, as they increased participants' awareness about their career futures. From the literature control, I, the researcher, learnt that certain difficulties encountered by participants when carrying out the intervention activities were necessary, and contributed to enhancing career and self-construction.

6.5.4 Disappointing findings

The divergence between the quantitative and qualitative outcomes of the current study could not confirm that the intervention significantly lowered the career indecision of participants of the intervention group compared to the comparison group. The absence of statistically significant differences and the presence of only negligible to small effect size differences between the subscales/subcategories scores as well as the total scores for the *CAAS* and *CDDQ* were disappointing. The high attrition rate of the participants in the intervention group (dropping from 27 to 17) was equally disheartening but could be blamed on the challenging time (the beginning of the worldwide Covid 19 pandemic) during which the research was conducted.

6.5.5 Unexpected findings

The enthusiasm with which the participants from both groups embraced the activities in the current research programme was not expected by me. Notwithstanding the challenging and unfamiliar nature of some of the tasks and the challenging period during the fieldwork, the participants persistently engaged to the

end. I, also did not expect that the participants of the intervention group would stay until the end, given the discouraging influence of their peers.

6.5.6 Personal meaning of the study to the researcher

Readers are respectfully called on to consider this narrative on its merits, considering the devastating and traumatising effect that the COVID-19 pandemic had on my research, the writing of this thesis, but also on the participants in my study. Much of the research was conducted while the province in which I live and work (and, by default, the schools involved in my research) were experiencing major, traumatic, and extended pandemic-related restrictions. I do not by any means ask the reader to see this as a request for accepting work that does not meet the basic standards for scholarly work of this kind. However, I confirm that I was compelled by the pandemic to substantially change and adapt my planned research strategy (including executing collaborative and fieldwork) to facilitate progress. This includes the following methodological and practical adjustments that I was compelled to make due to the disruptions caused by the pandemic:

- ❖ My research efforts were seriously compromised. Collaborative work and field work were put on hold/suspended and I was unable to carry out any actions during the time frames March-July and July-September 2020, due to the pandemic.
- ❖ The University of Pretoria library was unavailable during most of the year, 2020.
- ❖ I was unable to see my supervisor in person from February 2020 to July 2021. Even though we managed to meet via Blackboard Collaborate Ultra, and my supervisor e-mailed me copies of our discussions, connectivity seriously impacted those discussions. (Where I live, connectivity is extremely compromised.)
- ❖ Along with the closure of our local, provincial, and national borders, my visits to research sites were impacted in the following ways:
 - Delays in the fieldwork of up to seven months, along with implications of the extended period and the accompanying financial and emotional consequences. I could not take hard copies of my quantitative data to the data analyst, which delayed the data analysis process.

- Delays in the postal system, which delayed the quantitative data analysis of my research and thus left me desperate and depressed. Delays in extending my study visa, which meant travel was restricted and I could not leave the country.
- Suspension and eventual cancellation of documents which I was processing to emigrate to another country.

Finally, the abovementioned hindrances left me as an international student desperate, as I struggled to cope with limited support and in an adverse psychosocial situation (especially during the more serious phases of the intermittent pandemic-related lockdowns).

6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the current study, the researcher makes the following recommendations:

6.6.1 Recommendations for the improvement of practice

Assisting learners as early as in Grade 9 to start exploring their identities will be of great value to prepare them to make subject choices and will lay the foundation for career choice and transition from school to work/further studies by the time they are in Grade 11. The life design approach will assist them in going beyond social actors and motivated agents to find connections in their career stories that will make meaning to them and assist them in making informed decisions and becoming resilient in the contexts in which they live. Considering the background of participants from such contexts, practitioners should proceed cautiously with interventions. Most participants have lived through very traumatic experiences and for them the early recollections question in the career construction interview can be problematic, as it brings back painful memories.

6.6.2 Recommendations for further research

- ❖ Participants from diverse backgrounds should be considered in future research initiatives in small and large groups to further explore the value for and influence of life design counselling on learners struggling with career indecision.

- ❖ It is important to take into consideration participants' socioeconomic contexts because some have experienced traumatic events that are difficult to narrate or that can be embarrassing to narrate within a group context.
- ❖ Researchers should strive to adapt their life design activities to be appropriate to the age and context of their participants.
- ❖ It is important to ascertain the factors that influence participants' expectations of career counselling. Participants' individual expectations of career counselling outcomes differ and could affect their experience of the intervention.
- ❖ Research should be conducted to explore how Life Orientation educators address career indecision and how they guide high school learners during the career decision making process.
- ❖ Research on the topic should be conducted across institutions, nations, and disciplines.

6.6.3 Recommendations for theory building

Theoretical concepts serve as essential building blocks in psychology practice. They guide psychologists to understand their clients' experiences (personal and interpersonal) and context, thus conceptualising interventions that will be useful (Zonzi et al., 2014). Making career decisions is a dynamic process as individuals' interests and the world of work are continuously changing. Individuals should become more aware of who they are (identity) and when to change (adaptability) (Savickas, 2021). Knowledge of adolescent identity development and career adaptability should be part of the curriculum for training psychologists.

6.6.4 Recommendations for policy makers

Results of the current research confirm the value of life design counselling intervention and its usefulness in supporting learners to plan their future, discover various options, and decide on which career to pursue. Policymakers in the education sector should consider integrating this approach (life design intervention) into the curriculum, as it will assist learners in being more adaptable and in linking academic knowledge with the purposes of school learning.

6.7 CONCLUSION

The influence of life design counselling intervention on high school learners with career indecision was explored. Life design counselling techniques mediate the career indecision of learners from resource-constrained communities to varying degrees. Participation in the intervention helps them to take their studies seriously, and to become aware of their strengths and areas for growth. To a certain extent, it helps them make realistic choices and take concrete action towards constructing a future career trajectory.

Mixed emotions shroud me as I write these concluding paragraphs. On the one hand it is a feeling of relief that one of my long-term dreams will soon become reality. On the other hand, when I think about what the future holds in store for me, the feeling is that of apprehension. As I worked through the data analysis, I was struck by anxiety about what will come next in my life. The image of an early recollection kept returning to me: I was four years old when I lost my way trying to join my brother at his school. Someone who recognised me took me back home, and I remember I was scolded. I also sensed an atmosphere of people not trusting in my ability to find my way. At some stage during the research process, I felt as if I had lost my way and feared that my supervisor would ask me to discontinue due to my slow progress.

“The trouble with our times is that the future is no longer what it used to be”. In as much as my research was about assisting young people navigate the transition from school to work, I too was busy working on post-graduation transition. I was hoping to relocate to another country after completion of my fieldwork which was scheduled to last for four months. It seems that future I was planning will never be as I hoped it would be. The social, psychological, and emotional effects of delays in the research process caused by the Covid pandemic (see Section 6.5.5) affected my plans adversely. I was trying to assist students in a context I am familiar with and yet the circumstances made it seem as if I was unable to manage my own transition. So how could I be of assistance to those I was trying to help when I was unsure of my own future?

Towards the end of the fieldwork, participants walked up to me beaming with hope and explaining how they had improved in their academic work or been able to consider other career options. Some were simply sharing how they had gained

confidence in their studies. I then realised that as a result of the intervention, their future would no longer be the way it used to be. A sense of professional growth and gratitude filled me, and I mustered the courage to continue with my work because I knew that my efforts had not been in vain. My destiny was not doomed by the pandemic; I received unmatched professional support from my supervisor; my future, too, would no longer be stuck in the pandemic circumstances. A quote from Marianne Williamson motivated me as I worked on the last chapters of my research, and I would like to share it with the reader: “Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate, our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. We ask ourselves, who am I to be powerful...? As we let our light shine, we unconsciously let others to do the same.”

REFERENCES

- Abrams, L. S. (2010). Sampling 'had to reach' populations in qualitative research: The case of incarcerated youth. *Qualitative Social Work, 9*(4), 536-550.
- Abrams, M. D., Lee, I. H., Brown, S. D., & Carr, A. (2015). The career indecision profile: Measurement equivalence in the United States and South Korea. *Journal of Career Assessment, 23*(2), 225-235.
- Acevedo, V. E., & Hernandez-Wolfe, P. (2014). Vicarious resilience: An exploration of teachers and children's resilience in highly challenging social contexts. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma, 23*(5), 473-493.
- Adler, A. (1936). On the interpretation of dreams. *International Journal of Individual Psychology, 2*, 3-16.
- Akhurst, J., & Mkhize, N. (Eds.). (2006). *Career education in South Africa*. (2nd ed.). Van Schaik.
- Albien, A. J. (2019). *A mixed methods analysis of black adolescents' vocational identity status and career adaptability competencies in a South African Township*. Stellenbosch University.
- Albien, A. J. (2020). Exploring processes of change in a life-design career development intervention in socio-economically challenged youth. *Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling, 45*(1), 6-14.
- Albien, A. J., & Naidoo, A. V. (2016). Social career influences of Xhosa adolescents elicited using the systems theory framework in a peri-urban South African township. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 30*(3), 111-137.
- Albien, A. J., & Naidoo, A. V. (2017). Deconstructing career myths and cultural stereotypes in a context of low resourced township communities. *South African Journal of Education, 37*(4).
- Albien, A. J., & Naidoo, A. V. (2018). Barriers and enablers for career development among marginalised South African youth. In L. Nota, J. Rossier, & V. Cohen-Scali (Eds.), *International perspectives on current research in career counselling and guidance: Building careers in changing and diverse societies* (pp. 147-166). Springer.
- Alexander, D., Buthelezi, T., & Seabi, J. (2009). Adolescents' perceived career challenges and needs in a disadvantaged context in South Africa from a social cognitive career theoretical perspective. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 23*(3), 505-520.
- Allen, A. (2011). *Law and ethics in psychology: An international perspective* (2nd ed.). Inter-Ed Publishers.

- Arora, R., & Rangnekar, S. (2016). Moderating mentoring relationships and career resilience: Role of conscientiousness personality disposition. *Journal of Workplace Behavioral Health, 31*(1), 19-36.
- Aswathappa, K. (2005). *Human resource and personnel management*. Tata McGraw-Hill Education.
- Athanasou, J., Mpofo, E., Gitcheh, W., & Elias, M. (2012). *Theoretical-conceptual and structural aspects of thesis writing*. Juta.
- Bak, N. (2004). *Completing your thesis: A practical guide*. Van Schaik
- Bańka, A., & Hauziński, A. (2015). Decisional procrastination of school-to-work transition: Personality correlates of career indecision. *Polish Psychological Bulletin, 46*(1), 34-44.
- Barclay, S. R., & Wolff, L. A. (2012). Exploring the career construction interview for vocational personality assessment. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 81*(3), 370-377.
- Bernard, H. R., & Ryan, G. (2010). *Analyzing qualitative data: systematic approaches*. Sage.
- Betz, N. E., & Luzzo, D. A. (1996). Career assessment and the career decision-making self-efficacy scale. *Journal of Career Assessment, 4*(4), 413-428.
- Bimrose, J. (2010). Adapting in a changing world: dealing with repeated career transitions. In K. Maree (Ed.), *Career counselling: methods that work* (pp. 118–127). Juta.
- Bischof, D., & Alexander, D. (2008). Post-modern career assessment for traditionally disadvantaged South African learners: Moving away from the 'expert opinion'. *Perspectives in Education, 26*(3).
- Blustein, D. L. (2011). A relational theory of working. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 79*(1), 1-17.
- Blustein, D. L., & Flum, H. (1999). A self-determination perspective of interests and exploration in career development. In M. L. Savickas & A. R. Spokane (Eds.), *Developing self in work and career: Concept, cases and contexts* (pp. 345-368). Davies-Black.
- Blustein, D. L., Franklin, A. J., Makiwane, M., & Gutowski, E. (2017). Indigenisation of career psychology in South Africa. In G. B. Stead & M. B. Watson (Eds.), *Career psychology in the South African context* (3rd ed., pp. 196-209). Van Schaik.
- Blustein, D. L., McWhirter, E. H., & Perry, J. C. (2005). An emancipatory communitarian approach to vocational development theory, research, and practice. *The Counseling Psychologist, 33*(2), 141-179.

- Borchard, D. (1995). Planning for career and life: Job surfing on the tidal waves of change. *The Futurist*, 29(1), 8.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Brown, A., Bimrose, J., Barnes, S.-A., & Hughes, D. (2012). The role of career adaptabilities for mid-career changers. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 80(3), 754-761.
- Brown, D. (2002). The role of work and cultural values in occupational choice, satisfaction, and success: A theoretical statement. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 80(1), 48-56.
- Cadaret, M. C., & Hartung, P. J. (2020). Efficacy of a group career construction intervention with urban youth of colour. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 1-13.
- Cardoso, P., Duarte, M. E., Gaspar, R., Bernardo, F., Janeiro, I. N., & Santos, G. (2016). Life Design Counseling: A study on client's operations for meaning construction. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 97, 13-21.
- Caruth, G. D. (2013). Demystifying mixed methods research design: A review of the literature. *Online Submission*, 3(2), 112-122.
- Castro, F. G., Kellison, J. G., Boyd, S. J., & Kopak, A. (2010). A methodology for conducting integrative mixed methods research and data analyses. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 4(4), 342-360.
- Chartrand, J. M., Robbins, S. B., Morrill, W. H., & Boggs, K. (1990). Development and validation of the Career Factors Inventory. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 37(4), 491.
- Chen, C. (2007). Narrative counselling: an emerging theory for facilitating life career success. In K. Maree (Ed.), *Shaping the story: A guide to facilitating narrative career counselling* (pp. 20-38). Van Schaik.
- Chuang, N.-K., Lee, P. C., & Kwok, L. (2020). Assisting students with career decision-making difficulties: Can career decision-making self-efficacy and career decision-making profile help? *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, 26, 100235.
- Citarella, A., Maldonado Briegas, J. J., Sánchez Iglesias, A. I., & Vicente Castro, F. (2020). *Economic Pressure and Self-Efficacy as Independent Predictors of Academic Grades and Career Indecision for Southern European Middle School Students: A Confirming Study*. Paper presented at the Frontiers in Education.
- Cochran, L. (2011). . The promise of narrative career counselling. In K. Maree (Ed.), *Shaping the story: A guide to facilitating narrative career counselling* (pp. 7–19). Sense Publishers

- Cohen-Scali, V., Rossier, J., & Nota, L. (2018). Introduction: Building an international community of research in career guidance and counselling. In V. Cohen-Scali, J. Rossier, & L. Nota (Eds.), *New perspectives on career counselling and guidance in Europe* (pp. 1-19). Springer.
- Cook, A., & Maree, J. (2016). Efficacy of using career and self-construction to help learners manage career-related transitions. *South African Journal of Education*, 36(1), Art. # 1225, 1211 pages. <https://doi.org/1210.15700/saje.v15736n15701a11225>.
- Cope, D. G. (2014). *Methods and meanings: credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative research*. Paper presented at the Oncology nursing forum.
- Creswell, J. W. (2008). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Pearson Education.
- Creswell, J. W. (2015). *A concise introduction to mixed methods research*: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano-Clark, V. L. (2011). Designing and conducting mixed methods research. In J. W. Creswell, A. C. K. Klassen, V. L. Plano-Clark, L. Vicki, & K. G. Smith (Eds.), *Best practices for mixed methods research in the health sciences* (pp. 53-107). National Institutes of Health.
- Darkey, D., & Visagie, J. (2013). The more things change the more they remain the same: A study on the quality of life in an informal township in Tshwane. *Habitat International*, 39, 302-309.
- Darlington, Y., & Scott, D. (2003). Qualitative research in practice: Stories from the field. *Social Work Education: The International Journal of*, 22(1), 115-118.
- Dass-Brailsford, P. (2005). Exploring resiliency: Academic achievement among disadvantaged black youth in South Africa. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 35(3), 574-591.
- De Bruin, G. P., & De Bruin, K. (2017). Career assessment. . In G. B. Stead & M. B. Watson (Eds.), *Career psychology in the South African context* (3 ed., pp. 187-195). Van Schaik Publishers.
- Del Corso, J., & Briddick, H. S. (2015). Using audience to foster self-narrative construction and career adaptability. . In P. J. Hartung, M. L. Savickas, & W. B. Walsh (Eds.), *APA handbook of career intervention: Applications* (Vol. 2, pp. 255-268): American Psychological Association.
- Del Corso, J., & Rehfuss, M. C. (2011). The role of narrative in career construction theory. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 79(2), 334-339.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*: Sage.
- Di Fabio, A., & Maree, J. G. (2012). Group-based life design counseling in an Italian context. *Journal of vocational behavior*, 80(1), 100-107.

- Doyle, A. (2017). How often do people change jobs. Retrieved from <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/how-often-do-people-change-jobs-2060467>
- Duarte, M. E. (2009). The psychology of life construction. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour, 75*(3), 259-266.
- Duffy, R. D., & Dik, B. J. (2009). Beyond the self: External influences in the career development process. *The Career Development Quarterly, 58*(1), 29-43.
- Duke, M. P., Lazarus, A., & Fivush, R. (2008). Knowledge of family history as a clinically useful index of psychological well-being and prognosis: A brief report. *Psychotherapy Theory, Research, Theory, Practice, Training, 45*, 268-272.
- Edgar, I. R. (1999). The imagework method in health and social science research. *Qualitative Health Research, 9*, 198-211.
- Council on Higher Education (2010). Access and throughput in South African Higher Education—three case studies. Higher Education Monitor No. 9. Council on Higher Education
- Elwood, J., & Murphy, P. (2015). Assessment systems as cultural scripts: A sociocultural theoretical lens on assessment practice and products. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice, 22*(2), 182-192.
- Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity, youth, and crisis*. Norton Publishing.
- Eshelman, A. J., & Rottinghaus, P. J. (2015). Viewing adolescents' career futures through the lenses of socioeconomic status and social class. *The Career Development Quarterly, 63*(4), 320-332.
- Fenwick, T. J. (2004). Learning in portfolio work: anchored innovation and mobile identity. *Studies in Continuing Education, 26*(2), 229-245.
- Fetters, M. D., Curry, L. A., & Creswell, J. W. (2013). Achieving integration in mixed methods designs—principles and practices. *Health Services Research, 48*(6), 2134-2156.
- Field, A. (2009). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS* (4th ed.). Transcontinental printing.
- Fielding, N. G. (2012). Triangulation and mixed methods designs: Data integration with new technologies. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 6*(2), 124-136.
- Finestone, M. (2013). *An evaluation of a theory-based support group intervention for children affected by maternal HIV/AIDS*. University of Pretoria.
- Fisher, E. B., Boothroyd, R. I., Coufal, M. M., Baumann, L. C., Mbanya, J. C., Rotheram-Borus, M. J., Sanguanprasit, B., & Tanasugarn, C. (2012). Peer support for self-management of diabetes improved outcomes in international settings. *Health Affairs, 31*(1), 130-139.

- Forner, Y. (2007). L'indécision de carrière des adolescents [Career indecision among adolescents]. *Le Travail Humain*, 70(3), 213–214.
- Fouad, N., Cotter, E. W., & Kantamneni, N. (2009). The effectiveness of a career decision-making course. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 17(3), 338-347.
- Fouad, N. A. (2001). The future of vocational psychology: Aiming high. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 59(2), 183-191.
- Freeman, S. C. (1993). Donald Super: A perspective on career development. *Journal of Career Development*, 19(4), 255-264.
- Fritz, E., & Beekman, L. (2007). Engaging clients actively in telling stories and actualizing dreams. In K. Maree (Ed.), *Shaping the story, a guide to facilitate narrative counselling* (pp. 163–175). Van Schaik.
- Furnham, A., & Ribchester, T. (1995). Tolerance of ambiguity: A review of the concept, its measurement and applications. *Current Psychology*, 14(3), 179-199.
- Galvin, K. (2015). Measuring and assessing career maturity and adaptability. In P. Hartung, M. L. Savickas, & W. B. Walsh (Eds.), *APA Handbook of Career Intervention* (Vol. 2, pp. 183-192): American Psychological Association.
- Gati, I., Krausz, M., & Osipow, S. H. (1996). A taxonomy of difficulties in career decision making. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 43(4), 510.
- Gati, I., & Levin, N. (2014). Counseling for career decision-making difficulties: Measures and methods. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 62(2), 98-113.
- Gati, I., Ryzhik, T., & Vertsberger, D. (2013). Preparing young veterans for civilian life: The effects of a workshop on career decision-making difficulties and self-efficacy. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 83(3), 373-385.
- Gati, I., & Saka, N. (2001). High school students' career-related decision-making difficulties. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 79(3), 331-340.
- Germeijs, V., & De Boeck, P. (2002). A measurement scale for indecisiveness and its relationship to career indecision and other types of indecision. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, 18(2), 113.
- Goforth, C. (2017). Using and Interpreting Cronbach's Alpha. Research data services and sciences. University of Virginia Library. Retrieved <http://data.library.virginia.edu/using-and-interpreting-cronbachs-alpha/>.
- Gordon, J., & Patterson, J. A. (2013). Response to Tracy's under the "Big Tent" establishing universal criteria for evaluating qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 19(9), 689-695.
- Graven, M. H. (2014). Poverty, Inequality and mathematics performance: The case of South Africa's post-apartheid context. *ZDM Mathematics Education*, 46, 1039-1049.

- Grier-Reed, T. L., & Skaar, N. R. (2010). An outcome study of career decision self-efficacy and indecision in an undergraduate constructivist career course. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 59(1), 42-53.
- Guichard, J. (2005). Life-long self-construction. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 5(2), 111-124.
- Guichard, J. (2009). Self-constructing. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 75(3), 251-258.
- Guichard, J. (2015). From vocational guidance and career counseling to life design dialogues. In L. Nota & J. Rossier (Eds.), *Handbook of life design: From practice to theory and from theory to practice* (pp. 11-25). Hogrefe
- Guichard, J. (2018). Employability guidance & life design counselling: Objectives, ends and foundations of career and life design interventions. *Studia Poradoznawcze/Journal of Counselling*, 7, 235-236. .
- Hacker, J., Carr, A., Abrams, M., & Brown, S. D. (2013). Development of the career indecision profile: Factor structure, reliability, and validity. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 21(1), 32-41.
- Handy, C. (1995). Trust and the virtual organization. *Long Range Planning*, 28(4), 126-126.
- Hart, A., Gagnon, E., Eryigit-Madzwamuse, S., Cameron, J., Aranda, K., Rathbone, A., & Heaver, B. (2016). Uniting resilience research and practice with an inequalities approach. *Sage Open*, 6(4), 2158244016682477.
- Hartman, B. W., Fuqua, D. R., & Blum, C. R. (1985). A path-analytic model of career indecision. *Vocational Guidance Quarterly*, 33, 231-246.
- Hartung, P. (2011). Career construction: Principles and practice. In J. G. Maree (Ed.), *Shaping the story: A guide to facilitating narrative career counselling* (pp. 103-120). Van Schaik.
- Hartung, P. J. (2005). Integrated career assessment and counseling: Mindsets, models, and methods. In W. B. Walsh & M. L. Savickas (Eds.), *Handbook of vocational psychology: Theory, research, and practice* (pp. 371-395). Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Hartung, P. J. (2007). Career construction: Principles and practice. In K. Maree (Ed.), *Shaping the story: A guide to facilitating narrative counselling* (pp. 103-120). Van Schaik.
- Hartung, P. J. (2010). Practice and research in career counseling and development. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 59(2), 98-142.
- Hartung, P. J. (2013). Career construction counselling. In A. Di Fabio & J. G. Maree (Eds.), *Psychology of career counseling: New challenges for a new era* (pp. 15-28). Nova Science Publishers.

- Hartung, P. J. (2015). *Career indecision: Practice brief*. American Counseling Association.
- Hartung, P. J., & Cadaret, M. J. (2017). Career adaptability: changing self and situation for satisfaction and success. In J. G. Maree (Ed.), *Psychology of career adaptability, employability, and resilience* (pp. 15-28). Springer.
- Hartung, P. J., Porfeli, E. J., & Vondracek, F. W. (2008). Career adaptability in childhood. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 57(1), 63-74.
- Hedges, F. (2010). *Reflexivity in therapeutic practice*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hendricks, G., Savahl, S., Mathews, K., Raats, C., Jaffer, L., Matzdorff, A., Dekel, B., Larke, C., Magodyo, T., Van Gesselteen, M., & Perdo, A. (2015). Influences on life aspirations among adolescents in a low-income community in Cape Town, South Africa. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 25(4), 320-326.
- Heppner, M. J., Lee, D., Heppner, P. P., McKinnon, L. C., Multon, K. D., & Gysbers, N. C. (2004). The role of problem-solving appraisal in the process and outcome of career counseling. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 65, 217–238.
- Hergenhahn, B. R., & Henley, T. (2013). *An introduction to the history of psychology* (7th ed.). Cengage Learning.
- Herr, E. L., Cramer, S. H., & Niles, S. G. (2004). Career guidance and Counselling through the lifespan – Systematic approaches (6th ed.). *Canadian Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy/Revue de Counselling et de psychothérapie* 38(2). Retrieved from <http://cjc.synergiesprairies.ca/cjc/index.php/rcc/article/view/830>
- Hirschi, A. (2009). Career adaptability development in adolescence: Multiple predictors and effect on sense of power and life satisfaction. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 74(2), 145-155.
- Hlatshwayo, M., & Vally, S. (2014). Violence, resilience and solidarity: The right to education for child migrants in South Africa. *School Psychology International*, 35(3), 266-279.
- Holland, J. L., & Holland, J. E. (1977). Vocational indecision: More evidence and speculation. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 24(5), 404.
- Horne, M., Masley, S., & Allison-Love, J. (2017). *Drawing as a research tool: what does it add?* Paper presented at the <https://www.rcn.org.uk/professional-development/research-and-innovation/research-events/rcn-2017-research-conference>.
- Hughes, P. (1997). Education and work: Dialogue between two worlds. *Prospects*, 27(1), 7-15.
- Ivankova, N., Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2016). Foundations and approaches to mixed methods research. In K. Maree (Ed.), *First steps in research* (2nd ed., pp. 306–336). Van Schaik.

- Jackson, M. R. (2015). Resistance to qual/quant parity: Why the 'paradigm' discussion can't be avoided. *Qualitative Psychology*, 2, 181-198. doi:10.1037/qup000031
- Jantzer, A. M., Price-Stalides, D. J., & Rottinghaus, P. J. (2009). An exploration of social cognitive mechanisms gender and vocational identity among eighth graders. *Journal of Career Development*, 36(114-138).
- Jordan, R., Mireles, A., & Popkin, S. (2013). HOST Youth: The Challenges of Growing up in Low-Income Housing. *HOST brief*, 4.
- Kelly, K. R., & Shin, Y. J. (2009). Relation of neuroticism and negative career thoughts and feelings to lack of information. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 17(201-213).
- Korstjens, I., & Moser, A. (2018). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 4: Trustworthiness and publishing. *European Journal of General Practice*, 24(1), 120-124.
- Kreishok, T. S., Black, M. D., & McKay, R. A. (2009). Career decision making: The limits of rationality and the abundance of non-conscious processes. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 75(3), 275-290.
- Krumboltz, J. D. (2009). The happenstance learning theory. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 17(2), 135-154.
- Kuhn, T. S. (1996). *The structure of scientific revolutions* (3rd ed.). The University of Chicago Press.
- Kuit, W. (2006). *The career development of South African Grade 11 adolescents: A career systems and discursive perspective* (Master's thesis), Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.
- Kulcsár, V., Dobrean, A., & Gati, I. (2020). Challenges and difficulties in career decision making: Their causes, and their effects on the process and the decision. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 116, 103346.
- Lancaster, B. P., Rudolph, C. E., Perkins, T. S., & Patten, T. G. (1999). The reliability and validity of the career decision difficulties questionnaire. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 7(4), 393-413.
- Lease, S. H. (2004). Effect of locus of control, work knowledge, and mentoring on career decision-making difficulties: Testing the role of race and academic institution. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 12(3), 239-254.
- Leech, N. L., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2008). Qualitative data analysis: A compendium of techniques and a framework for selection for school psychology research and beyond. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 23(4), 587.
- Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2005). *Practical research: Planning and design* (8th ed.). Merrill Prentice Hall.

- Lent, R. W., & Brown, S. D. (2013). Understanding and facilitating career development in the 21st century. *Career Development and Counseling: Putting Theory and Research to Work*, 2, 1-26.
- Lent, R. W., Ezeofor, I., Morrison, M. A., & Penn, L. T. I., G. W. (2016). Applying the social cognitive model of career self-management to career exploration and decision-making. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 93, 47–57.
- Lent, R. W., Wang, R. J., Morris, T. R., Ireland, G. W., & Penn, L. T. (2019). Viewing the Career Indecision Profile within a theoretical context: Application of the social cognitive career self-management model. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 66(6), 690
- Lieff, S. J. (2009). Perspective: the missing link in academic career planning and development: pursuit of meaningful and aligned work. *Academic Medicine*, 84(10), 1383-1388.
- Lindstrom, L., Kahn, L. G., & Lindsey, H. (2013). Navigating the early career years: Barriers and strategies for young adults with disabilities. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 39(1), 1-12.
- Lipshits-Braziler, Y., Braunstein-Bercovitz, H., & Kapach-Royf, N. (2019). Strategies for coping with career indecision during the college-to-work transition: Concurrent and predictive validity. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 27(3), 440-456.
- Lipshits-Braziler, Y., Gati, I., & Tatar, M. (2016). Strategies for coping with career indecision. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 24(1), 42-66.
- Lopez Levers, L. L., May, M., & Vogel, G. . (2011). Research on counseling in African settings. In E. Mpofu (Ed.), *Counseling people of African ancestry* (pp. 57–74). Cambridge University Press.
- Mäkinen, S., & Vanhalakka-Ruoho, M. (2018). Guidance center as sites for construction of agency among young people on the educational margins. . In V. Cohen-Scali, J. Rossier, & L. Nota (Eds.), *New perspectives on career counselling and guidance in Europe* (pp. 167-185). Springer.
- Marcia, J. E. (1966). Development and validation of ego-identity status. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 3(5), 551.
- Marcia, J. E. (1980). Identity in adolescence. *Handbook of adolescent psychology*, 9(11), 159-187.
- Maree, J. (2012a). Using “informal” hypnotherapy in career counselling: Blending Savickas and Erickson to “free the angel”. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 42(2), 156-168.
- Maree, J. G. (2019a). Group career construction counseling: A mixed-methods intervention study with high school students. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 67(1), 47-61.

- Maree, J., & Beck, G. (2004a). Using various approaches in career counselling for traditionally disadvantaged (and other) learners: some limitations of a new frontier. *South African Journal of Education*, 24(1), 80-87.
- Maree, J. G. (2009). Career counselling in the 21st century: South African institutions of higher education at the crossroads. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 23(3), 436-458.
- Maree, J. G. (2012b). Career adapt-abilities scale—South African form: Psychometric properties and construct validity. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 80(3), 730-733.
- Maree, J. G. (2012c). A (guided) meta-reflection theory of career counselling: A case study. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 26(1), 670-690.
- Maree, J. G. (2013a). *Counselling for career construction: Connecting life themes to construct life portraits: Turning pain into hope*. Springer
- Maree, J. G. (2013b). Latest developments in career counselling in South Africa: Towards a positive approach. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 43(4), 409-421.
- Maree, J. G. (2015). Research on life design in (South) Africa: A qualitative analysis. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 45(3), 332-348.
- Maree, J. G. (2016a). Career construction as a way of resolving career indecision. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 30(3), 170-192.
- Maree, J. G. (2016b). Career construction counseling with a mid-career Black man. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 64(1), 20-34.
- Maree, J. G. (2016c). *Career Interest Profile (CIP) version 5*. JvR Psychometrics.
- Maree, J. G. (2016d). How to decide which career to choose. *The Post*.
- Maree, J. G. (2016e). "What lessons can we learn on the topic from the 2015 Florence conference? Paper presented at the Career and Life Design interventions for sustainable development and decent work.
- Maree, J. G. (2017a). *Career Interest Profile: Technical Manual* (6th ed.). JvR Psychometrics.
- Maree, J. G. (2018a). Contextualisation as a determining factor for career counselling throughout the world. In J. A. Athanasou & H. N. Perera (Eds.), *International handbook of career guidance* (2nd ed., pp. 555-580). Springer.
- Maree, J. G. (2018b). Using life design counseling for career construction to facilitate sustainable employability and decent work in a developing country context. In V. Cohen-Scali, J. Pouyaud, M. Podgórný, V. Drabik-Podgórný, G. Aisenson, J-L. Bernaud, I. Moumoula., & J. Guichard (Eds.), *Interventions in career design and education* (pp. 195-214). Springer.

- Maree, J. G. (2019b). Group Career Construction Counseling: A mixed-methods intervention study with high school students. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 67(1), 47-61.
- Maree, J. G., & Beck, G. (2004b). Using various approaches in career counselling for traditionally disadvantaged (and other) learners: Some limitations of a new frontier. *South African Journal of Education*, 24(1), 80-87.
- Maree, J. G., & Che, J. (2018). The effect of life-design counselling on the self-efficacy of a learner from an environment challenged by disadvantages. *Early Child Development and Care*, 1-17. doi:10.1080/03004430.2018.1495629
- Maree, J. G., Cook, A. V., & Fletcher, L. (2018). Assessment of the value of group-based counselling for career construction. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 23(1), 118-132.
- Maree, J. G., Fletcher, L., & Pienaar, M. (2018). Enhancing the sense of self of peer supporters using life design-related counselling. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 48(4), 420-433.
- Maree, J. G., & Morgan, B. (2012). Toward a combined qualitative-quantitative approach: Advancing postmodern career counselling theory and practice. *Cypriot Journal of Educational Sciences*, 7(4), 311-325.
- Maree, J. G., & Pietersen, J. (2012). Sampling. In J. G. Maree (Ed.), *First steps in research* (pp. 171-181). Van Schaik.
- Maree, J. G., & Pietersen, J. (2015). Adaptation and implementation of the Rothwell-Miller Interest Blank. *Suid-Afrikaanse Tydskrif vir Natuurwetenskap en Tegnologie*, 34(1), 7.
- Maree, J. G., & Taylor, N. (2016). Development of the Maree Career Matrix: A new interest inventory. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 46(4), 462-476.
- Maree, J. G. K. (2017b). Using career counselling to address work-related challenges by promoting career resilience, career adaptability, and employability. *South African Journal of Education*, 37(4), 1-5.
- Maree, J. G. K. (2020a). How global change necessitates innovation in career counselling: Linking economic, industrial, psychology, and career counselling waves. In J. G. Maree (Ed.), *Innovating counseling for self-and career construction: Connecting conscious knowledge with subconscious insight* (pp. 67-84). Switzerland: Springer.
- Maree, J. G. K. (2020b). Innovating Counseling for Self-and Career Construction: Theoretical Premises, Antecedents, and Associations. In J. G. Maree (Ed.), *Innovating counseling for self-and career construction* (pp. 25-42). Springer.
- Maree, K. (2016f). *First steps in research* (2nd ed.). Van Schaik.

- Masdonati, J., Massoudi, K., & Rossier, J. (2009). Effectiveness of career counseling and the impact of the working alliance. *Journal of Career Development, 36*, 183–203. .
- Mason, J. (2013). *Qualitative researching* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Masten, A. S. (2014). Global perspectives on resilience in children and youth. *Child Development, 85*(1), 6-20.
- Mau, W. C. (2001). Assessing career decision-making difficulties: A cross-cultural study. *Journal of Career Assessment, 9*, 353-364.
- McAdams, D. P. (2013). The psychological self as actor, agent, and author. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 8*(3), 272-295
- McAdams, D. P., & Olson, B. D. (2010). Personality development: Continuity and change over the life course. *Annual Review of Psychology, 61*, 517-542.
- McIlveen, P., & Patton, W. (2007). Narrative career counselling: Theory and exemplars of practice. *Australian Psychologist, 42*(3), 226-235.
- McMahon, M., & Patton, W. (2002). Using qualitative assessment in career counselling. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance, 2*(1), 51-66.
- McMahon, M., Watson, M., & Patton, W. (2015). The Systems Theory Framework of career development: Applications to career counselling and career assessment. *Australian Journal of Career Development, 24*(3), 148-156.
- McMahon, M., Watson, M. B., & Bimrose, J. (2012). Career adaptability: a qualitative understanding from the stories of older women. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 80*(3), 762-768. doi:10.1016/j.jvb.2012.01.016
- McMahon, M., & Yuen, M. (2009). Career counselling and internationalization. *Asian Journal of Counselling, 16*(2), 91-111.
- McMillan, J. H., & Schumacher, S. (2001). *Research in education: A conceptual introduction* (5th ed.). Addison-Wesley Longman.
- McMillan, J. H., & Schumacher, S. (2010). *Research in Education: Evidence-Based Inquiry*, MyEducationLab Series. Pearson.
- Mdepa, W., & Tshiwula, L. (2012). Student diversity in South African higher education. *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning, 13*(1), 19-33.
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (3rd ed.). John Wiley & Sons.
- Mhlongo, Z. S., & O'Neill, V. C. (2013). Family influences on career decisions by black first-year UKZN students. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 27*, 953-965

- Mhlungu, G. (2015). Black tax is not real. *City Press*. Retrieved <http://citypress.news.24.com/Voices/Black-tax-is-not-real-20150508>
- Miller, A. D., & Rottinghaus, P. J. (2014). Career indecision, meaning in life, and anxiety: An existential framework. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 22(2), 233-247.
- Molitor, G. T. (2000). Emerging economic sectors in the third millennium: introduction and overview of the “big five”. *The Journal of Future Studies, Strategic Thinking and Policy*, 2(3), 323-329.
- Morgan, B., & Skar, R. H. (2015). Sampling and research paradigms. In J. G. Maree (Ed.), *Complete your thesis or dissertation successfully: Practical guidelines* (1st ed., pp. 69-80). Juta.
- Morgan, T., & Ness, D. (2003). Career decision-making difficulties of first-year students. *The Canadian Journal of Career Development*, 2(1), 33-39.
- Motlova, V., & Honsova, P. (2021). The effects of a 13-week career development programme on career-adapting thoughts and behaviours. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 1-18.
- Mukeredzi, T. G. (2011). Qualitative data gathering challenges in a politically unstable rural environment: A Zimbabwean experience. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 11(1), 1-11.
- Naidoo, A. V., Pretorius, T. B., & Nicholas, L. (2017). The emergence of career psychology in South Africa: A socio-historical perspective In G. B. Stead & M. B. Watson (Eds.), *Career psychology in the South African context* (3rd ed., pp. 1-25). Van Schaik Publishers.
- Nauta, M. M. (2010). The development, evolution, and status of Holland’s theory of vocational personalities: Reflections and future directions for counseling psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 57(1), 11.
- Ngcobo, T., & Tikly, L. P. (2010). Key dimensions of effective leadership for change: A focus on township and rural schools in South Africa. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 38(2), 202-228.
- Nicholas, L., Naidoo, A. V., & Pretorius, T. B. (2006). A historical perspective of career psychology in South Africa. . In G. B. Stead & M. B. Watson (Eds.), *Career psychology in the South African context* (2nd ed., pp. 1-10). Van Schaik Publishers.
- Nieuwenhuis, J. (2010a). Introducing qualitative research. In K. Maree (Ed.), *First steps in research* (2nd ed., pp. 47–68). Van Schaik.
- Nieuwenhuis, J. (2010b). Analysing qualitative data. In J. G. Maree (Ed.), *First steps in research* (2nd ed., pp. 99-122). Van Schaik.

- Nieuwenhuis, J. (2016). Qualitative research designs and data gathering techniques. In K. Maree (Ed.), *First steps in research* (2nd ed., pp. 71–102). Van Schaik.
- Niles, S. G. (2003). Career counselors confront a critical crossroad: A vision of the future. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 52(1), 70-77.
- Nkomo, S. M., Du Plessis, Y., Haq, R., & Du Plessis, F. (2015). Diversity, employment equity policy and practice in emerging markets. In *Handbook of human resource management in emerging markets*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Nota, L., & Rossier, J. (2015). *Handbook of life design: From practice to theory and from theory to practice*. Hogrefe Publishing.
- Nota, L., Santilli, S., & Soresi, S. (2016). A life-design-based online career intervention for early adolescents: Description and initial analysis. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 64(1), 4-19.
- International Labour Organisation (2014). Global unemployment trends: The risk of a jobless recovery.
- Osipow, S. H., & Gati, I. (1998). Construct and concurrent validity of the career decision-making difficulties questionnaire. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 6(3), 347-364.
- Oxfam. (2013). How wealth and income extremes hurt us all.
- Pajares, F. (1996). Self-efficacy beliefs in academic settings. *Review of Educational Research*, 66(4), 543-578.
- Panter-Brick, C. (2015). Culture and resilience: Next steps for theory and practice. In *Youth resilience and culture* (pp. 233-244): Springer.
- Pathak, V., Jena, B., & Kalra, S. (2013). Qualitative research. *Perspectives in Clinical Research*, 4(3).
- Pearsall, H., & Pierce, J. (2017). A spoiled well (of data): Addressing the procedural injustice of contemporary environmental justice research through collaborative data gathering. *Local Environment*, 22(3), 388-392.
- Penn, L. T., & Lent, R. W. (2019). The joint roles of career decision self-efficacy and personality traits in the prediction of career decidedness and decisional difficulty. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 27(3), 457-470.
- Perry, J. C., & Smith, C. (2017). Career choice and poverty In G. B. Stead & M. B. Watson (Eds.), *Career psychology in the South African context* (3rd ed., pp. 158-173). Van Schaik Publishers.
- Perry, J. C., & Wallace, E. W. (2015). Children and adolescents. In P. J. Hartung, M. L. Savickas, & W. B. Walsh (Eds.), *APA handbook of career intervention: Foundations* (Vol. 1, pp. 189-208). American Psychological Association.

- Phasha, T. N. (2010). Educational resilience among African survivors of child sexual abuse in South Africa. *Journal of Black Studies*, 40(6), 1234-1253.
- Picard, F. (2012). Reducing academic and career indecision: The effectiveness of a first-year college program. *The Online Journal of Counselling and Education*, 1(3), 71-83.
- Pillay, A. (2019). *The need for career practitioners*. Paper presented at the Keynote Address at the Annual Career Development Practitioner Congress, Emperor's Palace Conference Centre, Kempton Park, South Africa.
- Polkinghorne, D. E. (2015). Language and meaning: Data collection in qualitative research. *Journal of Counselling Psychology*, 52(2), 137-145.
- Pordelan, N., Hosseinian, S., & Lashaki, A. B. (2021). Digital storytelling: a tool for life design career intervention. *Education and Information Technologies*, 26(3), 3445-3457.
- Powell, A. G. (2013). *The uncertain profession*: Harvard University Press.
- Prediger, D. J. (1994). Tests and counseling: The marriage that prevailed. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development*.
- Punch, K. F. (2009). *Introduction to Research Methods in Education*. Sage.
- Rafael, M. J. E. (2007). Career development and management in 21st century adults: readings towards harmonization of global and individual levels. *Electronic Journal of Research in Educational Psychology*, (5), 75-102.
- Rankin, N. A., & Roberts, G. (2011). Youth unemployment, firm size and reservation wages in South Africa. *South African Journal of Economics*, 79(2), 128-145.
- Ratlebjane, M. (2015). How black tax cripples our youth's aspirations. *Mail and Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://mg.co.za/article/2015-10-25-how-black-tax-cripples-our-youths-aspirations>
- Reh fuss, M. C. (2009). The future career autobiography: A narrative measure of career intervention effectiveness. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 58(1), 82-90.
- Reh fuss, M. C., & Sickinger, P. H. (2015). Assisting high school students with career indecision using a shortened form of the career construction interview. *Journal of School Counseling*, 13(6), n6.
- Ribeiro, M. A. (2018). Towards diversified ways to promote decent working trajectories: A life and career design proposal for informal workers. In *Interventions in career design and education* (pp. 131-151). Springer.
- Ribeiro, M. A., Cardoso, P. M., Duarte, M. E., Machado, B., Figueiredo, P. M., & Fonçatti, G. D. O. S. (2020). Perception of Decent Work and the Future Among Low Educated Youths in Brazil and Portugal. *Emerging Adulthood*, 2167696820925935.

- Roche, M. K., Carr, A. L., Lee, I. H., Wen, J., & Brown, S. D. (2017). Career indecision in China: Measurement equivalence with the United States and South Korea. *Journal of Career Assessment, 25*(3), 526-536.
- Rottinghaus, P. J., Falk, N. A., & Eshelman, A. (2017). Assessing career adaptability. In J. G. Maree (Ed.), *Psychology of career adaptability, employability and resilience* (pp. 207-223). Springer.
- Saka, N., Gati, I., & Kelly, K. R. (2008). Emotional and personality-related aspects of career decision-making difficulties. *Journal of Career Assessment, 16*(4), 403-424.
- Salomone, P. R. (1982). Difficult Cases in Career Counseling: The Indecisive Client. *Personnel & Guidance Journal, 60*(8).
- Salomone, P. R. (1996). Tracing Super's theory of vocational development: A 40-year retrospective. *Journal of Career Development, 22*(3), 167-184.
- Santilli, S., Marcionetti, J., Rochat, S., Rossier, J., & Nota, L. (2016). Career adaptability, hope, optimism, and life satisfaction in Italian and Swiss adolescents. *Journal of Career Development, 44*(1), 62-76.
- Santilli, S., Nota, L., & Hartung, P. J. (2019). Efficacy of a group career construction intervention with early adolescent youth. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 111*, 49-58.
- Sarniak, R. (2015). Nine types of research bias and how to avoid them. *Quirk's Marketing Research Review*,.
- Savickas, M. (2011a). *Career counseling*: American Psychological Association
- Savickas, M. (2015a). *Life-design counseling manual*: Vocopher.
- Savickas, M. (2019). *Career counseling*: American Psychological Association
- Savickas, M. L. (1997). Career adaptability: An integrative construct for life-span, life-space theory. *The Career Development Quarterly, 45*(3), 247-259.
- Savickas, M. L. (2000). Renovating the psychology of careers for the twenty-first century. *The Future of Career, 53-68*.
- Savickas, M. L. (2001). The next decade in vocational psychology: Mission and objectives. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 59*(2), 284-290.
- Savickas, M. L. (2002). Career construction. *Career Choice and Development, 149*, 205.
- Savickas, M. L. (2005). The theory and practice of career construction. *Career Development and Dounseling: Putting Theory and Research to Work, 1*, 42-70.

- Savickas, M. L. (2007). Internationalisation of Counseling Psychology: Constructing Cross-National Consensus and Collaboration. *Applied Psychology, 56*(1), 182-188.
- Savickas, M. L. (2008). David V. Tiedeman: Engineer of career construction. *The Career Development Quarterly, 56*(3), 217-224.
- Savickas, M. L. (2010). *Life design: A general model for career intervention in the 21st century*. Paper presented at the Counselling for Life Design, International Conference, National Institute for the Study of Work and Vocational Guidance, Paris, France.
- Savickas, M. L. (2011b). Constructing careers: Actor, agent, and author. *Journal of Employment Counseling, 48*(4), 179-181.
- Savickas, M. L. (2012). Life design: A paradigm for career intervention in the 21st century. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 90*(1), 13-19.
- Savickas, M. L. (2013). The 2012 Leona Tyler award address: Constructing careers—Actors, agents, and authors. *The Counseling Psychologist, 41*(4), 648-662.
- Savickas, M. L. (2015b). Career counselling paradigms: Guiding, developing and designing. In P. Hartung, M. L. Savickas, & W. Walsh (Eds.), *The APA Handbook of career intervention* (Vol. 1, pp. 129-143). APA Books.
- Savickas, M. L. (2015c). Career counselling paradigms: Guiding, developing, and designing In P. J. Hartung, M. L. Savickas, & W. B. Walsh (Eds.), *APA Handbook of career intervention* (Vol. 1, pp. 129-144). American Psychological Association.
- Savickas, M. L. (2021, May). *Keynote Address at the 2021 APCDA Conference*. Paper presented at the Asia Pacific Career Development Conference. Virtual conference in Singapore.
- Savickas, M. L., Nota, L., Rossier, J., Dauwalder, J.-P., Duarte, M. E., Guichard, J., Soresi, S., Van Esbroeck, R., Van Vianen, A. E. (2009). Life designing: A paradigm for career construction in the 21st century. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour, 75*(3), 239-250.
- Savickas, M. L., & Porfeli, E. J. (2012). Career Adapt-Abilities Scale: Construction, reliability, and measurement equivalence across 13 countries. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour, 80*(3), 661-673.
- Savickas, S., & Lara, T. (2016). Lee Richmond: A life designed to take the counseling profession to new places. *The Career Development Quarterly, 64*(1), 75-82.
- Schumacher, J. A., & Camp, L. L. (2010). The relation between family functioning, ego identity, and self-esteem in young adults. *Psi Chi Journal of Undergraduate Research, 15*(4), 179-186.

- Schwab, K. (2016). The Fourth Industrial Revolution: What it means, how to respond. Retrieved 12 January 2020
- Schwartz, B., Ward, A., Monterosso, J., Lyubomirsky, S., White, K., & Lehman, D. R. (2002). Maximizing versus satisficing: Happiness is a matter of choice. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 83(5), 1178.
- Setlhare-Meltor, R., & Wood, L. (2016). Using life design with vulnerable youth. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 64(1), 64-74.
- Sharf, R. S. (2010). *Applying career development theory to counseling* (5th ed.). Cengage Learning.
- Sinkovics, R. R., & Alfoldi, E. A. (2012). Progressive focusing and trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Management International Review*, 52(6), 817-845.
- Sinkovics, R. R., Penz, E., & Ghauri, P. N. (2008). Enhancing the trustworthiness of qualitative research in international business. *Management International Review*, 48(6), 689-714.
- Slaney, R. B. (1988). The assessment of career decision making. In W. B. Walsh & S. H. Osipow (Eds.), *Career decision making* (pp. 33-76). Erlbaum.
- Smith, J. A., & Osborn, M. (2004). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Doing Social Psychology Research*, 229-254.
- Smythe, W. E. (2015). An ethics of engagement. *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology*, 35(2), 128-131.
- Sokol, J. T. (2009). Identity development throughout the lifetime: An examination of Eriksonian theory. *Graduate Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 1(2), 14.
- Statistics South Africa. (2019). *Mid-year Population Estimates, 2019*. Available: <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P03014/P030142011.pdf>
- Stead, G. B., & Watson, M. (2017). Career decision-making and career indecision. In G. B. Stead & M. Watson (Eds.), *Career psychology in the South African context* (3rd ed., pp. 137-157). Van Schaik.
- Stead, G. B., & Watson, M. B. (1998). Career research in South Africa: Challenges for the future. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 52(3), 289-299.
- Stewart, H., Gapp, R., & Harwood, I. (2017). Exploring the alchemy of qualitative management research: seeking trustworthiness, credibility and rigor through crystallisation. *The Qualitative Report*, 22(1), 1-19.
- Stigberg, S., Guittar, M., & Morse, G. (2015). Capturing qualitative data: Northwestern university special libraries' acknowledgments database. *Libraries and the Academy*, 15(4), 571-585.

- Stringer, K., Kerpelman, J., & Skorikov, V. (2012). A longitudinal examination of career preparation and adjustment during the transition from high school. *Developmental Psychology, 48*(5), 1343.
- Subich, L. M. (2001). Career counselling: The evolution of theory. In F. T. Leong & A. Barak (Eds.), *Contemporary models in vocational psychology: A volume in honour of Samuel Osipow* (pp. 257-278). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Super, D. E. (1957). *The psychology of careers*. Harper.
- Super, D. E. (1983). Assessment in career guidance: Toward truly developmental counseling. *The Personnel and Guidance Journal, 61*(9), 555-562.
- Super, D. E. (1990). A life-span, life-space approach to career development. In D. Brown & L. Brooks (Eds.), *Career choice and development* (2nd ed., pp. 197–261). Jossey-Bass.
- Super, D. E. (1994). A life span, life space perspective on convergence. In M. L. Savickas & R. W. Lent (Eds.), *Convergence in career development theories* (pp. 63-74). Consulting Psychologists Press Inc.
- Suter, W. N. (2011). *Introduction to educational research: Aa critical thinking approach*. Sage.
- Sutrisno, A., Nguyen, N. T., & Tangen, D. (2014). Incorporating translation in qualitative studies: Two case studies in education. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 27*(10), 1337-1353.
- Swanson, J. L., & Fouad, N. A. (1999). Applying theories of person-environment fit to the transition from school to work. *The Career Development Quarterly, 47*(4), 337-347.
- Taber, B. J., Hartung, P. J., Briddick, H., Briddick, W. C., & Rehfuss, M. C. (2011). Career style interview: A contextualized approach to career counseling. *The Career Development Quarterly, 59*(3), 274-287.
- Tebele, C., Nel, K. A., & Dlamini, B. (2015). Career support needs of learners with historical disadvantage: An exploratory study. *Journal of Psychology in Africa, 25*(3), 258-261.
- Terre Blanche, M., Durrheim, K., & Painter, D. (Eds.). (2006). *Research in practice: Applied methods for the social sciences*. University of Cape Town Press.
- Theofilou, P. (2013). Quality of life: Definition and measurement. *Europe's Journal of Psychology, 9*(1), 150-162.
- Theron, L. (2016). Enabling resilience: Shifting the intergenerational career expectations of South Africans challenged by structural disadvantage. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 30*(3), 37-53.

- Theron, L. C. (2017). Facilitating Adaptability and Resilience: Career Counselling in Resource-Poor Communities in South Africa. In J. G. Maree (Ed.), *Psychology of career adaptability, employability and resilience* (pp. 145-159): Springer.
- Theron, L. C., & Phasha, N. (2015). Cultural pathways to resilience: Opportunities and obstacles as recalled by black South African students. In *Youth resilience and culture* (pp. 51-65): Springer.
- Theron, L. C., & Theron, A. (2013). Positive adjustment to poverty: How family communities encourage resilience in traditional African contexts. *Culture & Psychology, 19*(3), 391-413.
- Thomas, E., & Magilvy, J. K. (2011). Qualitative rigor or research validity in qualitative research. *Journal for Specialists in Pediatric Nursing, 16*(2), 151-155.
- Tolentino, L. R., Garcia, P. R. J. M., Lu, V. N., Restubog, S. L. D., Bordia, P., & Plewa, C. (2014). Career adaptation: The relation of adaptability to goal orientation, proactive personality, and career optimism. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 84*(1), 39-48.
- Townsend, L., Flisher, A. J., & King, G. (2007). A systematic review of the relationship between high school dropout and substance use. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review, 10*(4), 295-317.
- Tracey, T. J. (2010). Relation of interest and self-efficacy occupational congruence and career choice certainty. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 76*(3), 441-447.
- Trainor, A. A. (2018). Community conversation as a method of gathering and analyzing qualitative data. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies, 28*(4), 1-5.
- Tripney, J. S., & Hombrados, J. G. (2013). Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) for young people in low-and middle-income countries: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Empirical Research in Vocational Education and Training, 5*(1), 1-14.
- Turner, B. M., Rim, H. B., Betz, N. E., & Nygren, T. E. (2012). The maximization inventory. *Judgment and Decision Making, 7*(1), 48-60.
- Turner, S., & Lapan, R. (2013). Promotion of career awareness, development, and school success in children and adolescents. *Career development and counseling: Putting theory and research to work, 539-564*.
- Van Breda, A. D. (2017). A comparison of youth resilience across seven South African sites. *Child & Family Social Work, 22*(1), 226-235.
- VanderPlaat, M. (2016). Activating the sociological imagination to explore the boundaries of resilience research and practice. *School Psychology International, 37*(2), 189-203.

- Verbruggen, M., Dries, N., & Van Vianen, A. (2013). The counseling needs of employed adults: Implication for career counseling. In A. Di Fabio & J. G. Maree (Eds.), *Psychology of career counselling* (pp. 101-116). Nova Science Publishers.
- Watson, M. (2013). Deconstruction, reconstruction, co-construction: Career construction theory in a developing world context. *Indian Journal of Career and Livelihood Planning*, 2(1), 3-14.
- Watson, M., & Kuit, W. (2007). Postmodern career counselling and beyond. In K. Maree (Ed.), *Shaping the story: A guide to facilitating narrative career counselling* (pp. 73-86). Van Schaik.
- Watson, M., McMahon, M., Foxcroft, C., & Els, C. (2010). Occupational aspirations of low socioeconomic black South African children. *Journal of Career Development*, 37(4), 717-734.
- Watson, M., Samuels, J., & Flederman, P. (2014). Transforming career development in South Africa. *Australian Career Development*, 25, 13-15.
- Wessels, C. J., & Diale, B. M. (2017). Facebook as an instrument to enhance the career construction journeys of adolescent learners. *South African Journal of Education*, 37(4).
- Whiston, S. C., & Rose, C. S. (2013). Career counseling process and outcome. In P. J. Hartung, M. L. Savickas, & W. B. Walsh (Eds.), *APA Handbook of career intervention* (Vol. 1, pp. 43-60). APA Books.
- Whittemore, R., Chase, S. K., & Mandle, C. L. (2001). Validity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 11(4), 522-537.
- Williams, E. N., & Morrow, S. L. (2009). Achieving trustworthiness in qualitative research: A pan-paradigmatic perspective. *Psychotherapy Research*, 19(4-5), 576-582.
- Wood, C., & Dahl, H. (2015). Individualized career plans: helping youth create successful school-to-work transitions. In P. J. Hartung, M. L. Savickas, & W. Walsh (Eds.), *APA Handbook of career intervention* (Vol. 2, pp. 467-477): American Psychological Association.
- Xu, H., & Bhang, C. H. (2019). The structure and measurement of career indecision: A critical review. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 67(1), 2-20.
- Xu, H., & Tracey, T. J. (2014). The role of ambiguity tolerance in career decision making. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 85(1), 18-26.
- Xu, H., & Tracey, T. J. (2017). The reciprocal dynamic model of career decision ambiguity tolerance with career indecision: A longitudinal three-wave investigation. *Journal of Counselling Psychology*, 64(5), 538.

- Young, M. (2015). Work–family conflict in context: The impact of structural and perceived neighborhood disadvantage on work–family conflict. *Social Science Research, 50*, 311-327.
- Zonzi, A., Barkham, M., Hardy, G. E., Llewelyn, S. P., & Leiman, M. (2014). Zone of proximal development (ZPD) as an ability to play in psychotherapy: A theory-building case study of very brief therapy. *Research and Practice, 87*(4), 447-464.

ANNEXURE A: LETTERS OF CONSENT/ASSENT

Dear Participant,

Informed Assent/Consent

I am currently registered for a PhD (Educational Psychology) at the Faculty of Education. You are invited to participate in a research study. The following information regarding the study is provided to help you decide if you would like to take part, your participation is voluntary. Please also note that you may withdraw from the study at any time.

The purpose of the study is to explore the factors that influence career indecision of learners from resource-constrained communities. Should you decide to participate, you will be required to take part in Life Orientation sessions at school for a period of two weeks. You will be asked to complete two questionnaires at the beginning of the intervention and the same two questionnaires after a period of eight weeks.

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.
- There are no costs involved for you.
- No participants will receive any monetary compensation
- Ethical guidelines have been followed to ensure that no participant will be harmed or placed at risk of any kind. There are no known risks involved in the research and I am not aware of any possible short-, medium- or long-term negative effects of participating in the research.
- Sessions will be audio recorded and will be transcribed and interpreted by the researcher
- You will have access to the transcribed and interpreted data, and you reserve the right to access any information that has been collected about you throughout the research process at any time.
- No reference will be made in the report to any information that may convey any personal or identifiable information. Codes or descriptive names will be used
- 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.

By signing this letter of informed assent/consent, you are giving permission for the following sources of data to be released:

- The results of the tests administered pre- and post-intervention sessions
- The analysis, interpretation and reporting of the data gathered during the eight weeks of data collection

Yours sincerely,

C. Jude
Researcher

Prof J.G. Maree
Supervisor

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

I hereby agree to make myself available for the research. I also assent to the publication of the research findings, subject to anonymity and confidentiality.

Participant's name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

ANNEXURE B: PERMISSION LETTER FROM SCHOOLS

06 June 2019

Attention: The Chairperson, School Governing Body,

Request for permission to conduct research at XXX Secondary School

I am currently registered for a PhD (Educational Psychology) at the Faculty of Education. The purpose of my study is to explore the influence of life design-based intervention on learners with career indecision from resource-constrained communities.

For my research, I will require Grade 11 learners to complete two questionnaires: *Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS)*, and *Career Decision Difficulty Questionnaire (CDDQ)*. Both are standardised tests and will be administered immediately before and after an eight-week period, during which intervention sessions will take place. Furthermore, learners will be asked to take part in group intervention session once a week for a period of two weeks.

Participation in the study will be voluntary and the learners will be informed that they can withdraw from the research project at any time. Informed consent will be obtained from the learners and/or their parents. The learners' identities will be protected, their privacy respected, and all information gathered will be managed confidentially. The name of the schools will not be mentioned in the above study.

Your favourable consideration of my request for permission to conduct my research at XXX Secondary School will be greatly appreciated.

Yours Sincerely,

C. Jude
Researcher

Prof J.G. Maree
Supervisor

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby grant Jude Che permission to conduct a research study (as discussed and stipulated in the letter) at XXX Secondary School.

The Chairperson, Governing Body

The Principal

ANNEXURE C: INFORMED CONSENT

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Informed Consent

I am currently registered for a PhD (Educational Psychology) at the Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria. Your son/daughter is invited to participate in a research project aimed at exploring the influence of life design-based counselling on learners with career indecision from resource-constrained communities. The following information regarding the study is provided to help you decide if you will allow her/him to take part. Note that her/his participation is voluntary and that s/he may withdraw from the study at any time.

The purpose of the study is to explore the influence of life design-based counselling on Grade 11 learners with career indecision. Should you decide to allow her/him to participate, s/he will be required to complete two questionnaires, prior to the intervention sessions and eight weeks after the intervention. The intervention will take place at XXX Secondary School. The two questionnaires are the *Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS)*, and *Career Decision Difficulty Questionnaire (CDDQ)*. Both are standardised tests.

Possible benefits of your daughter's/son's participation in this study are that s/he might gain further insight about herself/himself and explore/acquire the resources required to make career decisions. Self-knowledge may enhance her/his development of a possible future self which will assist her/him in making career- and life-related decisions.

The following ethical principles apply:

- Participation is voluntary
- Your daughter/son is free to withdraw from the project at any stage if s/he wishes to do so
- All information provided by your daughter/son will be treated confidentially and anonymously.
- There are no costs involved for you or your daughter/son.
- No participants will receive any monetary compensation
- Ethical guidelines have been followed to ensure that no participant will be harmed or placed at risk of any kind. There are no known risks involved in the research and I am not aware of any possible short-, medium- or long-term negative effects of participating in the research.
- Sessions will be audio recorded and will be transcribed and interpreted by the researcher
- Your daughter/son will have access to the transcribed and interpreted data and s/he reserves the right to access any information that has been collected about her/him throughout the research process at any time.
- No reference will be made in the report to any information that may convey any personal or identifiable information. Codes or descriptive names will be used
- Your daughter/son reserves the right to withdraw any information or data that s/he wishes not to be released for publication.
- The research findings might be published in an accredited research journal, but confidentiality and anonymity will be honoured.

By signing this letter of informed consent, you are giving permission for the following sources of data to be released:

- The verbatim transcription of the content recorded during the intervention group interview
- The results of the tests administered pre- and post-intervention sessions
- The analysis, interpretation and reporting of the data gathered during the 10 weeks of data collection

Yours sincerely,

C. Jude
Researcher

Prof J.G. Maree
Supervisor

Having read the attached request for informed consent, I declare that I am fully aware of the nature and purpose of the study to be conducted by Jude Che. I understand that all the 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 allow my daughter/son to make herself/himself available for the research. I also consent to the publication of the research findings, subject to anonymity and confidentiality.

Parent's/Guardian's name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

ANNEXURE D: PERMISSION LETTER FROM DISTRICT OFFICE



Education and Sport Development
Department of Education and Sport Development
Departement van Onderwys en Sport Ontwikkeling
Letapha la Thuto le Tlhaboloko ya Metsameko
NORTH WEST PROVINCE

Private Bag 1036
Taung 8580
Tel: +2753 9941868/9
Fax: +2753 994 1162 Email: makhoanak@nwpg.gov.za

DR RUTH SEGOMOTSI MOMPATI DISTRICT GREATER TAUNG SUB DISTRICT OFFICE

Enquiries:- Makhoana K.M
053 994 1096

TO : Mr. Che Jude
53 Kremetart Street
Pretoria 0184

FROM : MAKHOANA K.M
SUB DISTRICT MANAGER
GREATER TAUNG

DATE : 31 JANUARY 2020

Dear Mr Jude Che

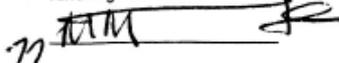
RESEARCH PROPOSAL: THE INFLUENCE OF LIFE DESIGN COUNSELLING ON LEARNERS WITH CAREER INDECISION FROM RESOURCE-CONSTRAINED COMMUNITIES

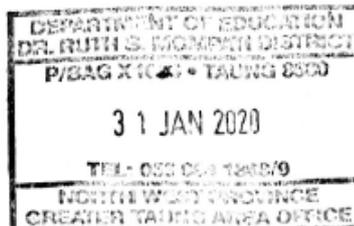
Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Greater Taung Sub-District of the North West has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programs are not to be interrupted.
5. The study is to be conducted from 01 February to 30 September 2020
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Ms Makhoana K.M at the contact numbers above.
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the North West Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Sub District Manager.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to the above address.

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards


MAKHOANA K.M
SUB DISTRICT MANAGER



ANNEXURE E: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. What has changed since the start of the intervention? What has changed in your plans, desire, and future, in your career and educational achievement?
2. What do you think has brought about the change?
3. What other help do you need to achieve your career goals?
4. How prepared are you to leave school next year?
5. What can be done to improve on the intervention you received?
6. Why did some learners not participate in the Saturday program and in the post-test (CDDQ and CAAS)?
7. Anything else you would like to add?

ANNEXURE F: EXEMPLAR PIECE OF CODED TEXT

	Pre-Test	Post-Test	
1.	<p>I want to be a doctor like doing medicine but I don't want to study for many years, and I don't know that I will be able to study medicine because my parent do not have much money to take me to varsity for studying further. CDDQ</p> <p>When I come to think about my future a head me, I come across to study hard but that doesn't last forever, sometime I think that I can study hard to achieve my goal but at the end maybe they wont be chance for me to go and study further because of the lack of money. Sometimes I become so sleepy when its about study time. CAAS</p>	<p>I just wish I could just pass with flying colours in Grade 12 so that I can get a bursary, because my parents doesn't believe on becoming a doctor because they do not have the money to support me on my career. And that makes me feel like even if I do not produce enough on my result it won't matter because there would be nothing more to be done about pushing my future and career forward. CDDQ</p> <p>There is this other time when I feel like even if I do or work hard on my education nothing will change about my future because at home have not much earnings. But sometimes I work and concentrate more on my studies and increase the leavels of my marks, but here and there I lose focus especially when I am facing challenges about what I am doing. Maybe if someone could just now and there tell me or guide me, helping me shaping my future. CAAS</p>	<p> Che Jude Duration</p> <p> Che Jude Low self-efficacy and Socio-economic challenges</p> <p> Che Jude Cost and economic factors</p>
2.	<p>To have someone who really will have a time to tell me more about subjects that I have choose. CDDQ</p> <p>I have learned more about knowing information of how would you really find information and also know what you want to be in your life. Even if you choose subjects you should also choose the subjects that can make you to reach your goals. CAAS</p>	<p>02. I feel so happy when I look answer this questionnaire because it also teaches me to know more about my career realizing how to do my vocational choices. To know how to deal with my own career choices. I should get my marks that is going to take me to the next grade and also make me to go to university to do my career to do whats best for me, to know what should I do to know how to do my corces and also knowing what years should I be there. CAAS</p> <p>No CDDQ</p>	<p> Che Jude CAAS 17</p> <p> Che Jude probably language</p>
3.	<p>Some of the questions were to difficult to answer and I didn't have the answers for it just because the question paper said "please do not skip any question". I just answered without understanding because I didn't have choice. Some of questions we good and I like it because it is encouraging me to know my career and to follow my career. CDDQ</p> <p>From this questions I have learned so many things that I didn't know. I learned to build my future, to take my career serious and t work hard in my studies to be cofident and to be percient so that I can reach my career and build my future. I am really happy about this questions because I can understand and I can answer all the questions. CAAS</p>	<p>The questionnaire was so simple, because it describe me very well. I don't know what I want to be, I don't know which career I will choose or I will take. It difficult for me to choose the career because I don't know my abilities, I don't know what I should do. CDDQ</p> <p>After answering this questionnaire something came to my mind and I was so emotional, this questionnaire is very hatie but I realise that it will help me to build my future, it will help me to know what I want to be in future, it will help me to reach my dreams but the problem is that I don't know what I want to be when I finish my studies, I don't know what I will do when I found school. All I want to do is to make my parents proud, to help my parents with life problems. I am so confused about what I will do when I finish school. The problem is that I want to be an entrepreneur, I want to study for hospitality so I will like you ... to help me. I want you to motivate me because I don't have motivation to make decision now. CAAS</p>	<p> Che Jude Desperate</p> <p> Che Jude CDDQ Lack of information</p>

4.	<p>I believe that it is not difficult for me to have my degree. My fear is that I don't have much experience to complete my degree due to difficulties at home. It is possible for me not to have my degree because of the difficulties. CDDQ</p> <p>It will help me to obtain my career choices and decisions to have my degree and prepare to have complications in life. CAAS</p>	<p>I am answering this and help with my career, am not sure about what I need to do and what steps to follow when choosing a career. I find it difficult to make a career decision. CDDQ</p> <p>Making decision for my future are very strong because I believe that am going to make it on overcoming obstacles and taking care of my actions. CAAS</p>
5.	<p>The questions were tricky but they relieved me. I was able to answer questions that are about me. CDDQ</p> <p>I never had a word to describe my abilities and strengths the ones I was able to elaborate myself and would be able to be advised about my career. CAAS</p>	<p>I have low self esteem, I'm afraid to believe in myself. I'm afraid to aim high because usually when I aim high I fail, it comes opposite of what I expect and that breaks me a lot. Since there I just don't aim high and mostly when I don't aim high, I pass. Nobody encourages me. They all see me as a loser because one day I sold my body to get money because things were not well at home at all. And I benefited I mean like what if that's where I'm competent? CDDQ</p> <p>I don't feel much I'm just afraid of aiming high and believing in myself because everytime I believe in myself I fail. Everytime I aim high they come low. When I believe something good will happen, nothing happens. That broke my spirit so I no longer believe in me. Most people hate me too. It hurts a lot. I don't believe I will reach my dreams. I never heard my grandmother congratulating me for good work. Nobody in my family since I'm an orphan. Maybe my mother will be the one to love me unlike these people I'm living with. Too much betrayals, failures and disappointment. I afraid if I don't make it in school I will suffer. I feel like no one will support me when I go to varsity. All my life I've been facing nothing but heart breaks. Nobody do what they promise. I have big dreams but no one is supporting me. How can I achieve? CAAS</p>
6.	<p>Usually this questionnaire have advised or guided me about career choice. I think this will lead to a great path about choosing or making career choices as young student sometimes we just go to school without know our career or our job occupation that makes us weak</p> <p>- we consider many career - choosing wrong subjects - sometimes we don't have confident</p> <p>Thanks to you because now I believe that am capable to choose or to consider what is right of me. CDDQ</p> <p>I have learned about all strength/ability and weakness as we all know that choosing careers can be difficult without knowing what we are good at. Sometimes as learners we underestimate ourself, we think that we are not capable/brilliant surely this will help us when choosing or building our future. CAAS</p>	<p>I can say that I have learned about the difficulties of choosing a career while you consider more than one career but as time goes am very sure that I will make right decision for me. Making career choice it is very difficult without knowing what you want to do or what attracts you. Making career decision might be a little harder than you thought so I know that now and am willing to take the right path for myself. CDDQ</p> <p>I have learnt a lot from this questionnaire as it helped me to look at things in a different way. Now I can volunte that I will take the right path on which of choosing the suitable career that I think is suitable. Sometimes choosing or selecting career can be a like difficult in a way that I know that am able and I can make my own decision base on what I think is good for me. CAAS</p>

-  **Che Jude**
Economic challenges and uncertainty
-  **Che Jude**
Further help and confused
-  **Che Jude**
CDDQ 3/2 Internal conflicts
-  **Che Jude**
Low self-efficacy, motivation, financial difficulties/socioeconomic
-  **Che Jude**
CAAS 4
-  **Che Jude**
Willing and determined
-  **Che Jude**
CDDQ Lack of information 2/2 & 2/3
-  **Che Jude**
CAAS 23 & 24
-  **Che Jude**
Readiness 1/1

7.	<p>I am very happy because it <u>guide</u> me to my goals and career. <u>It gives me more information about career.</u> CDDQ I am very glad because it <u>help</u> me more about my career. And it assists me how to achieve my goals. And it also <u>guide</u> me. CAAS</p>	<p>I am willing to take this <u>oppurtunie</u> <u>cause</u> it will guide me to achieve my goals and how to prepare for my future, and it learning new skills and more about careers and am so glad to take this responsibility for my own actions. CAAS</p> <p>Search CDDQ</p>	<p>Che Jude CDDQ Lack of information 2/3</p>
8.	<p>I am happy after writing this questionnaire and I feel very proud about myself cause <u>finally I know many things about career.</u> CDDQ I am very happy after answering this questionnaire and also am very proud about <u>my self cause</u> I know different strengths to build my career. CAAS</p>	<p><u>I find it difficult to make a career decision because some of the people are against the career path I want to follow. It is quite challenging having to decide what career I want to choose. There are some things I scared might come my way, like failing and not making money out of the career I want to do. Or maybe something happens and stand in my way of becoming what I want and I have to choose another career because of those obstacles.</u> CDDQ Making decisions has always been challenging and it is hard making decisions. But as I am in Grade 11 I am trying really hard being a strong person and building myself to be a great person and choose a good career choice so that young females throughout the world can look up to me. once I have grown and have a good job. CAAS</p>	<p>Che Jude Influence of significant others, low self-efficacy, finance and uncertainty</p> <p>Che Jude CDDQ 2/3</p>
9.	<p><u>My impression is that I already chose my career all I want is that I want to study hard and go to <u>university</u> and I want to find more information about my career.</u> CDDQ I want to build my career and keep on researching about my career. I want to plan how to <u>achive</u> my goals and to be thinking about future. I want to do what is right for me and make decisions by <u>my self.</u> CAAS</p>	<p>I usually found that I can be able to make my decisions and I can be able to choose my career and I am able to make career decision. CDDQ I am thinking about my future. Now I am able to choose what is strong for me and what is good for me. I always <u>realise</u> what I am going to become. I always use my strengths and abilities to make my career to be strong enough. I am able to choose what is good for me and what is wrong I always plan how to <u>achive</u> my goals. CAAS</p>	<p>Che Jude Very general, CDDQ 2/2 information on careers</p> <p>Che Jude CAAS 4 and 9</p>
10.	<p><u>My impression is that I want to be a climatologist but I don't think I have those requirements that they want. What I think it will help me is that getting to know deeper about my career and what is required. Or study harder than before to improve my marks.</u> CDDQ Somewhat strong I'm thinking about how my future will look like. <u>Somehow</u> I'm not positive all the time because my background is stressing me. Even when they say your background don't determine your future I guess I can put my trust on that statement. CAAS</p>	<p><u>I think <u>this questions</u> have a lot of inspirations towards me.</u> It was hard for me to answer the questions because they are all about career decision making. All I want to do is to be a politician or a climatologist. But what I like about <u>this questions</u> they talk a lot about my future and what I want to do in life. <u>It is not easy to answer this question because you can't know what future holds.</u> CDDQ When I filled <u>this questions</u>, it just made me be curious about my future and what I want to do in the nearest future. It is not easy to talk about the future because I don't know what the future holds. Being dedicated to wards my studies it is what I like. Doing <u>History</u> it is for the reason why I am doing it. I do not find it hard to study History because it is something I like to do in life. I want to speak for those who <u>cant</u> speak for themselves. CAAS</p>	<p>Che Jude Inspired</p> <p>Che Jude Uncertain and doubtful</p>

11.	<p>I feel very good because I have <u>get</u> some ideas that I was not understand and I've got advices about a career choices and I was interested about this questionnaire. I believe that this questionnaire will give me an opportunity. I feel very confident about this. CDDQ</p> <p>I feel good about the questionnaire because it <u>describe</u> you. This questionnaire it is interesting because everyone now how strengths he/she is. This questionnaire <u>help</u> us to make decision about out career. Now I'm very strong about my abilities and interests. CAAS</p>	<p>After filling this I <u>get</u> information about career choices. My career <u>confuse</u> me because other people say I should be a teacher and my friends say I should be a hotel guide. And my career choice is to be a traffic cop when I grow up. CDDQ</p> <p>This questionnaire <u>have</u> teaches me a lot of things that I should look through my career. I feel very happy about this because it helps me about my career I have to <u>choosed</u>. This emphasis some strengths to me. I have a problem on my career I don't know how I could study it. <u>Also</u> my friend confusing me about career choices. CAAS</p>
12.	<p>My goal is to achieve something I want to become when I grow up but most important thang is to research more about my career and know more about it. CDDQ</p> <p>I know that my future will be bright because I will work hard to achieve everything I want to be in life. I choose a perfect subject to be someone I <u>wanna</u> be in life a subject I chosen is connecting with my bright future. CAAS</p>	<p>I am extremely happy about the career I'm going to choose because it will help our village to go older and it will inspire other children to do the right thing. CDDQ</p> <p>I am extremely happy about the career I am going to choose because it is <u>inspire</u> me to be myself and it will help others to accept <u>themselves</u>. CAAS</p>
13.	<p>I believe that I learn many <u>thing</u> that I don't even know. I believe in choosing a career at a young age so it will help me to prepare <u>my self</u> for the next future. I learn that I have to choose my career so that I can achieve my goals. CDDQ</p> <p>The reason why I answer this paper, because it makes me feel like a <u>divice</u> or choose the career I want when to do when I am growing up. Some points I am sure about it because it's one of the things I am sure about. And some things am struggle. CAAS</p>	<p>When I still answered this question paper, I finally know what am going to do when I grow up. I want to choose a teacher career. Because I know somewhere it will help me. And what comes in my mind is it's better to choose a career when you are still in Grade 11. CDDQ</p> <p>I finally know what I am going to choose, a career when I grow up. This question paper really <u>open</u> my mind, I will like to choose a teacher career. And taking my responsibility to take care of my career. And am ready for preparing my future. And I finally know you have to choose career when you still at Grade 10 and 11 because when you are at Grade 12, you will <u>all ready</u> know what career you will choose at college. Now I am <u>all ready</u> know what career am going to choose when I at college. CAAS</p>
14.	<p>I know the career that I am going to choose and making my future brighter and apply in many <u>universities</u> and start planning for my future. CDDQ</p> <p>The reason why I was answering <u>this questions</u> is because I wanted to know if am very sure about my future and my <u>carrer</u> and am very concerned about it. CAAS</p>	<p>14. Answering this questionnaire made me <u>realise</u> my capabilities. It makes me <u>realise</u> that I have potential in me. It actually gives me the strength and answers that I was looking for long ago. I know I have capabilities knocking in all doors of opportunities, all doors of success. Before answering this <u>questionnaire</u> I was confused about my career. But this helped me a lot* I was thinking if we could have just a little time and discuss some of the challenges I come across when I'm alone and thinking about my career.</p> <p>It gives me a little fright*</p> <p>This questionnaire <u>have</u> made me <u>realise</u> things that I am capable of doing, and things that I am not able to solve them. There is a <u>lot o</u> changes from the starting of this questionnaire. <u>First</u> I was not able to count on myself, preparing my future and working up to my ability. CAAS</p>

-  **Che Jude**
Peer and other influence
-  **Che Jude**
General and vague and CDDQ
2/3 Lack of information
-  **Che Jude**
CDDQ Lack of information
2/1, 2/2 & 2/3
-  **Che Jude**
Decided, positive impact of
intervention
-  **Che Jude**
Positive response...

<p>15. I suggest that if you would have used "yes" or "No" instead of "Describes me well" and "Does not describe me". The questionnaire was little bit tricky. CDDQ This one was very easy for me to complete because I was able to identify my strengths and weaknesses. I think this questionnaire will help me a lot. CAAS</p>	<p>I suggest that if you would have used "yes or no" instead of "describe me well, Don not describe me well" because I found it difficult for me to understand that. But the questionnaire was very interesting. It has managed to make me notice that I am able to do everything only if I want to. Now I have considered what field I would like to major in or what occupational I would like to fit in. CDDQ I found the questionnaires very difficult to answer because of the numbers we are cycling on. I suggest if you would have used the answering system as follows "Yes or No". But I found it very interesting because I have managed to notice my capabilities and weaknesses. CDDQ</p>
<p>16. This questionare made me realise that I have strongly difficulties when it comes to career choices. I have to put myself together and introspect myself, my skills and my abilities. I am impressed because I thought I knew my plans for future but this questionare prove to me that I have choices to make in order to achieve my career. I've realized that I lack information about my career and how difficult it will be for me to achieve this. CDDQ The questionnaire made me realise my is determined. I have to work hard in order to improve my skills. I have to be strongest about my skills that determines my future. I have to stay positive, overcome obstacles, solve problems and plan for my future. I am worried about my future. CAAS</p>	<p>The career I will like to follow is the first career that came first on my mind and for now I am sticking on it because I can that is the great one for me and I love it. And my parent know about my first career that I dream and they support me on it and also my friends. CDDQ For now on my mand I can say that to achive my goal will not be easy because I have two things that I want to do on the sametime and the one that I add I don't follow it so much I follow my first dream of my career and now is on my mand this first dream. CAAS</p>
<p>17. No CDDQ Uhm thinking about my career that I will choose after completing my Matric and I want to be sure about that career I will choose and hope I will do good at. CAAS</p>	<p>I feel so bad because now I didn't choose any career that I will do it after my matric and sometimes I think it's a bad thing to not choose any career, and I think I should choose any career that I want to do. After choosing that career I make sure that I get good degree, and I want a high degree because I want to become a anything in my future and I should take a good steps on that career, maybe I should study for many years for that career, because I want to get good marks. CDDQ I want to build my career good because now day's other people do not take career serious and I want to make sure that I complete my career good because I want to degree on that career. I want to achieve my goals very well so that I can do something in my career. I will make a decision for me how will I do it on my goals and my career. CAAS</p>

- Che Jude**
Probably language
- Che Jude**
Positive impact of questionnaire
- Che Jude**
Awareness of strengths and weaknesses
- Che Jude**
CDDQ 1/2 Readiness-General indecisiveness
- Che Jude**
Positive influence
- Che Jude**
CAAS 6 Being concerned about my career
- Che Jude**
CDDQ 2/3 Lack of information
- Che Jude**
Determined and work ethic

18.	<p>My experiment on answering this question will help me to obtain my career choices/decision and also help me to believe in <u>my self</u>. CDDQ</p> <p>My experiment on answering this question is to gain/obtain some strengths to build my career further. CAAS</p>	<p>I decided to choose wisely on the career I wanted to choose in the near future. I have good feeling in the near future, I am going to be successful about my career. CDDQ</p> <p>I think somehow somewhere I think I will be successful on my career because I have chosen very wisely. I have very strong abilities on the career I have chosen. I believe on day I will be successful and will be able to be successful in life. I have good thing about the occupation career. The career I have chosen will help me in the near future and it will also change my life and future for good this time. CAAS</p>
19	<p>I feel very good after answering those questions because some of the questions were very interesting and I didn't think about them and I feel very confident about my <u>career now</u>. CDDQ</p> <p>I feel very good after answering <u>this questions</u>, because I now feel strong about my <u>career</u>, abilities and the communication I have with my family about decision making. I belief that my opportunities high, because I am very <u>forcurced</u> on what I want to be. CAAS</p>	<p>After answering the <u>questions</u> I have developed a good understanding about my career and the factors or people who may affect it. I am very excited about my future, because my career will improve other people's lives. My family supports me and I will not disappoint them. CDDQ</p> <p>When I was answering this <u>questions</u> I feel so confident about my future. The fact that I didn't know how my future well be. Now I know that "the future is in my hands". According to my research I have discovered that there is a high rate of unemployment in South Africa so it is my responsibility to decrease that high rate. I want to employ people and upgrade my village so that the future generation could be bright to those who are still young. CAAS</p>

Che Jude
CDDQ Readiness 1/2 and Self-efficacy

Che Jude
CDDQ Lack of information 2/2 & 2/3 and CAAS 22

Che Jude
Positive effect of intervention and questionnaire

ANNEXURE G: CD CONTAINING RELATIVE QUALITATIVE DATA

Relevant data were submitted to the supervisor.