

FACTORS INFLUENCING CAREER CHOICE AMONG STUDENTS AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND

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A mini-dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Education

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Education

in the

Department of Educational Psychology

and Special Education

at the

University of Zululand

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January 2016

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My acknowledgements go to the people named bellow. This document wouldn't have been possible without them.

- First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge my All Mighty Father, Jehovah, who has been with me through good and bad times. He has never failed me. I am so grateful for the assistance provided by Him towards the completion of this document. He has clothed me with full armour of God that makes me walk over snakes, Ephesians 6 verse 11.
- I would also like to thank my parents, Mrs Gugu Aurelia Zuma and Mr Bhekinkosi Funda Zuma. They have been the anchor upon my life and without their patience and support I wouldn't have made it.
- Prof. PT Sibaya and Prof. MM Hlogwane, thank you so much for your assistance. I wouldn't have made it without you.
- A special thank you to Mr Jeff Mkhize for assisting me to complete this document.
- Lastly, thank you to Mamkhulu, Mrs Mimi Thandiwe Memoria Dlamini and everyone that helped raise me. I would have not made it without you.

Dedication

This document is dedicated to my late grand parents Sbhamu Simeon Kweyama and Elizabeth Kweyama. I remember you Mkhulu when, after a hard day's work you would come back with sweets and say "I-job, I-job Sbali". Your love for education was carried down from our parents down to us as grand children. This is a fruit that will forever be carried on from generation to generation. I carry you both in my heart.

Abstract

This study examined the factors influencing career choice. The objectives of this study were to determine factors influencing career choice among the University of Zululand students. Secondly, to find out whether there are any relations between career choice and the following variables; gender, age and race and, finally, to determine the agreement among ranks assigned by students to social institutions.

The methodology of the study comprised of field and case study research design. SPSS was used to analyse data which consisted of 200 participants who correctly responded to the questionnaires. The sample was selected from the first year students at the University of Zululand (UNIZULU).

The findings indicated that mothers and the media played a role in influencing students in their career choice. Students agreed that the home played the greatest role in choosing their careers. Most students had a positive perception of their chosen career. Finally, variables such as age, gender and race did not play a significant role in choosing a career amongst this particular group of students.

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1. Chapter One

1.1. Introduction

This study sought to understand the factors which influence students of the University of Zululand (UNIZULU) in their career choice. Patton and McMahon (2006) state that human behaviour can only be understood in the context in which it occurs. This means that it is impossible to understand a person in isolation, especially when it comes to career development.

One of the leading theories in career choice is Hollands' Theory in the field of career development. Holland's Theory elucidates the different working environments which a person can fit in. The Career Development Theory explains that there are six different working environments, namely realistic, artistic, investigative, social, enterprising and conventional. The Theory further explains that a person is more satisfied when choosing a career that is suitable to his/her personality type (Holland, 1963 ; Crites, 1969 ; Kilbrick & Tiedemand, (1961).

Hacket and Betz (1995) contributed in career development by exploring ways in which self-efficacy theory may provide further information on career development. Their argument was on self perception and its' influence on career choice. Therefore if a students has a good understanding of themselves, they are able to choose a career suitable for their personality and are more satisfied with their decision. This theory supports Holland's theory as it also speaks on matching working environments and personality type.

1.2. Preliminary literature review

The Theory of Career Development by Super (1980) and Kunnen (2013) explains that as development occurs people occupy different life roles. Furthermore, there are different stages an individual goes through which are in accordance with a person's age. For instance, at the age of 15 to 25, a person is still in the exploration stage. At this stage people are either in high school, entering the higher education institutions or starting with their occupations. This study explored factors influencing career choice of first year students at the University of Zululand.

This study is of paramount importance since it looked at different variables, such as Faculties in the University, professions, gender, age and race. In addition, the study compared and contrasted the different variables. The study sought to provide a clearer perspective on factors which people use in choosing a career, especially within the population of students that register at the University of Zululand.

Some studies like Kiobassa, Miksch, Hermann, Loh, Szecsenyi, Joos and Goetz, (2011), Keshishian, Brocovich, Boone and Pal (2010) look at one variable and this often confines the studies in getting a limited view of the influencing factors of career choice. These studies often look at one field of study and it is mostly the field of science and medicine. To the present investigators knowledge little, if any, has been investigated in other fields, such as Social Sciences, Commerce and Law. The present study attempted to fill this gap. Therefore, the harm that would occur if this study was not undertaken is that there might not be a good understanding of factors influencing career choice among the students of UNIZULU. Further, the harm would also be that this area of study would not be appropriately attended to, especially

within the area of Zululand, as there seem to be inadequate research done on factors influencing career choice. This study could assist the University of Zululand in understanding the factors influencing career choice. Shumba and Naong (2012) looked at factors influencing students in career choice and aspiration in South Africa, the study sampled students who were familiar with career counselling. However, it did not sample students who were not exposed to career counselling. It could be said that the information received from the study could not be generalised to students who have not received career counselling. The study revealed that the most dominant factor in career choice is family. This means that most students are influenced by their family members in pursuing their career choice in South Africa. The second most dominant factor is a student's ability to recognise a suitable career field (Shumba & Naong, 2012).

Koivisto, Viro and Vuori (2011) report that preparedness of career choice could lead to improved personal development. It seems as though it is important for an individual to have the support of his or her family, education system and the ability to make an informed career choice.

Kiolbassa, et al, (2011) focused on factors influencing the career choice of medicine as a profession and revealed that most general practitioners are influenced by the family, friendly conditions and sizeable income. This was more pronounced to female practitioners than with their male counterparts. Males, on the other hand, were influenced by the status that comes with being a general practitioner. Keshishian et al, (2010) focused on motivating factors influencing college students' choice of academic major. The study focused only on the pharmacy field of study. The study showed that students entered the field of study because of their own

personal interest. A study done in Nigeria also shows that students who enter medicine are influenced by their own interest (Adeleye & Eze, 2010).

Keshishian et al. (2010) provided a study on factors influencing college students' choice of academic majors. The study showed that the University does not address the unique needs and concerns of under represented groups when taking in students. The study further showed that learners who finished their first year of study were less satisfied. The only students who proved to have greater satisfaction in their careers were those students who studied pharmacy. An interesting factor was that those learners who did pharmacy were not influenced by other people to enter into that field of study but it was their own decision to do pharmacy.

These results showed that students who had an idea of their career path, such as the ones who chose pharmacy, showed satisfaction in their degrees and those who had no clue on the career path they wanted to follow, showed less satisfaction in the choices they made in their field of study. Amino and Timothy (2014) further explains that the type of choice made by students influences their academic performance. Therefore students' satisfaction in their chosen career has positive influence on their academic performance.

Fizer (2013) adds that many students choose their careers based on their academic ability. However, some students work habits do not match the field of study they have chosen. These students may experience low satisfaction with the field of study they have chosen. Such students may find their chosen field to be challenging and uninteresting. Therefore career guidance plays an important part with such students in assisting them to choose a field of study.

Kiolbassa et al., (2011) investigated the career development between male and female medical practitioners in Germany. The study illustrated that most students preferred to specialise in the medical field. The study indicates that students had a perception that they would have better income by specialising in the field of medicine. Furthermore, they could have their own private practice and, therefore, be able to manage the hours they work. This would provide them more time to be with their families.

There is no doubt that monetary value could influence an individual in a certain career path. Boudarbat and Montmarquette (2009) were able to gather in their study that money is one of the most dominant factors in an individuals' decision on a particular career choice. The study indicated that when students choose a career in a university, they consider the income that a person could earn when they have received their bachelor's degree. Furthermore, the study indicated that students who have held occupations search for degrees that will provide them with a higher income when their studies are over. Additionally, it was found that males chose their careers because of the prestige attached to the career and females were influenced by family as well as friendly working conditions. In support of the statement above, Agarwala (2008) provided a study on factors influencing career choice by University students, which was done in South Africa. The study indicated that most learners are influenced by prestige attached to the field of work and life conditions.

The environment could also have a great influence on career choice. The environments include what the persons' society needs and job availability (Sarwar &

Azmat, 2013). Therefore a student is most likely to choose a field of study that has high opportunities for employment within his/her society.

Agarwala (2008) continues to show other aspects that influence career choice amongst students. These aspects include interest, life ambition, challenging nature of the career, intellectual ability and prospects of job opportunity. The study noted that learners were not getting proper career guidance and learners make uninformed choices. Therefore the study recommended that high schools should be provided with professional school counsellors. Agwarla (2008) indicated that having a skill or being competent in a particular field of work influences a person's career choice. Gottfredson (2004) argued that young people choose careers in accordance with their circumstances at hand.

Koivisto, et al., (2011) mention that preparedness is an important element in making a career choice, learners could benefit from extra interventions in assisting them to be prepared for life after high school. A study that focused on interventions for assisting learners to be prepared for career choice indicated that learners proved to be better equipped to make a career choice, after attending a workshop. Furthermore, the study indicates that through interventions learners are equipped in planning for their careers which assists them in their career preparedness. It is also said that there are cost effective ways to assist learners to make appropriate career choices, such as workshops.

If correct career decisions are taken early in life, young adults may have satisfaction and fulfilment in life and, therefore, contribute towards the economy and development of this country. Learners make career choices based on prestige that

comes with that career. Other factors, such as ability and entry requirement in those fields are not explored. When they enter into higher education institutions, the choices students make are not informed and they find themselves in the position of being dissatisfied with the field of study they have chosen (Alika, 2012).

Kusumawati (2013) reported that students considered factors such as proximity, university reputation, job prospect and parental support as influencing factors in choosing a career. However, it was apparent in the study that the one important factor in learners choosing a university was financial implications related to studying. The students make the choice of studies by comparing the cost of studying and their benefit after studying. Therefore, most students look at their economic status when making a career choice.

Previous studies, such as (Agarwala, 2011; Alika, 2012 and Kiolbasa, Miksch, Hermann, Loh, Szecsenyi, Joos and Goetz 2011) have researched factors influencing career choice. However, these studies have focused on a single career field, and did not focus on other career fields. Therefore, the gap that this study hoped to fill was to look at different career fields and compare the different fields. Shumba and Naong (2012) conducted a study on factors influencing students' career choice and aspiration in South Africa. However, their study focused on students who have received career counselling. Therefore, this study hoped to fill the gap by also including students who have not received career counselling.

1.3. Problem statement

There are many factors that influence career choice. Those factors are important since they contribute to the final choice made by the learner on his/her career. Students need to make informed decisions about their careers. If wrong choices are

made from the beginning it is highly unlikely that a learner would be satisfied with their career path. This study therefore, searched for answers to the following questions:

- What factors influence career choice?
- Is there any relationship between career choice and characteristics of respondents such as gender, age, race and ethnic group?
- Is there an agreement among students regarding factors which influence career choice?

1.4. Objectives of the study

- To determine factors that influence career choice among the University of Zululand students.
- To find out whether there are any relations between career choice and the following variables: gender, age and race.
- To determine the whether students were using the same criteria to judge factors influencing career choice.

1.5. Intended contribution to the body of knowledge

This study hoped to add to the existing body of knowledge regarding factors influencing career choice among University students. However, this study varied from the existing studies as it focused on the students of the University of Zululand which is a different sample from previous studies. In addition the study looked at variables such as multiple faculties and race which most studies in South Africa have limited information with regards to the topic. The study also hopes to contribute to existing literature within the University of Zululand as there seemed to be little research done on factors influencing career choice within the University.

1.6. Knowledge dissemination

The knowledge gained from this study would be available at the University of Zululand. It is anticipated that there will be national publications made out of the research study.

1.7. Methods of investigation

1.7.1. Research design

The study is a field study since it investigated a group of students in an education institution under natural circumstances (Cialdini & Paluck, 2011).

1.7.2. Method of sampling

Stratified purposeful sampling was applied in the study. The study variations of participants would be from different faculty groups. Stratification is appropriate because University population consists of strata. A sample must consist of participants from each stratum (Cialdini & Paluck, 2011).

1.7.3. Target population

The target population intended for the study was first year students from the Department of Social Work, Psychology, Nursing Science, Law, Commerce, Agriculture and Education. The fields of study mentioned above were randomly chosen in order to have various departments from UNIZULU represented in the study.

1.7.4. Method of data collection

The method of data collection was employed in this study is Group Contact. This method is usually used when collecting data from groups of people. It was suitable for this study as the study aimed to collect data from a group of students at the

University of Zululand. In order for the researcher to collect data, permission letters were sent out to the Registrar and the Faculty Deans. Information letters and an informed consent form were provided to participants. The information letter and consent form briefly explained the study and the ethical implications related to it. Structured questionnaire was administered in this study and the questionnaire consisted of a Likert scale in order for the sample to reflect the number of first year students of the University of Zululand Griffon (2005) and Ranjit (2005). Gill, Stewart, Treasure and Chadwick (2000) provide a detailed paper on how to apply the methodology base on group contact. This method seemed suitable for collecting data as it made the process more manageable.

1.7.5. data analysis

The methods of analysing data were initially left flexible at the beginning to allow qualitative and quantitative analysis to be used.

The statistical methods for analysing classificatory data were used. These include chi square one sample test, chi-square for a 2x2 table and chi square for K. Independent samples. To analyse students' ranks assigned the Kendall W test was used.

1.8. Operational definition of terms

- Career: refers to the field of study undertaken by students for their occupation.
- University students: In this study it refers to first year students excluding all other levels.

1.9. Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance to conduct the study was received from the research and Ethics Committee of University of Zululand. Since the research involved faculties and their departments permission was also received from the Deans of faculties and the head of departments.

In order to comply with the ethical code for research participants are given informed consent forms. Fairness was maintained by making consent really informed by explaining instructions and providing clear rules regarding the research. Finally the researcher made sure that there was no deception in the research project.

1.10. Resources

This research is purely library and fieldwork based. As such, it has no special resource implications. Current library and existing resources are adequate, and, apart from usual research and travel grants, no additional institutional allocations are required. Beginning

1.10.1. Feasibility

It was feasible to conduct the study because financial resources are readily available and human resources were also available for supervision.

1.10.2. Intellectual property

As this area of research continues to receive attention in academic circles, the outcome is likely to generate intellectual property that will be an addition to the existing materials in the field.

1.10.3. Cost management

It must be said that I am struggling with the financial implications related to this study, however, I plan to do whatever is in my power to cover the financial implications of this study.

1.10.4. Resource management

The resources were managed properly and there was no wastage.

1.10.5. Risk management

The study abided by the related ethical consideration. Furthermore this study does not pose as a threat to the wellbeing of the subjects chosen to participate.

1.11. The plan of study

1.11.1. Chapter one

This chapter provides background information on the research. It also highlights the major themes on this research.

1.11.2. Chapter two

The chapter consists of literature review, specifically regarding factors influencing career choice, the relationship between career choice and the different variables, and literature on the extent to which knowledge influences career choice.

1.11.3. Chapter three

The research design, methodology and instruments used are outlined in chapter three.

1.11.4. Chapter four

The results of the study, analysis and interpretation of data are presented in chapter four.

1.11.5. Chapter five

In this chapter, the findings of the research are discussed and conclusion drawn, as indicated. The researcher included recommendations to bring about intervention in identified problems.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2. 1. Introduction

This literature review will, firstly provide a brief history of the University of Zululand. Furthermore, this chapter will provide some theoretical background that is relevant to this study. Finally, the literature review will indicate some factors contributing to career choice from other previous studies.

2.2. History: University of Zululand

The inception of the University of Zululand (UNIZULU) had its' first intake in January 1960. The University was intended for the Black race, more specifically the Zulu ethnic group (Boughey, 2014).

It has been reported by Ngesi (2003) that the history of black education was filled with neglect, inferiority, inequality and discrimination. The education system of the apartheid times was that of a hierarchical and authoritarian structure. The system provided poor education for the Black community. It is a dubious proposition that students who come from Bantu Education could make realistic career choice.

The University of Zululand came about during a time where different ethnic groups and racial groups were separated. The University of Zululand is located in the rural area within the district of UThungulu where most Zulu speaking people reside.

UNIZULU has dedicated itself in assisting learners with their career choice. However, since the University's geographic location is a bit secluded, it makes it

difficult for other learners to benefit from the services the university offers towards career guidance. The Council of Higher Education report (CHE), (2014) indicates that learners residing in far away places are unable to come for career expositions that are offered by the University of Zululand every year.

2.3. Career development

Career choice is part of the career development framework which arrived with Frank Person during the 20th century. The term used by Frank Person for career development was vocational development. He urged that vocational development be part of public schools (Duane, 2002).

CHE, (2014) reported a growth on the number of students attending at the University of Zululand. Therefore as the number of students grows it would be beneficial for the University to be provided with information that helps it understand its students, especially within factors influencing career choice.

Frank Parson was known as the founder of vocational guidance, his theory focused on three factors of career choice. The factors were, understanding one-self, having a specific knowledge of the world of work and understanding the relationship between the two. Career choice and development involved many themes in a theory developed by Frank Parson. The initial theme focused on the relationship between the person and the occupation. This theme represented the trait and factor approach to career development. Another theme which followed was that career choice is a life process. A trend that followed was about focusing on cognitive processes in understanding career choice and development. These themes have been useful in understanding human behaviour and career choice. They have formed a basis for those who work as career counsellors (Bakari, 2014).

A Career Development Theory proposed by Holland in 1963, on the other hand, indicated that there are six personality orientations that matched six career orientations. The scales included realistic, intellectual, social, conventional, enterprising and artistic. The main focus of the Theory was that a person will choose a career according to the scale that matched their personality. However, Holland's theory might not fully be applicable to the students of UNIZULU. Boughey (2014) explains that the University of Zululand (UNIZULU) is placed in an area where most of the community are of low economic status, acquire low infrastructure, low levels of education and are rural based in nature. Therefore, students coming from surrounding places could be influenced by other factors when choosing a career.

Gottfredson developed a Theory on Circumscription and Compromise which is the process of disregarding undesired alternatives which are unacceptable to an individual and the society. Compromise involves a process of identifying those career which are accessible than compatible with a personality. The Theory of Circumscription and Compromise takes into account the realities of the society which a person is associated with. The Theory further focuses on gender, social class and cognitive development. The core element of this Theory is that it looks at how people compromise their dreams in order to fit their social reality (Brown and Brooks, 1996; Gottfredson 2004).

McMahon and Watson (2014) shared on the Systems Theory Framework (STF) within career development. The STF comprises of subsystems which are individual system, societal system and environmental-societal system. The individual system has variables which include gender, age, personality, interest, ethnicity and sexual orientation. However the individual system does not function in isolation. The social system and the individual system occur within the environmental- societal system. The Systems Theory supports Bojuwoye and Mbanjwa's (2006) notion on how the apartheid era has affected

the career development in individuals. They further state that due to the apartheid era we still find some individuals being under represented in certain occupational settings. However, this notion does not only relate to the apartheid era. Within any oppression system we find the same outcome.

2.4. Factors influencing career choice

If correct career decisions are taken early in life, young adults may have satisfaction and, fulfilment in life and therefore, contribute towards the economy and development of this country. Hasse (2011) mentions that individuals are influenced by motivating factors in putting behaviour into practice and these motivational factors could have a direct effect of a person's career choice. Kusumawati, (2013) writes 'Like any other business institution, higher education institutions have to understand its customer needs and wants in order to remain competitive'. Understanding factors which influence students' career choice is fundamentally important for a university. Hasse (2011) agrees with Kusumawati (2013) in that Universities have an important role to play within the economy as well as the social development of individuals. Therefore training of individuals is important within a University.

Keshishian, Brocovich and Boone (2010) indicate that Universities do not address the unique needs and concerns of under represented groups when taking in students. Therefore, students who had an idea of their career path showed satisfaction in their chosen fields of studies, whereas those who chose their career paths without any knowledge of their prospect careers were less satisfied. This is a clear example of the possible danger that most students at the University of Zululand might be facing. Pillay and Thwala (2012) mention that most learners residing in rural areas, are unable to acquire knowledge about psychology before

registering. This means that students become unprepared to meet up with challenges at University and therefore they are likely to underperform in areas that require knowledge of psychology.

2.4.1. Economic Status

Kusumawati (2013) reported that some students considered factors such as University reputation and job prospect. The learner's choice of career was closely linked to the financial implications related to studying. The students made their study choices by comparing their cost of studying and the benefit related to their degrees after studying. Therefore, most students look at their economic status when making a career choice. Funding is an important factor when choosing a career and getting a bursary as learners who come from low economic status find it hard to pay for their tertiary education (Maharaj, 2008).

2.4.2. Family

Koivisto, Viro and Vuori (2011), report that preparedness for career choice could lead to improved personal development. It seems as though it is important for an individual to have the support of his/her family when choosing a career. Furthermore, if family members have a good knowledge of the education system they can assist a learner to make an informed career choice. Kusumawati (2013) indicated that parental influence is greatest within the initial stages of career choice. Additionally the education level of a parent influences a learner's career choice as the parent is more aware of the procedures within selection of careers. The Census (2011) indicates that there are less educated people among people who reside in the UThungulu district. Most people have reached matric but a few have progressed to higher learning. Therefore, most students who reside in UThungulu District come from uneducated families. This makes it even more

difficult for those students to get assistance from their families in choosing a career.

Draper and Louw (2007) found that family members played an important role in influencing a learner's career choice. The study focused on learners who pursued careers as medical doctors. The results showed that some learners were largely influenced by their family desire to have a doctor in the family.

2.4.3. School

Shumba and Naong (2012) provided a study on factors influencing students' career choice and aspiration in South Africa. However, their study focused on students who have received career counselling. A school has an indirect or direct influence on career choice (Maharaj, 2008). It is stated that learners from traditionally African Schools have a much harder task in choosing a career as there is limited information and resources. Furthermore, less privileged schools are most likely to concentrate on the educational curriculum rather than other aspects of education (Maharaj, 2008).

Preparedness is an important element in making a career choice, learners could benefit from extra interventions in assisting them to be prepared for life after high school. Ogowewo's (2010), study recommended that high schools must be provided with professional school counsellors. Koivisto, Viro and Vuori's (2011) study focused on interventions for assisting learners to be prepared for career choice. The study indicated that learners proved to be better equipped to make a career choice, after attending a workshop. Furthermore, the study indicated that through interventions learners are equipped in planning for their careers, which assists them in their career preparedness. It is also said that there are cost effective ways to assist learners to make appropriate career choices, such as

workshops. Career guidance counsellors are one of the major role players in influencing learners along a proper career path.

2.4.4. Lifestyle

Alika (2012) indicates that learners make career choices based on prestige that comes with that career. Other factors, such as ability and entry requirement in those fields, are not explored. When they enter into higher education institutions the choices they make are not informed and they find themselves in the position of being dissatisfied with the field of study they have chosen. Boudarbat and Montmarquette (2009) support the above mentioned study in that money is one of the greater influencing factors in an individual's career choice making. The study indicated that when students choose a career in a university they consider the income that a person could earn after completion of studies. Furthermore, the study indicated that students, who have held previous occupations, search for degrees that will provide them with a higher income.

Ongewewo's (2010) study indicated that most learners are influenced by interest, life ambition, a challenging nature of the career, prestige attached to the field of work, intellectual ability, and high salary of the occupation and prospects of job opportunity. Kiolbassa, Miksch, Hermann, Loh, Szecsenyi, Joos and Goetz (2011) focused on factors influencing career choice of medicine as a profession. Their study revealed that most general practitioners are influenced by the family friendly conditions and sizeable income. This was more pronounced to female practitioners than with their male counterparts. Males, on the other hand, were influenced by the status that comes with being a general practitioner.

2.4.5. Location

Location of higher education institution seems to be another important influencing factor in career choice. Choosing a University that is close to home allows for students to maintain their close relations with their loved ones. This gives students a sense of security. However, there are a small percentage of students who prefer to study far away from home, so that they can gain independence (Kusumawat, 2013). The CHE (2014), reports that the geographic location of UNIZULU has both positive and negative impact. The positive side to the location of UNIZULU is that it allows for community engagement. However, the negative impact is that most learners struggle for residential space as the University is located in a rural area.

2.4.6. Personality

Personality is one of the important facets within career choice. Cochra, Melby and Neumayer, (2005) explain in their study of medical students that personality fit is one of the driving forces toward or away from a certain specialties for medical students. Rogers, Creed & Glendon (2008) further reiterate this point by indicating that personality types would have an indirect and direct way in career decision making. They found that a person who paid attention well to detail was able to plan for his/her careers.

2.4.7. Competence

Agarwala (2008) indicated that having a skill or being competent in a certain field of work influences a person's career choice. Gedde, Budenz, Haft, Tielsch, Lee & Quigley, (2005) agree on the above mentioned point as their study showed that factors influencing career choice among the field of ophthalmology found that learners chose their career due to their special skill and were, therefore, competent at their occupations.

2.5. Relations between career choice and variables such as gender, age and race

Farrington, Gray and Gary (2012) mention that attitude toward a certain career is the reason for the vast difference of careers chosen by females, males and the different ethnic groups. However, this attitude comes about due to the type of influence a person has received throughout hi/her development.

Gottfredson (2005) pointed out that learners make their career choice in accordance with their gender type and the prestige the career comes with. Bucak and Kadirgan (2011) further expand on this point by reporting that certain careers which are perceived to be good for females are usually preferred by females, and those perceived to be good for males are usually undertaken by males. Gedde, Budenz, Haft, Tielsch, Lee & Quigley, (2005) further report that women are affected more by family factors when making career choices, therefore, their choices are based on putting their families first, whereas men chose careers in accordance with the prestige attached to them.

Kiolbassa et al, (2011) explain that males and females have different reasons for following their chosen careers. Their reasons were around factors such as personal ambition and the need to help patients. The study showed that, as students grew in the field of study, a change in career direction came about. An example provided was that when learners started attending medical school most of them wanted to specialise, but when they grew in the field they changed and wanted to be general practitioners.

Fouad and Byars-Winston (2005) reported that race and ethnicity do not affect career choice. However, it is the perception of the opportunity offered by different vocations that influences career choice. Ferrington et.al (2012) further elaborate

by mentioning that in South Africa the White race are more likely to enter the field of entrepreneurship, whereas other ethnic groups find it difficult. They further explain that there seems to be a barrier to entry in some career fields, such as entrepreneurship. However, this barrier is only caused by the different perceptions that each ethnic group has.

Sands (2011) studied the influences of career choice among different age groups. The study showed that an influence towards career choices differs across the different age groups. Adults make use of their life experiences to be influenced by a certain career, whereas the younger generation are influenced by the type of perception they have towards a certain career. Furthermore, the media seem to be one of the greatest factors that influence young people into a certain career.

2.6. The relation between career choice and social institutions

Career decision making indicates a person's state of preparation for participating in the learning processes necessary to explore and decide among various occupational, educational, training, and employment options. Sampson, Peterson, Reardon and Lenz (2000) defined readiness for career choice as the ability of a person to make suitable career choices while also understanding the difficulty of economic, family and social variables that impact an individual's career development. Another way of understanding these dimensions is that the ability to make career choice represents internal variables and complexity of career decision making represents external variables that influence an individual's ability to make appropriate career choices. At times an individual could be or feel ready to make a career choice, however this changes due to a person's circumstances. Any individual circumstances could either enhance or detract from readiness to make a career choice.

Van Ecke (2007) noted another factor that contributes to a lack of readiness for career decision making and this factor includes the reality of disabling family, social, economic, or organisational variables. Individuals are faced by different family variables, such as multiple family responsibilities, multiple family stressors, role overload, and dysfunctional family input. Family life can contribute to or detract from readiness for career choice. For example, a person's readiness to make career choice can be enhanced when family members have few family responsibilities or stressors that complicate choice, provide healthy assistance during career choice, and are supportive of their choices. Additionally, there are also social variables that impact on an individual's career choice. Namely, these variables include stereotyping, discrimination, lack of role models, bias in education or employment, and harassment in education or employment. Social variables can also add to or detract from readiness to make proper career choice. An individual's career choice can be enhanced by modelling, mentoring, networking, and caring relationships with significant others.

2.7. Summary

The literature review has touched on some of the important factors of career choice, as these are important to consider within of the study. This literature review has focused on the history of UNIZULU. The study has also collected literature on factors contributing to career choice. Furthermore, the study has looked at variables, such as gender, age and race in relation to career choice. Literature on social support has also been included as it is an important part of the study. The type of literature collected is important to consider as it adds to understanding the different facets related to the current topic.

Chapter 3

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter the research design, research method, sample design, Instrument method and analysis of data will be explained. The chapter will also discuss procedures for conducting this research. The purpose of the research was to provide information on factors influencing career choice among the University of Zululand Students.

3.2. Research Methodology

3.2.1. Research Design

The designs employed by the researcher were case study and non experimental field study. Yin (2009) illustrates that field work and case study research designs share similar characteristics. Field work and case study research designs provide for investigation of real life events. Furthermore, they can be adapted to any type of research question and still afford the benefit of studying phenomena that may have many variables. The researcher opted for this design as it seemed most suiting in the type of study under investigation. Case study research design and field research design allow for investigation of students in their natural surroundings. Additionally, the research questions have allowed for different types of variables to be investigated. Delost and Nadder (2014) describe that a research design is formed after selecting a research topic. The research design is determined by the research question generated from gaps in knowledge on the topic as recommended from the literature review.

Therefore, the research design employed for this study seemed most fitting to explore the research questions offered for the study.

3.2.2. Research Method

According to Delost and Nadder (2014) a researcher should determine if a quantitative or qualitative approach is suitable for hi/her own study. A mixed method includes both qualitative research and quantitative research approaches, it allows for a full exploration of research questions.

Previous studies used different research methods in order to understand how students decide on their career choices. Shumba and Naong (2012) used a quantitative method which was both descriptive and exploratory. They used structured questionnaire to explore the factors that influence career choice and aspirations among South African students. To differ from the above mentioned study the researcher decided to focus on one university. The tool used for collection of data was developed with the help of expert knowledge from supervisors. However, Shumba and Naong adapted an existing questionnaire in order to collect data. Lastly, the above mentioned study sampled students at the Department of Education, whereas the current study focused on different faculties at the University of Zululand.

AnbuSelvan, Gokulnathan, PrabuRajan, RajaRaman, Kumar and Thagavelu (2013) conducted a study on factors influencing surgeons' choice of dentistry as a career choice. The method used for the study was descriptive survey design where undergraduate learners up until internship were utilised. Furthermore, the study only reported the Gender variable. The study did not report on the interrelation of other variables, such as age, ethnic group and the different study levels, such as level 1 and internship level.

Similar to previous studies which sought to identify the factors students consider important in a future career, this study employed a quantitative approach through the use of a self completed anonymous questionnaire. This approach was considered the most appropriate method for data collection as it allowed for the systematic collection of quantifiable data on a set of pre-determined variables.

3.2.3. Sample Design

Sampling is the process of selecting a portion of the population to represent the entire population. The investigator identifies the target population, the population to whom the research outcomes are intended to apply by designating the study population, which is the entire set of individuals or objects having some common characteristics related to the research investigation. The study population may be broadly or narrowly defined; examples include human subjects, hospital records or laboratory data. The researcher specifically defines the eligibility criteria, which are the attributes of the target population, and defines how subjects are selected for participation (Williams, 2007).

The sampling design used in this study was stratified probability random sampling. The sampling design seemed appropriate as the students from the University of Zululand consist of different faculties and academic departments.

The target population for the study were first year students from the faculties of Arts, Education, Science and Agriculture, Commerce, Administration and Law. The first year students were chosen because the researcher believed that they might be more able to reflect on the reason that has influenced them to choose a career.

3.2.4. Instrument Method

Breuce, Langley and Tjale (2008) report that the use of expert judgments has become progressively more popular in the field of research, as experts are knowledgeable people in a particular discipline. Experts are used mainly for the purpose of judging the content of instruments and data collection schedules. In research and education experts have been used consistently for the design, development and testing of instruments to collect data. Therefore, the instrument used in this study was evaluated by two expert supervisors within the Department of Educational Psychology to remove any ambiguities.

The instrument provided three sections which comprised of likert – type scales. The first section was mostly for biographical information which was quantitatively scored in order to get the statistics of the type of respondents used in the study. The second section, which is section B comprised of categories (i.e. A lot, Fairly well, Somehow, A little and Never). Respondents had to indicate the response which best suites them for each statement. The statements were coded in the following manner (A lot=5; fairly well=4; Somehow=3; A little =2 & Never=1).

The third section, which is section C comprised of positions 1 to 6. The respondents had to assign a position to a social institute that has greatly influenced their choice of career. The questionnaire provided 6 categories. In each of these categories the respondent had to assign a position. The positions ranged from 1 up until 5. Position 1 was related as the most favourable position, position 2 was favourable position, position 3 was the moderate favourable, position 4 was unfavourable, Position 5 was the least favourable and position 6 was most unfavourable.

Section D, comprised of five categories which were Strongly Agree, Agree, Unsure, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The respondent had to assign a category for each

statement. The categories were coded as follows; SA = 5; A = 4; U = 3; D = 2; SD = 1. These categories were to indicate the most influential factor there the least influential factor would be the categories which contain the least value.

In order to appropriately collect data, Departments were randomly selected from each faculty of the University of Zululand (UNIZULU). The researcher liaised with lecturers in order to get access to students. The researcher was present during the distribution of the questionnaires.

3.3. Description of Empirical Study

An information letter was provided to students to ensure they had full knowledge of their rights and the purpose of the research. Participation was entirely voluntary, with no coercion or pressure of any kind to participate. Permission letters were distributed to each Dean of Faculty and the Registrar of the University of Zululand. This was done as part of the protocols followed within the University when conducting a research project. Out of 250 questionnaires distributed to students, 200 questionnaires were brought back.

3.4. Analysing of data

Quantitative methods of data analysis are more beneficial to a researcher who is attempting to illustrate meaningful results from a large sample. One of the benefits of using quantitative methods in analysing data that is it provides the means to separate the large number of confusing factors that often obscure the main findings. Various forms of scoring methods exist; the most flexible scoring is where each item is scored by giving it any value within a particular range such as 1-5. This type of analysis leads to observations that are independent of each other (Abeyasekera, 2010).

The data collected for the study were analysed by using a spreadsheet where the data were stored. Thereafter the data were be organised into table in order to provide more meaningful information. A multivariate tabulation was be employed as there is more than one question in each section of the questionnaire. Data were also interpreted qualitatively by providing summaries which explain the findings on the quantitative analysis. Meaningful summaries provide emphasis on the important findings provided on the tables and the summaries also help to identify statistical inferential procedures relevant for demonstrating the applicability of results beyond the research setting.

3.5. Summary

In conclusion this chapter described the methods used in the study. This includes research design, sampling method, analysis and the expert contribution provided by the supervisors involved in this research. The next chapter will focus on the findings of the whole research.

4. Chapter four

Presentation and Analysis of Data

4.1. Introduction

This chapter will present and analyse data. The findings of this study have been explained hereunder using tables. A structured questionnaire was used in order to collect data from students at the University of Zululand. The number of students used for analysis of data was (N) 200. Different sections of the questionnaire investigated the objectives of the study.

4.2. Demographic Data

Table 1: Participants Demographics

<i>Criterion</i>	<i>Levels</i>	n	%
<i>Gender:</i>	Female	110	55
	Male	90	45
<i>Age:</i>	16-20yrs	81	40.5
	21-25yrs	103	51.5
	26-30yrs	12	6
	+30	4	2
<i>Race:</i>	Black	198	99
	White	0	0
	Indian	1	0.5
	Coloured	1	0.5
<i>Field of Study:</i>	Psychology	19	9.5
	Social Work	21	10.5
	Nursing	27	13.5
	Law	20	10
	Accounting	43	21.5

Agriculture	27	13.5
Education	43	21.5

4.3. Factors Influencing career choice

Table 2 shows the strength as to which each characteristic has influenced the student's career choice. In order to get a much clear picture Table 2.1 has ranked the variables according to their order. This clearly shows which variable has most influenced the student career choice.

Table 2 Ordinal strengths of role players (N=200)

Indicates the scores of students regarding the strength of each role player in influencing their career choice.

Column Titles

- A – A lot
- FW – Fairly Well
- S - Somehow
- AL – A Little
- N - Never

	<u>Scores for each scale column</u>					<u>Sum of each row</u>
	A	FW	S	AL	N	
Father	41	20	16	10	101	587
Mother	83	36	21	19	41	701
Sister	31	29	31	40	69	513
Friend	24	29	43	28	76	497
Neighbour	7	9	24	30	130	333
Teacher	29	38	29	20	84	508
Counsellor	18	12	25	22	123	380
Church	27	21	34	30	88	469
Community member	13	14	35	28	110	392
Media	58	33	35	27	47	628

Table 3 ranking order of the variables that have influenced career choice

	Sum of each row	Ranking Order
Mother	701	1
Media	628	2
Father	587	3
Sister	513	4
Teacher	508	5
Friend	497	6
Church	469	7
Community member	392	8
Counsellor	380	9
Neighbour	333	10

The results show that immediate family members and the media are most influential in a student's career choice.

4.3. Perception and career choice

Table 4 shows the distribution of the attitudinal dimension of learners towards their chosen careers.

The questionnaire had statements to which the learner had to indicate the extent of agreement with regards to his/her career choice. The questionnaire had a likert - scale which ranged from strongly agree (SA) to strongly disagree (SD). When analysing the data, it was possible to assess the attitude which the learner has towards his/her career. The mean was calculated to 32. Those students who scored below the mean are interpreted as having a negative perception towards their career choice. Additionally, students who scored above the mean are interpreted as having a positive perception of their career choice.

Table 4 Distribution of Participants along the attitude continuum SA-SD (N=200)

Negative Attitude	Positive Attitude
89	111

Table 4 shows there are 200 learners who participated in answering questionnaires. A total of 111 learners seemed to have a positive attitude towards their chosen careers and a total of 89 had a negative attitude towards their chosen careers.

Table 5 the relation between career choice and perception

Careers	Negative Attitude	Positive Attitude
Psychology & Social Work :	21	18
Nursing :	8	19
Law & Commerce :	10	36
Agriculture :	14	29
Education :	21	24

$$\chi^2 = 12.1412 \quad df = 4 \quad p < .05$$

The Chi- square value of 12.1412 at df 4 is significant. The conclusion is that students' perception has an influence on the career choice. Table 4 indicates that students differ with regard to their career perceptions.

Table 6 the relation between Gender and perception (N=200)

Gender	Negative	Positive
Male :	44	46
Female:	48	62
$\chi^2 = 0.5498$ df = 1 p > 0.05		

The chi-square value of 0.5498 at df 1 is not significant. The conclusion is that gender does not influence career choice differently. There is no relationship between career choice and gender.

Table 7 the relation between age and perception

Age	Negative	Positive
16-20 :	39	42
21-25 :	50	53
26-30 :	3	9
+31 :	2	2
$\chi^2 = 2.4874$ df= 3 p >.05		

The chi-square value of 2.4874 at df 3 is not significant. The conclusion is that age does not influence career choice differently. There is no relationship between career choice and age

Table 8. Relation between race and perception (N=200)

Race	Negative	Positive
Black:	93	105
White:	0	0
Coloured:	1	0
Indian:	1	0
$\chi^2 = 2.2329$ $df = 3$ $p > .05$		

The chi-square value of 2.2329 at df 3 is not significant. The conclusion is that race does not influence students' career choice. The results show that the University has predominantly Black learners; therefore, the other race groups are under represented. This makes it difficult to inter-correlate the perceptions of each racial group.

4.4. Table 9 Agreement among social ranks (N=200)

The perception of students towards social institutions influencing career choice was analysed by using Kendall W. The results are shown on table 9.

Social institutions	Home	School	Church	Youth	Community	Politician
Mean	1.83	2.47	3.33	3.94	4.23	5.20

Kendall's coefficient of concordance W^a is a measure of the agreement among several students who are assessing a set of social institutions. This is a non parametric test used with ordinal data to establish the degree of correlation among more than two sets of data.

The researcher computed and calculated the Kendall's W test. The answer to this analysis was converted to Chi-square (χ^2) test. The conversion was made in order to obtain probability for testing significance Kendall's W. The Kendall W test does not have sampling distribution of its own.

The probability associated with Chi-square of 256.059 (5) can occur by chance at a level of significance greater than .000 and therefore, it is highly significant at 0.5. The null hypothesis is, therefore, rejected. There is agreement among ranks assigned by students (N=120) to social institutes influencing career choice.

5. Chapter Five

Discussion of Findings

5.1. Introduction

This chapter is based on all the chapters that have been presented. The researcher will provide a summary based on the literature review and the results of the study. Recommendations will be provided based on the findings of the study.

Chapter one provides the reason for the researcher to undertake a study on factors influencing career choice. Literature and theoretical background presented was a build up to the presented research topic. The objectives were formulated after the researcher had collected background information regarding the UNIZULU background together with the literature provided on career choice. Chapter two provided some historical background about UNIZULU as a beginning point for the literature review. This aspect of the study is very important as it provides more of a holistic review of the literature needed for this study.

Chapter three presented a detailed account on the methodology employed to conduct the study. Chapter four presented analysed and interpreted data. It is in the interest of this chapter that the main findings of the study are presented and discussed.

The study had the following Objectives:

- To determine factors influencing career choice among University of Zululand students.
- To find out whether there are any relations between career choice and the following variables: gender, age and race.
- To determine the agreement among ranks assigned by students to social institutions.

5.2. Findings

1. Findings with regard to objective 1

The results of the study indicated that mothers were the most influential factor on their career choice. This finding supports other previous studies (Shumba and Naong, 2012). The media also proved to have a significant impact on the learners in choosing their career.

2. Findings with regard to objective 2

The findings indicate that students differ with regards to career perception. This could be that people have different desires when choosing a career. Some people desire money, some desire adventure and some want to make a difference in their environment (Olambi & Olawaiye, 2013). Dennison, Poole and Qaqish, (2007) mention that some students who studied social work had a negative perception of their chosen career due to the amount of salary earned after completing their studies. Thwala and Pillay (2012) indicate that young people are unsure of the usefulness of psychology on their life and their community. Therefore, this could be another explanation of first year students having a negative perception about the field of psychology.

2.1. To find out if there is any relation between career choice and gender.

The finding was that gender does not influence career choice differently. This could be that there is progress on the limitation of gender stereotypes towards career choice (Boster, 2005). Danariah, (2004); Farrington, Gray and Sharp, (2008) agrees with the findings.

2.2. To find out if there is any relation between career choice and age.

The results indicate that age does not influence career choice. Greenhaus (2003) indicates that in the 21st century age does not influence career choice however it is continuous learning that affect career choice. Therefore a person's age is not a barrier in following a desired career. Aminu and Timothy (2014) and Farrington, Gray and Sharp (2012) agrees with the findings.

2.3. To find out whether race influences career choice

The University of Zululand has predominantly Black learners and therefore race and career choice could not be inter-correlated.

3. Finding with regard to objective 3

The study indicates that there is agreement among students on the social institutes that influence career choice. The greatest influencing social institute was the home. These results correlate with most research studies on factors influencing career choice. Shahzad, Zahra & Ahmed (2014) and Keung, sun & Cheng (2012) agree with the findings.

5.3. Limitations

- The findings of the study did not reflect whether academic performance influences career choice.
- The study did not involve the career guidance centre at UNIZULU.
- The variable on race was not fully explored as the UNIZULU has predominantly Black learners.

- The study was limited to only first year students. Students from different levels could have been included as the matter of career choice affects all learners from different levels.

5.4. Recommendations

The recommendations provided are for future avenues within the field of career choice:

- A qualitative study on factors influencing career choice could provide a more comprehensive investigation within the field.
- When collecting data from students lecturers should be present as it will provide more of a controlled environment.
- Further exploration on the effectiveness of facilities at the university to assist learners in choosing careers could help improve the current career guidance centre.
- The University of Zululand could be more accessible to schools that are in a bit remote areas by visiting and informing learners about the current studies available at UNIZULU.

5.5. Avenues for future Research

- Future studies should consider involving the Career Guidance Centre and its' effectiveness in assisting students in career choice.
- The study did not allow for open ended questions. Therefore future studies could consider a more qualitative study.

5.6. Conclusion

This chapter began with the discussion of the findings. Future avenues were provided regarding the topic on career choice. Limitations were indentified, however, the aims of the study were met.

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Appendix I

INFORMATION LETTER FOR PARTICIPANT

Dear Participant

I would like to welcome you to my research project

The research project is titled: *FACTORS INFLUENCING CAREER CHOICE AMONG STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND*

The purpose of this study is to indentify the factors which contribute to the career choice of a learner within the University of Zululand. The participant is expected to fill in a short questionnaire that involves scaling of answers. There are no psychological, social, physical, legal and medical risks associated with participating in this study.

Any information identifying the participant would be treated as highly confidential. The researcher is willing to take full responsibility to assure that confidential information is kept safe. Please note that your participation is voluntary and you are free to not participate or stop answering the questions at any point of the research.

If you need more information about the research project then you are welcome to contact me at any time.

Contact details

Name : Nqobile Kweyama

Cell Number: 0846270959

Email : Nqobilekwe@yahoo.com



Appendix II

University of Zululand

Tel: 035 902 6341

FAX: 035 902 6260

University Of Zululand

Kwa-Dlangezwa

3886

PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT

My name is Nqobile Kweyama, and I am currently doing a study on *Factors influencing career choice among students at the University of Zululand*. I, therefore, request your participation within my study. Please note that participation is voluntary.

Please circle the appropriate answer YES /NO

- | | |
|---|--------|
| 1. Has the study been explained to you? | Yes No |
| 2. Have you had an opportunity to ask questions regarding this study? | Yes No |
| 3. Have you received satisfactory answers to your questions? | Yes No |
| 4. Have you received enough information about this study? | Yes No |
| 5. Do you understand that you are free to: | |
| a) Withdraw from this study at any time? | Yes No |
| b) Withdraw from the study at any time, without reasons given | Yes No |
| c) Withdraw from the study at any time without affecting your future health, education or any of the stakeholders involved in this study. | Yes No |

Full Name of Participant : _____ Signature: _____

Date _____

Researcher : _____ Signature: _____

Date _____

Signature of Supervisor : _____ Signature: _____

Date _____

Signature of Co- Supervisor _____ Signature: _____

Date _____



Appendix III

University of Zululand_____

Tel: 035 902 6341

FAX: 035 902 6260

Date: 9/04/2014

University Of Zululand

Kwa-Dlangezwa

3886

Dear:

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I write this letter to request for the permission to conduct research at the University of Zululand. The target population for this study is undergraduate students from different fields of study. I shall observe all ethical standards when using students as subjects in the study. My research study is entitled: *'Factors influencing career choice among students at the University of Zululand'*.

I am currently enrolled with the University of Zululand doing M Ed (Educational Psychology). This study is part of the requirements for the degree. It is supervised in the Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education at the University of Zululand by two qualified Educational Psychologists who are part of my support structure.

Your support will be highly appreciated.

Yours Sincerely

Miss N.I. Kweyama

Prof. MM Hlongwane

(Student Educational Psychologist) (Supervisor: Educational Psychologist)

Section A

Indicate by means of a cross in the appropriate space.

1. Gender:

F	M
---	---

2. Age in years:

16-20	21-25	26-30	31+

3. Race:

African	Coloured	Indian	White	Other race
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4. In which field of study are you registered?

Psychology	
Social Work	
Nursing	
Law	
Accounting	
Agriculture	
Education	

Section B

1. Indicate the extent to which each of this factors influenced your career choice

Factors		Extent				
		A lot	Fairly well	Somehow	A little	Never
1. Farther						
2. Mother						
3. Siblings						
4. Friends						
5. Neighbours						
6. Teachers						
7. Counsellors						
8. Church						
9. Community Member						
10. Media						

Section C

2. Please indicate by means of ranking a position next to the social institute that has influenced your career choice.

Assign position 1 to the most influential factor

Assign position 2 to the next most influential factor

Assign position 3 to the next most influential factor

Assign position 4 to the next most influential factor

Assign position 5 to the next most influential factor

Assign position 6 to the least influential factor

Social Institution	Position
1. Home	
2. School	
3. Church	
4. Youth Clubs	
5. Community Clubs	
6. Politicians	

Section D

3. Please indicate with a cross on the reasons for choosing your profession.

Strongly Agree - SA

Agree - A

Unsure - U

Disagree - D

Strongly Disagree - SD

Reasons	SA	A	U	D	SD
3.1. I chose my profession in order to satisfy my desire to serve the community.					
3.2. I chose my profession because I like working with people					
3.3. I chose my profession because I believe I will earn a lot of money from it.					
3.4. I chose my profession because it was the only available choice for me at UNIZULU.					
3.5. I chose my profession because I had done a lot of research about it.					
3.6. I chose my career because I received some career guidance at UNIZULU.					
3.7. I chose my career because I received some career guidance at UNIZULU					
3.8. I chose my career because it has social status.					
3.9. I chose my career because it has more job opportunities					
3.10. I chose my career because I was influenced by my parents/relatives					